

TALES FROM THE RIVERBANK



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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2003

Go West, Young Man, Go West...



Tony Morgan

7th July 2000 had me flying to the west coast of America to start an 8 week holiday: what it actually started was three years of back and forth travelling, paddling, and travelling and living in the land of the free.

My travels, in no particular order, had me Canoe tripping in the Alaskan wilderness near the Arctic Circle, covered in a bug net, armed with a pump action shotgun as bear defence. Solo paddling class 4 rivers in British Columbia, camping among the rattlesnakes in Southern Oregon, launching in 9 inches of snow on the Rogue river, returning from Lewis and Clark's "River of No Return" in Idaho. Paddling with US Olympic Paddlers, careering down the 200ft per mile gradient of Washington White Salmon, sub zero paddling in the rain forests of the Olympic Peninsula and gorges of Southern Oregon. Tarmac melting heat of California's Trinity valley, 5 days of solid white water on the Smith River system amongst towering Redwoods. Paddling from the end of the apartment garden to downtown Portland, hitching up and down the Clackamas valley after paddling alone, driving 9

hours to the river, shuttling cars 250 miles to the take out, launching over drops just to get a picture, having a 40th birthday on the river.

And it wasn't all paddling, it was riding a Harley down the Pacific Coast Highway, hiking in Yosemite, sailing in San Francisco Bay, shooting semi-automatic rifles in Oregon, skiing Mount Hood, rock climbing in Joshua Tree, canoe surfing at San Diego.

It was cold beer, pot luck suppers, moose stakes, pick up trucks, hugging and hollering, corned beef hash for breakfast, campfires, cougars, bears, coyotes, buffalo, bold eagles, humming birds and rivers of salmon. Hot tubbing on the deck and hot springs under the stars, more beer, living in the woods, driving miles and miles on dirt roads, wall to wall sunshine, deep, deep snow, ice caves and more than I could ever explain here, "just do it" as they say.

Here's a little bit of how it started, the rest will probably stay in my head and the hundreds of slides lying around the house...

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Umpqua River and McKenzie River – Oregon

It was like Mission Impossible without the music.

Ring, Ring, “yes, call this number, next Thursday, for the details, beeeeeeeeeeeep.”

Next Thursday arrives. Ring, Ring “yes, go to Susan Creek campground, 8.30am, look on the notice board for instructions, beeeeeeeeeeeep”.

It all started in England several months before with an email to a paddler in California, now I’m camping below the freeway at Roseburg, entrance to the Umpqua valley and ultimately my rendezvous, in 12 hours, with the noticeboard and hopefully the email recipient.

Hang on, did he say camping below the I5 freeway, the main north, south, 24 hours a day, transport artery for the West Coast?

Will that not be a less than ideal place to gain rest and relaxation before a week long white water paddling feast? Will it not be loud, very loud? Actually, not if you’re 70 years old and have your own custom moulded earplugs, which is the only way to describe the rest of the ‘campers’.

I fulfilled neither of the criteria, but the consolation was that I didn’t get chance to over-sleep, in fact I didn’t get chance to sleep. From the campground travelling east you soon get to look at the river narrowing into a beautiful gorge as you get closer to the campground. There it is, Susan Creek, swing in round a few bends and almost run over the noticeboard as my head swivels left to right into each camp spot looking for boats.

No note, aargh!

Not to worry, I spot some boats and head for them, the owners head my way, brief introductions, quick discussion about securing more camping spots for the yet to arrive ‘others’.

Then I’m naked, stood in bright sunshine, on the top of a rock outcrop, miles from home, with two other, equally naked people... meet Thad and Ilse. Wow, paddling in the States is going to be, well, different! It wasn’t quite like that, there was breakfast in the Steamboat diner and a walk to the hot spring, but even so I had only met them an hour ago and we were in the buff. We soaked in the hot spring, looking out over the valley and got to know each other even better, obviously.



Apparently they were the advance party, sent to secure camping spots for the other 20-odd that would arrive later in the day from California. A quick detour to check out a stunning double drop waterfall formed by a collapsed basalt lava tube was followed by more food at Diamond Lake before heading back to camp. The invasion had begun, two Californian paddling clubs, POST and Six Rivers, had headed north for their annual vacation, and when they vacate they do it in style. Trailer of boats, minibus, and camp kitchen with all the bits needed to seat, feed and clean up for all 23 of us. And the food!!! More introductions, nobody had a clue what language I was speaking but we were hugging

and smiling - we did however keep our clothes on this time. So this was the deal, I had cold called by email Eric and Joann and they invited me along saying I could borrow their boats, chip in for my share of the food, gas (oh sorry petroleum) and camp fees. Although I didn't think about it at the time it struck me now that we resembled a travelling circus rather than a canoe club, we had the large vehicles, big tents, the clowns (you know who you are), glamorous daredevil ladies, no safety net, and the circus master: a man around who things happened - meet Don. Don was the axis upon which our little planet was spinning: a man who said "jump" and we said "how high?"

So here I was, lounging around, having an after dinner wine, rather than a whinge, and signing up on the work rota for washing up, does it get much better than this? Actually it does and very quickly if you're the first one down Boulder Drop on the Umpqua. I knew I could do this, but a nagging voice kept reminding me of my reputation for disaster, especially in borrowed boats. Here I was in Joann's brand new Dagger Ovation heading down the drop with an audience of new found friends checking I could do the right, left, left, right, right, left move I'd explained, and miss the magnetic rock which was calling my name. Don't you love it when a plan comes together? Pool drop is how the book describes it, pool drop it was, the drops were never hard but usually interesting and the pools, wow! The water was so clear and the valley scenery was almost too perfect, rock walls and towers draped in trees, oh yeah, and sunshine.

We were all in open boats, something I found a novelty, and usually being a lone single blader among the plastic maggots (kayaks, it's an American thing!). We weren't the only ones in the group on the water that day; the others had gone for an easier section. This would be the usual game plan because the group was mixed in ability and in age, from Jacob who was 18 months old to Winni who was 75 years young. Back to camp, animated talking, lots of eating, nightcap, zip chorus and bed.

Zip chorus became an art form by the end of the week, we had to squeeze the tents close

together to save space and some people insisted on promoting insomnia with excessive zip abuse. Obviously the culprit would like to remain anonymous, but we know it was you Joan. Anyway it became a bedtime ritual to play a tune with the tent zips, this fulfilled Joan's obsessive, compulsive behaviour deformity and we actually got quite good at it; Gordon had great vibrato. Not so much a quartet as a quar-tent, with such favourites as zip-ody-doo-da. It also helped mask the noise of Bonnie's snoring for a while. Whether the rest of the camp site agreed is still unknown, but it puts the term 'gun control' into a whole new light, as no late night shots headed in our direction.

So this was the daily deal, the breakfast crew would cook American breakfast for all of us at 7:00. This consisted of foodstuffs that were not normally on the same supermarket shelf let alone the same plate. Whoever originally designed this breakfast had some sort strange food association dyslexia: sausage and syrup, come on! Or maybe it was like this: The first pioneers landing in America and someone saying "What's for breakfast?" Imagine the scene, your mother's thousands of miles away eating gruel in the industrial revolution; she can't say "we usually have porridge and sawdust". So they go ahead and invent an "anything you want, no rules from your past" meal. Welcome the American break-feast. It is a work of genius, it didn't taste good... it was great! No way was I going to admit to surviving on cornflakes, skimmed milk and weak coffee for 37 years, I kept my mouth shut and mixed my foodstuffs, the king is dead long live the king.

After breakfast my 'team' and I would do the washing up in several buckets, this was like a production line, dirty pots would enter one end and sparkle at the other, cold soak, hot rinse, hot water and soap, hot water bleach, cold rinse, at least that was the plan. For me getting the buckets in the right order everyday was like sitting my school exams three times a day. Luckily I could cheat by asking those who were bucket savvy the answer, then bask in the knowledge of good grades. Dinner was a self assembly job of various bread, meat or cheese of your choice, salad, spreads, cookies, chips, nuts, juice, fruit, the list went on and so

did the food, all laid out and filling each side of the 15' long boat trailer - 10 yards of food! And here's the wild part it: was still only 9:00am, 23 people fed, dinner made, cleaned up and ready for the river.

Evening meal was usually nibbles to start while we (non-cooking rota types) sat drinking cold beer and wine watching the dinner crew creating gastronomic miracles and even desserts. The clean up crew then sprung - or staggered - into action with the bucket test, before evening cocktails, exaggerated stories of the day's activity and the zip concerto.



So it went on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, paddling each day, usually two groups on different stretches. A highlight for most was the Steamboat rapid section, on this day a few people were pushing their grade, we had a couple of swims, some more dramatic than others. Those wanting to avoid the hardest rapid walked around while I did a sort of valet service bringing boats down a sneak route on river right - no charge obviously as I didn't have a work visa. Did I mention the raft? This was a sort of aquatic crèche, all the kids (did I mention the kids?) would travel in this with Charlie, Marcus or equally responsible adult (ha, ha if only) at the oars, like martinis they would return shaken but not stirred. The raft was usually on the easier trip and as I had spent most time on the frothier stuff I volunteered to go with the gremlin group, as a sort of "Trip Leader". This grand title was later translated to "the one to go first and point out what not to hit, then be used as target practice for the gremlins and the arsenal of water propelling apparatus". On the biggest rapid of the day I was treated to watching Ilse, a self confessed beginner, invent a new line

down the rapid, mind over matter, she didn't mind and the rocks didn't matter. It was a great trip, floating, swimming, rapids and I got chance to reverse the big V8 Dodge van with the trailer on. What more do you want? Oh yes, there was sunshine.

Then back to the campground and the food fest. It isn't all paddling though, the campground has an amphitheatre used for evening lecture by the rangers, and they also do guided walks in the area detailing flowers, fauna and wildlife. On the subject of wildlife the gremlins had a great interest in this subject and would regularly turn up with a hostage from the forest such as a giant Banana slug, various lizards and snakes. There was an audible hiss/croak/squelch of relief when they finally left. However they did find two very nervous, starved, and stray kittens, started feeding and eventually caught them. This led to Eric, Joann and Amy taking the kittens to the animal shelter on the way to the McKenzie River. Eric was obviously an animal lover; he had his faithful hound with him and was always calling its name, Nomoojinono. It took a couple of days before I realised the truth, No, Mooji, No, NO!... apparently some dogs are not as obedient as others. One of the 'others' was Chuck and Jan's hound, which was simply called Raven, who patiently absorbed all the stick prodding and tail pulling that young Jacob supplied without eating him and his sticks. I later found out that this dog had the distinction of having a home brewed cider named after him. On a subsequent visit I was offered Ravensdrool cider, which I assumed was a Bavarian traditional drink. Only when I saw the picture on the label, of Raven, tongue lolling out and dripping spittle did the penny drop. Ahhh, Ravens Drool, very droll. There is also lovely walking along the Umpqua and a long distance path follows a hundred miles through pristine forests and glades. You could access this from the camp and have an evening stroll if you had any energy left.

Mid week and it was up roots and head west to the highway, north to the next valley and east up the McKenzie valley, to where else but Paradise.

