



CANEWS

July 2009

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



"Wow, you're keen Mike. She says she may, but I bet she's just teasing."

In fact, I took this photo on the Thames about 16 years ago I think. As Mike demonstrated how not to get out of a kayak, with inevitable consequences, you can see Bev was trying really hard to stop the boat from drifting out, and I shouted "Don't move Mike" as I rushed for my camera. You know who your friends are Mike. I tried to find the second photo in the sequence, but perhaps Mike burned it.

Barry.

RCC PHOTO GALLERY



Don't forget – you can share your photos with all members

RCC HISTORY

This is Ringwood Canoe Clubs 21st year. To celebrate our coming of age I will continue to post up old issues of Canews for you to download and savour. See some real old school paddling!, find out what happened a decade or so ago, and for those RCC long-timers, relive some memories and cringe at what you, or others, said at the time.

AGM 2009

The clubs AGM was held on Monday 27th April at The Queens Head in Burley,

Following the meeting, Ian Mercer and Sue Jordan, together with Allen Westerby, members of Poole Harbour CC, kindly gave a talk on a wilderness open canoe trip in Canada.

Ian and Sue, accompanied by some magnificent images, recounted their recent trip down the Bloodvein River which runs through one of the last remaining regions of pristine boreal forest in Canada. This was a true wilderness experience (arranged with an 'eco-friendly' company called Northern Soul), involving a float plane access, rubberised canvass canoes, beavers, mossies, wood ticks, wolf scat and a First Nations sweat lodge ceremony



<http://www.northernsoul.ca/default.htm>

PORTLAND BILL 3RD MAY



Eleven paddlers met at Chesil Cove in bright sunshine but a very cold NW wind. All early to take advantage of the breakfast at the café - which was very good. The launch off the beach was into a choppy sea, but was fairly easy. I can remember a previous trip (not with Ringwood) when someone capsized at this point. I thought the sea conditions were ideal with just enough chop to make it interesting, but I am not sure that everyone will agree with this. As we paddled south we encountered a lot of sea birds, Fulmars soaring along the cliffs and then masses of Guillemots zooming out from their nest sites. There were lots of razorbills on the water, more than I can remember seeing before, but unfortunately no Puffins (I saw two off the Bill only two days earlier).

With the tide running behind us we were very quickly at and round the Bill and then stopped for a coffee break. I had with me the tidal streams from "Inshore Along the Dorset Coast" and Graham had another set from "The Almanac" and they did not agree about the stream east of the Bill, in fact mine showed a northerly one and Graham's a southerly one! Very confusing and Graham's was right. I will have to look more closely at the comparison for any future trips.



As we paddled along the eastern cliffs there was not much wildlife, a few Rock Pipits, two or three Shags and bright patches of Birdsfoot Trefoil on the slopes above, and lots of climbers. The group had kept well together until we reached the point when we could see the entrance to the harbour hereupon the Ringwood Canoe Club Syndrome kicked in. We were now heading just about due north and the wind was quite strong in our faces as paddlers spurted on toward the "finishing line", presumably in an effort to get the paddle over and done with as soon as possible! However, strange as it may seem, there are some people who enjoy a rather more leisurely paddle and also appreciate some company during it and by the time the first paddlers reached the harbour they were almost out of sight from the last ones. Not really a good way to paddle on the sea, especially as a club. Apart from the social aspect there is also the safety to be considered and I was a bit cross about this when we all joined up at the harbour mouth. As I pointed out, if one of the back markers had had a problem this could have been serious. With the wind from the north, anyone not paddling would have been blown back down to the Bill and the rest of the group was much too far away to have even seen that they were in trouble.

We then entered the harbour and were told off by the Harbour Master for entering a restricted zone (something to do with the prison ship I believe) and also told that we ought to be paying harbour dues. We landed about 2.30 for a late lunch. Thanks Graham for organising a really nice paddle and what precision on timing!

