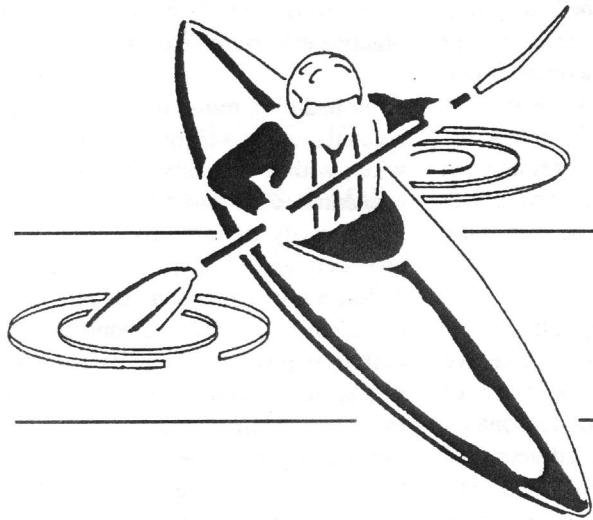

CANNEWS

APRIL 1990



RINGWOOD
CANOE CLUB

CANNEWS

The Hole In the Wall Gang

On Sunday January 14th Jill, Barry, Warner, Steve, Albert, and Nick assembled on the banks of the River Frome just outside Beckington in Somerset. The intention was to paddle downstream to the bridge at Iford Manor in Wiltshire, a distance of about six miles, shooting seven weirs and several small rapids en route.

Our instructor for the day was Colin Butler; he has now left the Mountain Stream Activities Centre on Dartmoor and is keen to organise a few 'private ventures' throughout 1990. We were joined by a couple of his friends, Ian and Nicky, who had driven all the way from South Wales just for the occasion. According to Colin, the state of the river meant that the trip would provide an ideal introduction to white water techniques. It sounded like the sort of thing some of us should have done before we braved the 'beginners' course on the River Dart last November!

The first weir that we came to proved too rocky for fibreglass kayaks, and most of us ended up carrying our craft round it. However, it did give us all the opportunity to practise the skill of backing-on to a weir in order to look over the edge before deciding whether or not to shoot it. Short of getting out and standing on the bank, this is the safest, if neck-cracking, way of examining weirs, because your forward stroke is the most powerful for getting out of trouble; or so the theory goes. Certainly the next weir presented no difficulties and everyone came over unscathed.

The famed 'Hole in The Wall' turned out to be the just that; a narrow breach in the side of a stone-walled mill leat through which most of the river was happy to flow. Shooting

this particular rapid involved more luck than judgement with everyone being instructed to paddle furiously to avoid being thrown against the stonework. The race on the other side proved ideal for practising 'ferry gliding', 'breaking in', and 'breaking out'. It also gave people a chance to rehearse their rescue drill when Nick attempted to break in and out simultaneously and promptly capsized. No sooner had he been reinstalled and left pondering whether Old Holborn really was waterproof, when Jill decided to copy him. At this point, everyone decided to move on.

The next obstacle was a water level monitoring station which takes the form of a concrete 'V' about 100 feet long. For the River Authority it provides a constant cross-sectional area to the river bed, allowing water levels to be accurately gauged. For canoeists, it provides an obstacle-free rapid with a small 'stopper' at the far end. We paused for lunch immediately below the monitoring station, and once revitalised, several members felt that it was worth carrying their kayaks back to the start of the 'V' and doing it all again.

Below the station, the Frome cuts a fairly steep-banked course through very attractive countryside. We encountered a couple of small weirs and a number of reasonably lively rapids. We also spotted a diversity of wildlife, including several kingfishers and a large mink that seemed to be out for a quiet Sunday swim.

