



# CANEWS

January 2012

## EDITOR'S CORNER

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



*Tim seemed to enjoy holding the blackboard, inviting people for a good meal, between his legs Mike W*

*It must have been cold in the shade, Dave was warming his boobies, Dot was warming her cheeks, Tim had his hands in his pockets and Paul had his hands on his hips mmmmmmmmm and the lady in the window was impressed by the advertised size!! Mike W*

*Having inserted the batteries, Tim smugly stood back and activated Take off Mode.!!!*

*Dot*

### RCC AGM

Please don't forget the clubs Annual General Meeting – a room has been booked at the Original White Hart in Ringwood Market Place for 19:30 on Thursday 19th April. If anyone has ideas for a speaker or presentation please let Graham B know

## PENGELLY – A DRY WEEKEND FOR SOME

The weekend on the Dart billed as an "Introduction to white water" would have been a very gentle introduction indeed, but without much white water this year. Nearly all of the 19 paddlers who turned up had plenty of experience and were disappointed to see the river lower than any of us have paddled it before. We had one white water novice though, Debbie Burke, who paddled just one day but made a brilliant show of handling solo the club's newest open boat.

I was sceptical that it would be worth going on the river at all, but a few of the group had run the loop the week before and had fun there so we stuck more or less with the usual routine. We paddled from Buckfast to Totnes on Saturday, and from Newbridge to Buckfast on Sunday. At the low level, the lower stretches tend to be ok because the river is channelled between rock ledges and cut deeply into the river bed, concentrating the water into some interesting little channels and even a few surprise small drops that normally aren't noticeable. On the loop though, the character of the river is very different, with several boulder gardens where the water is spread across the full width of the river, making it shallow everywhere and difficult to navigate between the boulders. Even the open boaters didn't need to get out and walk as some had expected though, and only had to step out a few times to get over a rock or two.



The narrow channel beneath a fallen tree at Staverton was a hazard to navigation that caught Alice out, having had little practice at manoeuvring an open boat she got it wedged and capsized it trying to manhandle it past. It was a warm day for a swim anyway. Dot was instantly on the bank with a passive throw line and a very active camera, while one of the club's gentlemen helped Alice back into her boat.

Sam Harper took the opportunity to cool off on Sunday, having stopped for a pee he tried to seal launch off a rock but slipped in before getting his deck secure. He was helped back onto the rock and tried again, but not before having a second dunking. He obviously enjoyed it.

I am sure there must have been some other mishaps but, with most of our wealthy members sporting expensive drysuits these days, swims aren't anything like the fun they used to be. I still take plenty of flak for my disrespect for the sport, paddling in a thermal shirt and no cag but, hey ho, I can take it.

Excitement wasn't on the menu but the crystal clear water gave us an unusually good view of the river bed, the trees were starting to turn, it was very warm, the sun shone, and we

only saw one other boat. Oh, and the company was good too. Both days were a real pleasure.

Poor Dave Eagles missed his Sunday paddle, having woken up with the stem of his specs in his eye and being keen to get it checked. Who would go to bed with their glasses on? Only someone who had been talked into spending an extra couple of hours in the pub by a good mate who didn't want the entire weekend to be a dry one. You know who your friends are Dave.

Monday morning came and the heavens opened, with about 2 ½ inches of rain on Dartmoor. The river rose a couple of metres in 5 hours and went over its banks in many places. It was half term so we stayed in Devon with my parents for a couple of extra days and Bev made us go for a walk in the rain. I wore a coat.



On Tuesday Jake and I went to Newbridge again and paddled to Buckfast with the river at a great level. It was a real delight to be able to run the same stretch twice in three days in such contrasting conditions. I think it took half the time it had on Sunday and was certainly a lot less effort. I did chicken out at Triple Drop, where the waves looked as though they had a fair chance of catching me out, or swamping my open boat, and I did want to keep my shirt dry. Jake was very happy to help me portage my boat. He thought it might be easier than picking up the pieces if I got it wrong. That day we saw a few other paddlers at the start, but soon left them behind as they were only paddling the loop and, being in bigger groups, probably needed more time to share the waves. Jake had them all to himself and a big grin on his face. I am sorry the rain didn't come a bit sooner so the rest of the group could enjoy it. Maybe next time.



