



CANEWS

March 2006

EDITOR'S CORNER

THANKS FOR THE ARTICLES!

It's nice to see a variety of contributions to this edition.

DON'T FORGET THE WEB SITE – the event list is kept up to date and the notice board, trip reports, etc. are there for you to fill !

www.ringwood.canoe.btinternet.co.uk

+ - the photos are in colour – by the time this has been through the photo-copier it loses so much!!

NEW FORMAT AND AVAILABLE ON-LINE

Apologies, but I have decided, at long last, to simplify things and produce this *Canews* (and future editions) in A4 format rather than A5 Booklet form. While perhaps visually less attractive it does make editing and production simple. Issues will be available in Acrobat pdf format for download direct from the web site (right hand click and select save as)

CAPTION COMPETITION

Visit the web site for the Caption Competition



"I can still remember the days when I didn't need any help to get her trousers off in the car park"

Barry.

Dot was anxiously trying to work out how she was going to fit the third leg she'd mysteriously grown into her two legged pair of trousers!

Paul B

GENE17'S ADVENTURE PADDLER'S WEEKEND

Held at the River Dart Country Park 3/4th December 2005.

This was the 3rd year that Andy and I had made a weekend of it – and this year was blessed with fine river levels.

Over a good breakfast on the Saturday Morning we settled on a plan to run the Dart from Two Bridges all the way to the RDCP (i.e. West Dart > Upper > Loop). 8 of us piled into two vehicles and headed up into the moors. Despite a speedy launch on to the West Dart some busy body farmer travelling by in his tractor yelled at us and dragged out his mobile to phone the Ranger. I tried to blag it but Alex and I (the two drivers) were reluctant to brazen it out and leave our vehicles on his land. Consequently we drove off to meet the other 6 (who paddled the river) at Dartmeet. Frozen by the time the others arrived, Alex and I were keen to get moving - for a classic high run of the Upper. The levels kept us focused and active. We had 3 swims within the party, (and some long boat chases) so it took some time to reach Newbridge. The Loop always proves a bit of a letdown (or grind) after a good Upper run and so we ended the day pounding non-stop down to the Country Park, warmth, food, and let the entertainment begin.

Simon Westgarth (Gene17) had laid on an excellent show – starting with a slide show from John Miles (Dart Photos) of some Loop paddlers that day. Rob Coffey followed, premiering a new film from North Norway. Tim Maud (Palm Equipment) talked us through the design of PDF's and Bob Campbell (Pyranha) took us through boat construction from Plug to Production. This was followed by an Open Forum Questions from the floor, hosted by Olli Grau with Ed Cornfield, Tom Parker, Rob Coffey & Dave Carroll. Mark Rainsley gave a slide show of his trip to Bolivia, and Rob Tulley gave a talk on the British Universities Expedition to KYRGYZSTAN. The whole evening was made doubly entertaining through Dave Carroll's clowning style.

Sunday, and the levels had dropped a few feet to a low-side of medium. The Erme was too low and so it was another Upper run (a more mellow paddle than the Saturday but still giving us the usual buzz)



It all proved a top weekend – I would strongly suggest that you put this in your diaries for next year.

G

JULIAN BUTLER MEMORIAL RACE 4/12/2005

Support for this race, normally held in June, has been dwindling in recent years and this summer a combination of bad weather and lack of enthusiasm resulted in it being postponed. It has always been a circumnavigation of Hengistbury Head, but someone had the bright idea of

changing the course to avoid a long portage and paddling in the open sea, and it was rescheduled for the first Sunday in December.

It was a bright, frosty morning with a very high tide and idyllic calm water in the harbour. 13 people turned up with 10 boats between them, including old white water and touring kayaks, sea kayaks and open canoes. This mixture, combined with a slightly longer course, warranted some careful guesswork on the part of the self-appointed handicapping official (me). I expected a winning time of about 55 minutes, 5 or 10 minutes longer than for the traditional course. With a bit of discussion it was agreed that Mike, Dot, Bev, Paul Toynton and Dave Chadwick, all in short kayaks would go together, with me Jake and Lee in a club Canadian. Dave and Annie would leave 5 minutes later in their Canadian, then Ross, Georgia and Ros, in their sea kayaks, 10 minutes after that.

Paul and Dave C. quickly demonstrated their competitive spirit and went across the harbour as if the price of a round was at stake. Bev, Mike and Dot variously potted, chatted and watched the birds. They had come "just for the paddle" and all were equally determined not to display any competitive tendencies. Dave R. was still trying to recover from a knee operation that had him devoid of exercise for months and Annie was still suffering the after effects of a debilitating bout of flu or similar, so they were definitely off their potential pace. Ros decided that she was sufficiently senior to deserve a better handicap, or got bored waiting, so she left a few minutes before Ross and Georgia. Lee was having an off day so he didn't get his paddle wet until we got to Christchurch, and it didn't stay wet for long, so we were a man and boy team struggling to maintain harmony, a reasonable pace and a straight line, while Lee ate his crisps.

