



CANEWS

April 2012

EDITOR'S CORNER

THE WEB SITE – www.ringwoodcanoe.co.uk

Sadly a very short edition this time – blame the lack of contributors and, big thanks to the few that did!

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.



"Having unpacked her sea kayak Dot settles down to dinner" Simon B.

"Here's to another perfect RCC weekend – not a canoe or a stretch of water in sight" Barry D



The weather for the w/end was magic, but the big bad BUT was, there had been no rain.

So what do you do, you go and look, armed with a pair of walking shoes.

We were staying at the Blytheswood hostel along with an army of large wood ants, up cardiac path, or crash course lane.

Dot, Tim and myself had decided to get down early and try to get in an extra paddle ,so we all tipped up about 10.00am to get the cars unloaded and look at what water there was. After a bacon butty we moved off to look at the Dart ,for the Saturday , with the intention of going over to the Tamar for a paddle. Got to New Bridge , no one around ,and probably enough water to float an open, so hasty new plan, as day was getting on, let's paddle the loop. There was a murmur of no access or something like that but when your ignorant you just don't understand these things, and here we were 3 ignorant people (well one of us) about to paddle an original Celtic road !!

Tim had his shiny (cheap) (cheap) open boat with him, a fairly rare sight and he had just put on some nice new skid plates in an exact match of colour(three different pigments to get just the right colour ,if I remember right)No kidding, the job had been done really well and I gave congrats on a superb job well done .



Dot and I got our boats in the water whilst Tim was carefully carrying his down , don't want to scratch precious, do we master!!

On the water and away, it was fantastic, low but paddleball , you needed to concentrate and look for a line but it was well worth doing. The beauty spots were full of beauties getting down to their bikinis, first near mishap with Tim, but we got his eyeballs back in and carried on down river. It was fun ,the river had lots of obstacles namely rocks which made it quite technical but we weren't walking the river because of low water , we just had to step out occasionally to get a boat off a rock , and it was only occasionally. Tim was set to test his skid plates, he managed to pick a very large rock in an area of no rocks and paddle straight into it ,Dot watched open mouthed ,I nearly lost my line laughing too much, amazing Tim ,amazing!!The features were all still good, smaller but still good fun. The sun was shining, no other paddlers, no people at all. It was a good day .We went all the way to the bridge before Buckfastleigh and got out there .It had been a good day out. Went back to the lodgings and then joined Barry, Bev, Dave, Paul and a very relaxed tanned looking Nicola after her long hols to Asia.

The rest of the motley crew rolled up later at the ranch, muttering about low wateryou know.

The next day we decided to do the Exe Loop. Jake Wiltshire and Tim Skidplate fancied another go at the Dart and off they went whilst the rest of us went to different put ins on the Ex!! Sue joined us late, so I hung back a bit to pick up my bow paddler. Mile or so down the river we came across Mike Farnden, as he hadn't seen us, he had throttled back 'in case I had had a heart attack' The club safety system does work !So it was us two boats and somewhere in front the rest of the pack .Tide was whooshing out and after we passed Totnes I did have the feeling we might end up towing our boats across mud to get to Turf Lock, so our little flotilla turned back and accessed the canal at the Topsham ferry jetty, where we paddled up to the rest of the group at the pub. For ref there is a good channel up to Turf Lock so we would have been alright. A nice picnic in the sun, and a gentle paddle back to Exeter, to let Victor loose in the new AS Water sport shop. Lots of goodies.

Highlight of the trip was on return to base. Jakey and Skid plate had returned ,and O I could write a book on this , but you remember those perfect skid plates I told you about well.....what can I say 'all that glitters is not gold' Tim had hit a few rocks (again) and the skid plates well ,they had just fallen apart and they had, looked ,dare I say that word ,so ,professional, what a shame .Plus they had encountered fishermenneed I say more .They had had a good day me thinks .



Didn't think that could be capped, but ,later Sue walked into

the chalet requesting a bit of help with her car!! How do you park a 4 wheel vehicle on 2 wheels diagonally opposed? ask Sue .How did she do it ,even she doesn't know. With a bit of a heave and a grunt and a twist of the wheel by Jake ,it was back on all 4 .Well, who wants a lift with Sue next time we go out ! ?



Thank you Barry and Bev for knocking up the evening curry ,a nice end to the day .



Sunday saw us leaving for the moor, hiking gear on to meet Barry and Bevs friends, Albert, Isabelle and daughter Chloe (who really likes Jelly Babies).They live in the area and Albert is the warden of Yarner Wood National Nature Reserve. He gave us a really good educated tour doing a round walk from Haytor .Again a really nice day out ending with a great cup of tea and some fine French cake cooking, sitting in the sun ,Barry with his shirt off (any excuse) at their house .Thank you Albert and Isabelle.



Cheers to everyone, a varied trip and fantastic weather for it.

Oh just remembered, you know that little drinking song.....

