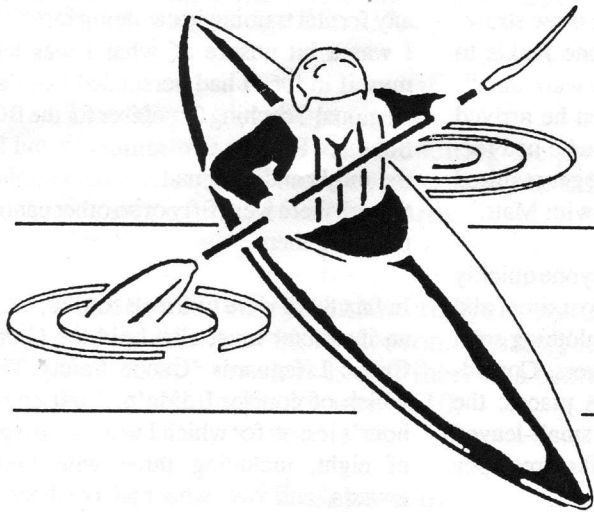


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# CANNEWS

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OCTOBER 1990



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RINGWOOD  
**CANOE CLUB**

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# CANNEWS

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## Not the Marathon (but equally as challenging)

On Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, nine canoes set off down the treacherous waters of the river Avon (well, there *might* have been a treacherous spot somewhere between Alderbury and Downton). Below are the notes of one of the survivors.

"While we were canoeing downstream the boats in front of us suddenly disappeared." O.K, so they reappeared after exploring one of the many inlets we encountered - it just doesn't make such good copy, that's all. This trip gave us all a chance to see the Avon valley from a different angle.

"The dangerous wildlife of the river attacked us." Well, we were bombarded by Mute Swans at one stage; and we had good views of Grey Herons, Little Grebes and Kingfishers.

"The experience we had gained on our white-water course on the River Dart came in handy when dealing with the stoppers and white water below the weirs." This statement is quite true. The experience we had gained on the Dart was how best to position ourselves to watch the antics of our underwater expert, Steve. He didn't disappoint us, and we were all treated to a thrilling close-up demonstration of how not to attempt rolling-up after cannoning off a brick wall.

Seriously though, this was a great day out. The event was very well attended and most people were able to try out a number of different types of canoe. If we can obtain permission to use this section of the Avon again next year, I'm sure there will be a lot of interest.

*Albert Knott*

## Rolling course

We are about to run a course that concentrates specifically on rolling techniques. Starting on Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> October, the course is being held at Ringwood Recreation Centre; it lasts for four weeks, and runs from 21.30 until 23.00.

The cost is £15-40, unless you are a member of the recreation centre, when it is reduced to £15-00. People wishing to attend must

enrol and pay for the course at the centre beforehand. Come and build up your expertise in time to forget everything when you need it on the River Dart in January.

## Kennet and Avon canal trip

There is a moral to this trip report: if you don't write things up immediately, they get a little bit hazy after five months! On the 20th of May a group that I think consisted of Matt, Reg, Albert, Nick, Steve and Warner, together with various support personnel (in the form of Jill and the two Marions) assembled at 9.30 at All Cannings bridge near Devizes and wondered what had happened to the club's Chairman.

Barry is very rarely late, so by the time it got to 10.15 we were beginning to draw straws to determine who should phone Jackie to tell her her husband had gone walk-about. The mystery was solved when he arrived and threatened to kill Albert, who had forgotten to mention that he no longer required a lift because he was coming with Matt.

The late start ensured that everyone quickly got warm trying to make up lost time, and those who had donned lots of clothing soon had to stop to remove a few layers. Considerable energy was needed in places: the canal had a thick covering of small-leaved weeds and looked distinctly like green pea soup.

