



CANEWS

October 2012

EDITOR'S CORNER

THE WEB SITE – www.ringwoodcanoe.co.uk

A BIG thank you to the contributors

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.

If you haven't registered – please get in touch with Graham or Simon who will set up your registration

RC Photo Gallery



Share your photos with all members

CAPTION COMPETITION

Visit the web site for the Caption Competition.



"Another bad hair day on the river"

Cindy Buckley

Nicola's attempt to enter a pantomime cow for Ringwood Carnival needs a bit of fine tuning.....

Dot T

In preparation for the RCC Pantomime this year, Dot and Paul were practicing their roles for Dobbin the horse. Paul lost the toss and got the 'rear' view!

Paul B

Hazardous Behaviour Inspired by the Olympics

Two canoeists narrowly escaped serious injury this week in an incident inspired by watching our Olympic hopefuls. After taking refreshment in a canal-side pub they decided to test their skills at synchronised diving. The pair attempted a backward summersault off a bridge but failed to notice that one of their canoes had slipped its mooring and drifted beneath them. A friend expressed no surprise at this, saying "It's well known that she's hopeless with knots. I wouldn't trust her with my shoelaces." Miraculously both were uninjured but those present feared a risk of neck injury if they tried to extricate them. They were lifted carefully onto the towpath and led to a nearby fire station for expert assistance. A spokesman for the fire service said "They were both extremely lucky. If they'd hit their heads on the bottom of the canoe they probably would have had serious injuries, perhaps fatal. It was only the amazing amount of goods in the canoe that broke their fall." Their names, and purpose of their trip is not known but it is assumed that they must have been moving house along the canal.

Barry D

THAMES CAMPING TRIP JULY 2012

I think we were all wondering whether Simon had managed to have a good chat with the weather God and secure a good w/end for camping, and he really does seem to be in with the chap up there as the weather turned out absolutely fabulous. A tick in the box for a vote for chairperson /secretary at the next AGM me thinks. What other miracles could he perform!!But enough political, canvassing....the paddle.

We all met at the dutiful time of 9.00am at the Waterside Centre Reading on a lovely Saturday morning. The Thames did not look as nasty as the EA web site led you to believe with hints like 'all unpowered craft should keep off, and powered craft proceed with caution '. I think we were all hoping for the bit of excitement we missed in the winter!! We rigged the boats and got going with the shuttle. We dropped Cathy's car at Aston as she was just joining us for the day, sadly, go on get a tent Cathy.

Off we went, flow was good so paddling easy . The first part was normal, but a pretty part of the Thames and quite busy with fairly large boats (like their owners) which really should have been on the sea.

A mile past Sonning lock we come to Simon's prize, the trip down St Patricks Stream, beautiful, you wouldn't know you were up in town. This pops you out just above Wargrave, and believe it or not Simon just knew of a pub to drop into, so with no arguments we did.

Henley was next on the list, all along the banks feverish work was going on , well not feverish as it was Saturday and we are English and we have 2 days of rest, but you could see all the work of the tents going up for the regatta, and what a huge amount of canvas /pvc there was , pity we missed it. The regatta course is a long stretch, and as normal, if there is a wind, its generally in your face . It wasn't hard paddling but luckily a Mr Softy was on the parked up on the bank, so a lolly excuse was made.

After this it was round the corner to drop off Cathy Read and link up with Paul Beeston, at Aston, who had to start later as his daughter had not been able to make it . So a quick change over with paddling people and onto the camping site at Hurley Lock .

A nice pitch, flat mown grass, good toilet block etc..Simon and Dave Eagles, dutiful dads, got going on cooking for their daughters Freya and Amelia, who had been great throughout the day, don't think they did a lot of paddling but they liked the ice cream and the lift . The way to start them I think. The singletons Paul, Ian and myself, cooked up and then took a walk into Hurley for a pint mixing it with 'apple and pears 'rhyming groups of the town. The padlock gave us a bit of a problem on the return to the island campsite, that's the problem with just drinking Coke!!

A nice leisurely morning camp break and we off back on the River of Money. If you havnt paddled any of this stretch you need to. This is Bankers territory, and I don't think I spelt that right. The houses are truly amazing, ostentatious, would be a good word , the boat houses are equally as fantastic with an incredible arrangement of watercraft toys parked in them. Yes I suppose I would like their bonuses, well I wouldn't turn it down, there lies the problem.....

Step off high horse and get on back on the river. We are now on fairly big stretches of water, but it is still beautiful and when we came to islands and the sensible way was signposted we went the other, well you have to!

At Cookham, at the orders from our trip leader we stopped for liquid refreshment and MOST expensive chips at the Ferry Inn, the pizza was good .

