

Paignton Canoe Club Member

Here at last is the February newsletter! Jeremy is off exploring exotic places this month, and he has left the newsletter with me.

This month sees a wide selection of different events advertised, from surfing to slalom; why not go and watch or try a new element to test your paddling skills – check the Upcoming Events section for details.

I am always amazed at the range of different trips available, and this month's features show just what is possible. Whether you are looking for a relaxing estuary trip, a white-water adrenaline-rush, a coastal journey or something further afield – paddling has so much to offer! Our club members are involved in loads of adventures. If you want to share your experience, or invite people to come along on a future trip (subject to conditions) you can publish the details here.

Email newsletter@paigntoncanoeclub.org.uk

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this month's newsletter. There are several attachments as well as the main content – please check out the extras!

Happy Paddling!

Sam (Welfare Officer and deputy editor)

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From The Chairman

Winter is still here, and as I type, there's snow around & cold Northerly winds. Despite the weather a recent paddle on the Lower Dart had a huge range of skills & experiences. Of course there were lots of smiles at the end. Keep your eyes open on the forum & Facebook for more river trips as they get organized. If there's little water in the rivers, there's always the surf, coast, estuaries & canals. Want some inspiration? Attached is a write up from a number of years ago that never got published as an email. See Jo and Colin's Wye trip.

This winter has seen a number of coaches & course providers look for paddlers to join as members of groups being led by aspiring river leaders. This has allowed a number of our paddlers to be led safely down new rivers from the wonderful Walkham to the mighty East Lyn!

During the cold weather the trips on the river have thrown up some questions about gear and keeping warm, especially feet! It isn't about staying warm all the time; if

your feet are in freezing cold water, then they will get cold. It's more about how quickly your feet warm up & stay warm once you are back in your boat. As with most outdoor gear, layers are the answer. Under dry trousers I wear both a thin thermal layer and a cheap fleece layer from the likes of Matalan or Primark etc. The same goes for my feet; thermal socks made by Immersion Research are very good, as are Reed Chillcheater socks, but any cheap thermal socks will do, worn under some wetsuit socks.

Useful links: www.chillcheater.com

Try Trago for some wetsuit socks – hopefully they will fit into your wetsuit boots! Check before leaving for the river or sea. Hope this helps.

There are some future plans with more details to follow.

We have a social evening planned: Skittles at the Manor Inn in Preston. This should be a great evening, based on previous skittles events.

Another event of note is the Paddlers Party at the River Dart Country Park on March 14th. While it will probably be more of interest to white water paddlers, this event is growing ever year with coaching, river leading & talks throughout the day. The raffle is definitely worth entering & a credit to Richard O'Brien's organisation skills.

We are always looking for ideas for summer trips & events. There's a thread on the forum if you fancy adding ideas.

<http://www.paigntoncanoeclub.org.uk/members/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=1554>

Latest News and Recent Events

First Time Kayaking on White-water – Jo Lihou

On a freezing cold Saturday in January, an extremely varied group of paddlers arrived in the layby near Austin's Bridge. Some were seasoned white water paddlers who had been doing it for years and some had never been on the river in a kayak before. What a bunch!

Personally this was my first time on the river in a kayak and I was feeling slightly nervous. Having done it several times in a canoe, I had this idea that it would be more difficult in a kayak despite everybody telling me otherwise.

After shuttling cars we eventually split into 3 smaller groups: one of more advanced paddlers who were looking at 3* skills, one for those who had not been for a while and required a refresher and us novices needing lots of tips.

We spent a lot of time at Austin's Bridge, practicing edging, breaking out and ferry gliding, before moving on down the river.

Within about fifteen minutes of practicing Rob P and Nige P had put me right at ease and I was starting to even enjoy myself (heaven forbid!)

We stayed well within sight of the other two groups which meant when we found a wave worthy of a play, I got to watch the others gracefully surfing. I somehow plucked up the courage to give it a go... It was great fun, and with some clear instructions and tips from Dave and Sam, I managed to sit on top of the wave for what felt like an age! So much so I went back and did it again!

We stopped for lunch but not for long as the wind was biting and the sheep scarily curious.

We continued on down the river and I managed to conquer another wave, make eddies and ferry glides along the way (including a few times backwards with much coaxing from Rob P)

Safely arriving at Staverton, I realised I was still dry! I had managed my first river trip without swimming! I was so chuffed!

So many thanks to all for a great day full of varied experience, sunshine and developing skills.

