



CANEWS

July 2008

EDITOR'S CORNER

THE WEB SITE – www.ringwoodcanoe.co.uk

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

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

THE RIVER AVON 'BLOG'



If you have any photos, information etc. on the river Avon that might be appropriate for the 'Blog' – please let me know

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

CAPTION COMPETITION

Visit the web site for the Caption Competition



No captions were submitted and so this photo of Gordon remains on the web site for another 3 months (sorry Gordon)

WELCOME TO RCC'S NEW CHAIRMAN

Maintaining the club tradition of rotating the chairmanship every two years, Ross Macildowie stepped into the breach at the AGM in May



Ross demonstrating his 'kayaking' skills on a recent trip to Slovenia

Thanks to Dave Ratford for steering the club over the last two years

DORSET COAST MAY 2008

Only 4 of us braved the forecast to paddle from Sandbanks to Ringstead over the weekend. The forecast proved pessimistic and we had a great trip - and we saw Puffins and Peregrins - so there!



Graham B

THAMES WEEKEND MAY 2008

Stories to follow - in the mean time, a photo from Mike Worth



THE GENTLEMAN AT THE RIVER

The gentleman at the river
The one who owned the land
Said I could not paddle
He told me I was banned
He explained that this was 'his river'
And he was not obliged to share
But he kindly agreed to an access agreement
Which *he* considered fair
An annual trip on a very short stretch
On a specified date and time
Would be how canoeist's could enjoy 'his river'
Without committing a crime

I thanked this gentleman profusely
For his reasonable and generous ways
For agreeing to canoeists' access
On those few, selective, days
And for forty years I kept to his rules
And I requested that others did too
This was, after all, 'his river'
My negotiations reinforcing this view

But it was when he withdrew his permission
That I finally realised
That at that very first meeting
This gentleman had lied
This was no more 'his river'
Than it belongs to you or me
In law nobody owns the water

Meaning that all our rivers are free
The river has flowed for thousands of years
Long before this man
His house, his fences, his cows and sheep
Had occupied the land
It is part of our natural heritage
Which is not the preserve of the few
Rivers are free for all to enjoy
Including me out paddling my canoe

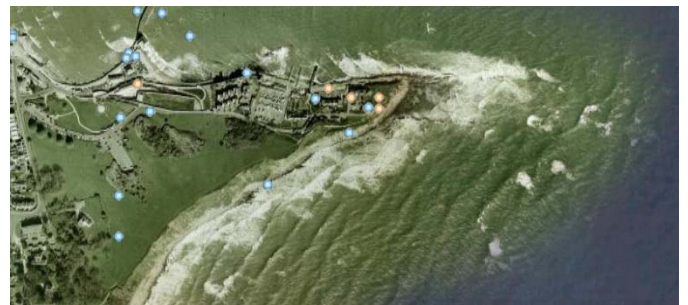
The gentleman at the river
The one who owned the land
Said I could not paddle
He told me I was banned
I did not apologise, I did not speak
I launched within sight of this man
If someone says that you can't paddle
Show them that you can

Jules

AN AFTERNOON AT THE RACES

It was Ascot season, the Steve Sambell Memorial paddle had, sadly, been postponed due to the weather and Paul, Ross, Elliott and I were kicking our heels and it was spring tides

How about a few hours playing the tidal race at Peveril Point, off Swanage? – it took me by surprise that all were keen. And a very enjoyable afternoon was had too. Something different



Graham

SEA SAFETY



We devoted a few Tuesday evenings in June/July 2008 to hone our sea safety skills – practicing a range of assisted and self-rescue techniques. Perhaps the overriding lesson learnt was – getting back into a sea kayak alone is more difficult than it looks. Either lots of practice or don't paddle alone or don't fall in!

SLOVENIA

6 members of Southbourne and Ringwood Clubs enjoyed a weeks paddling in Slovenia. We were blessed - with good weather and high river levels, for a memorable and relaxing five days paddling on the Soca



When the water wasn't 'white'



It was unbelievably blue



And always playful



Thanks to Richard Hampson, Southbourne CC's Chairman, for organising a great trip

Graham B

RIVER AVON, APRIL 2008.

