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# CANEWS

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**Autumn 1992**

## Dart Estuary Camping Weekend

Having had one trip thwarted by bad weather and lack of available members, I was determined to show off my beloved Dart Estuary before this wonderful summer drew to a close.

We finally got it together in September and rounded up five paddlers prepared to take a chance on the weather - next year Peter? Listen out for the long range forecast and let me know which weekend to plan on.

Steve, Colin and Mike made an early start and paddled from Totnes, the head of the 12-mile tidal estuary, to Sharpham Point, about three miles downstream. The river meanders round great sweeping bends through a steep-sided, wooded valley and this spot makes a very attractive camp site. It is not quite isolated from civilisation, there being a small boathouse opposite, but nowhere is perfect! Beverley, having a real job, had to work until five so I went with her to act as guide in the dark - and yes, it was dark. We set off from Totnes at 9 o'clock with a half moon for company, although once we got to the hilly stretches it spent much of its time in hiding. Bev was a bit apprehensive - it being only her fourth time in a kayak, and paddling in those conditions you feel as though you are going into a void. You can't see anything beyond the end of your boat and have to navigate by the shape of the hill tops. Wonderful! The advance party had a hearty fire going to welcome us, though they later admitted it had taken about three hours to get it going, and we sat round it for some time listening to the owls and the occasional intrusion of party boats - some even with live music.

On Saturday we paddled to Dartmouth in fine weather, via Stoke Gabriel, an old fishing and farming village half-way down the estuary. We went ashore at Dartmouth to stretch stiff legs and take on lubrication at the Cherub, the oldest pub in town. Bev disgraced herself by leaving a soggy spot on her seat - something to do with a leaky spray deck, she said.

We paddled downstream past the castles guarding the river mouth and went ashore on a small beach for lunch. The wind was fresh outside the river and this coast is very rocky with some dangerous headlands, so we didn't venture outside but returned up river at a leisurely pace against the tide. We camped

on Saturday night at Pighole Point where there is a small patch of grass at the top of a beach laden with firewood. Mike was quite excited about this as his legs hadn't recovered from his previous day's wood gathering expedition through the Sharpham brambles. I set about preparing the 'mixed grill' only to find that the liver was off (the water was obviously too warm to keep the kayak at its usual low temperature), so we had an un-mixed grill instead. At least we had plenty of good vegetables to go with the sausages. Bananas seemed to feature at every meal this weekend, and to round this one off we barbecued some - to be recommended, yum.

The rain started at dusk so we didn't get such a good evening round the campfire, but the river has a charm even in bad weather, with curlews and herons (Oh yes - and disco boats) breaking the silence.

That was the start of a long night for Mike, who was camped in a very suspect-looking tent which he had borrowed from someone who 'didn't want it back'! The rain went through the flysheet with hardly a pause, and didn't even notice the inner tent in its determination to get through Mike's sleeping bag. The rest of the party were in three man tents - warm, dry and with room to spare, but Mike was too much of a gentleman (well, too daft actually) to disturb anyone's sleep by squeezing into a dry space.

By morning, Mike was cold and shrivelled in his pond, and couldn't even find a dry match to rekindle the fire. Eventually though, the rest of us crawled, stretching, from our cosy cocoons and put him out of his misery with a light for his cigarette and his fire. Next time wake us up Mike, or borrow a better tent.

The rain continued on and off for most of the day but the paddle was pleasant nevertheless, back up past Stoke Gabriel and then a diversion up Bow Creek, one and a half miles of quiet backwater. At the navigable limit is the Maltsters Arms, now run by Floyd the drinking chef of TV fame. He filled our water bottles in person, undeterred by me in dripping canoeing kit on the threshold of his dining room, although he did point out "for future reference" that there is a tap on the quay!

We found a sheltered spot at the entrance to Bow Creek where the wind, now blowing about force six, couldn't get us, and ate the last of our rations - and some more of the bananas - then we paddled back to Totnes with mixed feelings: I am always sorry to

leave the river as it is where I spent much of my youth, some were coming under its spell I think, and would like to have stayed longer, others were glad to rest and dry out!

I would like to go again next year, perhaps with more people - who would like to come?  
*Barry*

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## Bank Account

The club has always banked at Lloyds, which has a ruling for clubs and societies with cheque accounts: they insist upon a standing charge of £2.50 per statement and 75p per transaction. This has cost the club a significant amount over the years, so I went to my branch and complained. This brought the desired effect and the Manager offered me an Instant Savings Account in the club's name. This has no charges and earns interest! A cheque book is not part of the deal, but I can write a cheque from my personal account and transfer money between the accounts without difficulty.

Cheques for subscriptions should still be made payable to Ringwood Canoe Club - keep them coming.

*Barry (in his role as Acting Treasurer)*

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## Essential Words

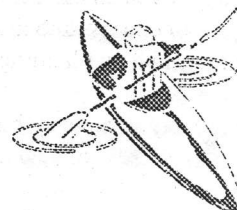
If any members would like to borrow a copy of the BCU Handbook - which is packed with useful information - they should contact Barry, who also has a variety of propaganda from other clubs and equipment suppliers.

