

# CHE-MUN

(Ojibway for canoe)

THE NEWSLETTER OF CANADIAN WILDERNESS CANOEING

OUTFIT 42

CHE-MUN

AUTUMN 1985

## SUCCESS!



## THE MORSE RIVER EXPEDITION

Members of The Morse River Expedition stand at the cairn they built to commemorate the river for Eric Morse on July 29, 1985. Members include, from left to right, Bill King, Sean Peake, Geoffrey Peake, Michael Peake, Peter Scott and

Peter Brewster. Two days later the Government of the N.W.T. officially named the river in an order passed by Council. The dedication was part of a 55-day, 1,000 mile canoe trip across the Northwest Territories.

**CHE-MUN TRIP REPORT: ACROSS THE BARRENLANDS**



# FALL PACKET

All CHE-MUN subscribers please note: Due to a post office problem all CHE-MUN mail received between July 30 and August 15 was returned to sender. This was done in error. We apologize to any subscribers who had letters returned and hope no one was inconvenienced.

Lots of letters did get through however and we welcome them all, especially those who have renewed their subscriptions. The first update of the Trans-Canada Canoe Expedition from the team of Al Kesselheim and Marypat Zitzer arrived with a Fort McMurray postmark. Dated July 24, which puts them a week ahead of schedule. Alan recounts some of their adventures so far.

One unfortunate incident involves a large black bear that was a constant problem to them both having torn up their packs and following them incessantly. Alan killed the bear when it became clear repeated attempts to scare him off were to no avail.

On a more positive note they are getting a good feel of the beauty of the land. Since this half of their two-year journey to Chesterfield Inlet is not through uninhabited wilderness they have been treated to the kindness of people they've met along the way (the ferryman at Vega Ferry

took them home for "tremendous Sunday dinner") and some of the unkindness caused by the pollution of the few towns through which they passed.

Alan was enthusiastic about the 100-mile stretch of whitewater from Grand Rapids to Fort McMurray. "The Grand is a definite portage but below that are eleven rapids in the Class III and IV range. We were able to run all successfully except for a short bit of lining".

Their spray covers made the big water manageable and there were no mishaps. Alan and Marypat will be wintering at Stony Rapids and you can drop them a line there until the spring. Just mark it **Hold For Arrival c/o Alan Kesselheim and Marypat Zitzer, Stony Rapids, Saskatchewan S0J 0B0.**

Ron Hirsch, 39 Day Ave, East Longmeadow, MA, 01028 sent a nice and surprising note with his renewal for two year's (thanks, Ron). Along with fellow CHE subscriber Sid Magee, Ron and two others did the Thelon River from Eyeberry to Baker Lakes and must have been within a day or two of our group. Both our groups tested the hospitality of Che-person Margaret Taylor a school teacher in Baker Lake or as we refer to her St. Margaret of Baker - the patron saint of wilderness trippers. This was Ron's first N.W.T. trip following runs on the George, Dumoine, Petawawa, Capitachouane among others.

Lynn Gentling, 2221 Baihly Ct. SW, Rochester, MN, 55902 got a letter away, with her renewal, just before departing for an 18-day trip down the Moisie River on Quebec's North Shore. Lynn works for the North Carolina Outward Bound School and sent us a wonderfully detailed trip report last spring of their group's trip on the Thlewiaza River last year. Incidentally our canoe group met a friend of Lynn's on the Back River this summer, Priscilla McClung - another Outward Bounder - who works at the school in Ely, Minnesota. Lynn expressed concern over the CHE-MUN subscription rate increase and we echo her comments. The price will be kept as low as possible in order to keep publishing, but there are still many bills to pay. Thanks to Lynn, as well, for her very kind words about CHE-MUN - that's the only payment we are really interested in.

We also heard from an officer of the LACOGA - Low Arctic Company of Gentlemen Adventurers. Douglas Todd, 89 Rancilffe Rd., Oakville, Ont. L6H 1B1 wrote to renew (thanks) and mention some of the trips his group has done. These include the Winisk, Matagami, Kopka and University. Further to the latter Doug told CHE-MUN to tell Bill Mason to hurry up and get his his trip report on the University (Dog) River in - or he will send in their's. OK Bill - that's a challenge.