I decided this year to fulfil a long term wish to paddle the Avon below Fordingbridge. I have asked permission of the major landowners on many occasions over the past 20 years, and always met with negative responses. The research by Douglas Caffyn on the right of public navigation on the river encouraged me to stand up for myself on this issue and disregard the landowners' claims that canoeing is not permitted.

Although I have strong feelings about the access situation, I had no wish to seek confrontation, and chose to go with just one other person to make the trip as discrete as possible, giving others the minimum cause for complaint. Paul Toynton joined me, and we launched my open boat at Fordingbridge recreation ground at 9 in the morning.

It was a bright day, but the southerly wind increased steadily as the day wore on, making the paddling hard work, despite a strong flow on the river. Indeed, if we stopped paddling we frequently drifted upstream!

The first weirs below Fordingbridge are at Bicton, where the easier option is provided by the first, about 100 metres upstream of the hatches at Bicton Mill. This low sloping weir could be paddled in a kayak, but the flow over it was very shallow and we chose to slide the canoe down it and jump back in at the bottom. Opting for this weir also means that you paddle down the western branch of the river at a discrete distance from the Mill.

The second weir, at Ibsley, is of very similar construction, and we tried to repeat the method there. This caused a few laughs for me, a few mutterings of consternation and bewilderment from Paul, and a few worried moments for both of us. The problem was that there was a fair depth of water on the weir slope, so that the canoe would not stay put on it. A vertical drop at the bottom, of about 30cm or so, meant that the water would drop straight into the canoe if it was held alongside. There is a raised concrete strip running down the weir providing a good place to stand, but beside it an open hatch gave a fierce jet of water that the canoe couldn't be held in. This combination meant that we had to seal launch of the bottom of the weir, but it was not easy getting in with the strong flow on the face. Obviously we should have portaged over the bank beside the weir, but we survived with dry clothes and all of Paul's lunch still characteristically stowed loosely in the bottom of the boat. (Barry kept saying "get your support stroke ready" and I kept asking him which side he was going to capsize me, and as I could not see what was happening behind me I was fully expecting a swim -Paul)

The scenery is quiet and very rural, with virtually no development along the river, except for numerous fishermen's huts, but the bird life through the Somerley Estate was very disappointing. The scenery changes suddenly at Ringwood, passing the electricity sub-station, a set of hatches that were paddlable that day, then beneath the twin bridges of the by-pass, then the old town bridge by the Fish Inn, and finally the disused railway bridge. This last bridge is a strange design on a bend of the river, with the pillars being rows of posts with horizontal beams, aligned at a diagonal across the flow. This makes them excellent flotsam catchers, so that the bridge can be a maze of trapped trees and branches and, I imagine, could be a hazard at times.

The scenery changes again as the river passes the up-market homes of Avon Castle, then its rural nature returns, with some impressive meanders, reeds, willows and water meadows giving a very similar landscape to the stretch between Fordingbridge and Ringwood. Something must be different

though, because the bird life was much greater. The most conspicuous features in this stretch were the hides, presumably for wildfowling, and quite substantial in their size and construction. The river divides again just above the Avon Causeway, and we opted for the western branch, again to be discrete from the houses at Avon Tyrrell.

At Winkton some large hatches, again paddlable with ease that day, divide the river into two and offer the best route, on the western branch. The other branch has small hatches, much less likely to offer a safe passage.

Shortly after this the river is blocked by the various hatches at the Bournemouth and West Hants Water Company works at Fairmile. A portage is essential here, making use of the Avon Valley Path which uses the hatches to cross the river. Unfortunately we were unable to re-launch without attracting the unfriendly attentions of the water company staff. Various threats were made and photographic evidence of trespassing obtained, by staff who were clearly mistaken about their powers, but we were afloat again before our way was blocked, and paddled round the corner into the tidal estuary just above the by-pass bridge.

We called Bev, who had agreed to collect us from wherever we landed, and paddled round to the slipway and car park on the river Stour. We arrived there at 4pm, 7 hours after starting, with a half hour lunch stop and numerous pauses for photographs. The total distance on the water was about 37 km, although as the crow flies it is only 21 km.

