



CANEWS

October 2010

EDITOR'S CORNER

THE WEB SITE – www.ringwoodcanoe.co.uk

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.

DON'T FORGET

RCC Forum



Don't miss out on impromptu trips, gossip and banter

RC Photo Gallery



Share your photos with all members

CAPTION COMPETITION

Visit the web site for the Caption Competition.



The Dog was disgusted at the way Dot continued to beg a drink from riverside locals although she was a registered member of AA. The camera never lies!

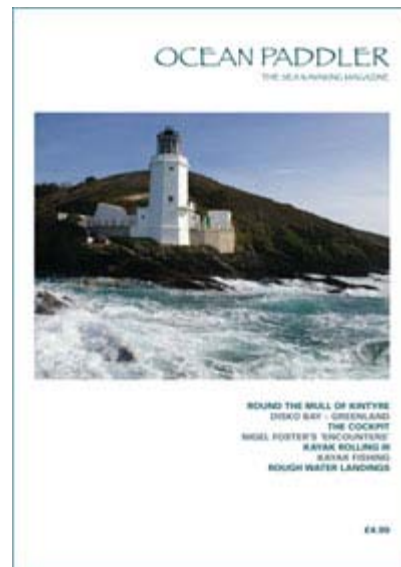
Mike W

That is the last time I trust that dam dog to keep a lookout while I try to sneak up and snaffle someone's pint!!

Dot

OCEAN PADDLER ON LINE

You can now read last months issue of Ocean Paddler on line. FREE.



Richard Parkin explains: *Ocean Paddler is incredibly well received and I see this as a situation where we all benefit; we get more readers and coverage, our supporters adverts are seen by more people and of course the members of the canoe and kayak clubs that take up the offer have free access to what I truly believe is a quality publication I'm always on the lookout for contributors so I see this as a way of attracting those too*

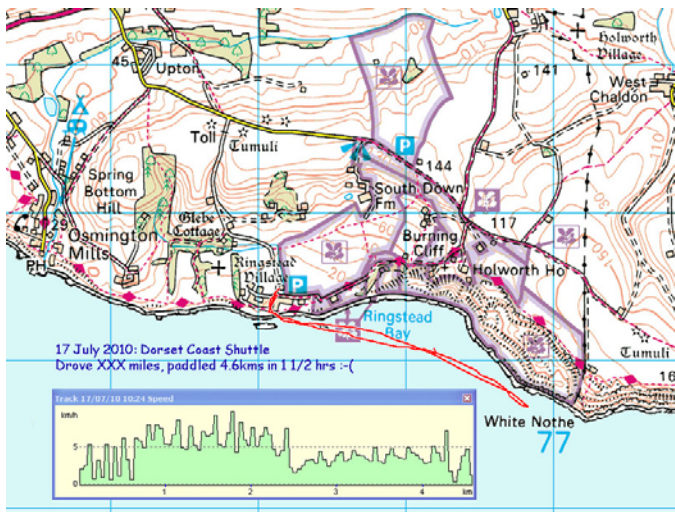
Go to the information page on the clubs website for the link

DORSET COAST SEA KAYAK CAMPING WEEKEND

*We launched down at Ringstead bay,
it seemed such a wonderful day,
we paddled a mile
then back for a while,
drove home
and put kayaks away.*

:O)

Rich J



STEVE SAMBELL MEMORIAL TRIP

Last year four of us set off to paddle from Totnes, down the Dart estuary, around the South coast of Devon and up the Avon estuary to Aveton Giffard. We were frustrated on Sunday by an uninviting seastate and retreated up the Kingsbridge estuary to end our trip there. I had organised the trip in memory of Steve Sambell, one of the main driving forces behind the founding of the club, and who I had paddled with a few times on this route. Last year's trip from Totnes to Kingsbridge replicated exactly the first camping expedition that Steve, Paul Toynton and I had done. Those trips had been done in general purpose kayaks but now, with all of us in sea kayaks, it should be possible to paddle greater distances, and the planned route therefore was a bit longer than any that Steve had done with us in the 1990s.

This year Richard Jennings, Bev and I tried again, with Ben Adams a new recruit to the group. Although Ben has been in the club less than a year, he had been out paddling in the club's Avocet sea kayak every day that week, and looked strong and confident on the water.