I would like to take this opportunity to ask everyone to consider paddling behaviour especially on the sea. I do not think that it is the event organiser's job to supervise the group, I would just like everyone to remember that as a club we all have a responsibility to think about the rest of the group. The speed should depend on the slowest paddlers. During a paddle, I continually count boats to ensure that everyone is there and I believe that everyone should do the same. Try looking back occasionally, it very easily becomes automatic. If you want a bit more exercise, why not paddle back and then catch up?

Paul T

EXPLORING GOKOVA



We were on the flight home when Frances turned to me and asked "can we do this again next May?" – yippee - just the result I was after. I have found a formula for sharing a paddlesport with my other half - sun, gentle paddling, deserted beaches and chilled days in foreign waters.

There were a few moments during the week when I thought the plan might have crashed. The time when she called out to me "there's a bloke up there with a gun waving at us" (we had wandered into a military zone) and the afternoon when a force 5 had picked up a 2 metre swell (but we were camped on a sheltered island). But, exploring the Gulf of Gokova, in South West Turkey, with a couple of rented sea kayaks proved an excellent week



The planning was all so easy. Turkey's South West Coast where the Aegean Sea meets the Mediterranean Sea is often referred to as the Turkish Coast on account of its azure seas - tempting. A browse of the atlas had revealed a rugged coastline with lots of inlets, bays and islands that all looked appealing. I knew Turkey would be warm in May. I found an outfit called "Alternatif Outdoor" that, in addition to running guided tours, will rent sea kayaks and gear out to 'independents' – it was a 'go'.

On advice from Alternatif, and after a few hours on *Google Earth* we chose to explore the Gulf of Gokova. While only 40 minutes from Marmaris and a couple of hours drive from Dalaman Airport, the area promised (and proved) a comparatively wild and remote coastline with many small beaches in sheltered bays - with little or no road access or settlement within the expanse of a pine forest

We flew out to Dalaman late on a Friday evening, arriving at Marmaris at dawn on the Saturday. We spent that day shopping for provisions – pasta, tuna, bread, fruit and vegetables all readily available. We also had to carry sufficient water for 5 days 30 litres (6 x 5 litre drums) proved just right.

Ahmet, who was driving us and our boats to the get in early on Sunday, laughed at our smiles as we left Marmaris in the rear view mirror. He remembered, just 20 or so years ago, when Marmaris was a sleepy fishing harbor. Now, there's only a tiny scrap of the original character remaining, the rest has been swallowed up by the ever growing tourist resort development. Restaurants and clubs vie for your custom, a 'Full English' breakfast available at every corner to aid your recovery after a night of Karaoke and foam parties.

We enjoyed cloudless skies and temperatures in the low 30's. The prevailing winds are North West and normally pick up in the afternoons. We were on holiday and not on 'an expedition' and enjoyed a leisurely paddling routine. Up with the dawn, packed up and away between 07:00 and 08:00, paddling (with stops) through to 13:00 and then lounging around the chosen beach camp for the rest of the day



The region is very quiet – no one around except the odd fisherman and passing yachts and Gulets (the latter, are beautiful yachts carrying tourists from the Turkish resorts on day or week excursions)

There was no shortage of beaches suitable for camping. All were of similar character, narrow and pebbly, often with some shade afforded by scattered pine trees and vegetation. The nature of the thick scrub behind the beach made it difficult to explore beyond the fringe.



Unexpectedly we found rubbish a big issue. Almost all beaches are cluttered with washed up debris. Vast quantities of plastic line the shore. At first we found this disturbing, but quickly became accustomed to executing a quick tidy-up and 'litter pick' before establishing each camp. A word of warning, however, the debris may include a fair share of fishing tackle and a barbed hook in a foot on this remote coastline would (and almost did, in our case) bring your holiday to a swift end.