Our trip was made on a weekday in the closed season for coarse fishing, and we only saw a few anglers, and only passed one on the branches we selected. We chatted amicably with some Environment Agency staff that we met en route, who appeared quite happy with our presence. We saw no other canoeists or kayakers, but passed numerous small boats, moored or on the banks throughout the trip, indicating regular navigation on the river by various people. It appears that the river is navigable despite some claims to the contrary.

Barry.

Bird life was very interesting although as Barry has said there was very little above Ringwood. After this there was a marked change and we saw dozens of Redshank, several Canada Geese sitting on nests, about 20 pairs of Great-crested grebe and lots of Mallards, some with ducklings.

We also recorded Cettis Warblers, Reed Warblers, Sedge Warblers, Reed Bunting, lots of Buzzards, a few Herons and a Stock Dove nesting in a barrel on a tree.

Paul

LULWORTH 2008



We had 25 boats on the water – and half a dozen of so walkers. Quite an RCC flotilla cluttered up the coast around

Lulworth Cove.



More beach lounging than kayaking – but we can be forgiven our laziness as, a few days later, we were busy at sea rescue training at Mudeford



Graham B

TRYWERYN TRIP JUN 08



Fri 13th

After a flurry of e-mail with the details, I arrived at Tyn Cornel at 3ish as planned, had a short chat with Pete & Jean (campsite owners) to check how many had booked, just you & Tim Hough, there are 3 tents over there but they've gone for a paddle (Dave Cunnea, Kevin Coombes & Pete Ambrose). I pitched camp with just the basic facilities (caravan, awning, fridge full of beer); I roughed it without electric hook-up, to stay in the same field as the group. Dave Ratford was the next to arrive, he expressed concern the river was a bit rocky, I assured him open boats did paddle the river & fortunately when the water was switched on next day most of the rocky ditch disappeared. Tim & Charlie Hough arrived next, followed by Ross & Martin. At about the same time so did 3 million midges, the final solution was to congregate in my awning with one of those smoky midge repellent coils & drink, until sent to bed by the camp police (loud intoxicated voices are frowned upon after 11pm).

Sat 14th

After breakfast with the surviving 2,990,000 midges a shuttle of sorts was arranged, with Tim, Charlie, Ross, Dave C, & Kevin

off to the top start, (Tim via the shop in Bala to collect 2 BA's to replace the ones left at home). I passed on the Chipper – campsite phase, but the conversation included such information as swims Tim 2, features graveyard, ski slope, NRA wave, etc. An enjoyable paddle at the same time Dave R, Martin & myself were inspecting the course when Dave bumped into 2 open canoeists & arranged to go down the river with them. Martin & I joined the others at the campsite and ran the rest of the river, a pleasant grade 2 with frequent boulder rapids, I vaguely recall Martin looking extremely soggy, although he did appear to be enjoying himself. The final rapid Bala mill fall was shot without incident or capsize, and lunch beckoned. After lunch Tim, Charlie, Ross, Kevin & Dave C, had a second run on the top course, Dave R found a pub somewhere. After the evening meal everyone congregated in the awning to discuss the day's events & dodge the midges, there was no need for the camp police to curtail the festivities as most were a little tired.

Sun 15

Sunday's events flowed swiftly & smoothly, all breakfasted & packed away by 9:30. The shuttle over and the first group at the start of the top site by 10:10, the course was swiftly covered & the second group met at the campsite at about 10:30. Dave R had made arrangements to paddle with new found friends. I did hear a rumour that Charlie had a swim on the Top site & spent the journey to Bala willing Tim into the water, unsuccessfully. The time swam by for some, Martin was spotted affectionately hugging rocks, but otherwise happy, Bala reached in record time by 12 ish, cars loaded, and goodbye's said, then off home. I would like to thank Pete Ambrose and Ross for providing the safety cover and everyone else for a great weekend.



P.S. The midges were a pain, the recommended miracle cure appears to be Listerine and water mix, a change of campsite, or possibly both.

Gordon Anderson

MINUTES OF MEETING, 15TH JULY 2008 AT THE NELSON, MUDEFORD.

Present:

Barry Deakin (Treasurer), Elliott Gully, Jake Deakin, Martin Pollok, Graham Assinder, Phil Smith, Dave Hill, Richard Jennings, Nick Leatherdale, Mike Worth, Dave Ratford, Simon Burke.

Apologies:

Ross Macildowie (Chairman), Graham Bland (Secretary), Annie Ratford.

