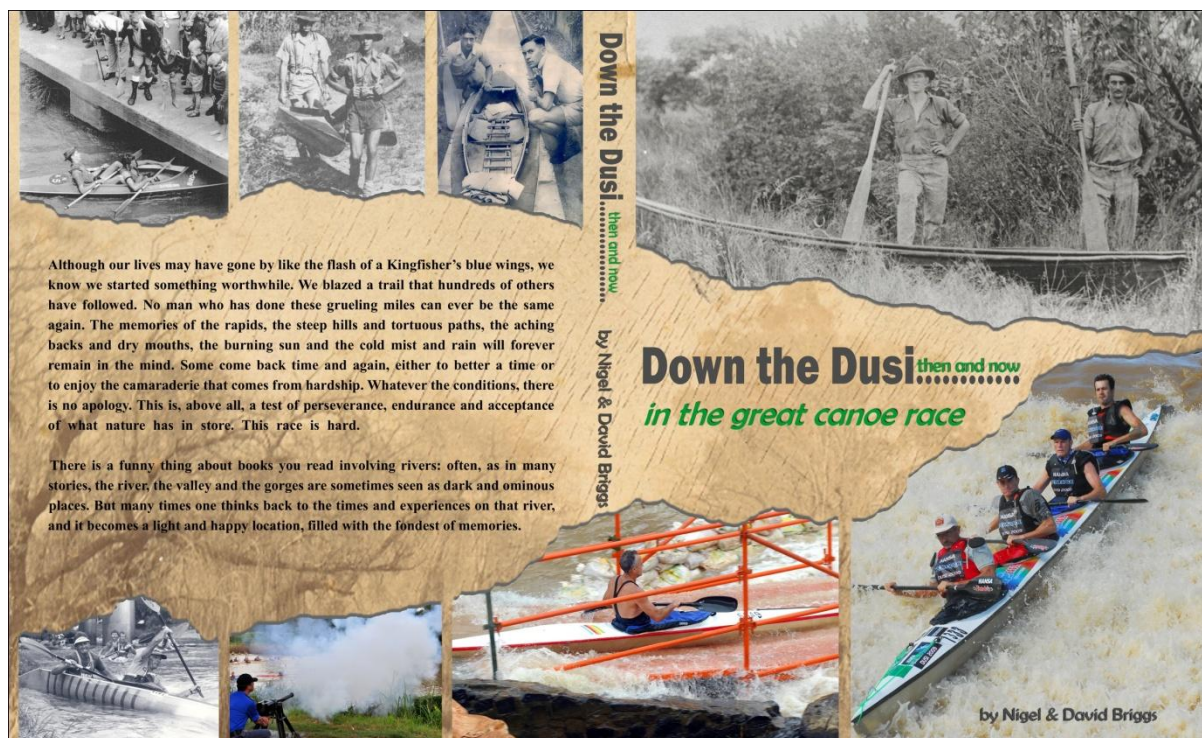


Down the Dusi in the great canoe race-then and now. Available through www.pagesofdiversity.com



“Down the Dusi” by Nigel and David Briggs is an amazing collection of anecdotes, maps, diagrams and photographs never before published, and above all and most importantly, memories of little-known facts and figures pertaining to the subtle changes in the race that have taken place ever since Ian Player completed that historical and inaugural exploratory voyage of discovery in 1950.