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## Riveting Pictures

I have bought a copy of the video of the kayak surfing championships taken at Thurso last year, so if anybody would like to borrow it and frighten themselves silly, they'll have to be jolly nice to me and buy me lots of drinks.

*Sally Campbell*





## Sea Touring Week

Any of you already planning your summer hols (as I believe real people do) and not already the proud possessor of a sea kayak may be interested to hear a little about the sea touring week which I went on in August this year. The course was held at the National Watersports Centre, Plas Menai.

The course was for five days from Sunday night to Friday night, and there were seven punters and two instructors. On the Monday, which was calm and sunny, we spent a slightly frustrating morning being lectured by the head instructor - nice chap, shame about the hot air - on how the most important thing was to enjoy ourselves. We finally made it on to the water at lunch time for a pleasant afternoon in plastic general purpose canoes, rock hopping along the coast from Rhos Colyn, on Anglesey, lunching with seals and enjoying the beautiful scenery. Although there was hardly any wind, there was enough swell coming in to frolic about over the rocks and in the caves and generally do the boats no good at all!

By the next day it was a different story. We were all twitching to try out the sea kayaks, but the wind was now blowing force 7 from the south west, so the only place we could go with safety was in the Menai Straits. Here at least it was relatively sheltered but still far from ideal for learning to manoeuvre these unwieldy machines. We did our best in the few smooth spots that we could find, trying to effect a turning circle of less than 100 yards! Some boats were a lot easier than others.

On the third day, the wind was a good old fashioned gale and our instructors decided that, with all the wealth of experience of sea kayaking we had acquired the previous day, we were now ready to take them out in the surf. We were duly bussed off to a beach on the south coast of Anglesey and pushed out into the oggin into the teeth of the gale, with surf as far as the eye could see. It didn't seem to me that these were quite the right craft for the conditions, but I was assured that it is required experience to know how to cope if accidentally caught out in breaking waves. My success on the day was such that I resolved to direct huge inputs of energy into listening to the weather forecast when planning a trip!

Thursday, thankfully, was grey but glassy calm, and we did a coastal paddle along the north of the island, the day's excitements

being provided by a battle against a tide race opposed by a swell round a headland, and riding the overfalls off Middle Mouse Island.

Friday was at last hot and sunny again, and our final trip was island hopping from Abersoch on the Llyn Peninsula. More seals and caves and glorious blue water.

Overall, I enjoyed the week very much, even though the conditions on two of the days were marginal. There were seven or eight different types of sea kayak and we all got a chance to try them all, which provided some interesting comparisons. It was not cheap (about £190), but that included absolutely everything except the beer. The food and accommodation were excellent, the centre is in a beautiful location, but the really superb feature was THE DRYING ROOM - Hexworthy take note - an open barn in January isn't good enough for me any more!

*Sally Campbell*

## Canoeing Equipment

There are no good specialist canoe shops within about 100 miles of Ringwood, but the following list shows suppliers who carry limited stocks of equipment. If you know what you want, mail order from one of these or direct from the manufacturer is always an option.

### *Andark Diving & Watersports Ltd*

256 Bridge Road  
Lower Swanwick  
Southampton  
☎ 0489-581755

Very good for wetsuits and clothing.

### *D&S Marine*

10 Seddul Bahr  
Allington Lane  
West End  
Southampton  
☎ 0703-473379

Probably the cheapest glass reinforced plastic kayaks in the country. Very cheap kayak repairs. Supplied the club's four Reflex kayaks. No equipment except paddles and spraydecks. Discount to club members.

### *The Boat Shop*

9 The Colonnade  
Woolston  
Southampton  
☎ 0703-449338

Mainly sailing dinghy equipment, but also some canoeing gear.

### *Woodmill Canoeing & Activities Centre*

Woodmill Lane  
Swaythling  
Southampton  
☎ 0703-555993

Canoeing courses, BCU-registered. Some canoeing gear in stock and reliable advice on hand. Discount to club members. Need to phone to determine opening hours. Good selection of plastic boats to try out.

### *Scott Bader Centre*

Unit 12  
Fitzherbert Spur  
Farlington Industrial Estate  
Portsmouth  
☎ 0705-210093

Strand glassfibre regional distributor. Canoes and equipment mainly to order, little held in stock. Supplied club's Europa and Falchion. Discount to members.

### *Alpine Wave*

62 Lagland Street  
Poole  
☎ 0202-677523

Under new management (previously known as Waterways). Now reported to be carrying wider range of canoeing equipment. Needs checking out by members - feedback appreciated.

### *Bobs Boatshop*

428 Bourmemouth Road  
Parkstone  
Poole  
☎ 0202-736704

Small boat chandlery with some canoes and basic gear, such as helmets.

### *The CanoeStore*

Queen Street  
Emsworth  
☎ 0243-372234

Specialises in Canadian canoes, but also carries a good selection of kayak equipment. Reliable advice.