At Wootton Rivers lock we were met by the support team, and adjourned to the very attractive village pub for lunch. This was followed by some slick car-swapping in order to make sure that no-one had to drive back from Crofton to All Cannings at the end of the day. We then set out on the second leg of the journey. Most of the locks that we encountered - about eight in all - were on this part of the trip, and involved landing, carrying the kayaks round the lock, and then seal-launching back into the canal.

The launching heights increased steadily as we neared Crofton, and we attracted quite an audience for the last lock of the trip. No-one capsized or even got wet until we were a few hundred yards from the finish. At which point, Albert inexplicably told Reg to stand up or get out in mid-canal (despite numerous witnesses, versions differ) and for some reason best known to himself, Reg

obeyed. Luckily, our trusty supporters were once again on hand with copious supplies of coffee and sandwiches, so he suffered no more than a minor loss of dignity.

*Nick Leatherdale*

*Postscript: after several decades of disuse, the Kennet and Avon canal was officially re-opened to the public a few months after our trip.*

## Barry undergoes examination

One sunny Sunday in May, I went to Pangbourne's 'Adventure Dolphin' - an activities centre on the river Thames - to be assessed as an instructor. Not having had any formal training in canoeing instruction, I was a bit unsure of what I was letting myself in for. I had persuaded Les Parter, Regional Coaching Organiser for the BCU Southern Region, to examine me and I was the only candidate under the spotlight, although there were fifty or so other canoeists paddling there.

In fact there were two tests to take, because an instructor must also hold the Corps of Canoe Lifeguards 'Canoe Safety Test' - which of course, I didn't. First came an hour's lesson for which I was found a group of eight, including three with two-star awards, and two who had not been in a canoe before. The river is very placid there and quite safe, so at least I was able to get them all on the water straight away. It is very hard to maintain the interest of a group of youngsters of such mixed ability and Les must have made considerable allowance for that in my favour.

Having covered a few basic strokes and played a strenuous game of tag, Les took me aside to assess my canoeing ability - of which he was quite critical. Apparently some of my strokes are not quite as they appear in the text books.

On then to safety aspects, and to warm up I had to swim across the Thames and back in my clothes and spray deck! That was followed by a few deep-water rescues and then another swim, this time towing my boat.

While I was on the bank emptying the canoe I was told that I would have to rescue a

# Ringwood Canoe Club

## Some dates for your diary

### **Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> August**

Come and practice seal-launching off the side of Mudeford Quay! This event will take place provided that the quay-to-water distance proves suitable on the evening. 18.30 onwards.

### **Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> September**

Pool session at Ringwood Recreation Centre. 18.30 to 20.00.

### **Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September**

A proficiency-level trip to the Isle of Wight. Meet at Keyhaven at 10.00, and remember to bring a packed lunch. If the weather permits, we will paddle round the Needles and along the coast to Freshwater. The round trip will be about 15 miles, and it must be emphasised that only experienced canoeists should contemplate this event. Further details from Barry Deakin on Fordingbridge 655325.

### **Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> September**

If you survived the seal-launching the previous Tuesday, come and review rescue procedures - the evening will be devoted entirely to safety on and in the water. Remember to bring a wetsuit for this event. 18.30 onwards.

### **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> September to Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September**

Weekend trip to North Devon. Surfing/coastal water canoeing, with the possibility of descending the river Exe if there has been any significant rain by then. Contact Paul Toynton for details on Rockbourne 510.

### **Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September**

Pool session at Ringwood Recreation Centre. 18.30 to 20.00.

### **Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> September**

The RCC's annual New Forest Treasure Hunt. Contact Glynis Marsh for details on Ringwood 475514.

### **On-going events**

Tuesday evenings and Sunday mornings (unless replaced by specific events) at Mudeford Quay. Remember that car parking on Sundays can be difficult unless you arrive fairly early - it's usually crowded by 10.00 at this time of year.

And finally: a life-saving club operates at the pool at Ringwood Recreation Centre on Saturday evenings, from 17.30 to 18.30. Anyone is welcome to turn up and join in, and it only costs £1-50 per session. Try it - it's good fun and may be useful one day!