## NEWS & NOTES

by  
**Michael Peake**

**TIME TO GET OUT OF SHAPE AGAIN . . .** Welcome back to everyone from what I hope was a wonderful summer of paddling for you all. It was certainly the best canoeing summer I've ever had and I'll bore you with the many details in this and subsequent issues of CHE-MUN.

**WEATHER IS HERE, WISH YOU WERE BEAUTIFUL . . .** The southern areas of Canada had a poor summer by most camping standards. Wet, cloudy weather persisted throughout most of central Canada. The Northwest Territories, on the other hand, had a great summer for canoeing as I (fortunately) can personally attest to. The water was high and while precipitation was greater than usual the rare calm sunny days weren't so scarce. Even the lower Back River gave us four consecutive serene days below Escape Rapids

**THE CANOE THAT FLEW . . .** One constant irritant for northern canoeists is the transportation of their canoes when they aren't in them. Often the cost of having your canoe return from the trip is high enough to persuade many travelers to sell or swap their boats. Good trip planning can take much of the surprise out of the price quotation. There are bargains around, however. Calm Air services the west coast of Hudson Bay and Northern Manitoba. They are one of the few airlines who charge by the pound for canoes thereby avoiding the ridiculous pricing formulas invented by most other common carriers ( the weight of the canoe x its length squared etc., etc.) Our three Old Town Trippers (17'2") cost us \$110 total to go from Baker Lake to Churchill, Manitoba where they caught the VIA train to Winnipeg. Very reasonable. The trick is letting the airline know that you have canoes as soon as you arrive in town and having a schedule that allows you to make sure they can get on a flight near you because they are taken on a space available basis. The basic point - as in all northern canoeing - be prepared for the unexpected and be flexible.

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(Cont'd on page six)

# Paul Mason's . . . CANOETOONS



NEW CANOE EH ?

# TRIP TIPS

One of the most useful items that we carried on our Journey Across the Barenlands was our 'Baker's Oven'. We were able to enjoy fresh yeast-risen bread every day for lunch through the abilities of Geoffrey Peake, the baker, and his oven - a Coleman Peak 1 Stove and a Coleman Folding Camp Oven.

Everyone has heard of the Peak 1 - a terrific stove - but few are familiar with the Coleman Oven. Because it is designed to fit the large two-burner Coleman stove that is too large for most canoeists to carry, few pay it any attention. The all-black metal box which folds flat holds two bread pans on its shelf and has a thermometer built into the door.

Geoffrey developed the perfect system through much trial and (burntcrust) error. Here are his steps to perfect baking:

1. Although the oven works well over a carefully tended fire (a tedious procedure) it is more convenient to limit it to gas stove use only, also it doesn't get covered with soot. Make sure you take into account the extra fuel usage requirements.
2. Set the oven up with the Peak 1 inside with a heat-proof pad (as used on electric ranges) or even a pot lid on top of the stove, to disperse the heat evenly.
3. If your tent permits and/or the outside temperature insists set the oven up in your vestibule or other safe and protected place.
4. Light the stove and set to low heat and place your dough in the greased breadpans on top of it until it rises. Punch down and repeat process until fully risen. Often bread rising can be done while something else is cooking in the oven. Dessert, perhaps?
5. Put risen loaves in the oven and maintain heat at 350 degrees (although the roughness of canoe tripping sometimes affects the accuracy of the door thermometer) and bake until a hollow sound is heard when the loaves are tapped -40 minutes to an hour.

Baking requires time. The fact that we were able to do it while on a 1,000 mile, 55-day canoe trip attests that it can be done on almost any trip. Proper organization and the desire to do it are as key ingredients as the flour and yeast.

## CHE REVIEW

### THE FAMILY CANOE TRIP--

AUTHORS: THE SHEPARDSONS, Carl, Margie Tina and Randy.

Publisher: ICS Books., 1000 E. 80th St. Merrillville, IN 46410

Distributor: Stackpole Books, Cameron and Kelker Sts., Harrisburg, PA 17105 U.S.A.

229 pp. 6" x 9" pb.; amusingly illustrated by David Sanders. \$14.95 (US)\$20.50 (Canada)

Reviewed by Nick Nickels, Lakefield, ONT. K0L 2H0; former editor CHE-MUN



The Main routes of the historic fur traders in Canada were 6,000 miles long stretching from Lachine, Quebec to the Arctic Ocean, into Russian Alaska. Modern canoeists find it difficult to visualize many of the tortuous waterways and the constant woes of travellers, except an American foursome from Marlborough, New Hampshire in the early 1980's.

