



# CANEWS

April 2010

## EDITOR'S CORNER

THE WEB SITE – [www.ringwoodcanoe.co.uk](http://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

### RCC HISTORY

Old issues of Canews are available 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.

### 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. We all know what the image will be for the next one



*"Those skid plates were a waste of money ....."*

Mike Worth

### DON'T FORGET .....

#### RCC Forum



A big thanks to Simon B for setting up a new forum on our own server. We now don't have to live with the slow load times and flashing advertisements that plagued the 'free forum' that I originally set up. (No more whinging!)

On the downside, we have to start all over again – 300+ posts from the old forum - all that lively banter - lost in space.

Another downside is that you all have to re-register at <http://www.forum.ringwoodcanoe.co.uk/>

So, please register / re-register and get planning trips and chatting - Read club banter, who swam where?, try Wezzits, Wozits and Hoozits, post links of interest, etc

Graham

ps You can still go to the old forum (for the link, look at the link threads in the new forum)

#### RC Photo Gallery



Share your photos with all members

## POOLE HARBOUR, 3<sup>RD</sup> JANUARY 2010

For the first event on the club calendar for 2010 the weather was clear and bright, but the temperature probably didn't rise above 5 degrees and the fresh North Easterly made it feel colder.



Twelve kayakers turned out though, and we had a great paddle from Sandbanks, along the southern shore of Brownsea Island, round Furzey and Green Islands and back to the shelter of Brownsea for lunch. The difference between the exposed areas and those in the lee of the islands was amazing, and lunch was very pleasant on our beach in the sunshine. We had to get back to Sandbanks somehow though, and all routes involved a fair bit of exposed water and headwind. Most of the group were comfortable in sea kayaks but two were in slow white water boats which put plenty of spray in your face in a head wind and short waves. Most of us opted to head straight into the wind and make for the shelter of the mainland at Salterns Marina, then we hugged the coast back to the cars at Sandbanks, enjoying calm water all the way.



Fortunately we had enough gloves or paddle mitts to go round, because I don't think anyone would have stayed the course without. The trip was quite short and uneventful, but long enough for most of the group in those conditions and an excellent start to the year.

Barry.

## PIG RIGS AND Z DRAGS

On the same cold frosty January morning another seven RCC members gathered together somewhere on the forest to practice their rope work.



Ross, having recently completed his AWWSS&R course was keen to share some new found knowledge, and we all learnt something on the day – and had a lot of fun in the process.

This had come about from a discussion on the new RCC Forum. An opportunity to practice and share rope work skills that proved a valuable experience.

Coffee and Christmas Cake restored circulation during the 'debrief' at Appletree

We will be repeating this later in the year (hopefully, when warm fingers allow more dexterous knot tying!)



Can you identify the above system? And what knots were used at A to D. If you don't know your Z-drag from your Pig Rig and are still struggling with your prussic loops come along to the next rope session. *Graham*

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## PYRANHA DART FEST



At the end of January we had the opportunity for more rope-work practice – but not in anger. Six of us attended the Pyranha 'Dart Fest' weekend. Bit of a fiasco really.

It was a cold and dry weekend and so we headed off to the East Lyn on Saturday (which normally still goes at low conditions). But the gauge was 'red' and, being responsible paddlers and aware of the hard-won 365 day access arrangement recently put in place, we elected to be good. A long drive across the moors to Dartmeet meant we didn't put on a river until 2:30pm. It was a bony run and no rain was forecast. We made the decision to cut our losses and head for home Sunday morning. Since there was no intention of paddling the following day we left our wet kit in the back of the frozen landrover and headed for the Sawmill bar for consolation.

The evenings entertainment was good – a mix of slide shows, lots of chat and drink. It was the drink that was to blame – at sometime that evening I have hazy memories of arranging for our group to join Rob Yates for some rope training.

The following morning both the weather and my reception was decidedly frosty. The others (Elliott, Ross, Chas, Rich and Jake) didn't recollect agreeing to the rope training and couldn't believe that I was suggesting they clamber into iced kit to tramp down and along a bony river to tie knots with numb fingers.

As it panned out, we all agreed that it was a good call and we all learnt something – except, perhaps, Elliott and Jake, who had elected to stay in dry clothes and act as bank participants, and, having walked up the other bank to join in, never found us!