### **Next committee meeting**

Would all RCC committee members please note that the next committee meeting is at 20.00 on Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> September at the Ringwood Recreation Centre.

swimmer. I was casually getting back into the canoe when I realised the 'swimmer' was already drowning! With no time to fit the spray deck I paddled off and the 'tired swimmer' clutched the back of my canoe. I suggested he crawl onto the rear deck but he had a better idea. With a grin like a Cheshire cat he reached across the deck and tried to roll me in. Of course, support strokes aren't much use without a spray deck, so he won and we were both swimming. Towing a canoe and paddle and a 'tired swimmer' definitely is hard work and I shan't forget his face quickly. Anyway, we got there and I gave him resuscitation and again emptied the canoe.

Les still wanted me to show that I could carry a swimmer on the deck, so he asked the lad to climb aboard and behave, while I

ferryed him across

the river and back. Halfway across, with the Cheshire cat on the stern, Les called to me to go to deal with another incident, this time a Canadian canoe upturned, but with no bodies in sight. I paddled alongside and found an 'unconscious' man underneath, pulled him out and somehow, with the aid of the cat, got him onto the rear deck as well. Canoes don't travel too well with three-up, particularly when the bow is about two feet out of the water! We got back to the bank though and, after more demonstrations of the kiss of life, etc, I was a ready for a beer.

First though, Les checked my kit, which was fortunately still dry, and we filled in the necessary forms, tied a few knots and chatted about my experience in general. He was very helpful, and the day was good fun despite the hard work. I would thoroughly recommend the canoe safety test for all canoeists of about three-star level - let me know if you are interested and I'll try to organise the training.

Barry Deakin

## Totnes-Kingsbridge

8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> June

It looked like being a really wet weekend as I drove down to Devon on the Friday afternoon in pouring rain to meet Barry and Steve, but in fact it turned out really fine and all those paddlers who did not come missed a superb trip.

We met in Totnes about 7 o'clock and began the job of getting all the camping gear and food into the canoes. We had packed it all in trials (Editor's note: are they really waterproof?), but it was not quite the same on the night. We managed the loading at last, and set off downstream and were soon in heavy rain. However, the sight of a double rainbow arching across the river more than compensated for this, and soon the weather cleared.

After about an hour and a half, we had reached Barry's old campsite, but time marches on and things change. Barbed wire prevented access to the old field and the wind was driving straight onto the shore, so we crossed the river to find a better site. We soon had our tents up and with a fire still burning from someone else's barbecue, dinner was quickly prepared.

We woke early on Saturday and had breakfast and loaded by 7.30, reaching Dartmouth before the shops were open, so no bread, only fresh water. We were soon out of the river and paddling south, with marvellous views of the cliffs and nesting birds: Fulmars, Gulls, Shags and Kittiwakes. This is the way to see the coast, with lovely beaches - some of which we stopped at briefly - including one for lunch where we found plenty of dry wood to brew tea. Barry said that there was never any difficulty finding wood for fires, something we reminded him about later.

The sea was calm and Barry was determined to catch our supper, so he towed a fishing line behind him all day. We saw people catching fish from the beach and from boats all the time, but they obviously didn't like canoes as there was nothing to show for the effort at the end of the day. Fortunately, we weren't depending totally on his prowess and when we reached a superb beach on Start Point at about 4 o'clock, we decided to stay there for the night as we were making very time.

It took about two hours to find enough wood to cook our supper - good job we didn't have too many fish - and then we had to put up the tents using large stones instead of pegs because we were camping on shingle.

The cliffs here are owned by the National Trust, and they are covered in bracken and short grass, with masses of wild flowers and

nesting Stonechats and Meadow Pipits. After supper we walked up onto the headland. As darkness fell, a huge fleet of yachts - obviously in a race - started to pass and this continued until it was dark, creating a magnificent spectacle with over 40 boats in sight at any one time, their lights drifting past and out into the distance.

