



CANEWS

September 2007(Late!)

EDITOR'S CORNER

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!!

CANEWS IS AVAILABLE ON-LINE

This (and the last few) Issue of Canews is available in Acrobat pdf format for download direct from the web site (right hand click and select save as).

If you don't need a hard-copy posted in the future (and you feel like saving some forests and my time and costs on copying, envelopes, etc). let me know

ARTICLES PLEASE

Thanks to all the contributors

CAPTION COMPETITION

Visit the web site for the Caption Competition



"The Immigration service deployed their sniffer dog, who immediately locked on to an illegal alien" or

"As his ears started to grow longer, Barry regretted calling Becky a witch!"

Mike

THE RIVER AVON 'BLOG'



Over the last few years I have been receiving an increasing number of phone and email enquiries concerning paddling the River Avon. Many of these are tourists visiting the area; many others are 'locals' who have, perhaps, enjoyed canoeing during their holidays on the continent and want to take it up here. The vast majority have been blissfully unaware of river access issues and have found it difficult to believe that they are 'not allowed' to paddle the Avon

Rather than explaining the situation again and again I have finally got around to setting up a 'blog' to provide some information on the River Avon and the 'Access' debate.

This 'blog' has been created in anticipation that one day, not too far in the future, the right of navigation on the River Avon (from Salisbury to Christchurch) will be accepted by all. Hopefully, by that time, it will provide a source of information for all river users - identifying access points and obstacles, and providing background material on the river's environment, local attractions, history etc

See: <http://theriveravon.blogspot.com/>

LULWORTH COVE



The Dorset coast doesn't get much more benign than this - 13 of us enjoyed a pleasant float along to Ringstead Bay on a beautiful day. Graham B

DEAKINS IN SCOTLAND



For the Whitsun half term holiday, I coaxed Bev and Jake 12 hours up the road to the west coast of Scotland for a few days sea kayaking. Perhaps in a few years I will get Lee up there too, but he always seems to find an alternative to paddling and this time it was a week's activity holiday near Weymouth. We had decided to go to the Inner Hebrides south of Oban, then I learned that a friend, Richard, had just bought a house there, fronting the water on the island of Luìng, so that gave us an ideal starting point.

We got an early start on the road on Saturday and arrived at Cuan Sound at 5 in the afternoon. A little ferry that can just squeeze on 3 modest cars runs across to Luìng strictly to a timetable, typically every 30 minutes, even if there is a queue of 4 cars waiting and it then has to make two runs. It must be logical to a Scot I suppose. Perhaps Ross will explain it to me. It is a very short but entertaining journey, with tides running up to 6 knots for much of the time, with seals and terns fishing in the boils and whirlpools. Richard had arrived just a couple of hours before us with a van full of cardboard boxes and a lawnmower, having sold his house in Cumbria the day before. He had unpacked the tea and Christmas cake (Yes, in May!) so the hospitality was good despite the muddle. With daylight until about 11pm, we had plenty of time before dinner to stretch our legs with a walk to the island's high point, and view a panorama of the islands and lochs within our reach. I had

paddled the area twice before, but it was a great chance for Bev and Jake to get their bearings.

On Sunday, Richard treated Bev's nerves with a breakfast of porridge with whiskey then we packed the boats and set off in sunshine and a brisk north wind. I ignored Bev's protestations that Cuan Sound looked really dangerous and we paddled seawards through it with a strong but favourable current. At least it would have been favourable if you had been brave enough to get away from the edge and out of the eddies, Bev. We had a lovely paddle south down the west coast of Luìng with the wind on our tail, exploring the narrow passages between the little isles and rocks clustered there. With a flood tide against us it was a bit like paddling up a river, and Jake got a bit frustrated that he couldn't swing the club's Avocet sea kayak around on the eddy lines like he can his little white water boat. We had lunch stripped off in a lovely warm sheltered spot then paddled on around the southern tip of the island. The plan was to turn north-east and cross to the island of Shuna to camp, but Jake could barely make any way over the ground against the wind, that had now increased to force 5-6, combined with the ebb tide now flowing south. If he could not hold the course needed to reach Shuna it would be a long way to the next bit of land – and we didn't have our passports. Instead I helped him with the towline for a couple of miles north along the coast of Luìng and then we crossed to Shuna a safe distance upwind and uptide. I have camped and walked on different parts of Shuna on every visit to the area, and am now confident that it is almost entirely bog. The flowers are fantastic though. We found a dry and sheltered spot beside a patch of flag irises in Port na Cro but had to look hard for enough firewood, and rummaging amongst the trees and long grass I also collected about 20 ticks. We cooked dinner and watched two seals watching us in our little bay. Jake was very happy with the camp site and the 21km he had paddled to get there.