Welcome to Paradise, this was the campsite for the second half of the week, on the banks of the fast and cold McKenzie River, which cooled Chuck and Jan's beer to perfection. With our, or rather their, military efficiency (some may have been related to Roman Legionnaires, they even had the sandals) the camp was up in a jiffy and before I knew it we were loading Bob's huge pickup and heading to put in upstream. The water here is different than its southern neighbour, it's fast - like 6-7mph fast - and cold. Like, "Bloody hell that's freezing!", and it keeps going down hill, not in boulder rapids more small drops, standing waves. Not too hard to paddle but not too pleasant to swim if it went a bit pear shaped, there's only a few eddies to stop in and collect the bits. Luckily our bits stayed in place all the way to the take out, a fast blast. As if there wasn't enough joy in my world Ilse found a hotpool right by the river, coming out of a small cave. Evening soaks in 102 degrees followed a plunge in the cold river not 6 feet away. Taking care not to lose your footing and get swept down the McKenzie at 6-7mph - a hypothermic aquatic stalker. More paddling followed, the valley not as open as the Umpqua would pass by at a rate of knots in a tunnel of trees, mist rising off the water in the mornings. Ten miles would fly by in no time. Evening trips further afield to another hot springs at Cougar reservoir, proved to be time well spent. Here a staircase of hot pools dropped down a small gorge, hottest at the top cooling lower down, take your pick.

Before you know it the breakfast crew had sizzled their last sausage and it was time to go. Some left on Saturday morning facing a long drive south to California; those of us staying for the night waved them off and went for a walk. The destination was the waterfalls near the source of the McKenzie, here the river tumbles over several big drops most of which have been paddled, but you have to wonder how. The most noticeable thing is the cold coming off the water, buckets of it, rising up and out of the gorge into the trees. Then there were two, only Ilse and I were left, I had no need to return to Portland until Tuesday so of I went to the phone box and called another paddler I'd never spoke to before. Twenty minutes later a smile had returned, next

morning I'd meet a group of paddlers, doing a lower section of the McKenzie and although I had no boat they would very kindly lend me a Dagger Atom for the day. "Have a nice day."

What followed was a day's paddling, a new group of paddlers to confuse with my accent, a Mexican meal, bed for the night, breakfast (not quite the standard I had become accustomed to, but acceptable).

At breakfast Dave was a little slow announcing that I could "help myself to things to eat": at this stage I already had my arms deep in the cupboards, like a gastronomic gynaecologist. Dave then announced that "this was a relaxed and informal house". His next comments didn't quite confirm this though, as I was asked to "move from my chair" before being told to "use the napkin" and "you've got my cup".

Win friends and influence people... I'm working on it!

The morning's events did however give me an early start, travelling to the canoe shop, owned by Jim. With a big wave I left, knowing I was unlikely to ever be invited back.

The canoe shop in question didn't open till 10:00 and it was not quite 8:30 when I arrived. Only one thing to do in this situation: cleansing and grooming. Off to the laundry and join the Mexican women doing there Monday morning detergent thing. Using the car as a drying horse for all the paddling gear and keeping an eye on my drying cycle I relax with a book and the great smell of Daz.

Next stop the barbers, adjacent to the still unopened canoe shop: in the chair, off with the hair. This included a neck shave with a cutthroat razor and liberal doses of a menthol liquid that made my neck go all prickly - anyone who has ever had a petrol syphoning adventure go wrong will be familiar with the prickle.

So with squeaky clean clothes, a big white line indicating the outline of my previous hairstyle and a neck smelling of nasal spray, I march into the shop, dollars in hand, speaking

an unknown language wanting to buy some plastic. The plastic in question is a Dagger Quake. I paddle it on the canal next to the shop, and do the deal. Jim lets me cut and glue foam in and play around with it which takes me most of the day. Some customers think I'm an employee and ask the price of things, I just say help yourself everything is free today. If they knew what I was saying they may have laughed as much as me, instead they just smiled.

Seaquest

A search for Adventure!

September 13th 2003

A combination of high tides, sunny weather, a light breeze and over forty entries contributed to the success of this inaugural event on the River Wyre. Outdoor Adventure Group from the Blackpool area had originally proposed a single event of 22km taking in a dozen checkpoints (orienteering style) and aimed at the sea kayak / marathon paddler but also laid on a shorter 16km distance in response to requests from local paddlers who wanted to participate in a competitive event.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Fleetwood, Mr and Mrs. Leadbetter, started off the 16km event to Stanah and back, and then set competitors off on the 22km event to Shard Bridge. A rush to locate checkpoints and punch route cards ensued with paddlers arriving from various points of the compass. The course was set out in order to take advantage of the rising and falling tide which appeared to be a successful plan, although the leaders set an aggressive pace in an attempt to prove the race organiser wrong.

J. Willacy set out to show that his journey to Fleetwood had not been wasted by covering the 22km in under two and a half hours and was followed by paddlers supporting the event from local, Lakeland and Rutland Water clubs.

I can't take the boat away because the hire car has no roofrack but I intend to solve that the next day and collect it on my return south. Have boat will travel. Did I mention the sun was shining?

[This is only one of many stories which Tony has sent me: if I'd printed them all there wouldn't have been any room for anything else! The stories will continue in future issues – MSJ]

Two solo open boaters closed the event in a breeze-affected four hours and all competitors received a welcome stick of rock on their return to the finish. Many of the visitors used the weekend to visit the sights of Fleetwood and further afield, and some enjoyed a walk along Blackpool promenade to view the Illuminations.

Our thanks to all who supported the event, keep a space in your diary for Saturday 18th September 2004. See you then.

22km Men

1 st	J. Willacy	2:24:00
2 nd	M. Mills	2:44:12
3 rd	M. Huddleston	2:45:28

22km Ladies

1 st	K. Simpson	3:02:41
2 nd	C. Pittendriagh	3:35:26
3 rd	H. Jeffries	3:41:00

16km

1 st	D. Eldershaw	2:49:23
2 nd	C. Brazenhall	2:55:13
3 rd	R. Land.	2:55:32

My sincere thanks to all who assisted in making this event such a success. Many thanks to John and Susanne for their administrative duties during the event and special thanks to Mereside Youth Club for manning the Shard, Knott End and Wardley checkpoints.

Pete Roscoe

AGM 2003

Notice is hereby given that the Ribble Canoe Club AGM will be held on Thursday 26th February 2004 at 8:00pm at Fulwood Leisure Centre.

This meeting is open to every Club member and is your opportunity to raise any issues you may have about the Club, its organisation and the way you want the Club to be run in future. Items of discussion for inclusion on the Agenda and proposals for new committee members are therefore invited and should be notified in writing to the Hon. Secretary, Martin Stockdale no later than 31st December 2003.

Current Committee members are:

Chairman	Terry Maddock *
Secretary	Martin Stockdale
Treasurer	John Kington
Competition Secretary	Vacant
Quartermaster	Steve Swarbrick
General Committee	Tom Byrne Peter Jones Tim Langridge Brian Woodhouse
Co-opted during 2003	Jacky Draper Maria Parkes
Resigned during 2003	Dave Ellison Michael Moul Tony Moul Chris Porter

Those marked * are due to retire by rotation (every 2 years) and being eligible offer themselves for re-election.

The General Committee propose the following members for election onto the general committee:

Jacky Draper
Maria Parkes

Proposals for the role of Competition Secretary, as well as any other proposals for committee members are most welcome and should be notified to Martin Stockdale as described above. Agreement will then be sought at the AGM.

The full Agenda for the AGM will be posted in the January edition of the newsletter.

Macclesfield Revisited

Sunday 28th September, 2003

Paddlers: Tom and Robert Byrne, Clive and Janet Robinson, Janet Porter, Hazel Gilkes and Helen James.

The somewhat reduced numbers on this trip were due to a combination of illness, late holidays and other commitments.

We paddled on the Macclesfield Canal in a northerly direction last year during some pretty cold weather. This time we started once again at Whitley Green but turned south. Having found a perfectly good canal side car park we might as well make use of it especially as there are no locks for at least eight miles. The weather was bright and sunny when we set off although there were some chunky looking clouds on the horizon. As it turned out these never really bothered us, we had a little drizzle but on the whole most of us kept warm.

Getting into the boats at Whitley Green was interesting. The canal side here is quite high, several of us were stung on nettles, there were a lot of moving narrow boats and some sort of canoe marathon was going on with folk breaking the speed limit in double racing

kayaks. I think we got in the way a bit: do we care? Not much.

Shortly after setting off we came to the first of the three mills we were to pass today all of which were built at about the same time as the canal. One was a textiles mill, one a silk mill and the last the old Hovis mill; all have been beautifully restored though now fulfil new functions.



The canal is fairly overgrown considering the amount of traffic that uses it making it narrow in places. Whilst this could be a bit of nuisance when boats approached from the opposite direction it did give it a wilderness feel – or it would have done if it hadn't been

for the Sunday afternoon dog walkers on the towpath and the nearby noise of model aircraft.

The canal skirts round to the east of Macclesfield so never gets very urbanised; there was some litter but not much and a couple of kids on one of the bridges threw a handful of grit at one of the boats but on the whole it was ok. We were still right on the edge of town when we stopped for lunch at Holland's Bridge.

Once again this was one of those flat water/touring trips where not much happened. Speaking personally I prefer it that way, I have reached an age now when I realise that life's short, why shorten it? The picnic, however, was memorable.



Robert befriended a white horse, nicknamed Shergar (though I felt it had more of a look of Desert Orchid), which lived in the field alongside the towpath at our picnic site. He sat on the wall and fed it salt and vinegar Pringles. I did try to warn him that this thing had a mouth like a piano keyboard and bigger teeth than a shark but Robert seemed to think that it had characteristics similar to those of a kitten. As soon as the food stopped coming,

of course, the horse bit him on the backside. Luckily for him the only thing injured was Robert's pride as he was wearing his old canoeing shorts and the horse's teeth just bounced off – we feel neoprene now has a new selling point.

As we were getting back into our boats a nearby householder called over to us and offered us a canoe that she had found abandoned some months ago. We didn't even ask to see it; I don't know how she thought we would get it back. So if anyone wants a free boat, the woman in the house opposite the field with the white horse near bridge 39 on the Macclesfield Canal has got one. We promised we'd pass the message on.

Today's was a very leisurely trip but Robert began to feel the cold so shot off to the get out and then sat on the edge of the canal getting colder while he waited for the rest of us.

All the fishermen we saw today were politeness itself. We saw four little boys fishing, one of whom only had a little stick with a bit of line tied to it; I wonder if he caught anything. I once heard of a child catching a salmon on the Conwy using this method so it does sometimes work. (I know the man who rescued him!)

The get out was as interesting as the get in. It was a good job there were a few people on the bank to help us, there were no swims but it was a close call. After collecting a few conkers in the car park it was off to the Windmill for rehydration before the journey home.

Janet Porter

Weil's disease

Peter from UK Canoes saw the two people involved in the local outbreak last month - one still looked distinctly yellow.

It is very much up to the individual to decide whether to paddle, as well as take precautions

- shower after using the Lune/canal, cover up open skin, no rolling/capsize drill etc

Please contact Laurence or Peter at UK Canoes on 01254 388850 to check on the latest situation.

Sea Scouts out & about...



Cast: Young people various and several Sea Scout leaders

Why is a Sea Scout troop featuring in the Ribble Canoe Club newsletter? Well, we have been affiliate members for a couple of years after Martin Stockdale persuaded us it would be a “good idea”. Since then several of our Scouts attended the beginners course in the pool, I have tried the rolling course and we have received coaching from Dave Ellison and 1* assessment from Terry Maddock. We have recently discovered the delights of the ‘open’ sessions at Fulwood pool.