*Graham B*

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## BASINGSTOKE CANAL, JANUARY 2010

We had an amazing turnout of 20 people and a dog; not bad for a freezing cold day at the end of January, and venue over 50 miles from Ringwood. At Odiham wharf the canal had about 6mm of unbroken ice on it, and this stretched for the first few hundred metres, giving us some unusual paddling noises and some drastic wear and tear on the poor wooden Canadian paddles. We had a good proportion of novice paddlers and the group quickly got strung out with the faster paddlers going about twice the speed of the slowest. I had hoped for a lunch break near a pub after about 8km but, having waited for the tail enders and then caught up again with the leaders, we found half of them in a pub much sooner

than that. It was 12 o'clock so I took the opportunity to light the barbecue and we feasted on sausages, bacon and eggs. Mike Worth did us proud with loads of eggs and bacon, and he brought a big gas burner and a frying pan, but finished up with egg on his face when he found the gas canister empty. No problem though, we had plenty of heat. For some the distance was enough and they chose to paddle back on full stomachs. The other half of the group continued on to Crookham, then turned and headed back at their own speed to make a full day of it.

The canal wasn't at its best, with not a flower to be seen, but the weather was calm and dry so the paddling was lovely. We didn't come across any more ice, perhaps because there is a bit more flow on the canal east of Odiham, and the water was very clear. The anglers said it was too clear, and some of the locals said they had never seen it so clear. Perhaps it had been undisturbed for a few weeks. There obviously hadn't been any big boat movements for a while because we came across trees that had fallen across the full width of the canal.

It wasn't a great wildlife day, although we saw several big shoals of fish in the clear water, and Bev and I spent a few minutes face to face with a huge fox. Perhaps its coat was fluffed up against the cold to make it look big. I find the cold weather always has the same effect on Dot – the extra five fluffy layers make her look twice her real size.

Top marks to Bex who was brave enough to go afloat with toddler Lily and lively Tod. I would never have dared take any of my kids afloat on such a cold day. What if .....?

I teased Lucy for turning up in her new dry suit – to paddle a canal! She kept assuring us all that she was lovely and warm and dry anyway. In fact Bev nearly got her to test it at the start when she 'helped' her to seal launch off the high bank and almost tipped her upside down into the ice covered basin.

We finished the day with no problems that I was aware of, apart from a few cold toes, and thanks to all who made the long drive for a fun day out.

*Barry.*

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## TEIGN / TAVY WEEKEND - FEBRUARY 2010

Powder Mills bunkhouse was a good spot to stay, right slap in the middle of the moor:- good for walking (like right out of the back door); cycling (what river leaders do); and, of course, paddling - with access to various rivers. 6 minutes up the road was the Warren House Inn, 3rd highest pub in UK I believe, and was still a traditional pub with 2 open fires. We noshed here and then back to bunkhouse which had a log burner with loads of free logs.

Day 1 was cold and so, to warm up, we decided to remove a fallen tree washed down and lying across the river. Luckily we had a carpenter with his saw (how lucky is that !!) - but no use, after working hard it just floated back to where it had started, towing Barry trying to get his crab out.

After the big weir we portaged because of the tangle of low trees. Nick swam trying to get in his boat, it's a big volume boat as well!! Oh well someone has to break the ice so to speak. The Boulder garden could have done with more water but it made it quite technical and interesting. Quite a few pins on the Canadians and a lot of grounding by the kayaks. I think Graham M swam here. I got caught on a rock, Paul Kendall joined me, he went on. Now I got blinded and deafened by the flash cameras and the noise from cheers from Captain Ross River and Sidekick Tim and the rabble when I steeped out into deeper water and did a controlled descent with my boat, the

photos lie. Dot and Mike were oblivious to the surroundings as they were still high fiving themselves as they had come down unscathed, so they said.

The kayaks all bounced down, you got to wonder why they take the line through rocks, but I suppose it's a kayak thing. Well done to James who nearly left his paddle on a boulder and then, just as he was leaving it, must have realised he might need it, wild grab, and he continued on down.

On down to Fingles Bridge, if you followed Ritchie and Glen you could always get a pre warn of rocks !!

Simon demonstrated a bow entrapment on the sluice, too much Summer lightning in the front of that canoe and got pulled out by Barry.

Lunch at Fingles Bridge , Nick left us ,we had put a car here for this situation and then we had a good steady paddle to the take out at Step Mills, where Paul put me in a position of no return on the weir and I bounced down it backwards. Yeah that was a panic look on my face, I think Glen ran it though didn't see him, but he was at the bottom with me !!( its borrowed Paul )

A good day out but cold, we stopped back at the Warren House for a pint and to warm up. River Leader Ross and Tim joined us complaining of aching legs, after their bike ride, but a brush up on the map reading skills needed as when the little brown lines get close together it means steep!!

