

Obituary - Ed Ecclestone

It is with much sadness that we have to announce the death of Ed Ecclestone last week.

Ed's funeral will be held on Wednesday 29th April at 10.30am at:

Breakspear Crematorium

Breakspear Rd, Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 7SJ

I first knew Ed back in the 1970s when he was involved with the Harrow & Wealdstone Venture Scout group and I was a member of a Ranger Guide Unit that took part in many activities together. There was at this time a very strong group who took up canoeing, Ed was particularly involved in the canoeing and was probably one of the most influential people in me taking up canoeing way back then.

Ed supported people. He didn't participate himself. Back in those days he was the mainstay behind supporting and training many of the boys taking part in the Devizes to Westminster canoe race and taking groups to the Welsh Harp Youth Sailing Base. He would also be found at most of the local slaloms supporting and helping any individual. He was a man of few words but his dry sense of humour will always be remembered.

As time went by many of the core group grew up and moved on, a number marrying and having families that also took up canoeing. Some took over the role of Ed in Harrow &

Wealdstone, coaching and running the canoeing section. Ed became more and more involved with slalom canoeing at GB level. In the days before World Class he was a huge supporter and spent most of his holidays travelling with the senior team as Team Manager. He continued with this support for many years on a voluntary basis with Team GB including the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. About this time he introduced the Team day sheet, a much appreciated initiative and a real boost to group arrangements. He'd sneak round the Team hotel near midnight having painstakingly typed with two fingers and printed for each team person a personal mail-merged day sheet. In 1983 it was Ed who took on the huge responsibility of a sick Roger Manwaring at Merano World Championships. This escalated into a case of appendicitis and he was driving into Austria before he finally was successful in gaining appropriate treatment. Get the job done and do it well could have been his motto.

Ed loved producing the Champagne to go with the medals. It would usually be duty free he'd buy on channel ferries; he may have even been teetotal himself. If there ever was a shortage of something he'd go out and get it, on occasion simply lending his new purchase long term to the Team – we still have his trailer and one of his radios! Paddlers hugely appreciated him, especially when he accepted a challenge on the penalty front where his best cards were 'benefit of the doubt', knowledge of ICF Rules and ability to accept decisions against without fuss.

He was right on the technology front wave of using wi-fi. Ed could be relied upon, one consistency being that he'd work from, 'happy paddlers make better racers'. At Augsburg he'd station himself on the edge of the café terrace with his laptop and deliver instant results, a service that kept Team GB ahead of the rest on information flow. From 1993, at the end of each season, he produced an International results manual, a much-sought-after volume amongst other teams. Over later years this became a CD carefully put together. The manuals remain the Team GBR historical record for those earlier years, as do the CD files up to 2008.

He was affectionately known as Big Ed because his presence amongst International Officials was always felt and respected worldwide.

In more recent years Ed has regularly been seen sitting on river banks Section Judging or as a member of the Jury. He had volunteered to help with the organisation of the European Championships at HPP in May and the class C world ranking event in Llangollen in October.

Ed has also been responsible for the setting up and printing of the Slalom Year book for many years. He will be sorely missed in the world of Slalom both in the UK and abroad. The kick he got was working with others to make canoe slalom happen at its best for the athletes. He was



Picture by Andy Maddock

very, very proud to be in a position to do this, to keep racing fair and square and above all to be a working member of the Great Britain Canoe Slalom Team.

Ed leaves behind a brother Steve to whom we send our heartfelt sympathy.

Anne Hounslow & John Macleod