We met at Totnes around 7pm and shuttled the cars to Aveton Giffard. It was made easy with a lift back from my parents who live near Totnes, and fell into the trap: "We'll be in Devon this weekend. Would you like to see us?" We paddled down the estuary to camp at Sandridge Point, a spot that was one of Steve's favourites, where Bev and I indulged in the luxury of steaks barbecued on the fire. Bev went to bed leaving the boys to drink, chat and gaze at the stars, and we sat up in shorts and T-shirts until the early hours of Saturday.

Rich was a bit groggy after only 4 hours snoring but I think my clattering of pots at the fire eased him gently from his beauty sleep. This was unwittingly in the spirit of the memorial paddle, as poor Steve didn't have a single decent night's sleep on any

of the trips we shared; not through any fault of mine I should add.

We had breakfast and were in Dartmouth for a toilet stop before the shops opened. The river mouth was very calm and the sea inviting, so we enjoyed paddling close to the rocks and coves at leisurely pace. As we progressed Southwards along Start Bay the wind became more of a nuisance. It was coming from the South West so we were in the lee and the sea stayed calm, but near the shore it was blowing force 4-5 directly against us. We stopped on the shingle beaches for a morning break and for lunch, and eventually found a calm stretch of coast between Hallsands and Start Point. It was bliss for a mile or so, but we expected to meet the full strength of the South Westerly when we rounded Start Point. We were surprised and very happy to find the sea almost windless and very calm. I don't think the wind had eased because the sea would have remained quite rough. It seems more likely that the sharp ridge of land was pulling the stronger wind at higher altitude down to sea level on its leeward side, just as a tall building does, causing stronger winds just along the shore of Start Bay.

That part of the coast is fantastic, with sharp rocks and jagged ridges, and a few coves that are difficult to access and never busy. We watched a buzzard on a hunting flight just below the cliff top. It stopped abruptly against a ledge on the cliff and another bird dropped off. We couldn't see if the buzzard had landed on a nest but it took flight without any prey. We realised immediately that the second bird was a peregrine, then another took off and the two of them easily outpaced the buzzard and dived onto it, making contact and driving it away. An amazing sight at quite close range.

We could have camped on that stretch of coast but Rich had set his heart on revisiting Sunny Cove in the Kingsbridge estuary, which is just a short walk from a much higher class of toilet than any that the isolated coves could offer. He also would have found it difficult to rest until Prawle Point was behind him.

As we approached Prawle it was apparent that the sea was rougher on the other side, and the tidal race off the headland was putting up some visible waves, or overfalls. Rich and Ben were just a few metres ahead of Bev and I, but it is amazing how the gap widens when the one in front is eager to get through the rough stuff, and Bev is the one behind. She slowed right down and obviously didn't fancy the bigger waves. I could see that it was going to be a long haul against the fast tidal stream, and we'd have to go a long way out to avoid the overfalls. There is a tiny gap in the headland, which you can get through if there's enough water. It is less than a couple of metres wide at the narrowest point though, so of no use to anything except a kayak. I looked through it for a while and was convinced that it was safe from breaking waves on the other side, so through we went. The tide was rushing through and it wasn't easy, but all Bev's years of finding eddies on white water had honed her skills at paddling upstream and we both got through without any trouble. Once on the other side we could see the others paddling hard and going almost nowhere, so we waited in the bay for a while, then paddled into Elender Cove where we went on a mercy errand helping to reunite people in a boat with a faulty engine and one of their party left on the beach. We thought we might stop there for a tea break but the others were still far out to sea and heading across the bay so we carried on to meet them in Sunny Cove.

On the beach were a group of youngsters with a plentiful supply of beer and disposable barbecues. We wondered if

we'd made the wrong decision on a camp site, but they weren't noisy at all, and only woke us up when their tents were all blown down by a squall in the night.

Next morning saw some impressive swells and breaking seas on the infamous Salcombe bar, but we avoided these and paddled out to Bolt head, where there is a group of rocks offering a choice of routes. I sat in a calm spot in the middle of them, watching the swells breaking over the outer ones and checking for the safest route, while Bev sat a little way back on the estuary side of them shouting "Barry; I'm not going through there". Richard, meanwhile, had forged ahead between the rocks and gave us the thumbs up as the waves broke each side of him. Ben followed and they were stopping for no one once they were in the bigger waves to seaward. Bev very grudgingly tucked in behind me and we went through the gap which was quite safe, but impossible to see from where she had made her assessment.