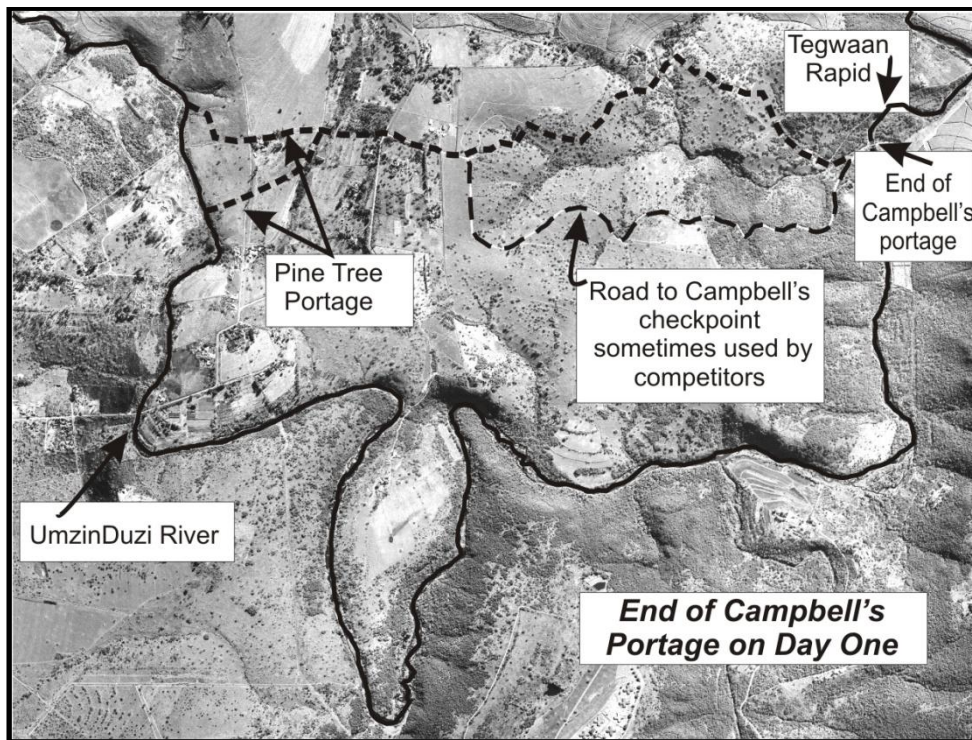
What lies between the covers of this book is not only a collection of stories from the memory banks of many of the great paddlers who have carved their names into the history of the race, but also valuable information as to how the race has changed from what was once essentially an amateur challenge between man and nature, into a multi-category professional event, demanding hi-tech kayaks and equipment as well as a supreme level of fitness that can only be obtained from optimum preparation over the months leading up to it.

The authors have meticulously described the route down the Dusi from start to finish, as it was in the beginning before the construction of the great Inanda Dam, and as it is today, fraught with man-made obstructions, the ever-increasing volume of water hyacinth and the legendary crocodiles!

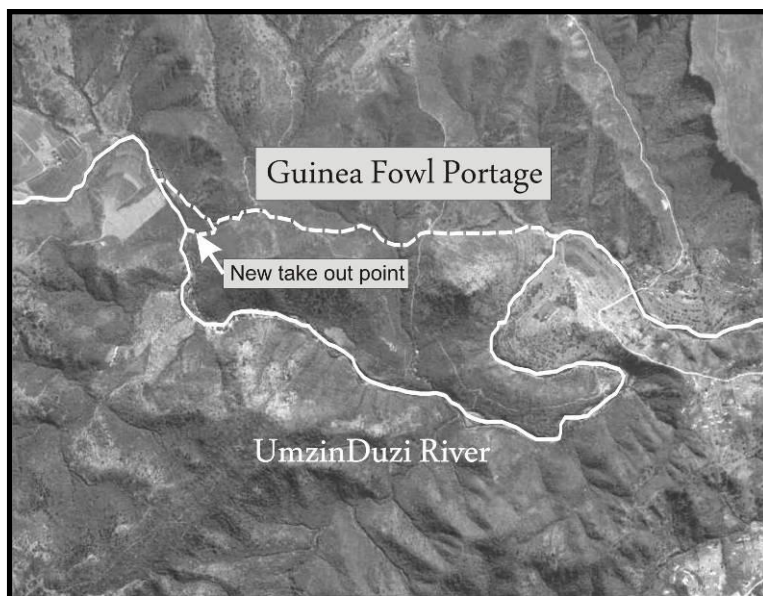
This is a book that will demand a place on the bookshelf of all paddlers who have braved the descent in dry years and wet, and have survived to tell the tale.

Tommy Ballantyne Sports Journalist (covering the Dusi Race since 1985)

Independent Newspapers



Map 9: End of Sewage Farm paddle and start of “Pine Tree” take out for the walk up to the second half of Campbell’s Portage. Note the long river loop above, which is avoided by this route.



After the put in at the end of Campbell’s, there is a short distance (running or by canoe) down to “Hole In The Wall” Portage that some individuals still use, followed by a slightly longer paddle down to Guinea Fowl take out. Some people still opt to canoe around this section, especially the late Aidan De Gersigny, who was well known for this endeavour.