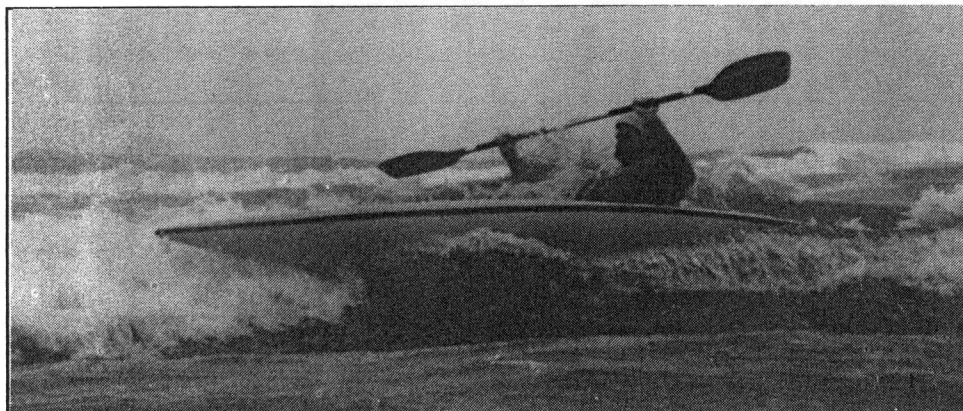
Folk Scene aficionados might be interested to know that the final leg of the journey involved paddling past Stowford Mill, the site of the Village Pump Folk Festival. This is an annual event which originated at the Lamb Inn, Trowbridge, some 17 years ago;

it moved to its present site below Farleigh Hungerford Castle about seven years ago, when the pub finally gave up trying to cope with hundreds of thirsty people demanding beer between acts.

Just downstream from the mill, there is quite a high weir. During the festival weekend in July, this normally has only a gentle trickle of water flowing over it, with a lot of rocks at its base. Things looked a little different in January! There wasn't a rock in sight, and the right-hand side had a torrent that fell about six feet. However, everyone had got into the swing of things and shot over without further ado. Everyone, that is except Albert, who for some reason decided that a suitable follow-through was to canoe parallel to the weir's base. Not that he capsized as a result. He merely vanished slowly from sight as his kayak sank beneath him under the sheer weight of water, giving those who wanted it another chance practice mid-river rescues.

After paddling round the castle mound, we sighted our last weir of the day. It was very wide, with a full flow of water that was concentrated in the middle by a brick channel - just wide enough to canoe through, provided you remembered to hold your paddle above your head. By now everyone was well-versed with the standard 'back-on, look-over, paddle-forward' safety procedure, and started working out their strategies for the shoot. Unfortunately, in an attempt to thoroughly evaluate the situation, Nick backed-on too far, and ended up going over the weir broadside on. Once the laughter had died down, the other eight paddlers came over without difficulty, but Jill, suddenly overwhelmed by a sense camaraderie again, decided to fall out of kayak in sympathy.

By now dusk was rapidly falling, so we all sprinted the last half-mile to Iford bridge. So ended a thoroughly enjoyable day. Except for Steve, who somehow gashed his hand getting the canoes out of the water, and had to visit Warminster Hospital's casualty department (brand new, for future reference) where he received a couple of stitches and an anti-tetanus jab. The doctor nearly died of apoplexy when Steve said he'd been canoeing on the Frome. Apparently it's one of the most polluted waterways in the UK and there is considerable local concern about Weil's Disease - and we all thought that bloody mink had only been out for a swim!



Barry Deakin rules the waves - OK

Nick L.

Membership Subscriptions

Members are reminded that subscriptions for 1990/91 are due on April 1st. At the AGM held on Thursday March 15th, the following subscription levels were set:

Full Member	£20.00
Junior Member	£12.50
Family Membership	£30.00

As of this year, a Junior Member is classified as any person between 12 and 18 years old on April 1st. Family membership covers husband, wife and children under 12. Also for the first time, the full cost of affiliation to the BCU will be met by the Club, hence there will be no 40p surcharge. To renew your membership, please send a cheque for the appropriate fee (made payable to **Ringwood Canoe Club**) to Alan Taylor (Hon. Treasurer), 167 Harewood Avenue, Queen's Park, Bournemouth BH7 7BJ.

Club Officers for 1990/91

At the Canoe Club AGM held on March 15th, the following committee members were elected to serve for the coming year.....

Chairman	Barry Deakin
Vice Chairman	Steve Sambell
Hon. Secretary	Glynis Marsh
Hon. Treasurer	Alan Taylor
Social Secretary	Nick Leatherdale
Equipment Officer	Warner Wallace
General Members	Paul Toynton & Peter Moreton

Barry Deakin kindly offered to continue doing his superb job of Expedition Officer, and it was agreed that the role of Membership Secretary should be combined with Hon. Treasurer - thanks Alan! Nick Leatherdale was 'press-ganged' into taking on the task of Canews Editor after it was discovered he has a professional DTP system at home, and Peter Moreton is pretty handy with the artwork - witness the photos in this issue!