School teachers Margie and Carl Shepardson and their two small children Tina and Randy have traced the main trade routes in three seasons of desperate travelling conditions. They not only survived the ordeal but kept meticulous journals that reflected prolonged shrewd planning and stubborn performance. They created a strong personal relationship with your humble reviewer.

The fur trade routes experience became an obsession with the senior Shepardsons, both very seasoned Canada wilderness canoeists even before considering the long haul. My files contain continuing letter and reports with them since 1979. By late 1982 I urged them to have their unparalleled experience published in book form and this July I received a copy of The Family Canoe Trip, a unique approach to family canoeing.

I am still revelling in it during late night hours for its pure reading enjoyment. As a wilderness canoeing journal, it's a bombshell!

The Sheps, children amidships, in their 20-foot canoe, paddled, portaged, poled, waded and dragged upstream across most of the continent it seemed: in 1980 from

Marlborough, New Hampshire to Kenora, Ontario; in 1981 to Fort Smith, N.W.T.; to haul-out at Fort Yukon, Alaska in 1982. Laced with humour, wisdom and water-smart skills, the family doggedly forged ahead for the three exhausting seasons.

Some major highlights: Paddling the ocean length of 500-mile long Lake Superior in 28 days; the bureaucratic snubbing by Canadian officials at Old Fort William; their feteing as heroes at Grand Portage, Minn.; the constant battling with the bug scourge; swept off a campsite during a hurricane on Lake Winnipeg; hypothermia, sprains, cuts, bruises and, yes, hunger. The kids came through magnificently, maturing quickly, in very real-life scary situations.

I can't sing enough praise about "my Sheps" book while confessing without rancour that I wish I had written it. Purchase The Family Canoe Trip before the first printing runs out.



# ACROSS THE BARRENLANDS A CHE-MUN TRIP

by Michael Peake, Editor

The canoeing summer of a lifetime! This past summer's Journey Across the Barrenlands was a resounding success both on and off the water.

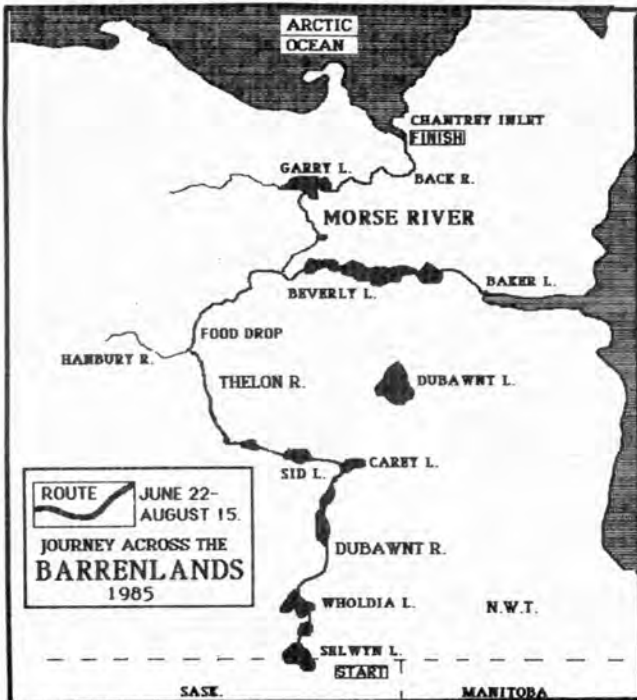
On August 1st, in Yellowknife, the Council of the Northwest Territories passed a motion officially granting our request to name the body of water flowing into the Back River at Upper Garry Lake as the Morse River after veteran Canadian canoeist Eric W. Morse. Coincidentally on that same day we finished paddling the newly-named Morse as part of Day 41 of our 55-day trip.

We had come a long way from Selwyn Lake on the Saskatchewan border - it seemed closer to 40 weeks than 40 days. Four of us, Michael, Sean and Geoffrey Peake and Peter Scott, set down late in a beautiful early summer's day on Selwyn Lake, June 22. An Indian grave at that first campsite was a good omen that we would see and experience the full spectrum of canoeing in the Barrens.

## Tyrrell & Moffatt

We followed Tyrrell's route over the height-of-land and down the Dubawnt River. We also had the report of the ill-fated Moffatt expedition down the Dubawnt in 1955. We were amazed at their lack of progress and were a bit shocked when we found ourselves taking five days on Wholdia Lake. Though it wasn't for lack of paddling.