Barry

## WHICH WAY DOWN THE EQUATORIAL PLUG HOLE?



### The Hypothesis

Rumour has it that, here in the Northern Hemisphere, water vortices down a plug hole anti-clockwise owing the Coriolis Effect of the earth's spin. Using the same principal I will always favour taking the right line through the gnarl. Of course, paddling in the Southern Hemisphere going left seemed to work for me, and water drains clockwise. Obviously, this is all rubbish – but we had to have a scientific quest to justify a paddling holiday in Ecuador didn't we?. Bang on the equator, surely the water drops straight down and the safest line will always be centre – well, that was the hypothesis we went out to test :- ) Dave Surman, Andy Newell and I

### The Laboratory: Wet and Warm

Tena (about 4 hours drive South East of Quito) and capital of the Napo Province, is arguably the most popular kayaking destination in Ecuador. Tena was originally founded by missionary explorers and retains a wonderful frontier atmosphere – A real jungle town that lies at the confluence of the Tena and Pano rivers. These rivers soon join the Misahualli and flow into the Napo River the 9th largest tributary to the Amazon. The city sits at an altitude of around 500M – it is hot, steamy, wet. We paddled at the beginning of the 'not so wet' season (Dec to February) the main kayaking season. The heaviest rains come in April, May, and June. But don't let the weather put you off – it is invariably hot and sunny for part of the day – thunder storms bubbling up in the afternoons. Wet and warm – a kayakers dream environment.



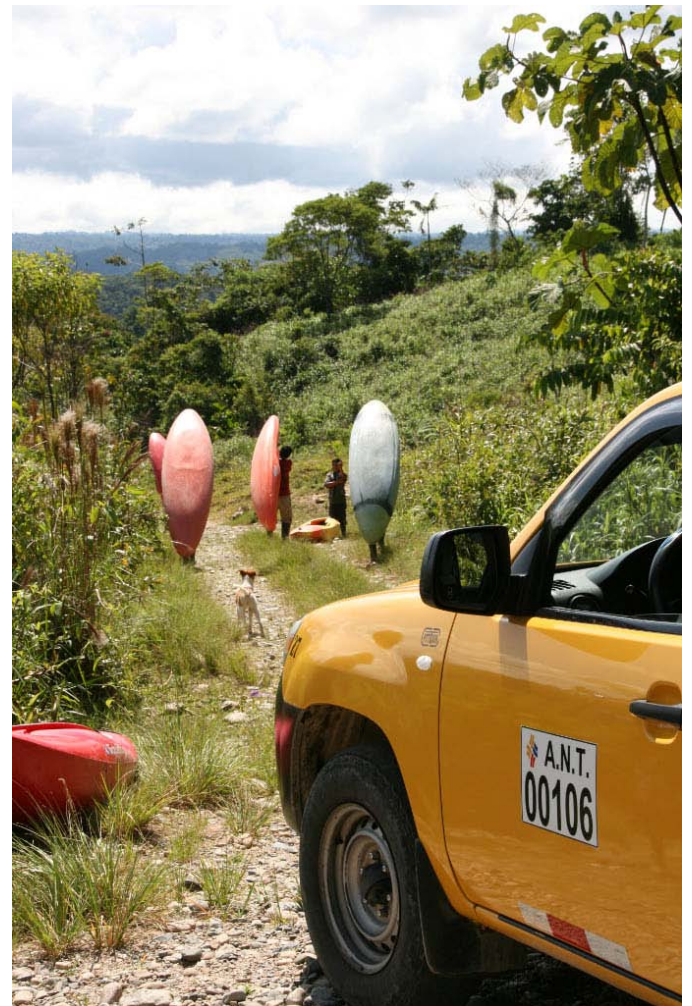
Tena lies one degree South of the Equator but we reasoned that this would have minimal effect on our experiment,

particularly in view of the good selection of cafés and restaurants offered and the opportunity to enjoy Coco Ron cocktails at Spiders bar – a time honoured way of finishing a paddling day

A couple of hours drive North of Tena, the adjacent Quijos catchment, at around 1500M altitude, offers some cooler boating. Both Endless Adventure and Small World Adventures are based here at San Francisco de Borja (Borja). Most kayakers visiting Ecuador sample the rivers in both these catchments

### The Logistics

On all previous paddling adventures I have managed to fly with my own kayak. However, flying American Airlines through Miami we elected to hire boats from the good folk at Endless Adventure who have a fleet of decent (although somewhat battered) creek boats on offer. To make things even easier, and to appease Chris Ryman at Endless Adventure who was concerned about our losing / trashing more precious boats, we elected to purchase a 'Gringo Warm Up' – three days where Endless Adventure provided guiding, shuttles, lunches and, perhaps most importantly, wisdom and knowledge.