A list of Club Members will be circulated during May (after it is clear how many have renewed, and any new members have joined). If you want to raise any issues for discussion in committee, please do not hesitate to contact any of the above people.

Telethon '90

The television charity Telethon '90 is being held on May 27th & 28th this year. We have decided to organise a sponsored paddle between Bournemouth and Boscombe piers in order to 'do our bit'. The distance between these points is approximately 1.7 miles and should take about 20 minutes to paddle. The objective is to complete as many 'laps' as possible and to get all your friends, neighbours, and rich uncles, to sponsor you per lap, or for a total distance!

Nick Leatherdale is contacting Bournemouth Council to find out whether or not we would clash with any other events organised for that weekend, and TVS to ask for publicity and promotional material.

The matter will be discussed at the next Committee Meeting in early April, after which, full details and sponsorship forms will be circulated. Please make every effort to give this event your full support - even if you think you cannot paddle any great distance - every penny counts!

Dates for your Diary

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| April 7th | Pool Session at 6.30pm
Waterways of Poole is lending us some plastic kayaks for evaluation - the Club is intending to purchase 2 this year - come and give 'em a try! |
| April 8th | Beginner's Day at Mudeford
Everybody who participated in recent courses at RRC is being invited to try it on open water. All Club Equipment holders are requested to ensure their equipment is there on the day - the 'plastics' will also be present. |
| April 22nd | River Avon - Longford Castle to Downton
We have permission to use 3.5 miles of water, including 3 weirs, running through Lord Radnor's estate. Contact Barry Deakin for details. |
| April 29th | Canoe Touring Trial - Basingstoke Canal
Westel Canoe Club of Basingstoke are organising this event which is open to all canoeists at £4.00 per head. Various distances are planned (from 6 to 40 miles!) and selectable according to ability. NB. This is NOT a race. Contact Barry Deakin for details. |
| May 5th | Salisbury CC Fun Day
All sorts of silly things to do on and in the water behind Grosvenor House with an open invitation to all-comers. Contact Barry Deakin for details. |
| May 13th | Isle of Wight Trip
Our perennial favourite! As usual, meet at Lepe Beach at 10.30am, lunch at the Folly Inn, and back for afternoon tea. About 5 miles each way with lots of interesting water! The escort boat will be present with limited space for non-paddlers. Contact Steve Sambell for details. |
| May 20th | Kennet & Avon Canal Trip
A re-run of the famous 'Ice-Breakers' trip (see last issue!) but without the ice this time? Meet at All Cannings at 9.30am, lunch at Wootton Rivers, and finish at Crofton Lock, approximately 4.30pm. The Engine Room at Crofton should be open this time, so lots of interest for families who may like to join us for lunch. Contact Steve Sambell for details. |
| May 27th-28th | Telethon '90 Sponsored Paddle
See article - final details and sponsorship forms will be sent later. |
| June 8th-10th | Camp & Canoe Weekend, S. Devon
Another epic from Barry. This time the intention is to start at Totnes on Friday evening, paddle to overnight campsite near Dittisham, continue down the River Dart and along Slapton Sands to Stark Point on Saturday, then up the blind estuary to finish at Kingsbridge on Sunday. Total distance is 35 miles. Members of the Brixham Canoe Club are hoping to join us, so this should be a tremendous weekend. Contact Barry Deakin before May 1st if you would like to go - experienced canoeists only!! |

A Wild West Country Weekend

Day 1: Daring the Dart

It was a wet, wintry morning as I set forth from base camp in Exeter to do battle with the River Dart in early February. Unfortunately, my compatriots starting from Fordingbridge were beaten back by the weather and couldn't make it past Winterbourne Abbas, so I was facing the prospect of our first guided tour of the infamous 'Loop' by myself.

On arriving at New Bridge I was heartened to see I was not the only idiot who had come to give it a bash; several other parties were already taking to the water, cursing themselves for being afflicted with this strange urge to test their mettle against the elements. Colin Butler duly arrived in his usual good spirits only to discover that he had forgotten to bring half of his equipment, including wet boots! Poor Liz (his wife, not mine) got quite a tongue-lashing for that.

Undaunted by the conditions and our depleted number, we set off and negotiated the first set of rapids without mishap. A week of heavy rain and gale-force winds had caused the river to rise and flow at an alarming rate, and it bore large amounts of debris to be avoided at all costs. We stopped for a breather (and a spot of ferry-gliding to build up my confidence), then disembarked to inspect the 'Washing Machine'.