Geoffrey and I put in an extra 60 miles on that lake going back for my rainpants that had extricated themselves from a closed stuff sack on the portage from Flett Lake into Wholdia. In fact, this trip was to be plagued by Mamaguishy, those mischievous little spirits who take things out of packs and generally cause havoc with canoeists. While few articles were actually lost (2 pipes, sponge, toothbrush, hat, tent pegs, brandy flask, paddledid I say few?) others were discovered at various stages of distance from them. Always check that campsite - lunch spot, etc., thoroughly.



The weather was good on the first few big lakes, little wind, light rain and generally fair weather. We reached the first swifts of the Dubawnt (broad, shallow) River which drains Wholdia Lake. The first few rapids were just riffles with comfortable Grade 1 and 2 appearing later. We had a very brisk tailwind that first day - a real treat.

The rapids were wide and well-spaced with the last set before Hinde Lake a solid Grade 2. Paddling to camp in the north end of Hinde we went through a narrow channel between two islands in the lake. To our surprise there was a three foot drop in a shallow rapid between islands.

## Bug City

For the next several days we were tortured by "perfect" weather. Sunny, hot and calm - a great combination down south but a real killer up here. The bugs eventually appeared in advertised numbers and the lack of wind kept them with us all day. We had to finally scout a couple of rapids below Hinde as the river was getting bigger. Camped on a 60-foot-high esker in Boyd Lake but we didn't eat until 11 p.m. because of the heat and bugs. The sun didn't go down until twenty to twelve. The weather next day was hotter (80F?) with even less wind. It was like being inside a 300 watt light bulb.

Since we were at the edge of the treeline there was no place to hide. The heat was so intense we had to eat lunch under the tarp. Even the bugs were packing it in. The back of your hands really take a beating as they are constantly exposed to the scorching sun. The zinc oxide we had along helped, especially the noses. The weather necessitated a change in our daily schedule. Instead of facing a hot, buggy campsite we'd paddle until 9 or 10 p.m. when the worst was over. This also meant not getting underway until late morning, though the morning sun on the tents made rising earlier than we wanted mandatory.



# RREN IP REPORT

Dr.

On July 1 we reached Barlow Lake and the heat finally played itself out with a big system moving in from the west. A lunch stop on a hill enabled us to see a white glimmer on the north horizon which meant only one thing - ice. The ice was floating in the north end of Barlow - right where the 1969 Lentz-Luste Dubawnt trip ran into it. Following their cue we, too, climbed the 1300 foot hill on the peninsula that juts out into Carey Lake. Just as they discovered, we also saw that Carey was 90 per cent covered in white.

Fortunately, we were due to exit the Dubawnt at Carey so we cut across the peninsula through a series of small lakes, about seven miles in a straight line. Doing the survey from the hilltop, Sean drew a map of the lakes, each of which we named after a different pet cat! The portaging was fairly straight forward with the most difficult part leaving Barlow Lake where there was a large fan of jagged boulders - tricky footing. We camped in the second lake (Grey Owl) and three of us set up while Geoffrey ran back to get his map that he'd left on top of the hill. The Mamaguishy weren't through yet, however. The next day on the final portage back into Carey - about a one-mile trot - they undid a lining rope that was fastened with a carabiner to the canoe. Nice work.

The Old Town Trippers were a wonderful surprise. We had all been used to Grumman's and their famous durability. The Trippers had that and much more - including a wonderfully slippery forgiveness over rocks and the fact they didn't conduct the cold was a very valuable asset as well.

Dinner was an in-tent event as we were joined by throngs of mosquitos who had relieved the previous throngs of blackflies. We'd all settled into a nightly ritual of a thermos of tea, a granola bar and a game of euchre in the tent. The bugs made it impossible to remain comfortably outside for long and Geoffrey's North Face Pole Sleeve Oval was a wonderful recreation centre.



**Editor Peake and friendly mosquitoes.**

A cold northern storm blew in and reminded us where we were. When we reached the end of the narrow SW channel out of Carey on July 4 and found the remains of a substantial trapper's operation - at least 20 years abandoned. This was where we started over to the Thelon watershed through a series of small lakes. Now that we were faced with some heavy portaging the weather became "perfect" again. We did the run to Gravel Hill Lake in one sweaty, hot, buggy day and were thoroughly exhausted when we camped on a totally barren island, that looked like a giant flying saucer, in the middle of Gravel Hill. Despite the heat there were large patches of ice in this lake.