The course took us up the harbour, around the circuit formed by the two branches of the Avon that divide downstream of the Christchurch bypass and re-combine after flowing beneath Bridge Street, then back down the harbour to the start point at Mudeford Quay. The Avon circuit could be paddled either way and my crew were very confused, with some paddlers passing us going "the wrong way" and then appearing ahead of us again in the harbour.

The very high spring tide had started to ebb, and the flow was increased by floodwater, particularly from the Stour, so I had to work hard to make any progress at all just downstream of Christchurch, and again going upstream through the small arches beneath Bridge Street.

The late starters never did catch the determined paddlers at the front and Dave took line honours, but Ros surprised herself with by far the best time. Not bad for an old timer Ros! Bev, Dot and Mike resolutely abstained from competitive paddling, at least they did until they heard Ross and Georgia catching them a few boat lengths from the line. Then all hell broke loose, and all five crossed the line together in a blaze of whirling paddles and spray.

The sun stayed out, the air warmed up, and we enjoyed a sociable pint on the Quay. All agreed it was a much better event than the traditional course, and I think it might become a permanent fixture in the diary, perhaps at a warmer time of year to encourage more to come "just for the paddle".

The individual times in order of finishing were:

Dave Chadwick, winner	57 minutes
Paul Toynton	59 minutes
Ros White	51 minutes
Barry, Jake & Lee Deakin	64 minutes
Bev Deakin	70 minutes

Dot Tilley	70 minutes
Mike Farden	70 minutes
Ross Macildowie	55 minutes
Georgia Newsome	55 minutes
Dave & Annie Ratford	71 minutes, including photographic interludes.

Barry.

GOING DEEP ON THE EAST LYN



Andy and I joined Dave, Cheryl and Ron for an entertaining run down the East Lyn in December

PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR : NAVIGATION IN THE HARBOUR ENTRANCE AND SMALL BOAT CHANNEL

The entrance to Portsmouth Harbour is potentially hazardous because of the amount and type of shipping. It is also a high security area. The following regulations have been introduced, prohibiting canoeing in a large part of the harbour entrance and its approach. If paddling between Portsmouth Harbour and Hayling Island, they prevent taking a route close to the shore, so that the route will now entail paddling some distance out to sea then crossing the shipping lanes. Obviously this makes such a trip potentially more hazardous than it might have been in the past.

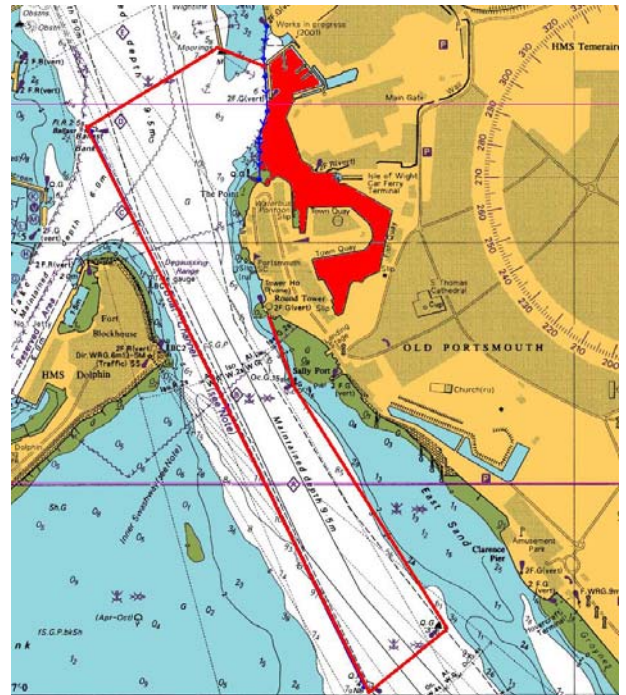
1) Small boats flying official flags or discs which are pilot boats, police launches, HM Customs and Excise craft, Her Majesty's vessels or Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service craft, and tugs engaged in towing operations or escorting a vessel under instruction from a pilot, may use the approach channel and the main navigable channels of the Harbour when the exercise of their duties requires it.

2) Subject to paragraph (1), small boats **must**:

- (a) use the designated Small Boat Channel when entering or leaving the Harbour;
- (b) not loiter in the Small Boat Channel;
- (c) obey any directions in respect of traffic separation which the Queen's Harbour Master may from time to time issue by local or general notice to mariners in respect of the entrance to the Swashway and the Inner Swashway; and
- (d) not, without the permission of the Queen's Harbour Master, cross the harbour between Ballast and Gunwharf Quays or the Town Camber.