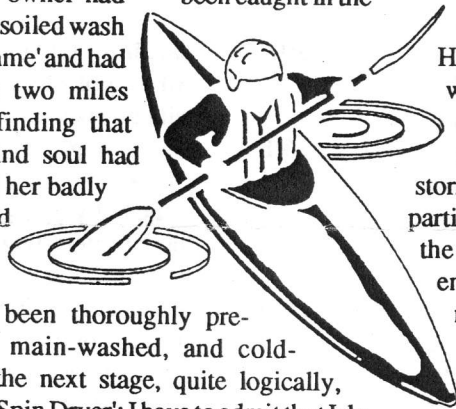
This particular feature is aptly named under normal circumstances; you know those tumble-action jobs which seem to throw your smalls every which way? Well this was nothing like it! My impression was of a voracious monster just waiting to gobble up the unwary canoeist and disgorge shredded shreddies. Another group which had set off earlier were busily debating whether to risk a mauling or choose the 'easier' route - a raging torrent racing through the trees along the bank. Colin spotted a barely wide enough chute skirting the main course and leaped into his kayak. Like Butch and Sundance jumping off the cliff, I cried "Ohhhhhh, sugar!" and followed him.

Wheee.....! What an indescribably electrifying experience. The quickening water hurled us past the gaping maw and into the maelstrom of standing waves below the stopper. As we broke out to watch others emulate the feat, I'm sure the trembling was nothing to do with the temperature; in fact, the clouds had cleared and we enjoyed brilliant sunshine beaming from an azure sky for the remainder of the day.

The next stage, 'Lover's Leap' had, by this time turned into a continuous stretch of seething cross-currents over 100 yards long. At the bottom, the water was pounding itself against a sheer cliff and astute timing was called for to break out into the biggest eddy I've ever seen. I was just congratulating myself when I hit 'funny' water and the kayak lurched alarmingly to one side. I frantically threw myself in the opposite direction only to find myself fighting for support because the current had started tipping me that way instead.

With my confidence again somewhat shaken, we continued downstream to the 'Triple Drop' - three interconnected rapids which sort of suck you in and spit out mangled remains. We watched several more hardy fools negotiate the last drop and get caught in the stopper, and thought maybe it was time to take a walk. The sight of an unmanned Aquabat being thrashed around before continuing its mad-dash descent resolved the issue. (We later discovered that the owner had been caught in the 'heavily soiled wash programme' and had to walk two miles before finding that some kind soul had beached her badly battered craft!).

Having been thoroughly pre-soaked, main-washed, and cold-rinsed, the next stage, quite logically, was the 'Spin Dryer'; I have to admit that I do not remember much about this one (I think I had my eyes shut!) except that the 'haystacks' were built like barns, and I came out of it perfectly dry. A superb high-speed break out just below Holne Bridge was the crowning glory and we dragged ourselves out with the satisfaction of knowing that, at least this time, we got away with it; the most thrilling two hours of canoeing I have ever experienced.



Day 2: Axe River Race

After a reasonably good night's sleep, I travelled to Whitford, near Axminster for the annual River Axe Canoe Race. Over two hundred canoeists in 11 classes were huddled together in gale force winds under a leaden sky to await the organisers' pronouncement - we go!

In my class, slalom under-40s (!!), 37 entrants were divided into two heats. I was drawn in the first heat and, in my usual style, set off at a great rate of knots. I vied for second place for the first mile or so, then ran out of steam and was overtaken by 3 or 4 more experienced paddlers.

I was just settling down to a steady pace when disaster struck. As we rounded one of the seemingly endless bends into the full force of the wind, a canoe less than a length ahead of me was blown sidewise and caught the bow of my kayak. I ended up staring into a bird's nest caught between two boughs of a partly submerged tree, with my kayak being sucked out from underneath me. I was not pleased, especially as I got an early bath and lost at least 10 valuable minutes recovering craft, paddle, and composure!

I restarted and soon got back into my stride. By the time I had reached Colyford Bridge, I had settled into a steady rhythm (well, as steady as possible in such awful conditions), and overhauled the tail-enders. We slogged on down the estuary towards Axmouth with 40mph winds full in our faces. Half a mile from the end, I spotted the guy who had ditched me, gritted my teeth, and went for it. I finally overtook him some 200 yards from the finish and stormed home for a time of 63m38s; not particularly good when you consider that the winner clocked only 45m51s, but enough to put me in 14th place overall - not bad for a first attempt I think!