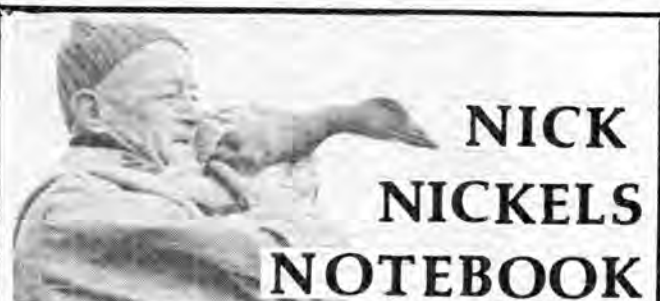
Next morning, Day 15, we finally took a rest day as huge thunderheads rumbled occasionally to the south of us and the smoke of a distant fire (from northern Alberta we later found out) blocked the sun in the early evening. Strange being affected by a forest fire when there are no trees around. In order to get to Sid Lake, the next one in the chain we had to paddle around the drifting ice turning a four mile jaunt into a 10 mile long headwind slog.

## **Solid Sid**

Sid Lake is one we will never forget, when we came around the corner we saw why - ice - as far as the eye could see. It was mostly black ice but it was still semi-solid - the worst kind. Sid Lake is about 15 miles long and seven wide with no islands or trees around it which contributed to its solid state. The north-west winds had blown everything to the eastern end and we had some hard work ahead of us. It was too dangerous to go out into the middle so we started dragging along the south shore. A very slow and tiring undertaking.

We dragged the remainder of that afternoon and all the next day for a total of only five miles. The saving grace was the weather - sun and rain combined to give us some beautiful rainbows. The water in Sid was a treat as well, clear and incredibly cold. The third day was easier dragging as the ice was broken and we dragged along the shore like canal horses. We reached the end of the ice about 5 p.m. on that third day and the waves crashing in through the shards of candle ice made an unforgettable sound.

**(Continued on Page seven)**



## NICK NICKELS NOTEBOOK

At the risk of being damned by a few cottagers, environmentalists and the Ministry of Overuse Resources, I must reveal a popular paddling district near my home that is being used by an increasing number of canoeists.

The North Kawartha canoe routes region, 40 miles north of Peterborough, Ontario, has been known to trappers and hunters for decades and, gradually since the mid-1960's, by post-war paddlers. Located in the rectangle of Cavendish, Anstruther, Harvey and Burleigh Townships, it received most prominence in the mid-1950's when uranium prospecting fever blanketed the area. It proved to be no mineral treasurehouse.

Serious wilderness canoeists explored the district 25 years ago and found it ideal for weekend and short-term camping. Bass and lake trout fishing is a titillation which sustains ice fishing through the winters. It is great snowmobiling country. Call it a gem for all seasons.

Of the three district waterways of interest to canoeists - the Mississauga River and Deer Bay Creek offer whitewater canoeing in freshest times while Eel's Creek is manageable during all open water. Campsites are adequate and clean, cottages few and environmental supervision on-going by the Loucks and Long Lakes cottagers association.

The district's charm and business potential was quickly spotted by Winnipegger's Joan and Dan Kuzma who learned wilderness living in central Manitoba. Dan was a Lake of the Woods fishing guide. Searching for a suitable eastern development spot in the mid-70's they purchased Long Lake Lodge, six cabins, camping site, ten canoes, ample parking and a small store. They keep canoe-use records for the Ministry and cottagers association which tell of four-fold growth by paddlers during the past decade.

The main Long Lake put-in is 15 miles north of Burleigh Falls on Highway 28, and one mile to the left of their landing. The maze of narrow lakes is also accessible from Highway 507, Goderham Road; from Lake Catchoma; Haultain (falls) on Eel's Creek. The hydro dam at the source of the Mississauga River starts a spring route to Buckhorn village. Eel's Creek empties into upper Stony Lake.

Joan Kuzma tends store and registers canoeists, collects put-in fees, dispenses empty garbage bags, folders, maps and, of course, food. Husband Dan maintains the campsites and lodge buildings and neat parking area but gets little time for fishing.