We left to go down a little stream, an onlooker said not passable,(he didn't know RCC!,) which might by pass the Weir. Ian and myself were in the front and we shot off down this little tributary, to give it a grand name, not much bigger than the boats, with Simons smiling face saying that it was the wrong one!! We were committed, or should have been so we went on. I lost sight of Ian who had disappeared in the low vegetation but eventually caught up with him clearing the branches out of the stream so we could proceed in the few inches of water there was , but it did have its deep patches. He had passed a family, standing amazed, on the river bank as he appeared out of the bushes and heard the words ' look its Ray Mears ', made his day it did .We could hear the weir ,but were we below or above? As it was we ended up at a dammed up bit of stream below the weir and we needed to pull the boats across fallen trees and detritus. I showed Ian the way by stepping out onto a branch, which quickly sank leaving me waist deep in not particularly nice water.....Ian didn't make the same mistake, a great pity.

We popped out onto the main stream looking for our River Leader, who had taken the right way, following his trusty map. Then we had the phone call, they had had to turn back and go through the lock. Oh sweet justice, after that knowing look he had made , as Ian and myself had disappeared into the jungle.

From here on it was a bit of wind in the face but nothing to great, the river was wider but still interesting and no sooner than we had got into the paddling rhythm we were at journeys end.

The lesson is keys. Always make sure you have your keys when doing shuttles. We set off, two cars loaded with the whole w/end, Simon was going to take Paul to his car at Aston and we would meet him at reading with all his kit. Punch in the post code into Sat Nav and we were off. 5 minutes into journey, plaintive message saying Paul's keys in kit in my wagon. No problem ,key in new post code , problem, sat Nav froze, we were going around Maidenhead lost ,no sat Nav ,my shotgun blind as a bat as no glasses, luckily Dave Eagles can read a paper map, a forgotten talent and like an arrow he took us straight to Aston. Nice muddy lane. We will forgive Paul this, as he might consider the soon to be relinquished secretarial post, as he is a whiz with computers!!!

It had been a great weekend, Amelia and Freya had been excellent, we will look forward to them as future paddlers, and the company was great. Well done Simon, a job well done. To make it even better I had found 5 boat fenders or buoys in the bushes and they have cleaned up really well. They will go well on the boat.

Cheers to all MW

THE DARK SIDE BECKONS

Having observed several club members migrate from kayaks to the 'dark side' of open boating over the years, I had so far managed to resist the pull of the force. However, in recent months my defenses have been eroded by thoughts of how to get my young daughter involved in the wonderful world of boating.

With this in mind, I pleaded to a select few (those who I thought would most likely be persuaded with alcohol!), for some of their time on the water to learn a few basic strokes in an open boat. In true RCC spirit, they all very kindly offered their services (of which I am most grateful), but it was Dot who came up trumps with a date that suited us both. It was also a great opportunity for a friend of mine, Toni (who had been inspired by some of the photos from the Thames Trip), to try canoeing for the first time. It appealed to her because it was something that she could involve her young son and dog with.



So on the day, Toni, Sala (Toni's very well trained dog) and I set off from Weymouth first thing and headed for Bournemouth to pick up the Prospector 15 club boat from Dave Eagles. We finally arrived at Dots place around mid-morning and we then headed up to Fordingbridge to put in at a handy slipway next to the sports ground. The weather had turned out beautifully and we were looking forward to the paddle up the Avon.

Unfortunately, things got off to a bad start when Toni and I were lifting the Prospector off my car. Neither of us were used to the weight of the open boat and it dropped rather more quickly from the roof rack than we expected. Wing mirrors aren't really designed to take the full weight of Canadian canoes falling from above so it sheared straight off! Poor Toni fell a bit awkwardly as well and agitated an already injured toe. Wing mirrors and toes are over-rated anyway!!



After the minor disaster, and with a hobbling Toni, we finally made it onto the water. I took the Prospector while Toni, Sala and Dot shared Dot's boat. Dot gave us some advice on seating positions and a couple of other useful tips (like which end was the front) and then showed us how to use the J-Stroke for paddling in a straight line. It took me a little while to get the hang of this and it felt like learning to kayak all over again, having to keep putting in correction strokes to keep straight. Having to fight a bit of a flow on the river as well, I was

worn out by the time we got to the bridge further upstream. The J-stroke finally started to click into place for me (it's all in the wrists apparently!) and I started to feel a little more confident. I was realising that this open boat lark could actually be quite good fun.

We then paddled back down the river to the put in and we had a go at some back paddling (crikey, that was tricky) and some bow rudder turns. Some of my (limited) kayaking skills came in handy as well. Toni also had a go at some solo paddling skills and picked it up very impressively.

Toni then came in the Prospector with me (she obviously didn't know what she was letting herself in for!) and thought she'd let Sala run along the bank. Bad idea! As we set off, Sala decided that she would prefer to be with us and swam after us. There was a nervous moment as we thought she was going to try and climb into the boat (perhaps she felt we needed a swim too) but we managed to guide her back to the bank where she joined us back in the boat.



I have to admit, I didn't know what to expect with having Sala with us and was a little nervous as to how excitable she might be, causing a few balance issues. As it turned out, she was amazing, very well behaved and was a joy to have with us (a credit to her owner!).