The 'apres-slog' in the Axe Yacht Club HQ was a tumultuous affair with most of the honours being split between old rivals from Exeter, Teignbridge, and Poole Harbour Canoe Clubs. I finally departed late in the day absolutely shattered but determined to return for the 10th anniversary next February, with my sights firmly set on a place in the top 5.

Verdict: Brilliant, not to be missed!

Steve S.

Help Wanted!

The Ringwood Canoe Club celebrated its 2nd birthday recently and is now well established as a recreational and touring club (with some elements of competition and training thrown in for good measure).

The Club attracted 27 members last year (and hopes to do at least as well again this year), and now owns a good quantity of high quality equipment, including kayaks, paddles, buoyancy aids, rescue equipment, first aid kits, and training manuals. The responsibility for purchasing, storing, and maintaining this equipment, and the organisation of all the events that take place, lies in the hands of the Committee which is elected each year.

However, the members of the Committee can only function to the benefit of all members of the Club if it is aware of their needs and aspirations. One of the most difficult tasks the Committee faces is what special events to organise. Most ideas for things to do and places to go come from the dozen or so regular paddlers - and it is usually only those people who participate on the day. So please, if you think the Club is not catering to your needs, tell us what you want to do!

In a similar vein, as you can see from this issue of Canews, we are beginning to get the act together in a more professional manner - well done to all those involved! However, the newsletter isn't intended just to bring you details of next month's special events, or decisions handed down from Committee! We desperately need more people to supply more material. So, once again, if you have any news, amusing tales, articles for sale (or wanted!), or you take part in a Club Event and want to write a report, please contact Nick Leatherdale, he will be more than happy to put your name in print.

The photograph is a shot of Warner just after he had completed the second day of the Beginner's White Water Course at Hexworthy last year. Can anybody imagine what he was thinking at the time? One suggestion rather churlishly relates to the puddle! The winning entry will be published in the next issue, and awarded a prize entirely at the Editor's discretion!! All entries in writing to Nick Leatherdale or Steve Sambell as soon as you like.

Club Headquarters?

The Southern Region of the BCU has recently contacted the Club to inform us of a plan to open up one of the Blashford lakes for non-motorised watersports users.

Apparently the Sports Council is promoting the idea and is looking for organisations which would be interested in participating in this scheme. No details have been announced yet, but it is expected that a communal clubhouse and storage facilities can be provided. Nor has there been any mention yet of the cost, but it is likely that the Club would be asked to pay an annual fee for the use of the facilities.

Summer Time

British Summer Time started on Sunday March 25th and this means that the Club will now revert to its usual programme of canoeing at Mudeford on Sunday mornings starting at 10.30am, and Tuesday evenings from 6.30pm onwards.

A number of events have already been earmarked for later this year, including another great day at Lulworth Cove, a trip to North Devon for the surfing beaches, a Club Competition day, and a trip to South Wales to sample the waters of the Wye and Usk. Among the social events being organised are a New Forest Treasure Hunt, a barbecue at Barry's, and a skittles evening.

Any other ideas will be most welcome; dates and details in the next Canews

Caption Competition



Instructor Training

We have been running the adult canoe courses at Ringwood Recreation Centre for some time now but we do not have any BCU qualified instructors in the Club.

Several members should now be capable of obtaining the BCU 3-Star and Inland Proficiency Awards which are pre-requisites for gaining the Instructor Award. To this end, a 3-Star examination session is being planned with Neil Richardson of Soton University; if you think you would like to be a candidate, contact Barry Deakin for date, time and location. The Camp & Canoe Trip in June should also be a qualifying event towards the Inland Proficiency Award.

Colin Butler has also recently contacted us again to inform us that he is now a Senior Instructor and to suggest that we might like to organise some weekend training trips later in the year.

Once these basic qualifications are achieved, Instructor Training can be considered and courses at Fairthorne Manor near Eastleigh cater for this. It is to be hoped that some members will progress to this level during the year, and the Club is considering sharing the costs.



Shooting the weir at Buckfastleigh - November 1989



Limbering up before tackling the River Dart at Totnes - September 1989