Next morning it was down to 6 paddlers and the rest walking. Paddlers to the Tavy which was very low. We bumped and scraped but eventually found water and then we had a really nice day. I think we all swam that day especially on one obstacle after Barry showed us how to, Glen lost his paddle which we were lucky to find as the poggies were sticking up. James walked it, a sound decision after watching everyone swim !

The last good obstacle was a vertical weir, which I think we would have all portaged had it not been for Paul's lack of concentration as he disappeared backwards over it and gave us the thumbs up. Interesting drop. James gave us a nasty moment when he got caught sideways under it but with a push he managed to get away from the pull.

At the end Barry demonstrated that he didn't really feel the cold and the rhyme "if you go down to the woods today , you are sure of a big surprise' has all sorts of meanings.

It was a great day out, scenery is great down the Tavy, it could have done with more water but it was a great day.

There are pictures about hopefully someone will post them up. Thanks to Graham M for a good chilli and Barry for cooking the breakfasts. I had a great time, roll on the Barle.

Cheers Mike Worth

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## WALKHAM

It was supposed to have rained - indeed, there were severe weather warnings broadcast for Saturday night and sheets of rain fell on the forest - but not the moors :-)

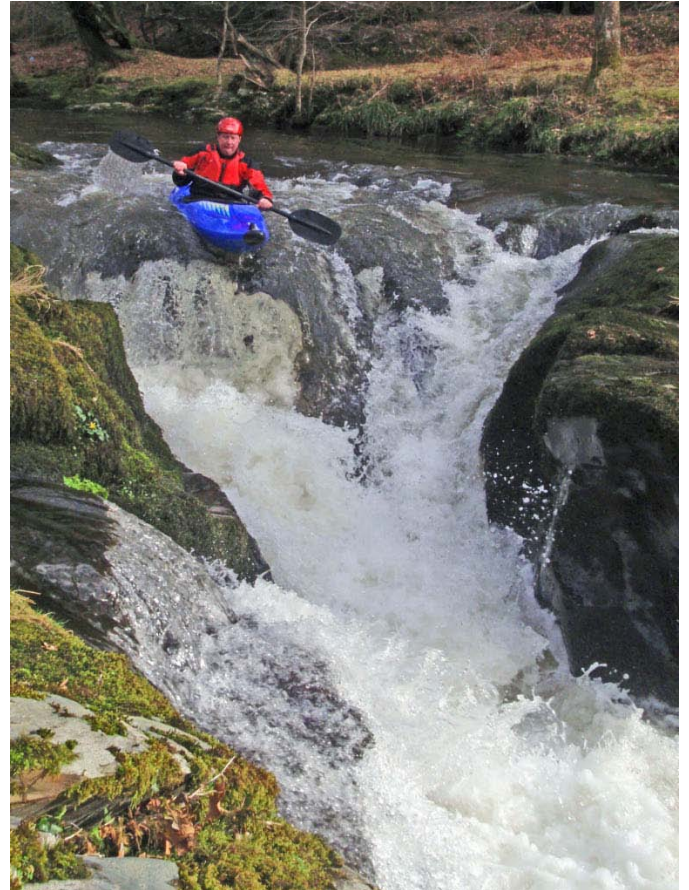
Ten of us (from RCC and Avon Valley Explorers) descended on (and down) the Walkham in low conditions - it proved a long and eventful day.

The shuttle took an age - principally because, knowing how convoluted the route is to Denham Bridge, we all decided to rely on my SatNav. Perhaps it knew I was driving a landrover, but it insisted that "in 90 meters turn right and navigate off-

road" and displayed a route through a farm gate and across a field!. I ignored this and Mrs SatNav calmly informed me "be patient, recalculating" and then looped me around the lanes and back to the farm gate ... "please turn right and navigate off road"

We got there in the end - the infamous solicitor was busy brow-beating some other paddlers at Denham Bridge, but we intended to park at the Forestry commission car park a bit further on down a track and so missed the agro. Back at Bedford Bridge, Jacob and Bryn were tasked with briefing the group (part of their GCSE PE assessment!) We eventually got on at 11:00'ish and bumped across too many rocks.

It wasn't too long before the river became more channelled and began to entertain us with some twists and turns. I don't recall any swims - but that may be a memory thing!