Monday was just as windy, still from the north and, although we didn't have a fixed plan, the best areas for sheltered paddling were to the north of us. Even after a good night's rest Jake couldn't make much progress upwind. There isn't much power available in a 4½ stone boy to propel a loaded sea kayak that weighs three or four times as much, and against a force 6 wind that would slow most adults to a crawl. I towed him north again, crossing about a mile and a half to Degrish Point on the mainland, where we decided to put up the tent and spend the rest of the day walking up the nearby hill. It is not a mountain but at 273 metres Dun Crutagain gives spectacular views of the Western Isles and mountains, from Ben Nevis in the north to the Paps of Jura in the south. More fantastic flowers here, particularly the carnivorous pinguiculas with their dainty purple flowers, each looking like a single

violet in a green vase. The weather was bright and sunny but warmth apparently is a state of mind. I walked in shorts but Bev and Jake were in fleece trousers, thermal shirts, jackets, woolly hats.... That evening we had to work hard again for firewood. I don't remember having that problem in this area before. We also had to be careful not to disturb the oystercatcher sitting on eggs just beyond the nearest rocks. No seals at this camp site, but at dusk, after Bev had gone to bed, Jake and I watched an otter scrambling over the rocks, rolling down the seaweed, then swimming across the beach in front of our camp fire.



Jake slept till 10 so we had a slow start on Tuesday. Bev's ears pricked up at the mention of a National Trust for Scotland garden across the loch at Arduaine, so that morning she set our course. The garden entrance was obviously from the road up the hill, but we found an unlocked pedestrian gate to access it directly from the beach. We had only got a few paces into the garden to look for the path to the admission kiosk when we encountered the gardener who gave us a very hard time for coming in the "private" entrance. Apparently we should have taken the more obvious route along the beach and over the rocks for 200 yards, over a fence, through a patch of gorse, up a path, through the grounds of a hotel and into the gardens from the road. Scottish logic again perhaps. Anyway, we kept up the RCC reputation for getting it wrong in the eyes of the locals. The gardens were a wonderful mixture of manicured lawns, ponds and steep, rugged woodland paths, and with the short Scottish summer upon them, all the flowers were on show together. This area is blessed with a micro-climate with most winds coming directly from the gulf stream, and hardly any frosts at sea level, so the planting can be almost sub-tropical.

We had lunch on the beach then paddled to the head of Loch Melfort for beer and chips in the pub at Kilmelford. I caught a small Pollack on the way, and another as we paddled back along the other shore of the loch to the tent, which we had left

pitched at Degnish Point. The wind dropped steadily through the day until the water was mirror smooth in the evening. Now Jake had no struggle with the elements but progress was slow again because he and Bev only took their eyes off the urchins, starfish, and anemones far below us on the bottom of the loch, or the jellyfish floating near the surface, to watch the three seals that followed us the whole way. The view below was just as I remembered it from my previous paddle there, 15 years before, with Paul Toynton. It was not as warm though, and the softer members of the family had their paddle mitts on. When we got back to the tent at 8:30 it seemed to have been a long day to paddle only 18km. We filleted and poached the fish, and watched the otter make a repeat performance at exactly the same time as the previous evening.