What else have we done connected to canoeing? We meet in the summer at Fairhaven Lake in St. Anne’s and the Scouts take part in kayaking training and activities (and pulling, sailing and safety boat work). The leaders in charge of each activity have various qualifications and we have several very helpful parents on hand as well.

During the rest of the year we take Scouts up to the Water Activities Centre at Moor Crag and have a good paddle on Windermere. We have also visited the Royal Navy training facilities at Portsmouth harbour where we stay on a Type 82 destroyer and take part in a wide range of Sea Scout activities.

What have been the highlights so far? Daniel Stockdale performing a variety of rolls to impress a visiting Royal Navy Officer is pretty high on the list. Out of 31 Scouts, 16 have passed the 1* BCU test and two of them have higher awards. With the adults we have available, we have also helped at Fylde Scout District and West Lancashire Scout County events. Spending money on new equipment is nice – last year we bid for a grant from LCC and were successful. Putting on boating sessions for other Scout troops has been appreciated.



Is there a downside? Capsizing in Fairhaven Lake is not great especially with 6 inches of unmentionable black mud at the bottom. We have felt frustration at not being able to develop our own skills and those of the Scouts. We have to cope with an incredible variety of gear – ‘no two boats the same’ used to be our motto. The cost of boat hire at some

of the campsites and centres we have been to can be prohibitive.

What's next? A river trip for some of the adults and more experienced Scouts would be good. I would like to aim for my 3* test. More visits to the open sessions are planned as everyone enjoyed the Friday nights in September and October. Keeping it fun for

everyone has been important and long may it continue.

Paul Andrew
Scout Leader
1st Lytham St. Anne's (St
Cuthbert's) Sea Scout Troop.

New club members



Well, that might be pushing the point a bit! I'm sure that everybody will be pleased to hear that Andy and Michelle Rushton have a new son, Stuart Matthew, who was born on Wednesday, 15th Oct, at 10:20am, weighing 8lb 8oz. The birth was by elected cesarean section so it was a very traumatic experience for Andy, though Michelle thought it was easy!

Also, Simon and Catherine Cole have a new baby girl – I'm afraid I don't know her name or the details.

Our best wishes go to both sets of parents. I'll be expecting membership forms for the children as soon as possible!

If anybody is wondering about the relevance of the photo to this article, the answer is – none whatsoever, I just thought it was a rather nice shot of Daniel, Helen James, and Steve Swarbrick on the Greta last Sunday. A report will hopefully follow next issue.

***Sweatshirts, polo shirts, rugby shirts,
 T shirts and other items of clothing with
 the new embroidered
 Club logo can be
 obtained from :***

Appli - K

155 Shakespeare Street, Southport, PR8 5AN
 Tel / Fax: 01704 501818

Chairman's Chat

Wrong again! In the last edition I opined that the summer was over. I'm sat here on 12 November with the mid-day sun streaming through the windows and bird song bubbling through the open door. The brambles covering my future garden are full of flowers again and bright blue combs of vetch adorn the hedge on the lane outside. And no, I haven't emigrated. Global warming? – great isn't it!

Halton (on the River Lune at Lancaster) began with a vengeance. Our first Sunday saw a very low water level at 11:00 am rising later to force us off the water (all but a hardy few) at 1:00 pm. The level must have risen by 4 feet (1.2m) over less than an hour. It was interesting to note that an early sign of the rise came in the form of twigs, leaves, branches and then tree trunks swept down on the front of the "flood" wave. The second Sunday had the level back down again to even lower than at the start of the first. Nevertheless a good time was had by the many paddlers there and a lot of learning went on. The dribbling scores of several beginners/intermediates are getting a last minute boost before the book closes on 31 December. The fight for the d'Ribbler's Award is hotting up.

Of course, November signalled the opening of access on most canoeing rivers and all we need now is the rain to wash us down them. Keep an eye on the calendar and ring up the contact if you want to go on a trip or if you want advice on whether the trip is suitable for you. I have annotated trips as Flat, Moving or White Water. Moving Water will usually be Grade 1 or 2 with White Water Grade 3 or over. Don't forget though that water level can completely change the Grade of a river so you could be encouraged to go on a trip and then advised against it on the day.

It appears that the North West Junior League for canoe polo has not survived this year, so Jacky is concentrating the club's junior competition activities on slalom for the coming season with an intention to review junior polo for next autumn.

Please make a note in your diaries of the club's Annual General Meeting on Thursday 26 February 2004. It's a social event as well as dealing with the formalities (which are kept to a minimum). The food is greatly subsidised by the club and the following awards are presented:-

- The Driftwood Trophy awarded to the member whose paddling ability has improved the most during the last year. Current holder: Tony Davis.
- The Competition Trophy awarded to the member who has performed the best in competition during the last year. Current holder: The Junior Polo Team.
- The Junior Challenge Trophy awarded to the member under the age of 18 who has achieved the most in the past year, be it in improved paddling ability or competition. Current holder: Richard Draper.
- The Author of the Year Trophy awarded to the writer of the best newsletter article in the last year. Current holder: Janet Porter.
- The Philip Singleton Memorial Trophy awarded for contributions to the club. It is not awarded every year, only when the committee feel that a club member has made significant contributions to the club which should be recognised. Current holder: Steve Wilkinson.
- The d'Ribbler Trophy awarded to the member who gains the most swimming points during the year as recorded by Tom Byrne. Current holder: Daniel Stockdale.

It could be yoooooooooooouuuu – so come along and find out.

In the meantime for incorrigible socialites there's the Christmas Do at Ferrari's, Thornley near Longridge. If you haven't yet booked with Ian McCrerie - there's still just time.

Terry Maddock



PARTY

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!NEW VENUE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

WITH RIBBLE

**CHRISTMAS DINNER & DISCO
AT FERRARI'S Country House Hotel
Thornley, Longridge.
FRIDAY 5th DECEMBER**

FOR THE MEAL CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING:

STARTERS:-

- MUSHROOMS SAUTEED IN STILTON SAUCE.
- MELON GARNISHED WITH FRUIT,
- HOMEMADE PATE, SERVED WITH MELBA TOAST.
- PRAWNS SALAD.
- SOUP OF THE DAY,
- INVOLTINI Di AGNELLO, (LAMB & SESAME SEED FILO PARCELS)



MAIN COURSE:-

- ROAST TURKEY AND CRANBERRY SAUCE.
- FILLET OF SALMON COATED WITH A SAFFRON & TARRAGON SAUCE.
- ROAST DUCK & ORANGE SAUCE.
- SIRLOIN STEAK DIANE,
- POT ROAST SHOULDER OF LAMB WITH MINT GRAVY.
- VEGETABLE & PASTA BAKE.

SWEETS:-

- CHOICE OF SWEETS OR CHRISTMAS PUDDING & RUM SAUCE



COFFEE AND MINTS.



**Party night price £20.00. To book, ring or
E-mail Ian or Ann.**

**All bookings must be followed by full payment as soon as possible to guarantee a
place, closing date... when we're full!**

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Whittingham Road, Goosnargh, Preston, PR3 2AY. Cheques made payable to Ribble
Canoe Club.**

NAMES-_____

PHONE No / e-mail-_____

STARTER-_____

MAINCOURSE-_____



Cast of 26 !!!: Me (Terry), Tony Morgan, Tim Langridge, Helen James, Daniel & Martin Stockdale, Mark Loftus, Mark Allton, Martin Walmsley, Sam King, Ian Krauklis, Keith & Philip Lawton, Peter & Sarah Benett, Martin & Charles Atherton, Ray Worthington, Adam & Karl, Stephen Miller, Steve, Sue, Andrew, Sam & Alex Green.

Location: Burrs

Conditions: Weather sunny but cool. Water levels very low.

I know it said the River Wenning on the calendar, but a look at the water level there on the Thursday convinced me that wheels would be necessary to get down. Although levels at Burrs would be low, the river channel there has been adapted for low flows and the man on the telephone assured me that the big weir was do-able (so a bit of excitement there then).

The list of people booking on the trip grew steadily as the date approached until Friday when the numbers jumped by 5 with one

phone call from the Greens. It began to dawn on me that several experienced paddlers and instructors would be away on the Scottish Trip (it's bad luck to say the exact location). PANIC! But thankfully a visit to Burrs is a different kettle of fish than a Wenning Trip and a higher proportion of beginners to experienced paddlers could be tolerated.



In the event, I think everyone enjoyed the day and the weather was more benign than expected. The big 17 ft (5m) high weir at the top end of the site provided much excitement and one swim when Mark Allton found his first moving water experience very moving as he tried to turn a corner (that wasn't there) at the bottom of the weir. Sue Green left a paddle stuck in the stonework part way down and Steve had to hang from the top by his ankles to dislodge it.

There was little useful to play on below the big weir until the small weir and pool below the access bridge and the three small waves

below that. Here we could practise ferry gliding and breaking in and out of current as well as trying to get a complete line of us across the bottom of the weir.

And after lunch we did it all over again. I was pretty tired by the time we got off the river and I went to bed at 9 o'clock that night – so I'd definitely had an enjoyable and exhilarating day. I hope everyone else did and many thanks to the experienced paddlers for their much needed support.

Terry Maddock

Lack of Committee?

In the last year we have lost a number of committee members who have had to resign for various reasons. Although we have co-opted two people onto the committee, we are still very short of committee members which means the remaining few end up with an awful lot of work to do.

Being a member of the committee is not an onerous task. The committee meets every two months for approximately 2 hours at the Hand & Dagger and discusses and plans the clubs activities. Committee members may also be asked to take on jobs which can be sorted out between one meeting and the next.

None of these jobs are very difficult or time consuming, and since we are all strongly opposed to un-necessary work we will not ask for jobs to be done unless they are really important!

So, if you have a bit of time to spare and want to help out with the running of the club, or you want to have more of a say in what the club does, please get in touch with me before the AGM to stand for election to the committee!

Martin Stockdale

Instructor Training

The club is greatly in need of new qualified instructors. To this end I am collecting names of those prepared to undertake training, initially to instructor (grade2) level. This training is not to be undertaken lightly as there is a lot of background training such as first aid to be done, as well as the canoe instructing. This will require several weekends to complete.

I will be drawing on all resources in terms of funding this training which means that those

who complete the training must be prepared to give their time to instruct others.

Those that wish to consider starting this course should be locally based and anticipate remaining so for the next few years. If you want to be considered for this course please forward your name and basic details including canoe experience to myself. Alternatively contact me first if you want to discuss this further.

Tim Langridge

Cyclades Chronicle

October 2003

I'd been out to the Greek island of Milos for two weeks last year and enjoyed spectacular multicoloured cliff scenery from warm deep clear seas, whilst there a mention to Rod Feldtmann (www.seakayakgreece.com) that an island-hopping trip might be a good idea struck home. A multi island tour to Santorini and a possible return had been top of Rod's wish list for some time; this year (2003) was time to achieve that goal.

Rod, an Australian, married to Petrinela and father of two daughters, has organised sea kayaking tours from his home in Milos for several years and for this adventure recruited Jeff and Heidi from Montana, USA to accompany him. I was keen to sample warm days and sleeping on sun warmed beaches and needed very little persuasion to make up the team.