The Kuzma's are NO prophets without honour in their adopted wilderness in south-central Ontario, for they talk canoeists' language. They'll talk to you too: Long Lake Lodge, R.R. 1, Apsley, Ontario. Phone 705-656-4570.

From a next-door district canoe reports to a typical far-off expedition came in a letter in May from my faithful pen-pal Hermann Harbisch, West Germany. His group of seven kayakers have, by now, tripped the South Nahanni, N.W.T.

They flew from Norman Wells to South Redstone Lake to put-in and made the necessary five-mile portage-carry from air drop to the Great River. A papaplegic using two-canes and carrying a light pack, Hermann reckoned the pre-portaging would take two-to three days, including rest periods.

During the past decade he and his friends have kayaked the tough Canadian routes, including: the Nahanni once before, the Coppermine, Churchill and the Albany. I treasure his fine colour photos and detailed trip reports on the above.

He never complains about physical hardship and I value his courage and friendship highly. Sadly we've never met.

## MORE NEWS & NOTES (Continued)

**SUPERMUGS . . .** One of the most valuable items on our Journey Across the Barrenlands canoe trip was also one of the least expensive. A 12-ounce plastic thermos mug made by Alladdin of Knoxville, Tennessee. This company also makes the stainless Thermos bottle which, too, accompanied us. These mugs which I have only seen available in stores with the selling places logo on it, come with a snap-on lid with two holes for drinking. Such is the insulating value of these little wonders they will keep a cup of tea/coffee etc. hot for 20 minutes plus, in the coldest barrenlands canoeing weather. Also their cup-and-a-half size make them a good vessel for holding dinner on a cold night and ensuring you get your fair share when greedy hands are surging forth. The lid also doubles as a bug screen though some black-flies are still able to hit a hole in one. They are a big psychological boost to a beleaguered paddler who needs to sit down and relax with something hot and not allow the temperature or bugs to take away from that pleasure. BUY SOME - they are essential equipment.

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**PASSING PADDLERS . . .** On our 1,000 mile trip this summer we saw few other paddlers on our route. The first group we met were actually on the VIA train from The Pas, Manitoba to Lynn Lake. Four young Danes in their early twenties were embarking on their first Canadian canoe trip - and only their second in total! Their nine-week journey was to do the entire Thlewiaza River (see CHE 41) and be picked up at the mouth on Aug. 24 from Churchill. The next group we saw paddled into our camp along the Upper Thelon on July 10. Eberhard Eckstein and friend are from West Germany and paddled down the entire Thelon from Lynx Lake to Baker in five weeks. The third group we saw was a real shocker - we passed them going down the Back River as they were COMING UP! Four American trippers, Donna Berglund, Patrick Leonard, Priscilla McClung and John Ochi had paddled the entire Back River to tidewater and were now heading back up to Baker Lake by September 1 via Amer Lake or the Meadowbank River. We'll have more on these three interesting groups in upcoming issues.

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**BOOK NEWS . . .** A couple of interesting books on the horizon which should be of interest to CHE readers. **NASTAWGAN: The Canadian North by Canoe and Snowshoe** is due out in November from Betelgeuse Books in Toronto. The book is a collection of essays and stories by familiar names like George Luste and C.E.S. Franks on various aspects of Canadian northern travel. Edited by Bruce Hodgins and Margaret Hobbs the book will sell for \$29.95 and has a forward by Eric Morse. Speaking of Mr. Morse, the Dean of Canadian Canoeists is presently working on his memoirs with a working title of **Freshwater Saga: Memoirs of a Lifetime of Wilderness Canoeing**. CHE-MUN will keep you advised on the progress of what promises to be an interesting work. For those of you who wish to get your hands on some vintage literature **HIGH LATITUDE** may be of interest. They specialize in "books and ephemera relating to the polar regions, their exploration, people and natural history." This catalog has a good share of big ticket items including a First Edition of Samuel Hearne's original published journal for a mere \$2250 (US) and much more for much less. For more info contact **Bob Finch Books, P.O. Box 11254, Bainbridge Island, Washington, U.S.A. 98110. (204) 842-0202.**

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**BURNSIDE BATTLES? . . .** It sounds like the battle for sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic wasn't only concerned with the Northwest Passage and the U.S. Coast Guard ship Polar Sea. A group of 30 Canadian Army canoeists or more appropriately, rafters, floated down the Burnside River to Bathurst Inlet on 30-foot rafts with 35 h.p. engines on the back. They were supposed to acknowledge a Canadian presence. It must have made for a crowded summer on the usually sparsely travelled river. Former Prime Minister John Turner did the river, the second time for him, also on the Burnside were a group of 10 U.S. paddlers including CHE subscriber Jack Wadsworth and Bob Greenhill and wives, another group on the river was a Black Feather outfitters group, and they were all within a week of each other. Ah, wilderness!