Wednesday was grey, damp and cold, still with a northerly wind. Where were the sunburned hands that I remembered from previous visits to Scotland in May? You don't get them with paddle mitts on! We set off north up Seil Sound and I was intending to pass through Clachan Sound towards Oban but Jake was disheartened in the cold drizzle, and we were passing too close to Richard's house for him or Bev to resist. I tried to convince them that you could see the good weather approaching far to the south but to no avail. We changed course and I put out my fishing line again hoping to catch something to offer in return for another night in a bed. As we approached Cuan Sound through a mass of seals, I thought I had snagged the bottom, when the kayak slowed to a stop despite the strong tidal stream, but it turned out to be another Pollack, 60 cm long, and the biggest fish I have landed in a kayak. Richard wasn't impressed as he isn't too keen on fish but, as he is even less keen on cooking, he was happy to accept Bev's offer to turn it into fish pie. I took four big fillets off it and there was more than enough to feed us all that evening, double helpings all round. After a shopping trip in Oban to stock Richard's larder we got back to Luinig which was now bathed in warm sunshine, and perfectly calm paddling

conditions. Ah well, next time.

The next day we had a walk around the north of the island and its old quarries, where the slate is speckled with bright, square crystals of, I think, iron pyrites (fools gold). A wonderful sight in the rock pools. The highlight though was a fantastic view of a pod of seven bottlenose dolphins, including two young ones, swimming, leaping, flipping and diving together just a few metres from the rocks below us. They took about 20 minutes to pass by, then we walked on along the shore of Cuan Sound to take another look at the impressive currents. In the evening we went for a sail in one of Richard's boats to Croabh Haven and back. It was a fantastic evening, in some of the best scenery in the British Isles, and there was only one other sail in sight.

The following day we headed home, breaking the journey for lunch in the Lowther Hills south of Glasgow, where we disturbed an oyster catcher sitting on eggs in a quiet layby, then overnight in the pretty cobbled village of Dent in the Yorkshire Dales. We camped for £10 in a wonderful empty field, on clean lush grass, with a portaloo and a tap to hand, just two fields away from a crowded camp site. Lovely. It was a great wildlife trip, we counted over 40 different birds, but we got home to find that the local wildlife had been busy too, eating all our vegetables.

This part of Scotland is fantastic, with something of interest to everyone. There are some extremely challenging bits of water for those seeking an adrenaline fix, but plenty of safe and sheltered areas for the more timid, and there is (almost) nobody there for RCC to offend. Don't just read about it, go and paddle it.

Barry.

JULIAN BUTLER MEMORIAL RACE



After a terrible few days of almost endless rain, the clouds parted and it looked like a great evening for a paddle. Jake may be the youngest regular paddler but he is probably the most competitive person in the club at the moment so he was keen to take part. He would have paddled a single kayak but, being so small, he would have needed an early start and I was a bit concerned that he might paddle most of the course unaccompanied. Yes, I do worry a little sometimes. We decided to paddle together and took our plastic open canoe for its first test of speed. There was a fantastic turnout at Mudeford: Mike, Dot, Nick, Trish, Dave and Annie all appeared late and without a boat between them, maintaining the tradition of boycotting this event. It seems strange to me that so many people drove to a canoeing venue on a lovely evening and didn't paddle at all. Paul Toynton appeared with a boat but, in an uncharacteristic moment of sensible self preservation, bemoaned that his injuries prevented him competing. He

paddled around the circuit, bumping into Larry and Jaqui in their open boat, who also went round the course for fun.

We were joined for the race by a select few new members who have not been infected with the race boycotting virus. Dave and Katie Cunnea were equipped with the club's sea kayaks, but Katie was seduced by the attractions of Mike Worth's open boat, and opted to paddle with him. Handicapping was a bit of a guess, with just three boats, one with a man and a boy, one with a novice open boater and novice, pregnant crew, and the third with a strong but inexperienced paddler on only his second outing in a sea kayak. Dave had never paddled in the harbour before so I described the course for him, across the harbour, up one or other arm of the Avon, down the other and back to the Quay "Simple. Can't miss it."

Mike and Katie started first, Jake and I after 5 minutes, and Dave 5 minutes after that. It was soon clear that the first boat needed a more generous handicap, as Jake and I caught them at the top of the harbour, with Dave just few boat lengths behind us. We had the tide against us, and a fresh breeze to work against. I was having trouble keeping the power on and maintaining our heading, but the wind slowed the open boats more than the sea kayak, so I hoped that we might hold Dave off in the sheltered stretches of the river. We managed to keep our small lead until we reached the top of the Avon loop, where we began the downstream half of the course and had the tide and wind in our favour. Jake kept looking back but Dave didn't appear round the corner as expected. We kept up our pace, expecting him to charge up from behind at any time, but didn't see him until we were well on our way back across the harbour. Jake said Dave was paddling fast and he didn't think we could beat him back to the quay. He must have been as tired as we were though, and we finished with a good margin ahead.