We regrouped and paddled the few miles of exposed cliffs from Bolt Head to Bolt Tail, without incident but not without a few support strokes each. There seems to be an absence of photographs from that part of the trip. For some reason none of us bothered to get a camera out. The windblown waves were quite small, and the swells were only about 1.5 metres but they were from a different direction to the wind driven waves. The swells were reflected from the cliffs too, so there were three wave systems making a confused sea. As the depth of water varied it was very noticeable what a big effect it had on the swell steepness and height. Once past Bolt Tail it was as if we were on a different ocean, with swells insignificant and no reflected waves from the beaches.

We stopped for a well earned coffee break on a beach near Hope Cove, where the water was as flat as on a good day in Christchurch harbour. We had an easy stretch then past some of the best South Devon beaches, to the river Avon. The river mouth is on the surf beach of Bantham and was invisible beyond the breakers. These were huge on the Eastern end of the beach and across the whole width the beach was thronged with body boards, surf boards, paddle boards, kayaks and of course swimmers. Even a couple of beach casting anglers in their midst! We chose the far Western end to go through their ranks, where the surf was tiny and the crowd thinnest. Even then I had to ask one of the surfers where the river mouth was as I still couldn't see it past the surf. Bev and Ben both caught waves wrong, Ben found support from the bottom but Bev didn't so she ended up having a short walk to the beach.

Rich and Ben were surprised when she said "Now I'm wet I might as well go and play." They thought she meant in her kayak, but of course she just wanted to go and jump about in the waves, which she did. We re-launched and paddled up the river a short way for lunch out of the wind, and to wait for the tide. We didn't wait long enough though, and soon ran out of water on the way up the estuary. Patience was the answer, but with lovely scenery around it wasn't a problem.

We were all happy to have covered the planned distance in good time and with (almost) no mishaps.

Barry.

OPEN CANOE ASSOCIATION RALLY

Mike W and I booked onto the Open Canoe Association rally held at Wimbleball Lake in North Devon. The weekend included a number of workshops; this was held over the 3 days of the May bank holiday. The star of the weekend was Becky Mason, daughter of the legendary Bill Mason of Song of The Paddle fame.



Mike Worth on the Exeter ship canal

There were some 90 participants, all of us camped overlooking the lake, which is man made but very beautiful.

We pitched our tents on Friday night and headed straight for the George Inn at Houghton Regis for a meal. It was extremely cold overnight but I've found that if you use a silk liner inside a 2 season sleeping bag, inside a 3 season sleeping bag and have your bivi bag in the tent just in case you should feel cold, we'll I was toasty anyway.

There were lots of workshops planned for the 3 days. Mike W and I had booked to paddle from just below Exeter, down the river Exe and join the Exeter canal on a round trip. Predictably it started to rain just as we put in but it didn't come to much. It's a nice paddle down through Topsham village and into the estuary and we had the tide with us. We had to carry the boats about 100 yds to get back onto the canal at Turf locks, there is also a pub there of the same name and so of course we stopped there for lunch.

It's a very pleasant paddle on the canal which is a lot wider than most canals that we've been on.

Back at the camp site we cooked dinner on Mike's Excellent home made fire box and chatted to other campers. It was interesting walking round the site, seeing other people's kit. One couple were even baking bread in their dutch oven!

During the day an incident occurred with the camp cooking workshop. Evidently several Kelly Kettles were on the go when one seven year old decided to help her mums kettle boil quicker by putting the bung in. When the pressure built up, it shot up about 9ft into the air scalding one of the kids nearby. 2 air ambulances arrived, 1 from Cornwall and 1 from Devon and the child was attended to. Perhaps drilling a hole in the bung would be a safeguard in future.

Saturday nights entertainment was held in the barn and featured a band called the "Mangledwurzels" who played good old Dorset songs, plus there was a heavily subsidised bar.

Sunday morning saw cold driving rain and very high winds. We had hoped to take part in the Becky Mason workshop on the lake but this was abandoned due to the adverse weather. Hastily improvised workshops were arranged in the barn. These included, camp luggage / expedition planning / fireboxes and tarps / hammock and knots. We both agreed that it had been a very worthwhile morning. With no improvement in the weather conditions a roast lunch back at the Georg was order of the day.

Late on that afternoon Mike took advantage of Mad River being there with a load of demo boats and tried a few out.

Sunday night Becky Mason and her husband gave a talk and slide show. When you see the fantastic lakes and rivers they have to paddle in Canada, you can't help feeling just a little bit jealous.