Wednesday 1st Oct

The peace and quiet of the local village was disturbed as Jeff and I dashed around for provisions, Rod picked up Heidi from the Airport and we assembled at our departure port of Pallonia. Heidi had been subject to delays on her air travel and had the task of loading up a kayak and setting off within a mere couple of hours of arriving on Milos.

Last minute purchases of bread, goodies and supplies of water were crammed into the remaining corners of the kayaks and we were on our way.

Heading northeast we soon reached Kymolos, skirted the south end of Poliegos and gazed at the cliffs, spires and pinnacles of this uninhabited island. As we followed the island's east coast to our destination an increasing wind slowed progress and it was with some relief when we landed on the beach in near dark conditions.

Thursday 2nd

The wind persisted throughout the night, building up a disturbed sea and our departure was delayed until midday when a "go for it" decision was made. The 23km crossing to Folegandros is open to the winds and estimates that we were subject to a Force 6 meant re-adjustments to our compass bearing. Some three hours of paddling and several sweep strokes later we were able to pick out features on the cliffs and relax a little as we put the wind to our backs and headed south. Huge smiles were exchanged as we landed on a secluded beach complete with nudists enjoying the sun.

Pushing eyeballs back into their sockets we paddled ourselves away from the warmth and calm of this lovely beach and made our way to Angalli, here we left the kayaks and walked inland to the nearby town with its winding streets, alleyways and birds singing in the tree lined square. Dragging ourselves away from this delightful area we returned to the kayaks, ate at a nearby taverna then settled down for a well-earned rest.

Friday 3rd

Quieter seas greeted us in the morning and we potted along the huge limestone cliffs of Folegandros and headed across to Sikinos. Lunch was taken on the summit rocks of the small island of Khardhiotiss where we were able to see both our previous route and look out towards our destination of Santorini. The beach at Sikinos had ample driftwood and soon enough material was gathered for a modest blaze. Jeff's attempts to conserve water by boiling the spaghetti in ready salted seawater did little to enhance his culinary reputation as we made inroads into our store of bottled water. His excuse? "Pacific seawater must have a lower saline content; I'll add a little more bottled water next time".

Saturday 4th

A short trip along the coast to the welcoming harbour at Sikinos to stock up on supplies, to Malta Point in a vain search for archaeological remains and a 6km crossing to Ios. Expansion work with cranes and diggers at the harbour took the shine off this sheltered retreat so we made our way to the bay of Milopotomus. What golden sands and how busy this must be in the high season! Rod searched for, and found, welcome showers, and refreshed we sought out a place to eat. The menu and the food at Club-Far Out is highly recommended. Jeff and Heidi were struck with Saturday Night Fever and went off to town in search of Line-dancing or a little Montana Two step.

Sunday 5th

Oh Dear! The late night and a glass or two of Ouzo had their effect on the revellers and their fragile state was reflected in a later than usual departure. The 14km to the south of Ios to the vast beach at Manganari was undertaken steadily and on landing driftwood collected for a BBQ - Western style. We settled down, each one no doubt thinking of the day to come. As we gazed towards our destination we could see the lights of cruise liners and passing freighters, a reminder that this can be a busy area.

Monday 6th

Rod was awake early, roused us from our slumbers and we were soon packed and prepared for the 22 km crossing. As we paddled through almost oil flat seas the mist closed in restricting visibility and reminding us of our vulnerable state. The whistles, flares and strobes to access on our decks did little to comfort us when the booming of a ships foghorn reverberated across the water and we closed together for moral support. Some two hours into the trip a light wind picked up and slowly the mist lifted sufficiently to reveal the volcanic mass which is Santorini. Sunshine brushed away the final strands of mist as we paddled into the flooded caldera which makes this island so special.

A celebratory lunch in a nearby taverna, a tour round the inner cliffs and arches, a visit to the sulphur laden hot springs, a campsite on the small port on the volcanic plug of Kemini and the spectacle of the village lights on the rim brought to end a memorable day. This had been a trip totalling some 150kms, taking in five major islands, numerous pinnacles, small islets and some stunning sunsets.

Tuesday 7th

The holiday season being at an end meant that ferry schedules were greatly reduced, Rod, under pressure from senior management was eager to return home, fortunately he managed to secure a place for himself and kayak to Milos. Jeff and Heidi decided to work on their suntans and take in the sights and sounds of the island. They returned to Milos by a combination of ferries and kayak excursions over the following week. The journey from Milos to Santorini had been extremely interesting and being keen to extend my knowledge of the area I decided to adhere to our original idea of completing the circle by returning via the islands to the north.

As Rod says, "There's no better way to see the Cyclades than by sea-kayak"

Santorini—Milos Tuesday 7th

As part of a "rest day" I took the ferry from Santorini to Ios. A laden kayak is a clumsy thing on land and I was to learn at first hand of the help and interest of the Ferry and Harbour personnel at the ports of Santorini and Ios. Their assistance was typical of the help received on my return journey. The luxury of the ferry soon faded into distant memory as I packed additional supplies into the kayak and headed to the northern point of Ios. Locating a quiet beach was easy on this indented coast and I was soon in my sleeping bag gazing up at the stars.

Wednesday 8th

The 11km crossing from Ios to Iraklia passed slowly by, and I watched a pair of buzzards

circling in the updraughts of steep cliffs before heading out to the rounded outline of Skhinousa. For some reason I had been intrigued by the name of this island which appeared to have huge beaches and looked inviting. Closer up the island was ringed by short but steep cliffs and with plenty of time available I headed across the 8km channel towards Naxos. As I moved from the shelter of Skhinousa this coincided with an increase in wind speed and a steady slog ensued. Bouncing through clapotis off a headland I entered a large bay providing shelter and a tiny beach. Pulling the kayak ashore and above the waves reach I found a rocky ledge as a home for the night. As the daylight faded a magnificent lightning display lit the skies with multiple streaks highlighting the black clouds. This display, the high winds and a short cloudburst reminded me of the possibility of being stormbound, fortunately I had sufficient supplies of food and drink but a restless night passed slowly by.

Thursday 9th

The storm of the night eased away as sun brought welcome warmth and dried out gear as I waited for the waves to ease off. Force 4 winds kept the sea agitated and I waited until mid-day before heading along the west coast of Naxos. This large island is very popular with tourists and building development is in evidence along the coast. After a couple of hours I found a beautiful beach and enjoyed a long surf in on green water to arrive at an hotel which was still open for business. Luxury! I entered the hotel and was soon tucking in to a Greek salad on the veranda.

Fortified and refreshed the return to open water and the west coast of Naxos was punctuated by pounding surf which threatened to pluck me from the kayak. Leaving the relative shelter of the island I set off for Paros, a two-hour trip into water exposed to the wind and I was relieved to reach the sheltered harbour of Marmara. A developing fishing fleet has its base here with a road alongside the beach which did not bode well for a quiet night. Wandering around I found a bar with rooms available at €15 - a bargain - a shower and a softish bed. I can also

recommend the food at Stavro's restaurant. The island of Paros has a thriving viniculture programme, the '98 unpronounceable red slipping down a real treat. As I walked back to the bar the bay shone silver in the light of the full moon. Feeling suitably pampered I tucked up in bed and drifted into sleep.

Friday 10th

The benefits of a good nights sleep showed as I left Marmara harbour, followed the south coast of Paros and headed to Andiparos. The waters around the islands of Pandironisi which divide this crossing are only three metres deep, added to that an almost white sea bottom reflecting the bright sunshine and the result a huge area of fluorescent water, a wonderful and uplifting sight.

Rounding the collection of small islands of Dhespothis and Strongilio I looked across the 20km to Sifnos and decided to make the crossing. Out of the shelter and in open water the wind reminded me of its presence and I was faced with over three hours of determined effort before reaching the leading light and calm waters at the harbour of Faros. The sea state was impressive; at one time I was in deep troughs with limited outlook and the next on high peaks with clear sight to the horizon. Not a period to relax, yet at the same time it was a delight to see dark seas with translucent green shoulders topped with foaming white caps. The "no camping" signs on the beach and a herd of noisy goats coupled with the effects of a 62km day soon had me knocking on doors in search of a bed. Once found I wasted little time before eating and "crashing out".

Saturday 11th

Loaded up I gently eased the kayak along, arms a little sore from the previous days effort and made my way to the southern point of Sifnos. As memories of islands blended into each other it was both comforting and satisfying to look around the horizon and pick out the places visited over the past few days and I could see my destination of Milos from the misty blue islands in the distance.

On the crossing from Sifnos to Kymolos the kayak was eager to extend the adventure and sought for further islands to explore - a quartering wind may have had something to do with it and my entreaties for better behaviour were steadfastly ignored. Not for the first time I felt that a rudder would have been a great asset.

Slowly the warm coloured cliffs of Kymolos drew near and I welcomed the sheltered straits between Kymolos and Poliegos (our first camp site). A short break then the final few kilometres to finish at Pollonia and a celebratory ice-cream.

A phone call to Rod informing him of my safe arrival and as I waited for transport back to the village I reflected on the circuit I had completed.

Some twenty islands visited or passed, warm clear waters and magnificent cliffs, lightweight gear, (I paddled in t-shirts on every day) and splendid beaches with villages perched on the waters edge. I'd covered over 320km and picked up a fine sun-tan along the way.

As the man said "There's no better way of seeing the Cyclades than by sea kayak"!!!

I used an Italian Rainbow / Laser kayak. Imray G.33 covers this route and a host of other possibilities.

Rod Feldtmann has a detailed site at www.seakayakgreece.com

Peter H Roscoe

Canoe Slalom

For those of you who don't know me (which is probably most of you), I thought a brief introduction might be useful. Many of you will know Richard (my son) and Vince (my husband) who have been quite active members of Ribble over the past few years. I've been persuaded to join the canoe club committee and at my first meeting, I seem to have volunteered myself to look after the competitions (what do they say about never volunteering for anything at meetings!).

We thought that it would be a good idea to try and generate some more interest within the club for canoe slalom and try and encourage newcomers to the sport. To give paddlers a feel for the event, we're going to be organizing some slalom sessions in the pool on the 16th January, 13th February and the 5th March, so I hope that I can get some experienced paddlers down to help (please, please, please) and some less experienced paddlers down to 'have a go'. During January and February, Stafford and Stone Canoe Club run three "mini slaloms" (dates to be confirmed), which are good taster events on easy water. We hope that some of you will

join in on these if you get a taste for it in the pool.

The aim of canoe slalom is to run a river course marked by "gates" fast, and without touching. It's the ultimate test of canoeing skill and stamina. And it's fun! A "gate" is two poles, suspended over the water. The gates are numbered. You must go through green and white gates in a downstream direction, and through red and white gates upstream, with an S movement or a spin (a "breakout"). The gates are placed so that you must make tricky cross-current moves and use the eddies and waves. If you touch a pole with anything - paddle, boat, buoyancy aid, helmet or yourself - a 2 second penalty is added to your time. If you miss a gate out, or go through in the wrong direction, the penalty is 50 seconds! The aim is fast and clean. The gates are positioned to test your skill in using, and coping with, the water. This is perfect training for running big white water rivers. (Courtesy of www.canoeslalom.co.uk the sport's unofficial "official" web site).