When Dave arrived we discovered that he had lost sight of us where the Avon splits, and had a moment of doubt about which way to go. He went to and fro a bit, upstream too far, and back again to find Mike and Katie, had a quick chat, got told off for not taking a drink for his thirsty wife, then took up the chase again. I am sure he would have beaten us if he hadn't lost his way, although my competitive son might have found extra strength with Dave on his tail. Dave had the fastest time but came home 2 minutes after us because of our 5 minute head start. Apologies to Mike and Katie, who were handicapped out of it and arrived a few minutes later. I'll make a note to allow an extra 5 minutes for pregnant ladies in future.

I was timekeeper and tired paddler so couldn't manage anything better than times to the nearest minute, but here are the individual times around the course, in order of finishing:

Barry & Jake Deakin	63
David Cunnea	60
Mike Worth & Katie Cunnea	76

Thanks to those who took part, none of whom knew Julian Butler, a great character who I am sure would have enjoyed the event and been an inspiration to the club if he was still paddling with us.

Barry.

DORSET COAST CAMP – JULY 2007



We enjoyed a remarkable 'weather window' for the July weekend 'Dorset Camp' - but, sadly, only three of us (Nick L, Simon B and Graham B) made the trip.

We paddled approximately 50kms (from Sidmouth to West Bay) carried along by a gentle SW swell and breeze – camping on pebbles somewhere along the way

Bad weather chased us east along the coast on Sunday but never caught us up and we paddled in the sun the whole time. Rain returned on the drive home

Graham B

EASTWARD HO!

Dorset Coast Camp, July 7-8, 2007

After years planning trips just such as this and cursing the tides which always seemed to be going the wrong way at the wrong time on the wrong day, Graham had a masterstroke. We'd paddle west to east instead of east to west. Suddenly, the tides were going the right way at the right time on the right day. If only the trip itself had gone as smoothly.....

Saturday morning dawned bright and clear, in stark contrast to the preceding few days, which had seen atrocious weather. After meeting up at West Bay at 9.45, Graham, Simon and I drove to Sidmouth and quickly unloaded kit and boats on the seafront, pretending not to see the double yellow lines. While Graham went off in search of the nearest car park, Simon and I passed the hours loading the boats, eating a leisurely early lunch and discussing the pros and cons of RCC's 'not on the water before midday' rule. After parking his vehicle somewhere near Ottery St Mary, Graham hiked back into Sidmouth.

Nil desperandum; we were on the water just after 12 (rules is rules) and set course for Beer Head with a fair wind behind us and the sun on the yardarm. Or some such nautical crap. Watching Simon and Graham rocket off into the distance, I contemplated the loneliness of the long distance paddler, and consoled myself with the thought that I'd probably have time for a quick cigarette, maybe even a beer, before succumbing to exhaustion and dying at sea unnoticed by anyone.

Paddling parallel with Branscombe Beach, I was struck by the number of timber dwellings perched on ledges all the way down to the shore. Some of these up-market beach huts looked really well equipped, and I pondered whether any of their residents had participated in the Whisky Galore style adventures back in January, when the container ship MSC Napoli ran aground off Beer Head. Swinging my telescope around, I could have sworn that I spotted some on-going

'salvaging', but then put it down to blurred vision brought about by paddling fatigue.



Graham and Simon were kind enough to wait for me in the swell off Beer Head, where we watched the latest attempt to re-float the Napoli; in fact, it was finally moved further out to sea a few days later.



We paddled on. My suspicions that this was developing into a serious paddling trip grew significantly when I noticed that the two lead paddlers were passing Beer without stopping. Didn't they realise that the Anchor Inn beckoned? Many a mariner (mostly of the shipwrecked kind) has been grateful for the pub's hospitality, and at the very least it would have been courteous to have stopped and thanked the landlord for services rendered to the maritime community. But no, my paddling partners once again shot off into the distance, bypassing even the dubious delights of Seaton in their desire to get to their destination.