Monday proved to be a much better day although still very windy. Mike and I paddled to one end of the lake. I found it hard going as usual but Mike made it look easy. We lashed our boats together and Mike unfurled his golfing broly. Using our paddles as twin rudders, we sailed to the Dam at the far end lake. We walked along the top of the Dam but there wasn't any water going down the chutes but it's still an impressive structure.

After a brew we started to paddle back to camp against the headwind. For part of the way the wind became too strong and we had to line the boats. It proved to be a varied and fun day on the lake.

After packing up the tents and a late lunch, we headed back to our homes. We both felt that we had got a lot out of the weekend and met some very nice people.

Sadly as usual, by the time I got home I couldn't remember any of the knots but hey, that's normal!

Dot

DSW 2010 – SURF, SAMBUCA AND, ER, POLE DANCING



September 2010 saw RCC members enjoy their most expensive-ever Devon Surf Weekend. Wallets were emptied and reputations were ruined. What started out as an innocent two days of wave-riding fun rapidly degenerated into an alcohol-fuelled orgy of frenetic pole dancing. Unfortunately, Jake and I missed the last bit because we were safely tucked up in our beds by the time the rest of the RCC reprobates hit the night club. But first, let's go back to the beginning.....

The week's build-up to DSW 2010 was a climb-down. Excuses for no-shows – all perfectly valid – ranged from illness and broken cam belts through to the need to get the harvest in before the weather changed. In the end, only Rich, Ben, Jake, Martin, Nic, Elliott and I made it down to Ilfracombe. Since I'd originally booked Maplewood House for 14, and had failed to let them know that numbers were fast diminishing, we had to pay full whack. Or rather, RCC did (sorry Treasurer). I guess this sort of established the theme for the weekend: we knew we had sponsors, and were determined not to let them down.

Friday night found us all happily ensconced at the George & Dragon in the lower high street by about 9pm. We were even happier a few hours later when we had a lock-in, and finally rolled back to our hostel at about 1am.

Following a very leisurely breakfast – hey, there's our reputation to think of, plus the last thing you need is indigestion on monster surf waves – and a review of webcams using the hostel's internet facility (a PC on the landing), we headed off to Woolacombe. The surf wasn't great, but we're ever an adaptable bunch, and everyone enjoyed hours of fun, with some of us swimming and some of us not. Oh, I'm so kind, aren't I, not naming the shamed?

Actually, one was most definitely female, which is a bit of a give-away, another was a fisherman and at least two others were not called Jake, Elliott or Nick. Oh alright, one was called Nick. But that's only because the seabed mysteriously disappeared just when I needed it most. And I did spend a considerable amount of time trying to roll up – Elliott reckoned at least 20 seconds.

At about 12.30, I suggested that we paddled over to Barricane beach for lunch and then went rock-hopping off Morte Point. If you take a close look at the expressions on peoples' faces in the photo below, you will see that everyone agreed with me and thought that this was a really good idea



After lunch, I was promptly abandoned by the rest of the group, who all paddled back to Woolacombe to continue having fun in the surf. Eventually even Jake had had enough, so together we made the long trawl back up the beach, got changed and went window shopping. Most of us were content just browsing surf shops, looking at clothing and attempting to break surf board simulators, but as usual, Elliott 'Nothing more for me please' Gully was dedicating his energy towards finding the world's biggest pasty.

Elliott's cravings satisfied (for now), tradition demanded that we then all repaired to the Rock Inn at Georgeham, where we spent a convivial hour. Since Nic had decided that after Friday night she was never ever drinking again, she only had cider and a rather suspicious-sounding cocktail. We then all made our way back to Maplewood House – Nic, Elliott and I called in to see Anne and John Redmond at Seagulls en route (who are both fine, by the way) – before going out for a curry. No names (again), and no prizes, but guess who had one dish more than the rest of us? For future reference, the Asian Spice restaurant wouldn't win any curry contests, and their korma is sickly sweet and mild, but the food's OK. Ish.