Where be the blackbirds be,

I know where they be,

They be up yon wurzel tree..... etc etc

Well just swop the words!!!

Where be the skid plates be,

I know where they be

They be on yon open boat

And Tim's in charge of e

Now rocks there be

And rocks to see

But Timmy he does fail to see,

Take a bloody great canoe, he hits it see

Skid plates are history

Mike Worth

RIVER HAMBLE, APRIL.

One of the club's shorter and more modest trips, but nonetheless enjoyable for that. Ten of us in a great variety of boats with double and solo open boats, touring kayaks and sea kayaks all well represented. Lisa Cox even had the audacity to turn up in the boat she'd outbid me for on eBay a couple of weeks before. Perhaps one day she'll let me have a go in it. We also had the full range of club experience from founder member to someone on his first time in a canoe. The one thing that we all missed was our Gallant Chairman on the first club trip of his new term of office. Not a very good start if I may so Mr Chairman Sir, but we'll forgive you if the bad back was the reason.

The forecast was for showers at lunch time, and we had a barbecue planned so Bev and I went ahead find a lunch spot and rig a tarpaulin over it. Some thought we were putting up a sun shade as it was still bright at that stage, but all happily crowded in shortly afterwards when the forecast came good. We had as diverse a range of cooking fires, barbecues and stoves as we did of boats, and if it was a race to cook lunch I failed miserably.

We spent a happy hour there cooking up, then most people got bored waiting for me to cook our sausages and headed off up the river. Bev and I took the tarp down just as the second squall came through and launched the boats into a hailstorm. Great timing! It didn't really matter though as it was short lived and gave the estuary a dramatic change of character while it lasted.

Most then paddled up to the navigable limit of the Hamble at Botley which is an interesting creek meandering through woods, reed beds and eventually houses. Heading back with the tide was a leisurely paddle, although some of the wind gusts demanded a bit extra from the open boaters. Lisa was on her first proper solo trip, and coped really well, but was glad to double up with Bev on the way back. So, Bev got to paddle in that lovely boat that could have been mine "Shouldn't be such a tight ba...rd" I can hear them braying with not a hint of sympathy.



We got back to Bursledon just before the next shower and then Dot treated some of us to tea and mince pies at her house. Thanks Dot, very nice. Another great day out and a chance to give my trusty fleece shorts an airing, surrounded as usual by ladies shivering in multi-layered costumes of designer labelled thermals and waterproofs. Strange people our club seems to attract. Just as well that we have a level-headed Chairman to keep us all in order I say. Pity he wasn't there too, with his equally trendy shorts and plastic toe protectors in a fetching shade of lilac.

Barry.

TORRIDGE

There was a smaller number than usual on the Torridge trip this year but a good weekend was had by all. Most people turned up during the day on Friday and by early evening we were all ready to head into Great Torrington for a meal at the Kings Head.



Dave and Annie's friends Phil and Elizabeth joined us and an excellent meal was had by all.

With the river levels being so low we put in at Beaford Bridge where Roz and Dave joined us for the days paddling. The upper section would have been too much of a scrape.

It was fairly warm but overcast and we were pleasantly surprised to find the flow wasn't too bad. It's a lovely river, with very few houses in view, so for most of it you feel that you are quite remote. The primroses were out and it was nice to gently paddle enjoying the beautiful Devon scenery.

There are only 2 weirs on this stretch. The first one was Taddipport which was shot without too much bother. The next weir is the Town Weir below Torrington. This is shot river right down some fish steps where you are pushed on to the concrete sides.

This weir has a rather strange brooding atmosphere. I thought it was just me who thought that but over the years a number of

people have made the same comment about it. As we paddled away from the Weir I was looking at a Cormorant the was flying up the river towards me, I was amazed to see it apparently stop dead in mid-air and drop straight into the river. After a few seconds it took off in a rather groggy fashion. It had flown directly into an overhead cable which was now swinging about wildly from the birds impact which

The take out was at the Puffing Billy pub, unfortunately it was closed so we didn't get that well-earned pint.

Back at Sea Lock Barn Nick and Marion cooked up a fab Indian meal and Viv served up Scrummy puddings and we all enjoyed a chill out evening.

The next morning the tide was perfect to paddle from Sea Lock Barn down the estuary to Appledore. It was a glorious sunny day, there was only Dave with Jo in his Canadian, Nick, Captain Worth and myself. We launched into the Lock and paddled out to catch the falling tide. The flow was so strong that you hardly had to put in any strokes.

We've never done this part of the river before and it's a real delight. The river winds under lovely wooded banks, we just floated along with the current listening to the Ravens calling in the woods above us. Annie and Marion were on the bank just before we got to Bideford and shadowed us down to Appledore. Marion

The old bridge at Bideford has some 23 arches and no two seem to have the same span or shape.

As we left Bideford we met a sea mist and the warm sunshine began to disappear.