A small boat is classed as less than 20 metres.

Further guidance is available from www.qhmportsmouth.com



The RED ZONE indicates the prohibited area for small boats.

MOOR SEASON

The Autumn of 2005 proved one of the best seasons for ages. I was on Dartmoor almost every Sunday for 3 months – it was shocking to find that, at this time of year, I visit Dartmoor far more often than Fordingbridge or Ringwood and I dread to think what it has cost me in petrol.



Alex and I on a glorious winter morning



Dave and Sheryl



Ross enjoys his first descent of Euthanasia 18/12/2005



Andy – back again a few weeks later 31/12/2005.



Ant on the Canonball

But then, in January, it all dried up

A "serious drought" may strike the South East, Environment Minister Elliot Morley has warned. England and Wales have had the driest January since 1997, with many areas getting less than a third of their average rainfall.

The Met Office said England and Wales had 33.2mm of rain throughout last month, making it the sixth driest on record.

We managed a last low run on the Upper mid-January, joined by Georgia and Chris D



And then the Moors became seriously dry – and I began planning the summers Sea Kayaking trips! Indeed – I had the Sea Kayak out of moth balls and on the Dorset Coast early February when, ordinarily, the moors should be stonking. G

TROUBLE ON THE TORRIDGE

Remnants of cauliflower curry may contain otter droppings

Ringwood Canoe Club has unwittingly become embroiled in the on-going controversy surrounding the death of Tarka the Otter. Although Tarka himself is widely believed to have met his end in 1927, in the jaws of a hunting hound called Deadlock, there is now the distinct possibility that one of his direct descendants finished life in a cauliflower curry consumed by club members. The alleged incident took place at Sea Lock Barn, near Weare Giffard, on the night of Saturday, January 14, 2006. A reliable witness cites evidence of mysterious black 'seed-like' particles in a cauliflower curry cooked by one of the club's less reliable chefs, although other members of the canoe club said that they had assumed they were merely some poppy seeds that he had chucked in for added flavour.

Given that we first heard about the incident on the Sunday morning, our offices were closed for the weekend. However, our editor, John Rolle, had the presence of mind to immediately engage the services of a local freelance photographer, who was tasked with clandestinely following the club during their second day on the river Torridge. A task made difficult by the fact that he is not a canoeist, doesn't own a boat, and, as a rule, doesn't even like cold water.

As always, the editorial team on The Torrington Trumpeter has made strenuous efforts to verify the facts behind the alleged incident, though we were initially hampered by excessive secrecy about the canoe club's membership. The owners of Sea Lock Barn informed us that their property was let out for the weekend to Ringwood Canoe Club, so we conducted a web search which revealed that the club has its own website [<http://www.ringwood.canoe.btinternet.co.uk/>], but it doesn't provide details about individual club members.

John Rolle attempted to contact the club's chairman, Karl Hardy, and secretary, Graham Bland, on Sunday morning when the story first surfaced, but was informed by a club spokesperson that neither of these people was available for comment, apparently because they were paddling another river in Devon. We also initially drew a blank when we started trying to contact people we believed might be club members, most of whom denied all knowledge of the club, canoeing, and anything that had anything to do with anything.

We then had an amazing stroke of luck. In fact, it seems to be on a similar scale to that experienced by Bob Woodward of the Washington Post in the USA, when that august newspaper broke the Watergate story which eventually culminated in President Nixon's downfall. On the Tuesday prior to the weekend in question, John Rolle had received an unsolicited email from the Secretary of Ringwood Canoe Club, with the subject line 'Canoe Club'. As a matter of course, the email had automatically been placed in the 'junk email' folder on John's computer – we receive a lot of 'spam' at the Trumpeter – but it transpired that the file hadn't actually been deleted from the hard drive. Closer examination revealed that the email had a PDF attachment called 'List', which – almost unbelievably – wasn't even password-protected. It turned out to contain full contact details for most of Ringwood Canoe Club's members, as well as highlighting their current financial status with the club.

During the week we again attempted to contact Graham Bland – this time by email – but again drew a blank. With time running out – The Trumpeter goes to press on Friday evenings – we finally managed to contact a Mr. Lee Deakin, who we

understand is the son of the club's treasurer and one of the club's younger members. Lee agreed to tell The Trumpeter about events that weekend. In the interests of accurate reporting, he might actually have said "I've spilt the beans" rather than "I'll spill the beans", but it was a bad telephone line – we have been experiencing communications problems in this part of Devon for the past few weeks – and also, Lee was apparently forced to conduct the interview under cover of his bedclothes, in case his parents discovered that he was talking to the press.