We enjoyed the hassle free boating so much during these three days that, having counted the dollars, we elected to continue with guides for the remainder of our stay. For us three gentlemen, no longer in the flush of gnarl boating youth, with limited time, and even less savvy, this proved perfect – No fuff, good company and maximum paddling time.

Guiding isn't essential – Transport to put ins and get outs is comparatively easy to arrange with taxi drivers in their 4wd pick-ups. Many of these drivers are familiar with the runs and know all the access points. Some, like Elluardo seem to

have an infinite knowledge and can describe the character of the river, grades, lines, levels, etc. etc.. – But pick your taxi driver well to avoid getting lost in the jungle. However, if you want to maximise your time in a boat and minimise time spent planning, scouting long drops, waiting for transport etc. we would highly recommend talking to Endless Adventure.

### The Rivers

This region seems to cater for every kayaker – big water playful runs to low volume steep creeks and everything in between (I even spied 4 sea kayaks on the top of a bus heading down to the Napo for a jungle float trip). We were looking for the grade 4 runs and there were plenty of these to choose from



Eight days paddling over a two week holiday ticks my box (and made my 'Over 50%' rule). Particularly considering it takes two days travelling each way from the UK.

We paddled

**Rio Jatunyacu** – a 30 km grade 3 warm up on the first day – A Big volume, wide, bouncy, playful run

**The Upper Misahualli** (Lodo and El Retin sections) from san Francisco to Archidona about 20 km of continuous grade 4 creek boating – a Boof galore run that we enjoyed so much we just had to return later in the week for another run

**The lower Jondachi /Hollin**. The long muddy walk in was rewarded by a stunning 38 km of grade 4 pool drop paddling through thick jungle with waterfalls cascading down the steep valley sides.



**Rio Quijos** (Borja and El Chaco sections) 20 km of powerful and steep grade 4 pool drop fun

**Rio Cosanga**: After a night of heavy rain a 10km beating of continuous busy grade 4 with powerful hydraulics – fast, furious and brown

**Rio Piatua**: 22 km of grade 4 steep low volume creeking. Being chased by menacing thunder clouds down to the confluence of the Rio Anzu



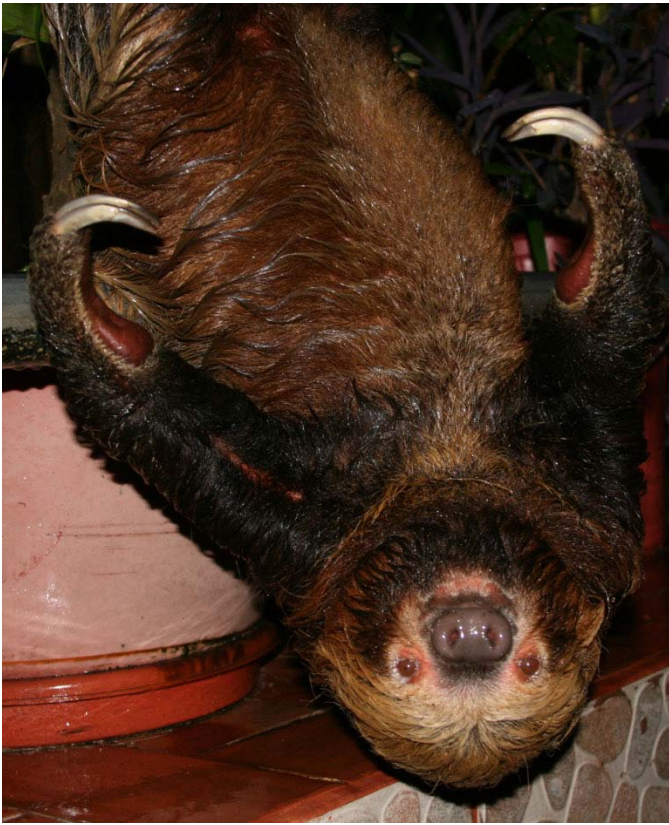
**Rio Tena** (Upper section to the Town): A Grade 2 and 3 bimbly float in the sunshine stopping for a few beers on the way and to play with the river kids – An excellent chill down before the long journey home.