The problem was, there wasn't a destination. Well, not a planned one anyway. Towards the end of the afternoon we passed what looked like a great camping beach just west of Humble Point, near the middle of the Lyme Regis Undercliff. But it consisted entirely of large pebbles, so we elected to paddle on in search of the sandy beach that we all knew was just around the next corner. Yeah right. This is the Undercliff we're talking about here folks. Characterised, at sea level, by rock ledges and absolutely no foreshore at high tide.

By now, I suspect that even our illustrious leader was beginning to tire, since he was happy to settle for a barren sleeping ledge which might or might not have been above water at high tide, just beyond Severn Rock Point. But as Simon pointed out, while this was probably OK for Graham, who was planning to spend the night in a bivvy bag, he and I might experience a slight problem hammering our tent pegs into solid rock. Plus, I noted, Graham's site was backed by high, and highly unstable, cliffs which looked as though they would probably rain rocks on us all night. We paddled on towards Lyme Regis; Simon and I with thoughts of beer in the pub at the shore end of the cob, Graham with thoughts about the wimps he'd chosen as fellow campers.

It soon became apparent that none of us would be happy spending the night in the immediate vicinity of Lyme Regis;

the beach was still rocky, star-gazing would be a non-starter due to light pollution, and one or more interfering busybodies would doubtless rush over and demand that we put out our campfire as soon as we lit it. The consensus was that we should paddle back to the beach we'd first spotted at Humble Point, despite the fact that this effectively added 6 km to our trip.

The beach was as good as it had looked a few hours earlier, just a bit darker. While Graham smoothed a place in the pebbles for his bivy bag, Simon looked around for some heavy bulwarks of timber to anchor his tent down, in readiness for the inevitable heavy snoring.



Obviously, not suffering from afflictions like this myself, I had no need of such preparations and contented myself with collecting driftwood for the fire. There was certainly no shortage of material to choose from, ranging from brushwood and twigs to large railway sleepers and complete wooden pallets. We had a decent fire going in no time at all, and after celebrating with a few beers, prepared to cook and dine in true al fresco style.

The first explosion was fairly muted. I didn't immediately associate the sharp pain in my neck with the sound, and was surprised when brushing away what I assumed was a mosquito to discover that I had burned my fingers. Luckily, the hot shard of stone came out cleanly. We were vandalising our beach; creating a mini eco-disaster of our own, turning beautiful sea-smoothed pebbles into aggregate. Of more immediate concern, our cooking area instantly became a no-go area, as did everywhere else within a 10 metre radius. Graham, with the experience of many RCC camping trips behind him, happily ate food he'd prepared earlier. Simon, who had come armed with gourmet cook-in-the-bag goodies, a stove and a saucepan, was equally content. Me, I rued the day I've ever heard of RCC, camping and beach bloody barbeques, and munched my way soulfully through a partially cooked beef-burger, while listening out for the ominous crack of breaking teeth.

We let the fire die down and eventually plucked up courage to sit within firing range. Admittedly, it was a beautiful sunset, almost offsetting the cold, hunger and grave threat to human life. Graham took the opportunity to phone Frances, who had had the sense to confine her boating activities to a day trip from Bournemouth to Swanage. Due to a bad signal he couldn't quite make out whether she'd been watching puffins or a male pole dancer during her voyage. It turned out to be the

latter, on which note we went to bed. Bed! That's another camping euphemism, designed to lull sensible home-loving people into a completely false sense of security.



Sunday dawned bright and clear. And relatively hazard-free, since the fire had gone out. We had a leisurely breakfast, surveyed the scene of the crime – marked only by a small pile of sand on an otherwise pebble-clad beach – and set off for Lyme Regis. Again. The town looked great in the morning light, but I'm glad we hadn't camped on the outskirts.