Jacky Draper



This place is amazing. During the summer there is something going on practically every weekend, which is in stark contrast to earlier on in the year. So I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised when one evening, whilst walking into town for a meal, Richard (one of the guys from the Vattern trip), shouted down from his balcony that he's been trying to get hold of me all day. It turned out that there was to be a Dragon Boat Festival at the weekend in Linköping and that Gripen International had entered a team and I'd been volunteered. The lure of a free T-shirt, baseball cap and beer was too much for me and weekend plans were duly cancelled.

I've never been Dragon Boat racing. I've watched it on Blue Peter but that's about it. I had visions of 20 to 30 boats all jostling for clear water as they surge across Hong Kong Harbour, drums beating, all the paddles in perfect sync, the reality was very different but still great fun. Linköping is situated on the Kinda Canal, which is more like a river with locks. Not quite Hong Kong.

A strategy meeting was held on Thursday before the great race. I was intrigued, so went along to meet my fellow competitors. The

meeting basically covered logistics, where and when to meet, time of first race, then the meaty stuff of positioning, stroke rate and balance. It was clear that only a few of the guys had actually paddled a Dragon boat, most hadn't paddled in anything. Tales of sunken boats, capsizes and swimmers left me wondering what I'd got myself into. At least they provided someone to steer, so with any luck we shouldn't crash.

The races consisted of heats in the morning, all timed. The boats were then broken down into pools, A for Pros, B for duffers and C for Girls/Ladies. The best four from each pool went through to a Final timed run.

The day of the race arrived. A light breeze, not a cloud in the sky - perfect conditions for something. I set off on my bike to meet the rest of the crew. As I entered the park area I had to get off and walk, it was 9:30 in the morning and the place was a mass of people, music and merriment. I got shot at by a group of women all dressed in combats armed to the teeth with water cannons. They were first up and were marching toward the assembly point in two rows. This was starting to look ominous.

I found our tent and met the rest of the crew. You can squeeze 22 paddlers into a dragon boat and this was the first time we'd all been together, let alone sat in a boat. Our first race was 10:30. We wandered down to the assembly point to be greeted with jeers from the opposition. Intimidating the opposition is all part of Dragon Boat racing. We opted for the strong silent look, mainly because we were intimidated and slightly nervous.

We followed the chanting opposition down to the boats. I've got to be honest, I was kind of expecting something a little wider! I slipped on my buoyancy aid, grabbed a paddle and jumped into the front. We had to provide a drummer (we should have picked someone with a sense of rhythm). As the boat filled up with bodies it rocked precariously from side to side.

We were finally ready and took the first tentative strokes. I couldn't see what was going on behind me but could feel the boat lurching from side to side and hear the managerial discussions as the inevitable power struggle takes place between a group of guys all used to being in charge who are asked to work as a team. The eventual outcome was chaos, we did ok on the way up to the start, not that that matters, but the race! We started poorly; the other boat seemed to get it together straight away, leaping into an early lead that just kept getting larger. I could hear giggling and moaning from behind, a random drum beat from in front and the rhythmic chanting of the opposition. Surely this isn't how it's supposed to be.



We managed to complete the course in 1min 10 seconds; they even gave us a medal. We had the second slowest time of all the

competitors. Only ICA (the local Tesco) were worse and only by 10ths of a second. At least the sun was shining and the beer was free! Whilst I was lounging around enjoying the crazy atmosphere, Kate was driving off to the airport to pick up her sister and boyfriend. I had warned Kate that Phil may get drafted into the crew at short notice, but even I was surprised at what happened. I went home to collect the Bourne clan, we wandered casually into the tent, to be greeted by a "right we're off"!! The race timetable had moved forward and we had a lot of guys missing, Wives, girlfriends and bloke just off the plane having travelled for 7 hours were bundled down to the assembly area. This was to be a race for honour: we had been pitted against ICA, the equally bad crew.



A few tactical changes in the positioning of the crew and a morale boosting water fight at the pontoon set us up for a quality race. The new drummer had some rhythm although she did feel a little unsteady perched up at the front; two of the veteran racers were at the front, followed by me and another vet. The plan was to try and get the front of the boat paddling with a steady stroke, which would hopefully drag the rest along. Paddling up to the start we felt and looked good, a sense of confidence (alcohol fuelled) rippled through the boat. All lined up and ready for the off, the gun sounded and we leapt away from the start. The boat surged forward. It was hard to believe; we all chanted in time with the drum, just totally fixed on putting the paddle behind the one in front.

It was an amazing feeling, like being part of a well-oiled machine. ICA didn't stand a chance, we'd established a terrific pace within a few seconds. The boat felt smooth as it

surged through the water, this was what it's all about. We beat ICA and shaved 10 seconds off the previous time. Soaked and elated we returned to the beer tent. The time stood as the third fastest until the last B pool race, unfortunately both crews beat our time, so we were out, but not disgraced.

Some of the A crews were awesome with times of less than 55 seconds.



The party atmosphere was fantastic and we were treated to a hilarious site of a drunken Swede trying to take a leak. Obviously mindful of the risk of wetting his trousers and the embarrassment that could cause, he pulled down both shorts and pants, and leant on a tree in full view. Job done, quick shakes then the tricky manoeuvre of pulling your pants back up. This proved too much for him as he could hardly stand unassisted; he leant forward, grabbed his pants and as he was pulling them up to hide his modesty, he crashed over sideways. This went on for about five minutes; his success at finally getting his shorts on was greeted with a round of applause. He then wobbled off in search of some dignity, bouncing off trees and tents.

Dragon boat racing is great fun and I'm delighted that I've had a chance to have a go. Looking forward to next year's event - maybe, just maybe!!!!!!

Dave Ellison

Kingsmill Bread

“Free Kit for Clubs”

Kingsmill bread are currently running a promotion to give kit and equipment to sports clubs absolutely free... as long as you buy lots of loaves, of course!

Each loaf of Kingsmill bread has vouchers which we can collect to get equipment for the club. The vouchers will be available until the end of August 2004, so we've got time to collect loads!

A look at the Kingsmill website www.kingsmillkitforclubs.com (am I the only person who thinks website addresses are

getting ridiculously long these days?) shows that with only 2,562 tokens (who's going to count them and check that the last 2 are there??) we can get a buoyancy aid. I'm not going to work out how many peanut butter and banana sandwiches you'd have to eat to get that many tokens, but I doubt if the buoyancy aid would fit afterwards!

Seriously, Tim Langridge has registered us for the scheme and has volunteered to collect the tokens on our behalf, so please pass any tokens you get on to him. I've got 4 tokens already, so that's only 2,558 to go!

Blast from the Past

Over the past few weeks Steve Singleton has either (a) undertaken a labour of love, or (b) gone completely bonkers, depending upon your point of view!

He has scanned his whole collection of Ribble Canoe Club newsletters, going right back to 1976, and converted them all to PDF files – nearly 200MB of them!

There are a number of gems amongst this lot, including Terry Maddock's first ever newsletter article, which is reprinted below.

If nostalgia has misted your glasses up, and you'd like a copy, pass a blank CD-R to Steve or me and we'll copy them all for your delectation and delight!

The Eden Cruise

2 July 1989

I remember at school (yes, I have a long memory) every time we had a day's outing, the pleasure was dulled by knowing that we would later have to write an essay on it. It's just as well I had no inkling that I would have to write this, otherwise a really splendid trip could have been ruined.

The car park by Whatsaname Bridge near Lazonby was easily found after a detour round the nearby school fete (I knew the Club was well organised but I wasn't expecting stalls and refreshments). I see from July's Newsletter that we had 22 on the trip, and I know I speak for all us new boys and girl in thanking the many experts who guided our route through what seemed to us to be raging waterfalls, rapids and wild white water. They tell me that the river was very low and quiet compared to normal!!

And in between the breathtaking rapids was the breathtaking scenery. Most of the cruise took place within a wooded gorge flanked by red sandstone cliffs fringed with greenery and dotted with bird's nest holes.

Spills were fairly few, apart from Ray "Everest" who is now an expert at paddling upside-down and is hoping to start a sub-aqua branch of the club. When Rebecca came out at the "Really big One", I think every "marshall" on the rapid set off to rescue her. However, she came up smiling and holding both paddle and boat - "It's the best capsized I've ever done" - and was rewarded with a hot coffee from Bill's flask. Tony gave an impromptu lecture on rolling (in a canoe) with annoyingly relaxed demonstrations between breaths. Later Bill successfully failed to complete a roll and went on to stir things up by telling Penny how useful the women were for ferrying the canoeists back and forth. And he says he's liberal compared to some others. (Who's Phil Moxham?)

Yes, it was a truly splendid trip - even the assault course at the end (Michelle, put my name down for your Commando Training Course). Thanks again to the organisers and to the many "marshalls" who enabled us to enjoy the thrills of our first real river trip without too much danger. When can we go again?

Terry Maddock



Would you like to learn to canoe?

Ribble Canoe Club is running a beginners' course starting on Friday 23rd January 2004 which will teach the basic skills necessary to paddle a kayak.

The course includes a classroom session to look at the theory of canoeing, three pool sessions to gain practical experience, and an outdoor session on the Lancaster Canal.

No previous experience is necessary.

For the first three weeks the course will take place in the swimming pool at Fulwood Leisure Centre, Black Bull Lane, Preston. The club has all the equipment necessary including kayaks and paddles, so all you need to bring is yourself - and your swimming costume, of course! (At the end of the pool session you will need to carry your equipment outside to the store before you get changed, so flip-flops or water shoes and an old t-shirt would also be a good idea.)

The course will run from 8:00pm until 10:00pm on the 23rd January, and 9:00pm until 10:00pm on the 30th January and 6th February. Please arrive about 15 minutes before the start time to give time to get equipment sorted out.

The final session will take place during the day on a Saturday (date to be decided) on the Lancaster Canal near the Hand and Dagger at Salwick. You will need to wear warm clothing and a cagoule (but they may get dirty or wet so don't wear your best gear!), and bring a change of clothes. Again, all other equipment will be provided.

The maximum cost of the course will be £34 per person, which includes the cost of the instruction, pool hire and membership of Ribble Canoe Club for 2004. Membership costs are less for junior members and for additional members of the same family.

For further details, or to book a place please telephone:

Tom Byrne

The Ross of Mull & Staffa



August 2003

The Isle of Mull is the second largest of the Hebridean Islands with over 300 miles of coastline featuring high rugged cliffs, deserted sandy beaches, a variety of offshore islands, lots of historical and geological interest, an abundance of wildlife, and a general acceptance of the notion of wild camping. Now, when I refer to “wild camping” I don’t mean to imply pitching tents like furious savages, but rather to be camping in wild places. What better way could there be to explore this unspoiled and largely unpopulated coast than by sea kayak?

Starting the trip from Loch Spelve meant we only had to drive 10 miles to the head of Loch Scridain where we intended to finish the trip in 7 days time. There should have been 6 people in the team, but Steve Swarbrick and Mike Haywood had to pull out due to circumstances beyond their control, leaving Bob Smith, Steve Wilky, Kevin Singleton and myself, launching our heavily laden boats in the early afternoon onto a fast flowing river giving easy access to Loch Spelve.

The weathermen were predicting a heatwave, but this looked like a remote possibility as we battled into a strong headwind under cloudy skies. By the time we had picked up the strong

tidal flow where Loch Spelve ebbed through a narrow channel into the open sea we were already soaked with salt spray, and were anticipating daunting sea conditions along the 10 mile section of exposed cliffs we had planned to paddle. The coastline in this area is wild and rugged, offering few opportunities for safe landings, and although a significant swell was running in from the west, the headwind was not enough to cause too much discomfort.