Saturday was even better, with glorious sunshine, but Steve had a bad back from camping the night on the hard ground and consequently didn't enjoy the paddling quite so much. Luckily, we didn't have too far to go on this last leg. Barry's determination was at last rewarded with a Pollock which he cooked over the lunchtime fire, and after this we paddled up to Kingsbridge - arriving too early for both Jackie and the tide.

As we could not get ashore in the town we walked up a lovely lane full of flowers (I listed over 40 species from memory when we got home) and then headed up to Kingsbridge as the tide came in. The mud in the river is very thick and very sticky and there was no way ashore for about an hour; Jackie found this particularly amusing, seeing us sitting in the middle of the town on our canoes. Let me hasten to say that this minor hitch was not due to lack of foresight, but to us arriving earlier than the original plan had catered for.

We loaded all the boats on Jackie's car and were soon back in Totnes, which was only about twelve miles away. And we had paddled 35 miles to get there! The long way round but this was a great weekend. Don't miss the next trip.

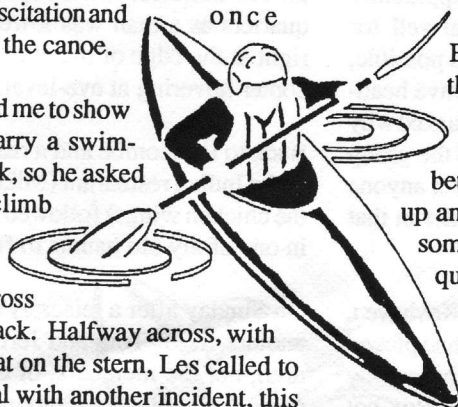
Paul Toynton

## BCU awards

Anyone who would like to train for, or be assessed for, any of the BCU awards should contact Barry. As a qualified instructor, he is able to assess candidates for one- and two-star awards, and can arrange for other tests with a number of senior instructors.

## Life-saving club

A life-saving club operates at the pool at Ringwood Recreation Centre on Saturday evenings, from 17.30 to 18.30. Anyone is welcome to turn up and join in, and it only costs £1-50 per session. Try it - it's good fun and may be useful one day!



## Keyhaven to Freshwater, I.O.W. (& eventually back)

Since this was billed as a proficiency-level trip only suitable for experienced canoeists, I should have known better than to put my name down for the event. And having put my name down, I should certainly have known better than actually turn up at Keyhaven on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September.

Anyway, after checking that we were suitably equipped with warning flares and spare Mars Bars, Barry, Matt, Warner, Albert and yours truly set our sights firmly on The Needles and paddled down the river and out through the salt marshes. After rounding the spit at Hurst Castle, we had a very pleasant journey across The Solent - the weather was superb - and stopped at Alum Bay so that Warner could start devouring his lunch two hours too early.

Then on round The Needles to the south side of the island. The chalk cliffs between here and Freshwater are spectacular: they are some of the highest sea cliffs in this part of the country and drop absolutely vertically, which means there is no chance of resting up on the shore because there isn't one. However, after paddling past a completely white wall in brilliant sunshine for what seemed like (and probably was) hours, some of us started to hallucinate. Mind you, I'm pretty sure that I actually did see Tennyson strolling along the top of that cliff.

Other than keeping up a steady stroke and making sure that the white wall was always on your left, it was pretty difficult to know if you were making any headway - Freshwater is set in a bay that is completely hidden from view until you arrive. However, we found some very interesting sea caves just prior to the cove - and the experience of canoeing out of a dark hole and into the sunlit edge of a wave was something that everyone felt obliged to try.

