

Title: *Rivers of Britain*

Subtitle: Estuaries, Tideways, Havens, Lochs, Firths and Kyles

Author: Stuart Fisher

Published: 2012

Publisher: Adlard Coles Nautical UK

Website: www.adlardcoles.com

Contents: 304 pp, maps, colour photos

Cover: softcover

Size: 297 x 210 mm (A4 size)

ISBN: 978-1-4081-4656-9

Review: Paul Caffyn

Stuart Fisher, editor of the British magazine *Canoeist* for over 20 years, always included guides to sections of the British coast in the monthly magazine, or guides to rivers and canals of Britain. Sixty two of those coastal guides, based on what Stuart maintained was the slowest ever kayak circumnavigation of Britain, were compiled into a 357 page book in 2006, titled *Inshore Britain* which was reviewed in *KASK* newsletter No. 124, p.15.

Now in 2012, *Rivers of Britain* moves into the inland tidal rivers of England, Scotland and Wales, the tidal rivers which finally morph into estuaries, tideways, havens, sea lochs, firths and kyles. The superb A4 size as used in *Inshore Britain* is followed, with 70 separate 'river' sections, working in a clockwise direction around Britain from Lands End. The upstream end of each section is where tidal action ceases.

Each section is lavishly illustrated with a combination of full page width, or single column width colour photos, along with well chosen thumbnail colour photos of book covers, stamps and beer bottle labels, and rounded off with a thumbnail location map and relevant 1:200,000 section maps. The inclusion of books covers, such as Naomi James *At One With The Sea*, Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, Robin Lloyd-Jones's *Argonauts of the Western Isles*, Dylan Thomas's *Under Millwood*, adds depth to the book, linking these classic read long ago with where were set or written. Inclusion of relevant stamps also is a lovely touch, especially as out here in the Antiodes we see only stamps with the Queen's head, not the mixture of scenic and historical stamps seen in the book.

The text is set in a very readable double column format, and place names when first mentioned are in bold, which is a nice touch. A relevant poetry verse introduces most chapter:

There after supper lit by lantern light
Warm in the cabin I could lie secure
The lap lap of the weedy Bure,
A whispering and watery Norfolk sound
Telling of the moonlit reads all around.

The text is not mere dry geographical descriptions of tidal rivers, but flows along nicely along with a marvellous mix of historical snippets, weather extremes, and how times have changed with the small and big ports.

The end of each section has a thin shaded column, with lists of: 1:50,000 map sheets, Admiralty charts, tidal constraints, the sea area (for forecasts) and rescue services. A full three page index completes the book.

I can't see the current breed of sea kayaker endeavouring to race around Britain in record time taking time to read about the next section of tidal waters and its history, but for Kiwis thinking about either a 'leisurely' paddle around Britain or a tiki tour by vehicle, this title is recommended reading.