The 'drop and slot' focussed a few minds and was run by most with a variety of outcomes. Pictured above - Glyn, who insisted on running it despite my suggestion that he only had a 5% chance of not swimming. He made it though, thanks to a long reach for an Eskimo rescue

I looked at my watch - it was almost 15:30 - over 4 hours and we still hadn't reached the Tavy - we pushed up the pace a bit. It all went pear shaped when we reached the only significant rapid on the Tavy. Ben ran too far left, tripped up on shallow rocks and swam. I was surprised he hadn't rolled but, as I was towing him to shore he explained (reasonably calmly) that he thought he had popped his shoulder. We were standing on the bank, Ben using a weighted rock to see if he could ease it back, when I chanced a glimpse of Glyn floating beside his boat at the bottom of the rapid. By the time I had pulled him in on the end of a throw line Ross had shepherded the others down and we began to examine Ben. His shoulder clearly wasn't where it was supposed to be. Ross's first aid training came in useful again this season, and so did his 'Vet Wrap'.

Strapped up, Ross and Ben started to climb out through the wood heading a couple of kms for Hocklake farm.

Meanwhile, The rest of us, towing the two empty boats, paddled the 4kms to the get out as fast as the playboats in the party would allow. The intention was to retrieve the vehicles, drive to Hocklake farm, and on to A&E. Fortunately some kind Samaritan picked Ben and Ross up and drove them to us (they arrived shortly after we did). By this stage, Ben's shoulder had almost found it's way back into position and we were able to get him into warm clothes, sling and strap him and drive him home.

A little later than planned!

Poor Ben won't be paddling any time soon but, fingers crossed, he will get there in the not too distant future

Graham B

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## RINGWOOD CANOE CLUB - TORRIDGE TRIP 2010

Dot & Mike, Dave R, Jo and Chris, Nick L, Paul K, Guy and Harris, Bev, Jake & Lee, Mike W, Paul B



Disclaimer: Some facts in the following report may be inaccurate due to poor memory, too much beer and some events may have been exaggerated for extra comedy effect!

RCC trips are less frequent for me these days since becoming a dad, so I was very much looking forward to this one - especially as I hadn't paddled the Torridge before. The initial weather forecast for the weekend was rain and more rain so I was expecting a wet trip. The drive up to Weare Giffard was wet and misty as expected and I arrived at Sea Lock barn just before 6pm. I had used the street view in Google Maps beforehand to see what the entrance looked like from the road - a very useful tool indeed. I think that without that, I would have easily sailed past the gates! Dave R, Nick and Dot were already at the barn, having stayed there on the Thursday night as well and making a longer weekend of it (and looking nicely chilled!). I received a warm welcome (as always) and a nice cup of tea.

We headed down to the Clinton Arms in Frithelstock for our evening meal. There we were joined at various points during the evening by Mike F and Paul K and later on, Bev, Jake, Lee, Guy and Harris. Dave's friend Elizabeth and her family (who run a holiday cottage locally) also joined us. The meal was very enjoyable and there was an enormous amount of chips to be consumed. All those who had the starter as well were soon regretting it! I'm now wondering if the Landlord had

inside information about how far we would end up paddling on Sunday and thought we could do with the extra calories!!

The plan for Saturday was to put in at Sheepwash Bridge and get out at Hele Bridge - a fairly short trip but the level at Sheepwash was very low on Friday afternoon so we were expecting a slow flow and a bit of a scrape down. After a leisurely breakfast (The RCC only do leisurely breakfasts - especially when Barry isn't around!), and getting cars and boats in the right places, we were on the water at 11.30am. Jo and Chris also joined us at the put-in. The overnight rain had lifted the level higher than we expected, so even though the water was still low, it was easily paddleable.



The section down to Hele Bridge is quite narrow and windy - interesting at high levels I would imagine with plenty of trees to avoid. The rain seemed to ease off a little as we headed down and there were no major incidents. Jake, Lee and Harris were determined to find any small waves to play on which were few and far between while the rest of us were happy to enjoy the scenery and a gentle paddle. I did at one point decide to have a little 'play' on a small and innocuous looking stopper, which was fine until I turned side on to it. As it tried to grab me and turn me over, I luckily remembered my tried and tested 'panic recovery technique' which basically consists of an erratic, random sequence of brace strokes combined with frantic knee wobbling until the stopper lets go of my boat! After that, I just stuck to enjoying the scenery!!