According to Lee, "Well, since you ask, in my view the weekend was a disaster waiting to happen. For starters, it totally failed to accommodate minority interests. As many people in Ringwood Canoe Club already know, I have an abiding interest in multi-media and video subjects, and I'm not especially keen on canoeing, following a paddling weekend on the river Usk in Wales a few months ago, when I survived several attempts by a club member – I won't embarrass Trish by mentioning her name – to drown me. Yet despite this, I was dragged away from my studies on Saturday morning, and again on Sunday, and forced to accompany my father Barry in a Canadian canoe on the river Torridge."

Lee went on to say, "The paddling on Saturday was relatively uneventful. I can't say I enjoyed it, but other members seemed to have a good time. There's no denying that the river Torridge is beautiful, with plenty of wildlife to look at. But that's not the point. I should not have been there. Anyway, after the paddling we drove back to Sea Lock Barn and I went for a walk along part of the Tarka Trail with Dad, my Mum Bev and older brother Jake. This was definitely the best bit of the weekend. A few of the club's other members joined us – I can't remember exactly who, but I think it was Ros and Dave, Dot and Mike, and Georgia. Apparently the other members on the trip, Dave and Annie, and Nick and Marion, went to the Puffing Billy [editor's note: this was formerly the station at Upper Torrington] and consumed copious amounts of 'Aza Newt'. In fact, in my opinion, this may have been the cause of all the trouble.

The evening meal was apparently some sort of curry dish. Since it was obvious to me that it was going to be served up late, due to the chef's consumption of 'Aza Newt', I decided to have cheese on toast instead. And I'm jolly glad I did. It was unmitigated chaos. The chef lost the rice – it didn't appear until the following evening – and the rest of the food was disgusting. Despite my advice, my brother Jake made the mistake of trying the lentils, and immediately wished he hadn't. He had to drink gallons of water just to try and get rid of the taste. And all the chef could say was 'sugar ameliorates chilli' or some such rubbish. Plus, of course, there were these highly suspicious seed-like particles in the cauliflower, about which I have severe misgivings. In the end I couldn't stand any more, and went to bed.

Sunday was even worse. Again, I was forced to accompany Dad all day in a Canadian canoe, and the section of river that we paddled had rapids and waterfalls – most of which we had to portage, which involved me getting in and out of the boat repeatedly. Most of the falls were towards the end of the trip, so as you can imagine, I was getting fairly tired by the time we encountered these obstacles.

And believe it or not, some members – including my parents – ate more of the curry on the Sunday evening, before heading home. The chef had sobered up a bit by then, and had found the rice he'd mislaid the previous evening. Personally, I think everyone was trying frantically to dispose of the evidence. I can't honestly say that I saw an otter on the river Torridge. But I definitely smelt a rat that weekend."

Editor's footnote: the photographer we hired to track Ringwood Canoe Club during its Sunday paddle on the Torridge managed to capture a few potentially incriminating images.



Photo 1 shows what may be some of the club's members disappearing around a bend in the river. The photographer had to wade out into the middle of the river to take this shot, and discovered that his boots leaked.



Photo 2 is believed to show all members who participated in the event, although there is some doubt about the identity of the chef. The photographer also pointed out that following a canoe club without a boat of his own proved immensely difficult; in fact, he snagged his pants taking this shot, the remnants of which can be seen hanging from a branch in the foreground.

For your delectation

To start

Plain and spiced Poppadams
Mango chutney

Main course

Chicken with mustard seeds
Cauliflower coated in poppy seeds
Potato and tomato curry
Sweet and sour lentils

Served with

Chicken spiced rice
Choice of plain, garlic & coriander, and kulcha naan breads

Followed by

Bex' special puddings

Photo 3, which may be the most revealing piece of evidence, appears to show the menu from the club's meal on Saturday evening, which our photographer found discarded in a waste bin at Sea Lock Barn late on the Sunday evening. We have highlighted the most damning entry with a red circle.

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Held at The White Hart

On Saturday 8th January 2006

Present

Barry Deakin (Treasurer), Graham Bland (Secretary), Mike Farnden & Dot Tilley, Karl Hardy, Helen Lawrie, Dave and Annie Ratford, Ross Macildowie, Paul & Rebecca Kendall, Michael Dew, Georgia Newsome

I think - unfortunately, once I had updated the calendar I threw away my notes and so these minutes are based on my less than satisfactory memory! I believe all we chatted about was money and events

Finances

Barry reports a healthy balance of approx £1,400. We have recently purchased a rudder for the Sea Lion Kayak. We are about to purchase a new Valley Avocet plastic Sea Kayak which should bring our balance down to the normal.

Pool sessions – with the alterations in the changing rooms (now separate cubicles) it is becoming increasingly difficult to collect money from those attending. Please don't leave without coughing up.

Forthcoming Events

An up-to-date list is given, over.

Other Business

Next Meeting : AGM