The pine tree forests of this region are plagued by fires throughout the summer. While, for this reason, I believe fires are forbidden in the area, we built small contained fires on the pebbles each night – but well away from any vegetation



This area of South West Turkey is reputed to be teeming with birdlife, but the particular stretch of coast that we explored had surprisingly little (gulls and cormorants) The insect life proved much more interesting with many species of arachnids (some beautiful some looking decidedly mean). There were a few mosquitoes and horse flies about but too few to cause a problem. Snorkelling proved a pleasant way of passing the hot afternoons. Lots of urchins and fish but no colourful reefs



We hired kit from

AlternatifOutdoors

Email: info@alternatifoutdoor.com

Web: <http://www.alternatifoutdoor.com>

Graham

JULIAN BUTLER RACE 2009

An evening of calm water, little tidal flow and warm sunshine set the perfect scene for a wonderful paddle up the harbour and round the Avon loop. Certainly the best Tuesday evening we've had for canoeing this year. Plenty of other people were making the best use of the evening too, with rowers, kayakers, dinghy sailors and anglers everywhere. I'll never understand those members who, determined to demonstrate their non-competitive nature, turn up at Mudeford on such an evening without a boat. Our secretary, on the other hand, turned up with a boat, but paddled off into the sea to boycott the event.

I think all who took part enjoyed the fun of the race, and I know they all enjoyed the tour of the harbour. Once again I set the handicaps, but based them on the times for last year, when there was a force 3 blowing. This affects some craft more than others of course, and I didn't allow for the wind as I should have. This is not to take anything away from Mike Worth, who paddled a fast race in his open canoe, knocking 10 minutes of his time for last year, and coming home a clear victor with the second boat 3 minutes behind him. He still

paddled and sweated for longer than the rest of though, so deserves to have the Julian Butler memorial trophy over his fireplace for another year.

The field was unusual this year, with most paddlers in sea kayaks, only one short white water kayak and one other open boat.

I paddled my sea kayak in the race for the first time, and my personal target was to catch my son Jake in his mum's sea kayak. I had given him 5 minutes advantage on me but I knew that I had about 50 minutes to catch him. I first caught a clear sight of him as we neared Christchurch at the top of the harbour, and gained steadily on him as we paddled up the Eastern arm of the Avon and down the Western arm. By the time we were in the open water of the harbour and within sight of the finish at Mudeford Quay, I was just 300 metres behind him. I made sure that I matched his stroke rate, knowing that my extra strength must be converted into more power and hopefully a bit more speed. By then though, he knew I was there. He gritted his teeth and his determination won the day. He finished perhaps 100 metres ahead of me. I'm getting older and he's getting stronger. I must remember that if I set the handicaps next time.



The times (in minutes) and positions are listed below. On looking at the results and those of previous years I was pleased to see that I managed to break the course record, previously held by Ros White who went round in her sea kayak in 51 minutes, on a similarly calm evening in 2005.

Our chairman, Ross, honourably took on the role of sweeper, making sure nobody was left behind or in need of assistance at the back of the field. He came home last, looking fresh and relaxed anyway, so I assume that was what was on his mind.

Paul Toynton, who has been paddling the harbour for at least 20 years to my knowledge, followed me away from the start muttering that he couldn't go too fast as had to follow someone or he would get lost. He came to the finish triumphant as the top bird spotter though, reporting three green sandpipers, two cetti's warblers, one reed bunting, and a partridge in a pear tree; or something like that.

Once again it was a fine display of determined non-competitive spirit, with just a few racers in the group for the other paddlers and spectators to feel pity for.

Results			Start time	Finish time	Lapsed time
1	Mike Worth	Solo open canoe	0.0	68.0	68.0
2	Dot & Mike	Tandem open canoe	10.0	71.0	61.0
3	Jake Deakin	Sea kayak	20.0	74.0	54.0
4	Martin Pollok	White water kayak	9.0	74.1	65.1
5	Barry Deakin	Sea kayak	25.0	74.5	49.5
6	Paul Toynton	Sea kayak	25.0	79.0	54.0
7	Simon Burke	Sea kayak	25.0	83.0	58.0
8	Graham Mussett	Sea kayak	20.0	83.0	63.0
9	Ross Macildowie	Sea kayak	25.0	84.0	59.0

LIVING RIVER PROJECT

In early June I met with Eva Stuetzenberger, a new member of the Living River Project team in Salisbury. This is a project run by Natural England to "Increase access to the river Avon". In their terms, this means provision of such things as information boards at strategic locations, river dipping platforms for children to discover the river creatures, and accessible platforms for disabled anglers. Paul Toynton and I met with the two members of the team last year, and discussed canoeists' issues while paddling the river at Fordingbridge. Eva has replaced one of them, and contacted the club to ask for a meeting. Rather than meet in her office, we met at Fordingbridge and paddled the river in my open canoe, while we discussed their aims and our wishes.