Progress was inevitably slow and by 5 o'clock we found a welcome landing on a small pebble storm beach topped with a patch of flat grass and several moth-eaten wild goats. The goats may have sensed how hungry we were and hurriedly scampered up the precipitous cliffs as we landed. It had been a long day, but after we had eaten, an abundance of driftwood allowed us to relax round a friendly fire as we enjoyed some late evening sun illuminating the Garvellach Islands and Scarba in the distance.

Sunday - It gets misty, but we know where we are going

Cessation of the overnight rain encouraged us onto the water at 9am on Sunday morning, but a heavily overcast sky heralded more rain to come.

Few words were spoken between us as we headed west along the coastal cliffs into the rolling swell. Before long the expected rain arrived, dropping the cloud base to sea level and cutting off all views of the 900 foot high cliffs. Jagged rocks along the shore loomed out of the mist as we passed, until one appeared with an unnatural shaped pinnacle. Closer inspection revealed it to be a White Tailed Sea Eagle, and we watched fascinated as it gained altitude on languid beats of its huge wings and its ghostly shape gradually disappeared into the mist.

At the entrance to Loch Buie we lost site of land, and we all suffered complete disorientation in the mist. We found it difficult to accept the logic of map and compass which appeared to be directing us straight out to sea (next stop, Nova Scotia?). Reason soon prevailed and we followed the compass for the next 2 miles. However, Bob remained sceptical, and convinced of our folly proceeded to cut a swathe through our midst on a heading of his own choosing. I think it was peer pressure rather than logic that persuaded Bob of his error, and, happily, at the appointed time and place, the cliffs reappeared out of the mist 2 miles east of Carsaig bay where we intended making a lunch stop. Carsaig was the setting for the 1945 Powell and Pressburger film comedy "I Know Where I'm Going", but the implications of this title clearly didn't apply to Bob.

The prospect of a cold, wet lunch stop on the beach at Carsaig was not particularly appealing, so when someone suggested we pitch tents and stay for the night there was general agreement. This was a sensible decision, because we would have seen little of the coastal scenery or wildlife in the heavy mist. Later in the afternoon the low cloud lifted allowing us views of an otter fishing and a juvenile Sea Eagle (identifiable by blue wing tags as a twelve month old bird) scavenging among the offshore rocks about 100m from the tents.

Monday, Carsaig to Sound of Iona

We had now fallen into the routine of awakening at 7am followed by breakfast and packing the boats to launch at 9am. We have found an early start (tides permitting) gives us more flexibility during the day to change plans or make detours as the mood takes us, or sometimes to cover a

greater mileage. We launched the boats that morning onto a calm sea with a promise from the weathermen that the high thin cloud would burn off to give a warm sunny day. An hour of paddling took us past Carsaig Arches and another mile or so later to a deeply indented cove with a 2 tier waterfall dropping 600 feet into the sea. The sun was just now breaking through and we spent a pleasant 20 minutes drifting here while we had a small snack. Beyond this point the character of the coast changes from precipitous cliffs to more low-lying moorland interspersed with many sandy beaches. A beach called "Traigh Bahn" which we shared with a herd of inquisitive cows made a good lunch halt after about 10 miles. In fact "Traigh Bahn" just means "white sandy beach" in Gaelic so there are many Traigh Bahns in this area. There are now 8 breeding pairs of Sea Eagles on Mull and while having lunch we spotted yet another of these perched on the cliff-top overlooking the beach.

The afternoon's paddling took us past many beaches where we could have spent the night, but in such perfect conditions it felt like you wanted to keep going forever. Eventually we landed in a deserted bay encircled by a curving bar of white sand finishing at a flat area of grass where we could pitch the tents. It was an idyllic location, but we were looking for something better, so we paddled on a further mile to a very similar beach one mile east of the Island of Erraid which satisfied our desire for the highest possible standard of accommodation. For the first time on an extended trip we had taken our collapsible trolleys, and over the ensuing days we made good use of these, transporting loaded boats over lengthy stretches of sand with little effort. The heatwave had now arrived, tempting us in to the sea for a swim before our evening meal, which we were happy to share with some local midges. A driftwood fire on the beach rounded off a memorable day.

Tuesday, Erraid and Iona

We made our usual 9am start in warm sunshine, but overnight the wind had picked up in strength, shifting to an easterly force 4 tailwind. With this kind of assistance we were soon into the Sound of Iona and heading north via a sheltered yacht anchorage on the west coast of Erraid Island, known as "Tinkers Hole". This island featured in

Robert Louis Stevenson's book "Kidnapped", and was also where the pink granite was quarried for the construction of 2 offshore Stevenson lighthouses (The author and lighthouse builders were related).

We landed on the north side of the island at high water to investigate an observatory located at the highest point on the island. A collection of single storey terraced cottages was served by a substantial stone built pier out of all proportion to the size of the community (a legacy of the lighthouse construction). The cottages and associated farm buildings were neatly enclosed by 6 foot high dry built walls of the local granite, lending the settlement an isolation and stillness that was almost ecclesiastical. As we walked through the farmyard we thought we could be intruding on an obscure religious sect whose ancient rituals were shrouded in secrecy. The sudden appearance of one of the residents, a bald headed man sporting a long grey beard, did nothing to dispel our fears. When we asked the way to the observatory however, he helpfully directed us by way of the quarry, and assured us that he wasn't a monk, weirdo, or hippy, but a normal hard-working chap. The observatory had recently been restored and commanded views over all the islands to the west of Mull, its purpose being to signal to the lighthouses - it was certainly worth the short walk via the Stevenson quarry.



Re-embarking after lunch in the hot sun we had elected to cross the Sound of Iona to round the southern point of the island, allowing us to paddle the west coast which we had never seen before. The southern part of the island consists of low, rocky, deeply indented cliffs, suddenly changing to sweeping white sand beaches and shallow offshore waters dotted with small

islands. We landed at Eilean Chalbha on a small inviting beach, but the camping arrangements did not quite measure up to our exacting requirements. It was while getting back into the boats that a small wave unbalanced me and I suffered the indignity of a technical swim ("technical" means I didn't swim at all but merely got a wet bum). At about the same time as this occurred, someone obviously told a very funny joke as there was much loud laughter from all the others. Unfortunately, I was otherwise engaged recovering from my mishap and so never found out what was so amusing.

“We always stand outside in weather like this” - Bob

A mile of paddling into what was now a stiff headwind took us to a small island called Eilean Annraidh a quarter of a mile north of Iona, where we camped on the machair overlooking the Sound of Iona. The air was now hot and humid, and darkening skies to the east heralded a storm approaching.

Just as the first drops of rain began to fall we were joined by a group of 9 paddlers from the Scottish Canoe Association who were soon running for cover. Bob expressed his surprise when they wanted to take shelter, and explained that when the weather is bad we all put our ponchos on and stand outside to enjoy it. We felt obliged to support Bob's lunacy on this point and so, donning our ponchos, we stood around in the torrential rain, battered by the wind, watching the almost continuous lightning and hearing thunder that rolled around the hills forever. After an hour or two of this, we considered we had upheld the honour of Ribble Canoe Club, and dived for cover into the tents. This was one of the most spectacular electrical storm I have ever witnessed, lasting from 6pm to 11pm and the strangest thing about it was the almost cloudless sky immediately behind us to seaward.

Wednesday, Staffa - and Bob throws a sickie

One of the objectives of the week had been to visit the Island of Staffa, and the famous Fingal's Cave, and when Wednesday morning dawned warm and sunny with not a breath of wind, the conditions were ideal for the 5.6 mile crossing.

Bob had been complaining of a sore arm for several days, and the open sea crossing did not appeal to him, so on production of a sick note he was excused the days paddling, leaving the remaining three of us to get on with it. We set a fast but comfortable pace and with a favourable tide giving us about 0.5mph of assistance we made the crossing in 1 hour and 7 minutes (Average speed 5.01mph)*.

Staffa is a magical place to visit by kayak, and some time was spent exploring caves and geological formations before landing for a snack and leg stretch. Bob had stayed in the Sound of Iona, and to keep in contact we had a pre-arranged radio schedule by marine VHF whereby we would call each other from 12 midday at half hour intervals. VHF works line of sight only and your horizon from a kayak is just over a mile away so it was no surprise that at midday while we were slightly hidden by the island, we got no response. At 12:30, however, Bob came through clearly, and from the GPS I was able to tell him we were 1.6 miles south of the island travelling at 4.5mph (it was now slack water and we had lost the tidal assistance) and expecting to meet him at "Bull Hole" at 1:30pm.

The sun was now baking hot but on the water we benefited from the cooling effect of the sea, so it was pleasant to be forging an arrow straight path across the glassy surface. A Dolphin leaping clear of the water 300 metres away was a highlight of the day (at least for Kevin as he was the only person who saw it), and a little later, we paddled through a flock of Manx Shearwaters afloat on the surface. The birds immediately in our path reluctantly took off and closely circled our boats with wingtips skimming the sea before re-joining their friends. I don't know if it was great skill, or a reflection of the modern technology, but at 1:30pm we met Bob as planned, and soon found a small coral beach where we stopped for a late lunch and a swim.

A couple of miles paddling along the northern shore of the Ross of Mull brought us to a large sandy bay (Traigh na Margaidh) where once again the trolleys were used to transport the boats to the perfect camping spot. The evening was spent watching the fiery red sunset while we sat round a modest log fire and recalled amusing incidents from previous sea trips - there may have also been a glass of whiskey involved.



Thursday, a navigational challenge

We woke on Thursday morning to thick fog and after breakfast were chased from the beach by some hungry midges. We made a small detour to visit the village of Bunesson where Wilky bought some bread, and secretly also acquired one can of Guinness (not four cans - only one!). We thought the time spent here would give the fog a chance to lift as forecast, but when we left Loch Na Lathaich to head for the Ardménach Wilderness 3.1 miles to the north-west, visibility was down to 200 metres, and showing no sign of improving.

We were aiming for a point on the opposite shore where there is a fossilised tree, and a compass bearing of 045 was the agreed course. As we headed out into the fog, our four boats began to head in four different directions, but we soon came together again and settled into the habit of keeping an eye constantly on the compass. Paddling purely by compass is not easy, so after nearly an hour of this we were delighted to be only about 150 metres away from our intended destination. The fossil tree dates

from about 60 million years ago when molten lava solidified around a large tree without destroying it, leaving the remains as a 12m high column set in basalt.



Bad light and a broken bat stopped play

For the second time this week we called a halt to the day's paddling because of poor visibility, and found a small pebble storm beach giving access to good camping ground about half a mile north of the fossil tree. The afternoon was spent exploring the coastal rock formations and collecting driftwood for the evening's entertainment. One of the items collected for the fire was an old broken oar which was too good to burn, so a game was devised where the bowler threw a small pebble and the batsman (or was it oarsman?) took a big swing and tried to hit the stone into the sea. For me, the highlight of the evening came when Wilky, following his first two successful strikes went for a boundary, and,

completely missing the stone, executed what in ice skating parlance would be termed a triple axel. We were all equally bad at this game, and with fading light making the proceedings dangerous (not to mention the broken bat) we called a halt to the game and burnt the bat.