There were lots of runs that we, either, didn't have time to fit in, or, for the grade 5s, the inclination and balls to run. Our one regret is missing the Overnighter on the Hollin – one of my passions in kayaking is journeying and spending nights on river beaches. However, we arrived at the Hollin put in to find it already high and the sky black with thunder clouds. The risk of a flash was very real and we moved elsewhere. However, this does illustrate that there are always options. Rainfall is usually very localised – while one river is full, tanking brown an adjacent river might be running low and clear.

### This is South America

Bear in mind, this is South America, and a degree of flexibility and tolerance always helps. If the taxi driver insists that you crouch in the well of the cab to avoid detection as he negotiates a police check point with dodgy paperwork, so be it. Rooms in lodges and hostels might not be entirely free of tarantulas and other creepy crawlies. What you get served up in an eatery might not necessarily be what you thought you ordered. And if you have an aversion to Avocado or bananas you might struggle. If a sloth hangs down from the rafters and grins at you while you are trying to enjoy a steak – live with it!



But, in the main things work out just fine. Our taxi drivers invariably turned up at the get-out within a few minutes of our arrival, with a case of cold beers (even on Sundays when new laws prohibit alcohol). And for a few bucks you can hire a little old granny to carry your boat down a muddy track to a river for half an hour (oh the shame :- ).



The locals are great too – children treat the rivers as their playground. It is not uncommon to find yourself being shown

the lines through a boulder choked river by a bunch of ten year olds riding tubes.

### The Hypothesis Proved?

So back to our scientific quest then, did we prove that water goes straight down a plug hole when on the equator? Did we establish that the middle line through the gnarl works best? Hmm we did find plenty of holes to experiment with and, I for one, was most diligent in my studies of these features. But, no, we didn't prove the centre line (which seemed to get me into some of the larger holes) and we did learn that water and, more to the point, boats in Ecuadorian holes don't seem to go anywhere. Indeed my coveted 9-year 'no swim' record was trashed by these equatorial waters.

However we did prove, beyond doubt, that Ecuador offers some fine boating even for 'soft core' boaters like us. An abundance of quality grade 4 runs where the boulders are smooth, the water is warm and the beer is cold.



See more images here:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/rollalot/sets/72157628370935829/show/>

Graham B

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### ROPE WORK

Ross volunteered to do a refresher course on Rope work and Rescue Skills. We met up at Abbotswell car park on a beautiful Sunday morning in November.

A kayak had been brought along so that we could see the effectiveness of the different rescue rigs that Ross showed us. I must admit, this did get us a few strange looks from passers by and we even had a Park Ranger stop and enquire what we were up to.

I had done a White Water Safety and Rescue course a few years ago but had forgotten most of it. It was most interesting to set up a Pig Rig under Ross's guidance and see how the mechanics of it works.

We all had a go and Ross showed us different knots and explained their uses.

We went back to the Tea rooms at Hyde and Met up with Sarah and young Master Olli. After Coffee and cakes we all went for a very pleasant ramble.

Many thanks to Ross for his time and expertise, I hope I never have to use it but at least I think we all felt it was very worthwhile

Dot

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## NICHOLAS NIGHT PADDLE

One Friday evening last November, Nichola organized a night paddle from Christchurch up the Stour as far as the Weir.

It was a good turn out for a cold winter's night, with some 12 paddlers taking part. It was nice to see 3 new members and great to see Glyn back on the water again.

The flotilla consisted of mostly sea kayaks and Paul K and Tom and Pip in Canadians.

It was an easy paddle up river and we stopped in the eddy just before the Weir. It was then while most of us unwrapped our sarnies and opened up flasks for a hot drink that Paul K and Tom and Pip started their Master Chef cook off 'IN' their respective boats!!. Tom settled for cooking up some soup and toast but Paul won by cooking up a tasty chilli.

Meanwhile as our 2 Chefs were busy, Nicholas paddle had floated off. Steve had his blinding million watt torch with him luckily and he swept its beam down the river and the errant paddle was spotted making a break for freedom.

On the way back there was the usual antics of trying to ram each other in the dark and tip each other in, all normal pastimes for RCC members!!

Thanks to Nic, it was a very pleasant night paddle

Dot