Treasurer's Report:

The club funds stand at £1300, with several subscriptions overdue. Please check yours and pay promptly. This is very healthy, with no significant expenditure foreseen. Barry has bought several bits of replacement equipment recently, such as buoyancy bags, spray decks, kayak back straps and paddles, but nothing requiring large expenditure. The club barbecue was subsidised by the club with £60 spent on drinks.

Events:

Barry has no weekends free to reorganise the Steve Sambell Memorial Paddle round the Devon coast, which was called off due to foul weather. Anyone who wants to run this trip this year can take over and Barry will provide any information necessary.

The current events list is reasonably full into the autumn, but some extras, and particularly events for sheltered or flat water are needed to cater for the less adventurous paddlers. Suggestions were Sunday trips in Poole Harbour, around Wareham and one from Swanage to Dancing Ledge, and a Tuesday evening meet at Christchurch instead of Mudeford to paddle to the top of the tidal Stour. Dates to be decided on the basis of tides.

A date for the next meeting was not proposed.

(Thanks to Barry for taking these minutes in the secretaries absence)

JULIAN BUTLER RACE 2008

The race was run over the same course as the last three years: up the harbour to Christchurch, up one arm of the Avon past bridge street, almost to the bypass, then down the other arm and back down the harbour to the start at Mudeford Quay. With one of the best evenings of the summer so far, we had a great turn out. Not only did lots of people turn up, they all wanted to take part! Apart from the old diehards of course; Nick didn't bring a boat and Elliott was determined to paddle the course without undue effort, acting as tail-end sweeper in his sea kayak. Once again Nick was pressed into being the reluctant time keeper. Thanks Nick.

It was lovely and warm, but the wind was about force 3, and made it hard work, as did the fast flow in the upper stretches, with the Avon swelled by the recent rains. It was very fast under the bridges, and poor Nicky said she took three attempts to get through upstream.

It was great to see some new faces taking part, and I think everyone enjoyed it. Thanks to you all for competing in the spirit of fun that was shown in the very first Race by Julian Butler. The trophy and race now bear his name as a memorial.

I had my own personal race with my son Jake, only 13, who chose to paddle my sea kayak. I didn't know how we would compare, with me in a slow boat, but we started together and

stayed side by side until the half way mark, despite several attempts by me to shake him off. The current, eddies and turbulence were fierce at the point where the Avon splits, and I got ahead by a few lengths. Jake struggled to keep the big sea kayak on course and I knew what his mother would say if he ended up in the trees, so I waited briefly to make sure he was ok. Well, that was my downfall, because we paddled together again down the harbour, to within about half a mile of the finish, then he pulled away and I could do nothing about it. He finished just a few lengths ahead of me. In fact the first few boats home were all very close, as they should be if the handicaps are correct of course.

The list below gives the field in order of starting, with the start and finish times, and final position. The individual lapsed times are also there to save you the trouble of working them out, if you are interested.

Mike Worth won the trophy, being the first home, and it was a great performance, paddling solo in an open canoe in that wind. Graham Assinder was fastest round the course though, in 53.5 minutes. Well done to the ladies too; mother and young daughter paddling slow white water boats, in difficult conditions, and with little experience. I was impressed.

Julian Butler Race 2008: Results Table		Start time	Finish time	Position	Lapsed time
Mike Worth	Solo open	0.00	78.00	1	78.00
Nicky James	WW Kayak	0.00	83.00	8	83.00
Laura James	WW Kayak	0.00	83.00	8	83.00
Simon Burke	WW Kayak	15.00	87.00	10	72.00
Martin Pollok	WW Kayak	15.00	84.00	9	69.00
Barry Deakin	WW Kayak	20.00	79.00	4	59.00
Phil Smith	GP Kayak	20.00	81.00	6	61.00
Dave Hill	Sea Kayak	20.00	97.00	12	77.00
Jake Deakin	Sea Kayak	20.00	78.30	2	58.30
Graham Assinder	Sea Kayak	25.00	78.50	3	53.50
Moray McGowan	Sea Kayak	25.00	80.00	5	55.00
Richard Jennings	Sea Kayak	25.00	91.00	11	66.00

Barry.



Mike cruises in to victory (Photo from Nick L)