After lunch and a pint at Freshwater, the group started the long haul back along the coast. The trip was made more arduous by a stiff North-Westerly wind, but everyone arrived back at the The Needles in good spirit. We had another very good and uneventful paddle across the Solent, until we were a couple of hundred yards off-shore from Hurst spit. At which point all hell

broke loose! The combination of tide, wind and shallow water created extremely turbulent conditions that in the space of about 15 minutes had everyone mentally reviewing their capsize drill. Everyone except Warner (who seemed intent on heading off to Milford on Sea) took a straight line for the shore and beached their craft while they recovered their composure and breath.

Barry was within an ace of launching back into the meleé to see what had happened to Warner when he appeared round the edge of the castle, carrying his kayak. Apparently he hadn't heard Barry's original yell for people to get ashore as quickly as possible, and had decided to tackle each wave head-on to avoid capsizing. And when asked why he hadn't seen where the rest of the group was going, said "you didn't expect anyone to risk glancing over their shoulder in that lot, did you?".

A slow paddle back up the river to Keyhaven, the usual review to discover who had picked up parking fines, and so ended a thoroughly exhausting but enjoyable day. But not before Albert and I had awarded each other medals - for survival skills, not proficiency.

*Nick Leatherdale*

## N. Devon week-end September 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>

Five club members plus Sheila and the three girls drove down to Ilfracombe on Friday with some difficulty, due in the author's unbiased opinion to their poor navigation not the instructions† (supplied by me). Albert and I joined them by 9.30 on Saturday morning to find them all finishing breakfast and very comfortable in the flat with the children (not our members, of course) watching Tom and Jerry cartoons on the videos provided by our landlady.

Woolacombe was our chosen surfing beach for the first day, and we arrived there to find a rather broken surf with the wind in the north west and the tide falling quickly. This meant a long walk when getting out and also made launching difficult, because by the time the spray deck was on the water had disappeared. The waves were not huge, but big enough to be exciting and to cause all of us some difficulty. We spent a few hours in the sea, with a brief stop for some lunch, and by the time we called it a day we were all cold and getting tired. Everyone had cap-

sized a few times and I think most people had got out at least once. Mike unfortunately had a badly swollen wrist and was not able to continue after lunch, saving himself further duckings.

By 3 o'clock we were on our way round the coast (by car) and had found food in Croyde, with Albert tucking in to a proper cream tea. After this we all walked round Baggy Point, the superb headland to the south of Woolacombe, from where we inspected the surf at Croyde and were treated to a display from the Air-Sea Rescue helicopter at very close quarters as a man was lowered to the sea right at the edge of the cliff, with the helicopter hovering at eye-level.

Back to Ilfracombe and a really good meal in the Indian restaurant (Mike recommends the chicken wings) followed by a few beers in one of my old haunts to finish the day.

On Sunday after a leisurely breakfast (and another fix of Tom and Jerry for the children, not the members, of course) we decided that rather than canoe near Ilfracombe we would prefer more surfing and as the sea had looked better at Croyde, we went there for the day. The surf was more regular than it had been the day before, but still quite broken and there were some big waves, quite enough to capsize most of us fairly frequently and even Peter a couple of times. It was really exciting and I found as usual that it was difficult to stop. "Just one more good one and then I'll finish", so that by the end we were all cold and tired.

Back to the flat for coffee and to say goodbye to the Redmonds who had been so friendly, and then off home, leaving Mike and Peter to stay another night. I for one am looking forward to the next visit and wish we could surf like this nearer to home.

*Paul Toynton*

† Publisher's note: actually, this was the most challenging part of the entire weekend. Whilst Glynis does a great job organising treasure hunts, Paul beats everyone hands-down for cryptic clues! And the rest of did wonder why Paul and Albert didn't turn up until the Saturday.....

## Club discounts

Strand Canoe Centres (part of the Scott Bader company) are offering a 10% discount on canoeing equipment to all RCC members. For further details, contact Peter Ganfield at Strand.  
(☎ Portsmouth 210093).