She is not a canoeist or a naturalist, but has a public relations background, and was fascinated with the different perspective that a canoe gave to the river environment. Previously she had only seen it from the bank. She is keen to bring "stakeholders" together to discuss their varying requirements and issues, and offered to help us to meet with anglers to talk with them. She suggested, for example, that we offer a canoeing session to representatives of the local angling clubs in an effort to convince them that canoeing does not necessarily create a disturbance. She remained faithful to the company line, that all activities on the river require the approval of Natural England, and offered to put us in touch with the appropriate people if we wish to try to arrange any canoeing. I explained that many canoeists regard the river as a route with a right of public access, like a footpath across an SSSI, for which we would not seek permission from English Nature if we wanted to use it, unless of course it was for a major event with large groups of people.

She went away very happy from her new experience, but she is clearly a long way from us in terms of understanding our position or frustrations.

Barry.

SOUTH DEVON STEVE SAMBELL MEMORIAL PADDLE JULY 2009

An RCC trip with no faff! – the up side of only four (Barry & Bev, Rich J and I) signing on to this trip. Hopefully, this (or variations of it) will become an annual event and others will have the opportunity to paddle this beautiful stretch of coast in the future.



We were all able to leave at around 2'ish on the Friday afternoon (for me, this was a direct result and advantage of the Credit Crunch!). This meant that, after the shuttle and loading, we were away from Totnes by 7pm. An hour later we were pulled up at Sandridge for a pleasant moon light camp. A seal came to watch our proceedings – not the last we saw over the weekend.



The intention for the weekend was to paddle 70kms from Totnes, down the Dart Estuary, around Start and Prawle point

to Bantham and up the Avon Estuary to Aveton Gifford. The forecast was doubtful, but then it was only a forecast.



Saturday saw us away by 8am, a short stop at Dartmouth, and an enjoyable stretch along Slapton Sands. Light headwinds, smooth seas and sun shine – we were 22K along, at Hallsands in time for lunch. Start point has a reputation, and the wind was picking up, but the beast was quiet when we rounded the light house.



Unfortunately the same couldn't be said for Prawle point. By the time we arrived the sea had woken up in a very confused state and it remained so for the 'battle' towards the shelter of Salcombe. We finally pulled in to 'Sunny Cove' at 4pm. We had paddled 38k and it felt like it – we collapsed on the sand (after having wolfed down great chunks of Bev's Apple cake) and watched the dumping surf over some chilled beers.



Sunny Cove proved a great camp spot. Once the few others on the beach left in the early evening we had the bay to ourselves and Rich was particularly enamoured with the public toilets that were a short stroll away in the adjacent bay.

We had hoped that the wind and swell would have abated over night. We were away before 7am on the Sunday (on account of Barry's inaccurate reading of his time piece) and headed for Bolt Head to check the conditions.



There's an 8km stretch of cliffs running from Bolt Head to Bolt Tail that is exposed to the Atlantic swell and weather. We poked our noses out and looked along the coast. Thank god for democracy. I think Barry would have liked to press on, but the rest of us (memories of the uncomfortable paddle the previous afternoon still vivid in heads and backs) didn't give him the chance to pull rank. We about turned and surfed away as fast as possible – the shipping forecast blurting out of our VHF's "force 5 SW, 6 later, sea state moderate to rough". We made Kingsbridge by 9am, only 10 minutes to spare before the falling tide would have made a landing difficult and muddy (if not impossible). We walked the 4 miles to Averton Gifford to retrieve the Landrover and were home for tea and cake!

We ended up having replicated a trip that Steve Sambell had enjoyed – in an old glass fibre general purpose kayak with wet sleeping bags wrapped up in bin bags. Good on Steve

Thanks for organising the trip Barry – an excellent weekend. (Any more Apple cake left Bev?)

Graham B