At my suggestion, we stopped for a coffee at Charmouth and wished we hadn't. It was packed with holidaymakers and the coffee was crap. By now the low that had been threatening to overtake us for most of the day looked set to win, so Graham and Simon resumed their high speed paddling, leaving me to fend for myself. From the Western Patches at the foot of Golden Cap to Eype Mouth there was a slight swell, which made things great fun. Our leader had prepared us for a long hard slog – by identifying some cliffs on the horizon that he claimed we needed to paddle past – but we actually arrived at West Bay sooner than expected. And way before we got anywhere near the cliffs. So much for sat-nav. But Graham's timing was impeccable; we were off the water at about 14.00 (I think), seconds before the rain hit in earnest. Leaving Simon to look after the boats, we made a quick run back to Sidmouth to retrieve Graham's vehicle, and were all home by about 16.30.

Thanks both. I had a great time – no, really – and look forward to doing it all again. As far as I can recall, this is the furthest I've paddled on a weekend trip – just over 46 km. But next time, please could we allow just a bit more time for sightseeing?

Nick L

A LETTER TO MR BROWN

Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP
Prime Minister, 10 Downing Street, London
16th July 2007
Dear Prime Minister

Congratulations on becoming Prime Minister.

We would like you to consider an anomaly that exists between Scotland and the rest of Britain.

Representing the constituency of Kirkcaldy you will be aware of the very successful canoe club based in the town. These canoeing friends of ours have, because of the Scottish Land Reform Act 2003, the freedom to use

their natural environment for enjoying their sport and leisure activities. They have rights and responsibilities concerning their natural heritage. Yet, when they come on holiday to England they are unable to enjoy the same freedoms.

In England we have the "Right to Roam " under CRoW 2002 and soon we will have access to our coasts under primary legislation. However, we have no statutory right of access to our inland waters.

If our friends from Kirkcaldy decided to come to England for their summer holiday along with their children and canoes the following is the sort of experience they could have:

The confusion begins at the Scottish Border...

The River Tweed forming the border between England and Scotland highlights how English law acts against public access to water. On this river either Scottish or English law can apply depending on which half of the river a boat is located. English law can make use of the river a trespass, whilst, the Scottish Land Reform Act (2003) gives a right of responsible access on the Scottish side.

Our friends decide to take their canoes and go and visit the beautiful city of Durham.

Access to the river Wear (County Durham) for canoeing above and below the City of Durham has been strongly opposed by landowners and angling interests. In stark contrast a scheme to provide a riverside trail for walkers and cyclists along the same sections of river where canoeist are unwelcome is planned by local agencies. It is apparent that a sector of the public who enjoy water recreation are overlooked in the provision of recreational facilities. This situation is further exacerbated by recorded historical use of the river by boats and a disputed right of continued public use.

Totally confused they head further south to find a place to go. They avoid the beautiful city of Salisbury even though there is the river Avon running through it. They know that the river Avon has a right of navigation. The Act has been on the statues since 1664 and has never been revoked. However, the landowners in this part of the country have insisted that there is no right of navigation and so custom and practice has led us all to believe this is the case. In fact, this is wrong there is a right of navigation on the river Avon.

They head off to the river Rother in West Sussex. They know that in 1790 an Act was passed for making the Western Rother navigable from Midhurst to Stopham Meadow. It was enacted: "that all persons whosoever shall have free liberty ... to navigate upon the said River, and the said Cuts or Canals, with any Boats, Barges or other Vessels, Upon payment of such Rates and Duties as are herein-before mentioned"

In 1936 the then Minister of Transport ordered that the proprietors of the navigation should be released from all liability to maintain the aforesaid navigation and from all obligations arising under the said Act of 31 George III cap.66 . The order did not explicitly extinguish the public right to navigate upon the river. But our Scottish friends then find that the Cowdray Estate have maintained since 1936 that the Act was passed to enable the transport of goods and that the Act never gave recreational boats a right to use the river.

Confused our Scottish friends head home.

There is a general uncertainty for public access to inland waters in England and Wales. Prior to the nineteenth century, research has shown that the public had a generally accepted historical right to access and make passages along rivers. Legal opinions and interpretations expressed since that time have diminished this position and created a lack of clarity for such a right.

With the 2012 Olympics in London and Britain proclaimed embarrassingly as the fattest country in Europe now is the time to give clarity of access to our natural heritage, our inland waters.

Having worked with voluntary access agreements for the last 50 years we know that they do not work. The only way to have clarity is through primary legislation. The Bill – Public Access to Inland Waters has been sponsored by Dr Des Turner MP and is due for its second reading on 19th October.