Friday, and the sun re-appears

Miraculously it seemed, the sun was shining from a clear blue sky when we emerged from the tents early on Friday morning. The view to the west was spectacular, with Little Colonsay, Staffa and the Treshnish Islands framed by the Ross of Mull in the south and Ulva and Gometra to the north. We were on the water later that morning, paddling hard in difficult conditions due to a keen easterly wind being funnelled into our faces around the Ardmeneach headland. A compensation for this effort was seeing the many waterfalls whipped off the cliffs by the wind and producing rainbows in the low morning sun.

Once into Loch Scridain the wind eased, allowing a relaxed lunch stop on a sheltered beach. Heading on into the Loch with views of Ben More to our left, we eventually picked out Bob's car on the southern shore, where he had left it nearly a week ago. We had decided to camp that night at the head of the Loch, so while Bob drove the 2 miles, the rest of us paddled a meandering course up the river estuary to meet him. Once again the marine VHF radios we carried came in useful as Bob guided us by radio to the place he had chosen to camp. Finishing the trip exactly at high water meant we had to carry the boats only 20 metres to our camp site - a professional touch at the end of a week's trip. A communal bath in the nearby stream drew some strange looks from the occasional passing motorist, but was the ideal way to clean up before the evening meal we had booked in the nearby pub.

Steve Singleton

**[I'm not sure which is more sad: Steve for calculating their average speed to two decimal places, or me for checking his calculation to make sure it was right! - MS]*

The French Alps

Summer 2003

At the end of June, I headed out to the French Alps with York University Canoe Club. After two days on British and French public transport (scary people and scarily fast, respectively) I arrived in Argentiere....

What follows is a not-so-short summary of the holiday. In the nine days, I paddled thirteen sections and didn't even scratch the surface of the paddling possible, which ranges from pleasant lakes to scary rivers. The area would also suit those looking to do things other than kayaking (Heaven forbid!) since there are ample opportunities to go rafting, canyoning, cycling, walking, climbing etc. After all, paddling isn't everything! I've graded the rivers as I found them in a period of medium-low levels; as they change from day to day in both the riverbed (boulders move, banks collapse) and level, the grades are by no means accurate and given just to give an idea of the range of rivers in the region. There are also many easier and harder sections. The rivers tended to be steeper and more continuous than UK rivers; I didn't think that this was a big thing but some people were adding on grades purely because of this. Anyway, enough of this grading rubbish, the holiday....

Day One - Sunday

An afternoon paddle on the Durance (II with a III) from St. Clement down to Embrun. Most of the entertainment came in the form of watching paddlers in front of me ignoring the eddy lines and backlooping. A nice warm up run with pleasant scenery.

Day Two – Monday

A drive up the valley brought us to the Upper Guisane (III with a IV-). A rocky run (perhaps because of the low water). Not an especially interesting section but the scenery was nice, when you could see beyond the forest. After lunch, we continued down onto the Lower

Guisane (IV). Two initial portages were followed by the only rapid on the section. Not to worry though; the rapid lasted for about 4 km. Interesting.

Day Three – Tuesday

The sun failed to make an appearance in the morning so paddling was replaced by canyoning (no sun ⇒ no melt water ⇒ no river). Not being a great fan of falling, heights, swimming or getting wet, I chickened out and instead went for the spineless option; reading a book. Just as well really, one human probe discovered a rock in a plunge pool with his shin. By afternoon, the weather had improved (the sun was fashionably late). A brief drive up the valley brought us to the Onde (III). Low water made this rocky pinball run perfect for taking a few years off my boat's life. Still at least it was my *boat's* life; I ended up mending a girl's forehead with suture strips after she rolled.

Day Four – Wednesday

After the pleasure of playing pinball while paddling, the lower Guil (II+) was quite peaceful. A nice bimble in a scenic area (it's a common theme that valleys in the Alps are picturesque). After lunch, we headed to the Middle Guil (IV- with two harder bits). Technical paddling around boulders in a beautiful open rocky gorge. I got my first 'swim point' after rolling in front of a crowd on the roadside.

Day Five – Thursday

A drive south over a frightening mountain pass took us to the Ubaye valley. The early start meant that the sun wasn't on the river, there was no water and it was cold; without the mountain peaks it could have been England. Still, we paddled the Upper Ubaye (III-) because we were there. Further down the valley we ran the Racecourse (III+ with a IV- or two), a fantastic

run with more volume than most of the other rivers in the region. There would have been some good playing on this section, but nobody wanted to stop.

Day Six – Friday

After an hour or two of debate in the morning, paddling plans *still* weren't finalised so a small group went up to the *Glacier Blanc* (half of the source of the Gyr). Climbing up the path, we came to a small alcove where some marmots lived...well, I was told they were marmots. Standing at the base of the glacier was belittling, especially when car-sized chunks of ice dropped off and started bouncing downhill towards unsuspecting victims, sorry, walkers (nobody was crushed luckily). The best day of the holiday.

Day Seven - Saturday

Half of the group was heading home today so a more northern river was chosen, the Romanche (III+ with a longish IV). A similar run to the Guisane in that once it started, it didn't stop. I doubled my swim points after rolling in the grade IV section. An easier river for everyone was called for and the Vénéon (II-) obliged. The EDF (Électricité de France) plant at the get on should soon be forgotten as the river winds through the valley (with tremendous views...again), but there are always man-made imperfections to remind you that the river isn't quite as it should be. A shame really as otherwise it would be a nice section for touring. On the way back we scouted the Romanche below the barrage (V). Too much volume for the riverbed, steep, littered with trees and one monster rapid where endless tight moves led to a final eddy before the main flow dropped *under* a boulder. "Oh no, after you...I insist."

Day Eight – Sunday

We ran the Durance again. This time we stopped by the seal launch spot and spent just over a second sliding down a 5 m *steep* ramp which stopped 2 m *above* the river. Leaning forward didn't have the desired effect and as the boat left the end of the ramp, the bow came up and I landed flat on nicely un-aerated water. Ouch. After a quick chat with Tony and Ingrid at the Rabioux campsite (they were out with Canoe Control) we headed to the Guil valley to look at Chateaux Queryas (IV-, perhaps). The river is constricted by a deep, sheer-sided, narrow gorge, creating fairly boily and powerful water. I couldn't help but feel a bit disappointed by the gorge; at the low levels we encountered it wasn't that interesting, a case of just pointing downstream and paddling through the small stoppers. Perhaps the endless horror stories about the section (one guidebook writer recommends "Stiffening the sinews before paddling!") made it an anti-climax.

Day Nine – Monday

Morning came and went and we were on the Gyronde (III- with a personally recommended weir portage) just after midday, on a day when the temperatures hit a frosty 40 Celsius [*Eh? – MS*]. Luckily, I had my drycag to keep me toasty warm. Low levels made this a bit disappointing, an attitude that the weir didn't improve. Stopped above it, a random paddler on the bank showed us the 'line' with his hand. Having seen two people go down with varying success, I headed for the same line. It would appear that the line between two boulders was a) crunchy, b) narrower than a boat and c) not really that feasible. Another swim point for rolling. We probably should have pondered why the paddler showing us the 'line' was stood on the bank carrying his boat around the weir.

Rob Byrne

For Sale

Ace plastic kayak

Blue, 4m long
With paddle

Good condition

£150 ono
Tel: 01253 895091

Derwent Water



Sunday 19th October, 2003

Paddlers: Tom, Chris, Janet, Clive, Janet, Ian, Nick, Eileen, Peter, Tony, John, Pauline, Alan, Lesley, Joanne, Stephanie, Steve, Bev and very briefly a stray dog called Molly.

Sixteen of us set off this morning from our launch point next to the landing stages at Keswick and once we were all on the water (no quick procedure itself) we made our way slowly down the eastern side of the lake. We set off in very calm weather though the clouds were clinging to the tops of some of the mountains and there was very little sunshine.

The water levels are very low at the moment and those of us paddling round to the left of Lord's Island might have found it easier to walk. We managed to paddle without actually scraping the bottom of the boats but it was a close run thing. Having met up again on the other side of the island we made our way, in a rather straggly group, towards one of the hotels at the end of the lake.

One of the books, which several of us flat waterers now own, warns of floating islands in Derwent Water apparently caused by a build up of natural gas which forces the lake bottom to

the surface. Now I don't know much physics but it strikes me that however much buoyancy a boat has it will fail to float should a giant gas bubble burst beneath it, so I paddled today half expecting to be dragged downwards by a huge, malevolent vortex – bad things always happen to me! Fortunately we didn't find any islands that floated although there was one which normally consists of just a few rocks but today was largish, flattish and covered with cormorants, a measure of just how low the water was.

As we made our rather stately progress to the foot of the lake we began to notice a swell that every now and then would increase ominously. The rather large wake created by the ferries couldn't account for all of this and under lowering skies we decided to cross the lake before the weather deteriorated enough to make life difficult (or interesting, it all depends on your point of view really). Tony felt it was already interesting enough and decided to stay on the eastern side, have his picnic and make his way back to Keswick at his own speed.



Having crossed the lake without any problems we pulled up on a long shingle beach and sat under some pine trees to have our lunch. While we were eating we noticed another couple of kayakers heading our way and watched them for a while until Tom and Chris recognized them as Steve and Bev so went down to the edge of the lake to meet them. We also half expected to see Nick and Sam when a little border terrier took an interest in our picnics. We've no idea who she belonged to but she was called Molly and although timid became quite attached to us (at least while there was food around). Joanne and Stephanie wanted to keep her; there was some suggestion that we should put her into a boat then ring her owners from the middle of the lake and ask them to come and fetch her but, in the end, we left her behind. She tried to follow us into the lake, so in a sense she did paddle with us, but it was just too chilly. Hope she found her way home, she probably lives locally and was on the scrounge.

We were paddling into a fairly stiff wind on our way back up the lake but it was a very pleasant trip all the same. The autumn colours were beautiful but just how long the leaves were going to stay on the trees is anyone's guess.

We began to cross the lake when we reached Lingholm Isands and realised Tony had the right idea all along as it was far more sheltered that side of the lake. We gradually all made our way back to the landing stages; Steve and Bev carried on back down the lake to the car park they had started from and Tony arrived back more or less the same time as everyone else.



The trudge up the slope back to the car park pretty well finished some of us off. Family commitments meant that Chris and I had to head straight for home but I believe there was an expedition into Keswick to search for a watering hole.

Janet Porter

Boat loans

Please would everybody take note of the following important points regarding loan equipment, especially boats:

You **MUST** arrange loans beforehand by phoning Steve Swarbrick, preferably on a Monday evening. It is no good just turning up at the Hand & Dagger on a Wednesday night and expecting to be able to take what you need, since other committee members cannot authorise loans if Steve is unavailable.

Loans are for **1 WEEK ONLY** unless previously arranged. If you need a boat or equipment for a Sunday trip, you are welcome to pick it up on a Wednesday and return it the next Wednesday. If you keep equipment for longer than this without arranging it with Steve then you are depriving other club members of the use of it.

Ribble CC Library

The book and video library is open to all club members, young or old, new or long-standing. I take the library to the Hand & Dagger most Wednesday nights, and if you can't get there and want a book just give me a ring or email me. Donations of books or videos are always welcome.

If you read a book and liked (or loathed) it let me know and I'll print your comments.

