

Steve Cartwright

HEY DID YOU SEE THEM CANOEING ?

Down the Derwent
We went
Me and my mate Paul
Flying madly in the wake of what the proper lot
might say was just a weedy bit of current
But what us ageing blooming hippies thought
must be a crashing, raging torrent
Terrific
Brilliant
Well perhaps for half a minute
Twisting down through Derby
Like a frenzied serpent
When suddenly
And with the river widening
Out we popped in Derby's city centre
Steps all ranging down
Like in some Grecian Amphi-theatre
Crowds of people all anticipating
And us two nutters in the bobcat
Looking from a distance, like for all the world
We knew what we were doing
Cut off jeans and lycra trousers
Wet suits, dry bags, posh arse paddles dipping
Cutting slicing

Quite fantastic
Olympians, our bronzed and slender bodies
Synchronised, into this moment,
rippling, bulging,
Well
Until we get in close that is
And folk can see what's really happening
Coils of plastic rope
All dangling in the water dragging
Bits of orange plastic flapping
Huffing, puffing
Bumping into staging
Wobbling
Stranded in the shallows on the bottom
Grab the mooring
Hoisting our fat arses out onto the paving
Beached like whales
Then pulling half a dozen plastic bags
Out from the rigging
Frantic for the sandwich
Very entertaining
Not really what our audience expected
Sent them all home chuckling
Hey did you see them canoeing?