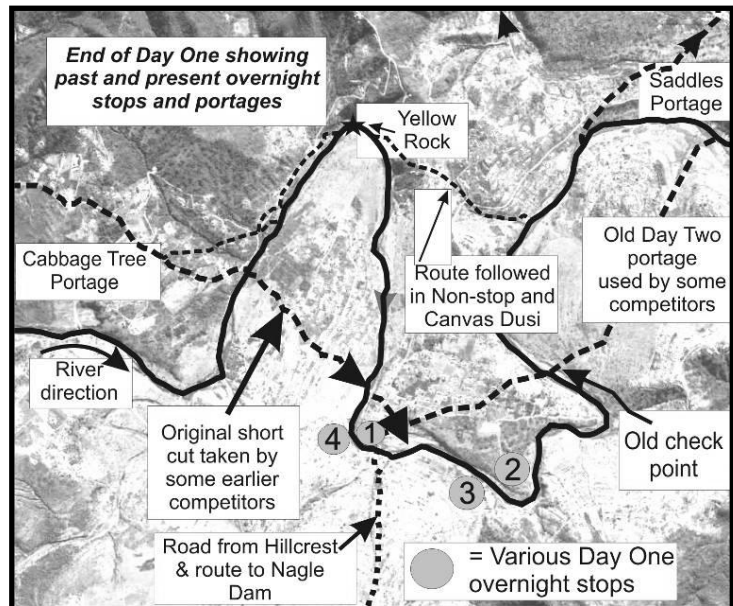
Map 10: Guinea Fowl Portage.

From the end of Guinea Fowl it's usually quite straight-forward paddling through the Maze and onto Mission Rapid, which is capable of producing interesting viewing as boats sometimes become quite entangled (*right*). Most competitors still opt for Finger Neck walk to stretch their legs while some canoe around Cabbage Tree Portage, which is easy and pleasant if the water level is sufficient.



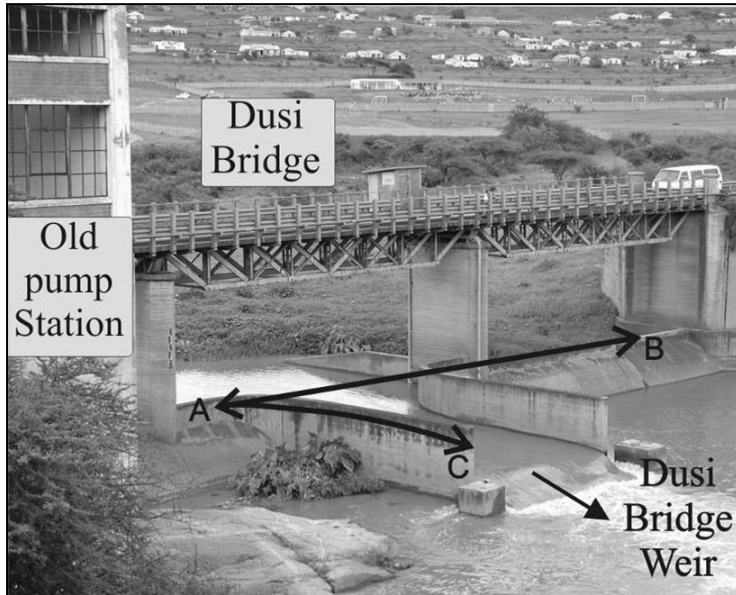
Towards the end of Day One, participants used to be able to cross the UmzinDuzi if they so desired, directly after Cabbage Tree put in, and continue over the spur, re-entering towards Dusi Bridge and the first overnight campsite above the road bridge on river left (*refer label 1 on Map 11*) opposite the present-day one. In 1970 another compulsory checkpoint was created at Yellow Rock, forcing paddlers to stay in the river completing the horseshoe stage. The campsite was then relocated to a section below Dusi Bridge on river left (*label 2 on Map 11*) and then was positioned back at its original site but nearer the road. Politics then necessitated a once off move downstream on river right (*label 3 on Map 11*) and then across to its previous site on river left again. In 1999 this overnight camp was moved back above Dusi Bridge Weir on river right, where we find it today (*label 4, Map 11*). Compulsory checkpoints were introduced in the late 1960s at Campbell's Portage and the Confluence on Day One and Two respectively, and also at Khumalo's Causeway on Day Three.

Map 11: Past and present campsite locations.