### *Discount Wetsuit Centre*

350 Ringwood Road  
Parkstone  
Poole  
☎ 0202-740646

If you know of any other local suppliers, please pass the details on to Nick so that we can maintain an up-to-date list.

## Forthcoming events

*S Wales!*

### **Devon white water weekend**

*20th to 22nd November*

The annual trip to Perth-y-Pia in South Wales for some white water kayaking, with instruction by Colin Butler. Members wishing to go on this should by now have paid a deposit to Steve Sambell. As this newsletter went to press, there were just a few places left - contact Steve now if you want to come.

### **Pool session**

*Saturday 12th December*

Ringwood Recreation Centre, from 18-30 to 20-00.

### **Kennet & Avon canal**

*Sunday 13th December*

A trip of some 9 to 10 miles, with a pub lunch. Starting at lock 88 (just to the east of Newbury and to the right of the race course) and paddling about 5 miles to a canal-side pub known as the Row Barge, near lock 94. After lunch, we will paddle on past lock 97 to Ufton swing bridge, which should provide easy egress. Full details - including start time and map - from Colin.

### **Pool session**

*Saturday 9th January*

Ringwood Recreation Centre, from 18-30 to 20-00.

### **Beer and skittles**

*Friday 15th January*

Beer and skittles evening at the Churchill Arms, Alderholt. From 18-30 onwards. Bar food available.

### **Pool session**

*Saturday 13th February*

Ringwood Recreation Centre, from 18-30 to 20-00.

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## Beginners' course

We are currently running another beginners' course at Ringwood Recreation Centre. Each session is held on a Saturday evening from 18-30 to 20-00. The dates are: 31st October and the 7th, 21st and 28th November. Please come and lend a hand with instruction if you are available on any of these evenings. The 21st will need someone who isn't going on the Perth-y-Pia trip to provide instruction.

## Rolling course

We have organised another rolling course at Ringwood Recreation Centre. Like the beginners' course, each session will be held from 18-30 to 20-00 on a Saturday evening. The dates are the 16th, 23rd and 30th January and the 6th February 1993. Please advertise the course to anyone you think may be interested, and again, come and lend a hand if you can.

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## White Water Weekend - River Dart

There were only five takers for last month's River Dart trip: Barry, Nick, Andy, Richard and me. It seems to be one of life's paradoxes that when the weather is glorious - which it was - then canoeing is generally unexciting as there is no water in the river and no surf on the beach! That said, it was quite exciting enough for me, being only my second white water trip, even though it was paddled over the same stretches of river as the previous one, so I had vague memories of what was likely to happen next!

On the Saturday we paddled from Holmbridge to Buckfast. It was a stunningly beautiful day which, for me, more than made up for the lack of water in the river as we bumped and scraped our way over the rocks. The state of the waves and stoppers was perceived as pretty pathetic by most of the company, but I only found one that was pathetic enough for me to have a go in! However there were plenty of other distractions in the way of wild life and the autumn colours, and the concentration of trying to master bow rudder which had confounded me on the previous trip.

On the Sunday it was obvious that there would be no surf at Bantam, so although this had been conceived as a combined white water and surfing trip, we went and paddled the Loop - from Newbridge to Holmbridge. Again, the weather was wonderful and it was a privilege to be on such a beautiful river, even if it did have a canoeist stuffed into its every crevice. By the end of the day I had seen my first kingfisher, Andy had jumped off his bridge and Richard had succeeded in turning his canoe into a sieve, so a good time was had by all.

*Sally Campbell*

## Moving Water Techniques

The following notes on breaking-in techniques have been extracted from a series of teaching exercises developed by Pete and Lynne Whitfield, who kindly gave Canews permission to reproduce them here for the benefit of members.

### **Point 1 - Heel of boat**

Exercise A: edging practice in an eddy - "lift upstream knee".

Exercise B: paddling across eddy-lines with varying degrees of heel.

- (i) positive upstream heel
- (ii) neutral heel
- (iii) negative upstream heel, to 'dip' the stern.

### **Point 2 - Speed of approach**

Exercise A: paddling across eddy-lines with varying speeds of approach, but with a constant angle of approach.

- (i) slow - eddy-line spin
- (ii) medium - fast turn, near bank
- (iii) fast - slow turn, far bank

### **Point 3 - Angle of approach**

Exercise A: paddling across eddy-lines with varying angles of approach, but with a constant speed of approach.

- (i) 0-20 degrees - no turn
- (ii) 20-45 degrees - slow turn, far bank
- (iii) 45-70 degrees - fast turn, near bank
- (iv) 70-90 degrees - eddy-line spin

### **Point 4 - Trim of boat**

Exercise A: paddling across eddy lines, varying the position of trunk, forward and aft.

- (i) forward lean - bow catches, fast turn, near bank
- (ii) backward lean - stern holds, slow turn, far bank

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## Thames Camping Trip

Initial reports from our Lechlade correspondent suggest that this trip was a great success. There will be a full report from Bev in the next issue of Canews (she won't know until she reads this, but this edition went to press while she was writing it up!).