Looking forward to the next time!

Lower Walkham Adventures – Sam Kite

A late request for paddlers to join a 4 star assessment group leading on the River Walkham was a great opportunity for me and Dave Lucas to explore a new river last month, with paddlers from Gene 17. The Lower Walkham is Grade 2-3 and has good parking at Horrabridge. A short walk leads to a grassy put-in, into a narrow, rocky flow through beautiful woodland. There are fast-flowing twists and turns, leading to an exciting slot-drop, continuing on to long rocky rapids. Eventually the river joins the Tavy Confluence and the scenery changes dramatically: the banks open out to form wide, bouncy wave trains; there is a great play wave, and an easy exit up the bank to the cars. If we don't manage to fit a trip in before the end of the season, let's have a club trip in the autumn!

A few safety cover reminders – Jon Roberts

Just recently, after a period of heavy rain, I had the luxury of a choice of paddle destinations and so joined 3 friends and together we headed out somewhere other than the Dart for our Saturday fun. Looking back on it later that evening, we all agreed it was a great day's paddling and that some good lessons had been learned. I thought I'd share my lessons with you.

At one point during the day, we set up safety cover for a rapid that consisted of two drops about 10 metres apart followed by a flowing section of around 20 metres leading to a slot / drop, below which was a small pool and then another drop. Beyond that there were no further drops but the water did run away downhill pretty quickly.

It's my role to cover the slot and so I'm stood alongside it so I can see upstream and am also in position to cover the pool with my throw-line, should anything occur through the drop.

A paddler has a problem at the second drop, some 20 metres above me. They catch a rock on the lead in and are flipped into a stopper that pushes them against a rock making it difficult to roll and so, inevitably, they take a swim.

My reaction is to get to them before they get to the slot to save them the unpleasant swim through it, which I do. I'm moving uphill and they are floating downstream fairly quickly, so when we meet and I get my line to them they are only about 5 metres or

so above the slot. I don't have time to get my line tight and them to shore before the slot and so have no option but to let some slack on the line to allow them to flow through it.

Once they are in the pool below it, I now have to quickly gather the line back. As I've moved above the slot I'm no longer in the best position to swing them to the bank. Also, by the time the line is tight again, they are at the next drop. There is no more slack on the line and the force of the water means they have to let go and are again free in a flow fast enough to make self-rescue unlikely, at least not for a while.

I re-gather the line as quickly as possible and run down the bank to catch them but, by the time I do, I realise that I have not left the end of the line readily available, which costs me valuable seconds to sort and when I throw the line it snags and falls just short. Fortunately another one of our group has got alongside by now and their line hits the target, and all's well that ends well.

So what should I have done? I'm sure many of you will have a list of suggestions, but this is my own view:

1. I should have held position where I knew I could perform the rescue, even though that meant allowing the swimmer to come through the slot. My eagerness to shorten their swim resulted in me lengthening it considerably.
2. While setting up safety, I should have considered the option of performing a rescue above the slot and properly evaluated the option. It may have been possible but I would have had to shorten my throw-line first by unravelling 10 metres or so of it so that I only had the length needed in the bag. That way, once I hit the swimmer I could have immediately performed the rescue. As it happens, I don't think there was ever enough room for me to perform the rescue above the slot. Had I assessed that and ruled it out earlier, I would have stayed in position.
3. I didn't recoil my line using the method we're all taught on our WWSR course; a basic schoolboy error that meant my second attempt at a rescue also failed.

I realise these aren't lessons for most of us; they are just reminders of what we *should* already know. I'm sharing it because I also knew all this stuff but still didn't put it into practice.

The Dart is a great river and we are very lucky to have it on our doorstep. However, I think paddling the same river so much does risk us becoming a little complacent so I figured a gentle reminder can't hurt, can it?

So be safe out there and all that's left for me is to formally apologise to a fellow paddler, a friend who had a more unpleasant swim that was necessary: Sorry. I promise I'll do better next time.

Upcoming Events and Trips

Pool Organisation

The next Beginners and Improvers Course course is just about to start, so the far end third of the pool will be roped off for the next 8 weeks. In addition the students will have first pick of the boats on the trailer. Please be both patient and encouraging to them and the coaches!