As we all stopped for lunch and were tucking into our sandwiches, Guy appeared from around the bend looking a little wet. He had bravely decided to practise a roll in a nice looking eddy - but had only successfully completed the first half of the exercise (the capsize part!). He complained about the buoyancy aid being too 'buoyant' and not capsizing him quickly enough. In my view that's a good thing.

The rain held out until we finished lunch but soon after being back on the water, it started to rain again. The run down to Hele Bridge was uneventful and we got there about 2.30ish. Due to such a low level, the banks were extremely muddy and taking the boats out was not straight-forward because of the steep sides. We ended up tying the ends of the boats together and pulling them up from the bank. After much effort and muddiness, we were happily in the pub by 3.00pm.

The events of the weekend nearly took an interesting turn while in the pub. Mike F returned from the gents having picked up a leaflet on the way back. "I think we should cancel tomorrow's paddle and do this instead", I think were his words. He then presented the tourist information leaflet for the 'Gnome Reserve' (not to be confused with the Ideal Gnome

Exhibition!). Once everyone had picked themselves off the floor laughing (Mike was still looking serious), the idea was politely dismissed as being ridiculous. However, if it had been 'Smurf Village' or the 'Fairy Gardens' then that would have been have a totally different proposition and we would have cancelled Sunday's paddle.



*Is that Mike on the right?*

Back at the barn, a traditionally great curry was enjoyed by all, thanks to Nick, and a few of us decided to return to the pub to watch the England v France Six Nations match. Mike W, who had only just joined us before dinner, very kindly gave up his whiskey (or did we hide it?) to give us all a lift up to the pub. The match was pretty poor in the end and we tried to convince Nick, who doesn't normally follow rugby, that matches are usually much more entertaining. He wasn't convinced!! We did discover however that Jo was a big fan of Johnny Wilkinson and his odd shaped ball (how did she know?!). We were back at the barn again by 10.30 to find that everyone had gone to bed - must have been all that hard paddling - so we did the same.

On the Sunday, and after another leisurely breakfast, the plan was to put in at Hele Bridge again and paddle down to the Puffing Billy Pub near Rothorn Bridge. On previous trips, I believe that the usual Sunday paddle is from Beaford Bridge down to Rothorn Bridge, which is a much shorter paddle. I think that we all felt guilty for spending so much time in the pub the day before and the longer paddle seemed like a good idea at the time.

After a longish shuttle and the awkwardness of getting the boats back in at Hele Bridge, we didn't set off until 11.30. The weather was a great improvement on Saturday and we started off in glorious sunshine. The river soon opened out after a narrow and winding start and it was another very pleasant paddle. We stopped for lunch around 1.30 and Mike W decided to practice his 'punting' technique. Two metres from the bank, he lost his balance and was on the verge of diving face first into 6 inches of water! Laughter and cheering was soon followed by disappointment as he somehow managed to recover and stay in the boat.

Setting off again, the realisation started to sink in that we still had a long way to paddle and the clouds were coming over again. After a couple more hours, we were all starting to feel tired and were hoping for the arrival of Lady Palmer weir, which is within a couple of miles of Rothorn Bridge. Cries of "are we there yet?" were starting to emerge but Bev just told me to stop whinging and get on with it! ;o) I think Lee was feeling it the most but I think he did amazingly well to keep

going until the end. Jake and Harris also did very well and even though they are probably fitter than the rest of us, they were in shorter boats and used up a lot of energy 'playing' on the way down.



I noticed at one point that Chris wasn't wearing a buoyancy aid. He explained that the backrest in his boat was broken and the seat was starting to dig into his back after the long paddle. So he had recklessly abandoned safety (ok, so we were only in 1 ft of water) in favour of a comfy seat cushion!

We finally arrived at Lady Palmer weir and we all shot it down the centre without any problems. Jo decided to take a more supervisory role and shouted encouragement from the bank as Dave R negotiated the weir safely. Another couple of miles further down was Taddipport weir which again, was negotiated safely by all. Soon we were at Rothorn Bridge at and the exit point by the Puffing Billy pub – we were all puffing by then!! Apparently, we had paddled 18.5 miles from Hele Bridge – surely even Barry would be impressed with that? (Ok, maybe not!).

Even though tiring and maybe a little long for the Sunday paddle with a late start, it was a lovely river to experience and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Thanks to everyone for a great weekend, especially to Dave R for organising and all those who provided meals.

Paul B