Technique books:

General technique

BCU Canoe and Kayak Handbook

Franco Ferrero

The Practical Guide to Kayaking and Canoeing

Bill Mattos, Andy Middleton

This book is now available in the discount book shops at £4.99, and if you want to know more about virtually all aspects of canoeing this will be money well spent.

Canoeing & Kayaking

Marcus Bailie

Kayak

William (not Bill) Nealy

Kayaking and Playboating

The Playboater's Handbook

Ken Whiting

Open Canoeing

Path of the Paddle: An Illustrated Guide to the Art of Canoeing

Bill Mason, Paul Mason

Canoeing

Laurie Gullion

Open Canoe Technique

Nigel Foster

Sea Kayaking

Sea Kayak Navigation

Franco Ferrero

Rolling

The Bombproof Roll and Beyond!

Paul Dutky

Safety

White Water Safety & Rescue

Franco Ferrero

Guidebooks:

English White Water

Franco Ferrero

Are there any of this guy's books we haven't got?

Scottish White Water

Andy Jackson

White Water Lake

District

Stuart Miller

An Atlas of the English Lakes

John Parker

Expeditions:

Blazing Paddles: A Scottish Coastal Odyssey

Brian Wilson

Dancing with Waves: Around Ireland by Kayak

Brian Wilson

Paddling to Jerusalem

David Aaronovitch

The Last River

Todd Balf

"One of the worst books I have read in a long time" (Terry Maddock)

Paddle to the Arctic

Don Starkey

"He really doesn't know what he's doing" (Martin Russell)

Canoeing across Canada

Gary & Joanie McGuffin

General:

The Rough Guide to Weather

Robert Henson

The Liquid Locomotive

John Long (ed)

Many Rivers to Run

Dave Manby, donated by Andy Dowe

Signed by Dave Manby so might be worth something!

Videos / DVDs

LVM Lunch Video Magazine (DVD)

Donated by Tom Kington

Liffey Descent (V)

Donated by Tony Moxham

Deliverance (V)

BBFC rated 18.

Extreme Sports Canoeing (V)

Donated by Terry Maddock

Well, actually, donated by somebody unknown who lent it to Terry and never got it back!

A Taste of White Water (V)

Donated by Brian Woodhouse

Competition News

Richard Draper (a 12 year old J14) has been promoted to Division 2 K1 slalom.

Having had a bad start to the season, breaking his wrist "dropping in" on his roller blades and missing most of the early events, towards the end of the season he scored a second at Oughtibridge (952 points) and a third at Sowerby Bridge (857 points). In both cases he was only beaten by seniors and a J18.

With the 741 points he scored at Stone in June his top three events give him 2550 points, 50 points more than needed for promotion.

Moving up to Division 2 will be a big step for Richard, so he is going to have to train hard over the winter. Anyone who fancies joining in with Richard please get in touch.

Jacky Draper

Editor's bit

Bumper Christmas Issue!

Well, we're nearly at the end of this bumper Christmas issue of "Tales from the Riverbank". I'm sure this is far and away the biggest newsletter we've ever produced, and I hope you have all enjoyed the variety of articles in it.

My hearty thanks go to all of you who gave me contributions to this, and indeed to all of this year's newsletters.

To those of you who haven't contributed yet, why not give it a go? You don't have to be Shakespeare to be able to tell everybody about a trip you've been on - you should see Tim's articles before I edit them into English!

The large trip reports which we publish are always interesting, but I'm sure there's a lot of trips which take place which never get a write up, so come on, put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and tell me what's been going on!

So long, and thanks...

As mentioned elsewhere, Chris Porter has been forced to resign from the committee due to pressure of work.

I, and the whole committee, would like to thank Chris most sincerely for the effort he has put into the club during his time on the committee.

I'm sure Chris won't be able to keep completely out of things, and I'm sure on Wednesday nights we'll hear him telling us in no uncertain terms what we should be doing!

Christmas greetings

On behalf of the committee, I'd like to wish everybody a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Dates and deadlines

The next committee meeting will be on January 6th at 7:30 at the Hand & Dagger. The next newsletter will be published on January 20th. All submissions to me by Saturday January 17th at the latest please.

Martin Stockdale
martin@stockdale.fsbusiness.co.uk

Pool sessions

The following lists the pool sessions booked at Fulwood Leisure Centre, the contact for the courses and the lifeguard on duty for each session. All sessions are Friday 9:00pm – 10:00pm.

Special Event: Touring & Sea boat rescue, safety and rolling

The special event on February 27th is aimed at our increasingly large and enthusiastic touring and sea kayaking sections. Flat water is often seen as safe water but many people have come to realise only too late that it can be every bit as treacherous as the moving stuff – or more so!

Steve Swarbrick will be arranging this session with the support of our more experienced touring and sea paddlers. The purpose will be to give you a chance to learn about and try out the sort of rescue and safety techniques which are specifically relevant to touring.

Paddlers of any sort of touring boat are welcome: sea or touring kayak or canoe. The only rule is that no short boats are allowed!

Special Event: Slalom Training

Jacky Draper has volunteered to pull together some proper Slalom training sessions in the early part of the new year so that our competitors are raring to go at the start of the season! If you've not tried slalom before, why not come along and give it a try – it's one of the best ways of learning boat control there is! Please could all our experienced slalom competitors give Jacky as much help as possible at these sessions.

DATE	SESSION	CONTACT	LIFEGUARD
28 th November	Polo	Phil & Lorraine Haworth	John Kington
5 th December	Polo	Phil & Lorraine Haworth	Sara Withall
12 th December	Open	N/A	Andy Rushton
9 th January	Open	N/A	Peter Benett
16th January	Slalom training	Jacky Draper	John Kington
23 rd January	Beginners Course	Tom Byrne	Sara Withall
30 th January	Beginners Course	Tom Byrne	Andy Rushton
6 th February	Beginners Course	Tom Byrne	Peter Benett
13th February	Slalom training	Jacky Draper	John Kington
20 th February	Open	N/A	
27th February	Sea/Touring Rescue	Steve Swarbrick	
5th March	Slalom training	Jacky Draper	
12 th March	Rolling Course	Bob Smith	
19 th March	Rolling Course	Bob Smith	
26 th March	Rolling Course	Bob Smith	
2 nd April	Open	N/A	

Prices: Beginners Course £20 (plus club membership)

Rolling Course £15 (plus club membership)

All other sessions (Open, polo, special) £3

Please book in advance for the Beginners and Rolling Courses by phoning the named contact.



Other	Junior Polo	Ladies Polo	Mens Polo	Advanced Slalom	Beginners Slalom	Canoe Surfing	Open Canoeing	Sea Trips	Advanced River Trips	Intermediate River Trips	Beginners River Trips	Flat Water & Lake Trips	Social Events	Hand & Dagger Keyholder	Lifeguard	Instructor or Coach	Canoe Courses	Access Agreements	General Information	Committee	Area of Interest	Contact	Telephone Number
								✓						✓								Andy Dowe	
Rolling Course																	✓					Bob Smith	
										✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓		Brian Woodhouse	
Website												✓								✓		Chris & Janet Porter	
						✓			✓	✓						✓	✓		✓			Dave Ellison	
Christmas Party			✓										✓									Ian McCrie	
	✓																			✓		Jacky Draper	
												✓			✓				✓	Treasurer		John Kington	
Library											✓			✓					✓	Secretary, Newsletter		Martin Stockdale	
Paddles Up competition			✓	✓																		Mick Huddleston	
								✓		✓												Nick Pope & Sam Turner	
				✓	✓													✓	✓	✓		Peter Jones	
			✓																			Phil Haworth	
									✓	✓												Simon Cole	
									✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	Quartermaster		Steve Swarbrick	
						✓		✓		✓					✓			✓	✓			Steve Wilkinson	
					✓						✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	Chairman		Terry Maddock	
Training Coordinator										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	Calendar		Tim Langridge	
D'Ribbler's Award (swim reports)												✓							✓	✓		Tom Byrne	

CALENDAR

Last minute trips organised at Hand & Dagger (Weds, 6:30pm onwards) or Fulwood Leisure Centre (Fri, 9:00pm).
If you have any dates for the calendar please contact **Terry Maddock**

Ribble CC organised trips are in **bold**.
Other Ribble CC events are in *italic*.

River information:

Burrs 0161 764 9649
www.activity-centre.freeserve.co.uk
Canolfan Tryweryn 01678 520826
www.welsh-canoeing.org.uk
Teeside Barrage 01642 678000
www.4seasons.co.uk
Washburn 07626 978654
yorkshire.bcu.org.uk/washburn.htm
Wharfe
yorkshire.bcu.org.uk/wharfe.htm

Trips / Events

November

23 Wharfe White Water
Hebden to Barden, N.Yorkshire
Steve Wilkinson

23 Leven Open White Water
Newby Bridge, Cumbria (£2.00)
Sten Sture (to book) 01229 582257

30 Ure Moving Water Trip
R. Ure, West Yorkshire
Brian Woodhouse

December

5 *Christmas Party*
Ferraris, Chipping Rd, Thornley
Ian McCrerie

7 **Beginners' Trip**
R. Lune, Halton, Lancaster
Terry Maddock

7 Leven Open White Water
Newby Bridge, Cumbria (£2.00)
Sten Sture (to book) 01229 582257

14 R. Greta White Water
Keswick
Grahame Coles

14 Leven Open White Water
Newby Bridge, Cumbria (£2.00)
Sten Sture (to book) 01229 582257

21 R. Crake White Water
Coniston Water to Greenod
Tony Morgan

31 / 1 New Year Barn Camp and Bonfire
Party
Wroster's Barn, East side of
Coniston Water
Steve Swarbrick

January

4 Beginners' Trip
R. Lune, Halton, Lancaster
Terry Maddock

6 *Committee Meeting*
Hand & Dagger, Catforth
Martin Stockdale

11 Kent White water (Grade 4)
R. Kent, Kendal
Tony Morgan

18 Leven White Water
Newby Bridge, Cumbria (£2.00)
Tony Davis

18 Flat Water Tour
Rufford Canal
Tom Byrne

20 *Newsletter deadline*
Martin Stockdale

25 Moving Water Practice
R. Lune, Halton, Lancaster
Tim Langridge

25 Leven Open White Water
Newby Bridge, Cumbria (£2.00)
Sten Sture (to book) 01229 582257

February

1 Beginners' Trip
R. Wenning, Bentham, N.Yorks
Terry Maddock

1 Leven Open White Water
Newby Bridge, Cumbria (£2.00)
Sten Sture (to book) 01229 582257

8 Upper Lune White Water
R. Lune, Tebay to R. Rawthey
TBA

15 Flat Water Tour
R. Derwent, York
Tom Byrne

15 Eden White Water
R. Eden, Lazonby, Cumbria
Steve Swarbrick

22 Leven White Water
Newby Bridge, Cumbria (£2.00)
Tim Langridge

26 *Annual General Meeting*
Fulwood Leisure Centre
Martin Stockdale

29 Calder Moving Water
R. Calder, Great Harwood
Brian Woodhouse

March

7 **Beginners' Trip**
R. Rothay, Rydal, Cumbria
Terry Maddock

Slalom

See www.canoeslalom.co.uk for event details

No dates for the Stafford & Stone mini slaloms yet, please check with Jacky Draper for details.

Full Slalom calendar to follow in January newsletter!

Polo