Thanks - Tim

Canoeing

Fancy something to go & see? Gary Peverill from Inspiring Adventure is talking about his Knoydart adventure on **Thursday 26th Feb** at AS Watersports at 6.30 and completely free of charge!. The challenge was to get from Mallaigin Knoydart to Fort William using the sea, lochs, mountains, roads, and rivers and only in five days. Knoydart is pretty much the last wilderness in the Up with no roads, few people & only the occasional ferry. Not just an evening of interesting information and pictures about the trip but also top tips and handy hints for any paddling expedition.

Dulverton Slalom 7-8 March

Bideford Canoe club invites you to join them for their first Dulverton Division 4 and Open Canoe Slalom, held in the beautiful Exmoor National Park on the River Barle. This is a fun Class 2 river, making it the perfect event for both Juniors and Seniors new to slalom or those wanting to test their slalom skills.

Venue: River Barle, Dulverton, Somerset. (O.S.Map OL9, Grid Ref. SS9128, Satnav: TA22 9HJ)

There hasn't been any slalom competition down this way for a number of years. The nearest is an annual event at Frome. So it is great to see a new event & one local enough for us to get to easily. It's all about speed & accuracy, race downstream, through the green poles & back up through the red poles, simple... or is it?

Whitewater skills required! A quick post on Facebook shows enough interest for at least a car full.

See additional PDF

Paddlers' Party – River Dart Country Park, 14th March

This social and fundraising event is in aid of the Dartmoor Search and Rescue Team, Ashburton.

This year the event is sponsored by South Coast Canoes, who are supplying their team paddlers for leading trips down the Upper, Loop and the middle sections of the Dart. There are only limited space left for the Loop and Middle sections left and at £25 pp they'll go soon. The £25 goes to the pot for charity.

There will be raffles and auctions with LOADS of prizes, and talks in the evening at the party. All welcome so please come and enjoy the day/night.

Club Social 24th April

We will be having a Club Skittles Night on Friday 24th April starting at 7:30pm. It will be at The Manor, Preston. The skittle alley is in a rear room behind the pub, separate from the bar areas, so suitable for partners and families to join in the informal fun if you would like to bring them along and pick up some paddle points.

The evening is free of cost, but if you would like to be part of a finger buffet then a payment by 10th April latest of £5 is needed. There is a limit to space, so please express an interest if you would like to come. Drinks can be purchased at the bar.

We are looking to make this a regular yearly event, so that we have three events spread around the year with the AGM and the Christmas do. We are not sure what to call this event, so please make some family friendly suggestions on the Forum.

<http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/members/phpBB3/posting.php?mode=post&f=2>

Adventure film nights

Recently Rob C went to the Adventure Film Festival at Exeter over a number of nights. Lots of short films from adventures around the world! In the same vein, there is the Banff Mountain Film Festival. This is over two nights in March in Exeter, and May, half of it is being shown at the Babbacombe Theatre. Details from the website www.banff-uk.com

Surfing

Surf competitions for this year have been advertised. More details can be found on the excellent www.surfkayakskills.com website and further dates will be published in the March newsletter.

All Paddle sport has a certain risk to it. It is not and never will be 100% safe. Anyone attending any and all Paignton canoe club activities does so at their own risk.

Pcc rules can be found at: <http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/ClubRules.html>

All Boats and kit used in the pool needs to be clean inside and out.

All paddling trips and events are entirely weather dependent and because of this are often organized (and can be cancelled) at the last minute. So please keep yourself up to date with what's going on using.....

Club Communication

Emails: info@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk

newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk Please use this for anything relating to the newsletter and only the newsletter. Please do **not** give this email out to non-members.

Website: <http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk>

Club Forum: (for members only)

<http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/members/phpBB3/index.php> To access this and any other password protected part of the site you will need.

Username: pcc

Password: paddles

This is for all members and only members to use. Feel free to contribute, your input matters and we want to hear it.

Facebook: Love it or hate it, it's used a lot. PCC has a facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/44208464189/> which we allow anyone to join and use, so please only put on there what you want the whole world to see.

Committee Telephone Numbers: (For Members only)

http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/restricted/Members_Contact.html

All Committee members are unpaid volunteers with separate full time Jobs

The Next Newsletter

We want you to contribute to the Newsletter. ALL MEMBERS please email to newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk anything you want to put into the newsletter.

Newsletter Info (including what we are looking for) can be found at:

<http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/members/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=1434&p=5196#p5196>

We store members' names, email addresses and telephone numbers on a Gmail account, if you do not wish to have your details stored in this way then please email newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk and request to have your details removed.

The cut off date for content for the next newsletter will be the 28th of this month.

Happy Paddling
Jeremy (and Sam)