(Continued on Page eight)



## THELON RISING

The sandy banks of the Upper Thelon River make for some beautiful campsites. With high water having passed through there was plenty of driftwood available. This two-level campsite offered a windy ridge which meant more relief from the bugs

(Continued from page five.)

Time was starting to become a worry as we were scheduled to meet our food drop and two new paddlers, Peter Brewster and Bill King, in five days and 150 miles away! We crossed the height-of-land into the Thelon system and battled the wind up Mantic Lake and into Jim Lake where we joined up with the Thelon the next day. We got a break getting into Jim. The four mile long creek from Mantic is usually a drag but with our high water we had about 2 inches of water to spare.

Getting on that big river was like a tired hitchhiker catching a ride in a Ferrari. After all the slogging through ice and portaging it was a great feeling to see the bottom of the river speed by. Even when we took a break we made at least half a mile - sheer luxury. The water was high but not in flood. The river sometimes give you a feeling you are paddling in a drainage ditch as the sand and gravel river banks are often high above your head making sightseeing difficult.

### Thelon Highway

Cruising down the rapid-less Upper Thelon we saw no caribou but several moose. This was a surprise as none of us had heard any mention of moose up here. One treat was a good sighting of a grizzly when we were 50 yards from shore. The beautiful golden coloured male finally caught our scent and after standing up to get a better look took off at top speed.

We were surprised the evening of July 11 when two kayaks paddled into camp all the way from West Germany. The two West German paddlers had actually started from Whitefish Lake, the Thelon headwaters, and were on their way to Baker Lake. We played leapfrog on the river for a couple of days with the Germans and finally left them.

Once past Eyeberry Lake the Thelon develops some whitewater character with a large mile-long rapid just north of that lake. The weather continued warm and very buggy but good mileage kept spirits up.

The real whitewater highlight is the Thelon Canyon an impressive piece of water. There is a portage around the whole thing on the right but we chose to go left and portage around the first drop and line and run the rest. The flat ledges of limestone made for good footing when lining. I learned an almost costly lesson - when lining the Tripper keep that stern in really tight. I let it get out a bit and that combined with Peter Scott's pull on the bow the canoe felt as though it had been attached to a passing freight train.

### Heartstopper

I felt sick when I had to let go of the line and watch the boat slowly roll over in the huge curling waves. Quick action by Sean and Geoffrey saved the day when they grabbed the trailing line and cinched it around a rock and the boat came in about 25 yards downstream. I had done the full spray cover up when lining and that prevented it from filling up with water. We were lucky!

The toughest part lay ahead at the end of the canyon the walls narrow and the cliff plunges straight into the foaming river. Sixty foot cliff walls just barely allow an unloaded climber to scramble up where we tried to scout the drop. We had to run because it was too deep to line so despite the fact we could see everything but the small area at the base of the cliff we shot it. It's about a 3-4 foot drop that pulls to the left over a

rock close to the cliff face. The Old Town's did their job perfectly and it was so exciting we even forgot about the clouds of blackflies in our faces, for a few seconds.

The river makes an immediate sharp bend to the west and we eyeballed the next rapids. Lumpy but fairly flat. However we had been looking at the canyon for so long we forgot what flat was. The waves were 5-6 feet and very sharp in the shallow river. The spray cover turned an open boat swamping into a comfortable run - but very exciting. Another roller coaster set awaited before the Hanbury confluence but first we were treated to a welcome by two peregrine falcons who'd nested in the rugged cliffs near the confluence. The setting sun bathed us in a glow of relief and exhaustion after a quite tiring day.

We picked a spot about four miles past the Hanbury confluence where a plane could land and set up camp. We had been carrying a SBX-11 radio with us - on loan from La Ronge Aviation. We tried it several times during the trip with no success but finally got it to work the morning we were expecting our drop. We found out that our group would be delayed a day because their canoe was held up in cargo getting to Yellowknife. We were 300 miles east of Yellowknife but the only station we could raise was Nueltin Narrows Lodge - about the same distance the other way!