Anyway, where else could we go after that, but back to the George & Dragon. We were a quiet and reflective bunch that evening, content to sit back and sip our drinks peacefully, just taking pleasure in each others' company. And then someone – and because things quickly became rather hazy, I honestly can't remember who, but the prime suspects are Ben and Rich – suggested that we all needed livening up a bit and that what we really, really needed was a black sambuca each. Not just one black sambuca, but several black sambucas. And not just black sambucas, but white sambucas. And then after the white, because we might have forgotten what the black tasted like and it is very important to remember, another black. And then..... Well, and then we got locked in again. The landlord had decided that he loved us after all. And he'd also decided that what we really, really all needed were miniature Guinesses (black sambuca and Baileys) on the house. This time, I think we left the pub at about 1am.



Normally for RCC that would probably mark the end of an evening. But not this time, oh no; the fun was only just starting. Jake and I headed to bed. Jake because he'd had enough of watching adults get rat-assed (though he claims to have enjoyed it), and me because I was exceptionally proud of the fact that I'd found my own way to my own bed. Then Elliott – who else – announced that he was hungry and might not survive the night unless he had a kebab. The rest of the team (sans Jake and me) decided to accompany him on the basis that, and I quote, "we need some fresh air."

And that was the last I heard of them. Well, until about 4am. Somehow, Jake managed to sleep through their return. Quite how he did this, considering all the giggling and "shush" sounds, is beyond me. But they were very considerate, and didn't even turn the bedroom light on. Consequently, when Nic kicked over her glass of water in the dark, nobody could find it, though everybody spent a considerable amount of time and effort trying to give her a helping hand. When she eventually returned from the kitchen with a replacement and discovered someone in her bed, she probably didn't even know that it was Rich. Not that she wasted any time trying to identify the interloper – she simply emptied the contents of her glass over the incumbent form. And then realised that she'd just wet her own bed and stomped off in search of a spare dry one. Eventually a sort of silence sort of reigned.

Sunday morning dawned on people. More on some than others. The silence was broken by groans and the funny sound that bed covers make when they're being pulled over bloodshot eyes. Jake and I were fine, though a bit concerned as to what might have happened to our fellow surfers on the dark streets of Ilfracombe. Oh that we should have worried.

Turns out that post kebab, they went to a nightclub called Chinese Whispers – definitely Ilfracombe's crappiest, according to our hosts – and danced the night away. Expensive whisky, expensive lager and cheap.....

Perhaps we'd better draw a veil over the rest. Allegedly it involved pole dancing, with some performers performing more elegantly than others. It's all to do with the type of footwear, apparently. Rich, Ben, Martin, Elliott and Nic vehemently deny the existence of any photos, though eventually, of course, it's quite likely that one or two will surface on some sleazy website.....

Sunday breakfast was late. Very late. Strangely, appetites – even Elliott's – seemed to have become smaller overnight. Jake, who was the only one amongst us who could stand the thought of surfing on the net for more than a few seconds, reckoned that every beach webcam was showing much the same scene, so we shambled back to Woolacombe.

Then Jake, who also was the only one amongst us who could stand the thought of surfing on the sea, went, er, surfing. On the sea. Martin bravely dragged his kayak to the water's edge and spent half an hour battling the in-shore breaks before finally admitting defeat. The rest of us? Well, we spent the time cowering behind glass at the beach café, drinking coffee and talking down the surf. Some of us ventured out for a closer look at the sea (things were still a bit hazy), but that's as far as we went. Climbing into a kayak might have been a step too far.

Lee and Harris on body boards joined Jake in the water – Gus had brought 6 people down for the day – so at least he had company, if not kayak surfing buddies. And according to Jake, the surf was even better than on Saturday, but everyone seemed content to take his word for it, without need to participate.

It was the quietest journey home from Ilfracombe that I have ever experienced. Nic curled up fast asleep in the back, and Elliott in the front pretending to keep a careful eye on the kerb.

Footnote: the Treasurer didn't quibble about the accommodation costs, but merely enquired about the average cost per wave surfed. Thank God we'd had Jake with us! Since he'd surfed far more waves than the rest of us put together, he was single-handedly responsible for bringing the figure back to something reasonable. And by avoiding taking part in the sambuca tasting session, to say nothing of the night clubbing, he'd almost certainly saved enough money to buy another boat!

Roll on DSW 2011!

Nick L

KEEPER OF KIT

Mike Farnden, who has been the 'keeper of the kit' for a long time, resigned at the meeting 8th October. I was very remiss at the time, for not thanking him at the meeting for the work he has put into this over the years,

And so - a big thanks Mike, cheers.

Claire has taken over and will probably be contacting people to verify whereabouts of club kit

Once again THANKS Mike. And good luck Claire

Mike Worth