The Bill is a reworking of part one of the Scottish Land Reform Act 2003 amending it to apply to access to water in England under English law. Like the Scottish Land Reform act this Bill would have an access code written to support it. The Bill giving everybody rights with responsibilities enshrined within the access code.

Access to our inland waters is not just an issue for canoeists but for anyone who wants to exercise on or near water (swimmers, walkers, anglers, other watersports etc)

We are aware that there is a perceived conflict between the different users, particularly with fishing. We understand that in reality as access is increased and therefore intense use of a few sites removed, any conflicts will be few and far between. It is worth noting that the government sponsored Active Peoples survey indicates that 281,000 adults fish at least once a month. Very few of these participants would be affected by the proposed legislation. Many anglers pursue their sport either; in specially provided still water fisheries on private purpose built lakes or on the sea or on large rivers which are often existing navigations where fishing and boating interests have had shared use for many years, an example being the River Thames. Many of our angling friends now fish from kayaks so access to the inland waters would support this rapidly growing part of the sport too.

We note and applaud the social values attached to your recent statements. We would ask that you consider addressing this particular inequality giving back to the people basic rights, which have been lost, not through the legislative process but through interpretation.

We wish you well in your endeavours to make Britain a fairer place.

Yours sincerely

Tamsin Phipps
The Rivers Access Campaign

THE VERDON CANYON – PADDLING UNDERGROUND

During the course of a family holiday, Andrew and I managed to include the surreal experience of paddling through the Verdon Grand Canyon in Provence. Aided by Deb Pinniger,

who knew the route through the numerous siphons and sieves along the way (negating the need for endless scouting), we managed to complete the 35km run in 7 hours.



An excellent but weird paddling experience - something between canyoning and kayaking

Deb also came with a 'shuttle bunny' and so we were able to avoid many additional hours of shuttle driving at either end of the day. Consequently, we were back to the Gite in time for dinner with the girls.



Information

- Known as the 'Grand Canyon of Europe' this is a spectacular limestone gorge, where the river Verdon runs for over 30kms in a 500m deep and very narrow canyon before spilling out to Lake Croix
- During the summer it can only be run on scheduled EDF release days (Tuesdays and Fridays) when there is normally a guaranteed release of 10 to 15 cumecs. This release is due to commercial operators working on the upper river
- The run is considered to be a committing paddle. While the rapids themselves don't exceed grade 4, the river has eroded the limestone extensively over time creating

many siphons, sieves, sumps, caves and un-navigable passages along the way - These are not always obvious from river level and have been the cause of numerous fatalities. Consequently, if you are not with someone that knows the river intimately you will need to scout a large number of blind drops. Allow at least 9 hours for a first descent

- Having said that, where else will you find a crystal clear rapid leading directly into an underground passage that you can paddle through until the water mysteriously vanishes and you have to crawl out of an opening and throw the boat (with you after it) down to a pool 3m below!
- Pete Knowles South Alps guide provides good information on the run and, if you have the opportunity to take the canyon on, go for it.
- NB the trip ends with a 5km flat paddle along the flooded section of the gorge at Lake St Croix. At the end of a tiring day, with full 'creek boating' kit, you negotiate an ending through a flotilla of pedaloes !

Graham B

SUMMER RAIN



The above photo was taken on the 'Dorset Coast Sea Kayak weekend' - you guessed it, the paddle was diverted to Dartmoor where, in mid August we found excellent winter levels. What a crazy summer

Graham B

COMMITTEE MEET 25TH SEPTEMBER

There were only a few in attendance (Barry D, Graham B, Dave and Annie R, Dot T, Mike F and Graham M) and I'm going to attempt to squeeze what was said in this little space!

- Club Funds £1,100 (Late payers to be 'culled' after warning)
- Future acquisitions: agreed to purchase one 2nd hand white water kayak and one large size PFD
- Pool sessions: Cost the club £70.00 each. The costs are always subsidised but it was agreed to pass on some of the increased costs to members with a new rate of £5.00 per boat per session (Non-Members £7.50)
- Events: see new 'Dates for your Diary'