### Rendezvous

They relayed our message through La Ronge's base in Lynn Lake who contacted Yellowknife. They also passed along our vital message to bring in chocolate bars. As it turned out it was lucky their plane was delayed. The day they were due a calm sunny morning was abruptly shattered by a vicious blast of north wind signalling a ten hour barrage of rain, cold and wind.

We retreated to Geoffrey's spacious Chateau North Face and gingerly cooked up the remainder of our edible food - the last remnants of cheese and Nature Burger and popcorn with dried spaghetti sauce mix (no margarine left). There was still piles of oatmeal but we didn't consider that edible - at least not yet.

Day 25, July 17 and our plane arrived bearing an amazing amount of food, mail from home and chocolate bars brought by Peter Brewster and Bill King. We changed paddling partners to better acclimatize the two white, squeaky-clean canoeists. We set off down the Thelon next morning loaded past the gunwales with food. Too much, but better than the other extreme.

That day's big highlight was the crossing of about 50 caribou in front of our canoes about 10 miles upstream from Hornby Point. Their grunting and complaining was clearly heard as they swam across and bolted off as soon as they hit solid ground. This herd flushed a moose who was hiding in the brush on the far side. That's the first time I'd ever seen the two ungulates together.

The caribou's hide at this time of year is pretty tattered and shaggy, a lot different from the ones we would see later in the trip. Two sturdy rock cairns had been erected at the narrows in this area and these marked the spot of greatest concentration of caribou crossings. We camped at the second cairn and were wind and rainbound there the next day and saw and listened to several herds go through.

(End of Part One. Part Two will appear in the next issue of CHE-MUN and will feature the Morse and Back River descents.)

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# SOMEWHERE . . .



. . . over this rainbow lies open water. That's the pot of gold that Peter Scott, with his Old Town Tripper in tow, is looking

for. This picture was taken on July 6 in Sid Lake between the Thelon and Dubawnt Rivers.

## NEWS & NOTES cont'd.

**OPERATION RALEIGH . . .** A five-year, world-wide project for young people between 17 and 24 years began last summer in the jungles of Central America. The program which combines features of the Peace Corps and Outward Bound is the pet project of Prince Charles who is the Patron of Operation Raleigh, named after Britain's famous soldier of Elizabethan times, Sir Walter Raleigh. The Canadian segment of Op Raleigh, which combines outdoor activity with community service, will be represented by a two-month Arctic canoe trip. Plans are still being formed as the trip is not scheduled until the final year of the program - 1988. David Pelly, a name familiar to CHE readers and northern canoeists alike, is one of the organizers and we hope to hear more in the near future.

...

**SEEMS LIKE OLD TOWN TIMES . . .** It looked like a catalog picture from the Old Town Canoe Company - and maybe it will be! On the shores of the Back River a half-mile above the Arctic Circle in beautiful bug-filled sunshine five Old Town canoes sat on the shore as the only two (to our knowledge) groups to canoe the lower Back this year compared notes. Old Town had given the U.S. group of seasoned pros two new Discovery (polyethylene) canoes to try out for this trip. We had the incomparable Trippers.

...

**GREAT SHAKES . . .** The Great Lakes Pulp and Paper Company has its eyes on the much-travelled Missinaibi River in Northern Ontario. The river is a canoeists favorite and is supposedly under the protection of being a Provincial Park Reserve. The idea is to dam Missinaibi Lake in order to increase the flow of the Michipicoten River which flows into Lake Superior. They say it will cut nine per cent of the outflow into the Missinaibi River and increase their power input three per cent. Also in the cards for Great Lakes is the future damming of the Magpie River. CHE-MUN will follow this story and keep you updated.

### CHE-MUN OUTFIT 43

PART TWO OF JOURNEY ACROSS THE BARRENLANDS CANOE TRIP. INCLUDING HORNBY'S CABIN AND THE CLIMB FROM THE THELON TO THE MORSE RIVER. ALSO THE INFAMOUS BACK RIVER WHICH PROVIDED THE SURPRISE OF THE TRIP

J.A.T.B. EQUIPMENT EVALUATION — WHAT WORKED BEST FOR US — AND WHAT DIDN'T

WILL WE FINALLY HEAR FROM BILL MASON? HIS UNIVERSITY RIVER REPORT IS TURNING INTO A GRADUATE THESIS.

## CHE-MUN

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