Our Chairman wanted to paddle over to the Village of Instow on the opposite side of the estuary but we didn't fancy the chance that we might lose the water and spend the next six hours high and dry on a mud bank.

All too soon we got to Appledore and met up with Annie and Marion and then it was back to Sea Lock Barn for a fry up. It was so nice that we sat at the picnic table outside.

That afternoon Adrian who owns the Barn and lock gave a guided tour of the restoration of the Lock and its history.

That evening we joined Phil and Elizabeth at their lovely farmhouse for a meal of home reared beef, it doesn't get much better than that.



Thanks to Dave and Annie for organizing such a nice trip.

Dot

BANFF FILM FESTIVAL

A number of RCC members met up at the Lighthouse theatre in Poole for the Banff film festival.

It was a really great evening. It consisted of several films which varied from mountain biking, mountain climbing, slacklining, kayaking etc. but they are something else.

The tickets were about £12 and the place was full.

Put it in your diary for next year, you won't regret it.

Dot

OLYMPIC SWIMMING



Tim B called me after he had been up to Lee Valley WW centre with a crowd from Chichester and persuaded me to head up to north London to see what it was all about, I did a little research and discovered there was less than a month before the event was closed to the public and handed over to the Olympic competitors. He suggested we go the following weekend, so keen was he to make this happen he combined it with a Dartmoor weekend only doing the Friday and Saturday down west meeting up with me on the Sunday morning and heading up to the Lee Valley WW centre.

I signed up for the assessment and turned up to be checked out, the first bit was on the pool at the bottom of the two courses. This involved being asked to paddle in a straight line and capsize the boat with the option to either roll or swim back to shore. Of the 8 being assessed 2 failed at this stage and it was quite obvious they had done very little kayaking. The 6 of us then headed for the Legacy course, this one has a conveyor to take you to the top and we were asked to hit some eddies and surf some waves on the way down. This course is fast and fun with the features having a surprising amount of energy from the small drop in elevation. 3 of the group were comfortable on this course and were invited up to the Olympic course. The others were happy on the Legacy and finished their assessment at this point. This will allow them to return to the Legacy course only, which is great to develop kayaking skills in relative safety and with no rafts to get in the way.



The remaining 3 of us headed off with the assessor to inspect the bottom half of the Olympic course which has large rafts running down the course at regular intervals. We were given specific moves to make and eddies to hit and to avoid being run over by the rafts, we then headed up to the top of the course where again we were asked to make certain moves, during this run down we were all given the all clear and were now allowed to book sessions on either course. There were only 12 kayakers allowed on the Olympic course in and one hour session and I had to wait a couple of hours to get a session both Tim and I could get a space.

When our time came around we had a short warm up and headed for the top, the water is quite fast and we had fun trying to catch eddies and surf some of the waves, there are lots of features within the 300m course including two larger drops. We had a couple of fun runs down getting used to the water and as you can see from the photos the water is a lovely colour and quite energetic. I had my GoPro with me and have uploaded a short video clip for your entertainment.

<https://plus.google.com/photos/103230509681751763016/albums/5736027672635865761>

And now for the bit you have all been waiting for, on our next run down half way down the course I got a little tangled up with a raft and after a few failed attempts to get the right way up I bailed out and completed the rest out the course separated from my boat, Tim ably assisted me in retrieving my kit and we continued with the session. The picture below shows you how close I came to one of the rafts during my rolling efforts.



During that week I was keen to head up again and looking at both my and Tim's calendars concluded that the only thing for it would be to head up the very next weekend, this time I was a little more prepared with video camera and photographer (Sara and Oliver) joining me, we had also arranged to catch up with friend in the area after the session. Tim arrived ahead of me and had a session on the Legacy and Olympic courses before I could get on the water, the session followed a similar pattern and we had lots of fun playing on the features and hitting the eddie lines.

And now for the bit you have all been waiting for again, we agreed that the next run down should be a straight blast through the meat of all the rapids. We sent Sara off a vantage point where she could capture the main part of the run and we headed off. Things were going well until I found myself in the wrong place on one of the plastic features. I was eventually washed off this feature only to find myself on the next one, unbeknown to me at the time Tim was right next to me. I had a couple more attempts to come up but eventually bailed again by this point I was at the bottom of the features and swam to the side.

I have uploaded some pics for you to see for yourselves.

<https://plus.google.com/photos/103230509681751763016/albums/5736027672635865761>

[ms/5735059211138029169?authkey=CNbsgoeAy6Px2gE](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ms/5735059211138029169?authkey=CNbsgoeAy6Px2gE)

Despite the swims I really enjoyed both my trips to the fantastic Lee Valley WW centre and would encourage all the WW kayakers to join me in a trip when the course open back up to the public in September. The assessment and Olympic course was £10 and the sessions on the Legacy course are £5. which is good value for the quality of the facility.

Ross