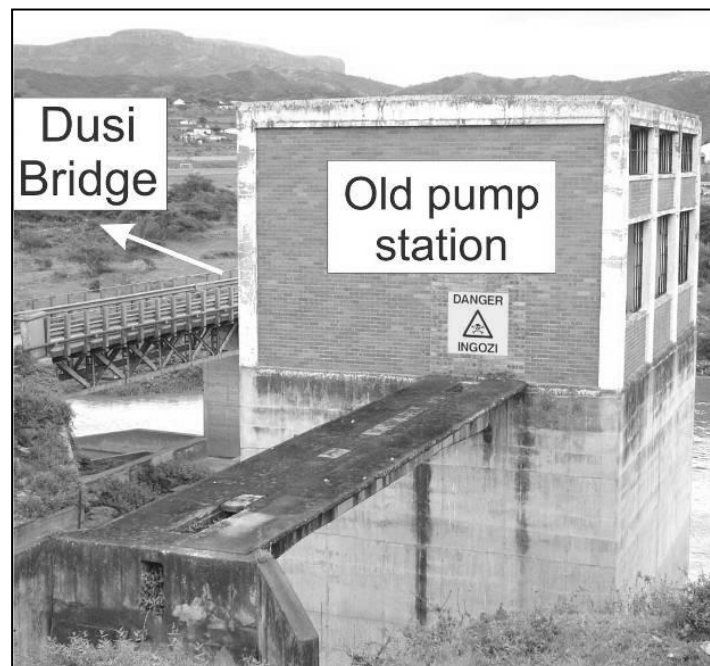
Dusi Bridge Weir and Pump Scheme were built in 1959 beneath this structure, crossing the UmzinDuzi on the road to Nagle Dam. They were constructed to supply water to the Assmang plant at Camperdown (that large processing factory, still found on the left of the road as one turns right at the Caltex garage at Cato Ridge into Eddie Hagan Drive to make one's way towards Dusi Bridge). This weir was an optional portage and, when paddled, had a very steep drop (significantly lower nowadays) which if not angled correctly resulted in one's

canoe diving considerably. In 1993 this obstacle was made a compulsory take out after John Edmonds, while leading the race with his brother Andrew, lost their six-minute lead at this weir and nearly drowned. Now the only excitement is the slipping, sliding and probable cursing of the back markers in the knee-deep mud, left by those fleet of foot who went over this barrier first.



Above and left: The old Pump Station and Dusi Bridge just below the present Day One campsite, showing the configuration of the original weir as 'A' to 'B'.

Spare a thought for the old iron bridge, bought from the South African Railways for £600 (pounds) in the halcyon pre-war years of the 1930s. It was transported from its original site in Aliwal North and was erected by the Durban City Engineers Department on its present concrete piers and abutments.



Right: Rick Whitton and Pete Zietsman on Dusi Bridge Weir during a high water year before the slot was cut into the concrete wall (below).



Here the weir consisted of one long barrier from 'A' to 'B' (previous page).

This created a very nasty pull-back that resulted in a paddler passing away while on a recreational outing one year during the 1970s when a K2 was dragged into the backwash.

Right: The remnants of Nigel Briggs and Frank Sol on this same obstacle at elevated levels.



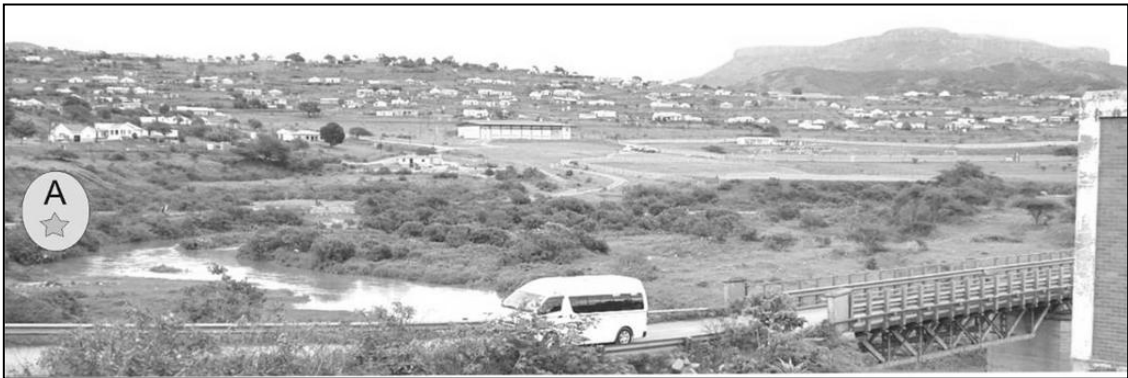
Right: A number of years later a section was removed from this wall (clearly visible). Photo right shows John Murray and partner negotiating this weir at lower water flows.



Nowadays, as seen on the previous page, the walls have been extended forward from 'A' to 'C' and have been lowered considerably.



*Above: Dusi Bridge as it appeared in the 1950s, with very little habitation.
The pump station had not yet been constructed.*



*Above and below: Dusi Bridge as it is today. Point 'A' on all three photographs indicates
the same corresponding position. The corner of the pump station can be seen
immediately below the bridge on the middle photo.*