We finished the session off with another trip upstream and I found it much easier to steer the boat with Toni paddling in the front. Apart from a near miss with a tree, it went reasonably well.



Back on dry land, putting the boats back on cars was less eventful than taking them off (everything remained intact this time) and we headed back to Dots for tea and some German Christmas cake! Toni and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and had a fantastic day.

Thanks to Dot for looking after us, and to Toni and Sala for great company on the water. **Paul B**

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN?



I don't really enjoy paddling artificial courses – too much concrete and plastic, you don't get that feeling of escape to the wilderness and they are normally very crowded.

However, Ross's enthusiasm for the new Olympic White water course at Lee Valley gradually won me over and I joined the RCC/Salisbury CC party at the end of September.

Ross, Tim B, Pete A and a few others from Salisbury CC had been before, and were paid up members. For the newbies (Nichola, Martin, Jake D, Jake W and me) – well, we had to endure an hour long assessment to demonstrate our competency to paddle either the 'Legacy course' (160 metres of Grade 2/3) and/ or the Olympics course (300 metres of grade 4).

In truth, the 'assessment' was quite fun – being told to hit various eddies, nail some slalom gates, surf the odd wave and put in a roll (or swim)

Once through this we were able to book another hour long session and head for the kayakalator that takes you to the course for which you have qualified.

And, I have to admit, the 'kayakalator' made things very easy

The water is filtered and crystal clear



And the 300 meters Olympic course is packed full of drops, waves, holes and 'swirly' eddies



Indeed, it feels like one 300 metre long rapid, and the young guns (Jake D and Tom from SCC) just ripped it up – making me feel my age!.



But sharing such a small piece of water with such a large

number of rafts, for me, wasn't much fun



Is the 'Kayakalator' a stairway to heaven or hell then?

I am undecided. Might have to return sometime to reach a decision ☺

However, there are no rafts on the smaller 'Legacy' course – which provides a great venue to sharpen up white water skills if you don't feel up to the 'Olympic'



And, despite the glum look on Nichola's face we all had a good time

Graham B

As Jake has 'Blogged'

The first time you go to Lee Valley you have to pass an assessment so they can decide what sort of level you are and whether you get to paddle on the legacy or the Olympic course. You start off just paddling around on flat water so they could see that we had the basics. We then took the conveyor belt up to the top of the legacy course, which is a lot smaller than the Olympic. We did one basic run down then a run where we had to hit slalom gates and do a roll or a "controlled swim". He then told me and Graham we could go to the Olympic course as we had passed that part of the assessment. (Everyone else passed to stay on the legacy course). On the Olympic course we had to surf across a big hole and come back across surfing a wave. Then we had to hit four eddies

and then make a must make eddy before one of the big drops. Me and Graham both passed to be able to use the Olympic course in future



We spent another hour on the course after the assessment. The Olympic course is a lot bigger than it looked on the telly, I was pleasantly surprised. The only thing that wasn't that great was that there wasn't really any deep holes for play boating. I had one sketchy moment with a raft, when I was surfing the big hole you can't see upriver and all of a sudden the raft was on top of me but I just managed to skim passed it. All in all it was a good day and I will definitely be going back there when the rivers are empty.

Jake Deakin (<http://jakedeakin.blogspot.co.uk/>)

BUSHMOOT

Mike Worth got to hear about a Bushcraft event called the Bushmoot that was happening in Wales at the end of July. It was held in a nature reserve near a village called Merthyr Mawr. It's a fantastic place consisting of 300 acres of broadleaf forest (which is where you just pick your camping spot, no pitches here). There are 5k of sand dune (2nd highest in Europe); 4.5 k of coastline; 6k of river and estuary; 3 natural springs and 2 castles. What better playground could you ask for?



Sue J and instructor collecting nettles

Ian M, Sue J, Jake Lisa and Charlie, Captain W and I made up the merry crew. We all brought our boats, intending to take advantage of the river and sea but none of us got to paddle at all. There was just too much going on

I know a lot of people in the club have an interest in bush craft and this just fits the bill. On signing in and we each received a hessian goody bag which even had some King Alfred's cake fungus - great for lighting fires with. The first class that most of us took was about knife sharpening. Charlie did a children's

safe knife handling class and was proud to show us his new skills at lunch time.



Knife sharpening

There was a Father and son (that's the name of the bow) making class which Charlie took his dad to and came back with an effective working bow made by them.



Jake and Charlie with the Father and Son bow

I spent the afternoon learning to dry cure meat. Sue J and Mike W Learned how to make wooden fish hooks.

Over the course of the weekend we attended courses on making dead fall traps and snares, navigation and one of my favourites was learning how to make string from nettles. Sue J and I did this and found it almost like a meditation once you started weaving the string.



Wooden fish hooks made by Sue J and Mike W along with some nettle string

There were so many courses being run over the 5 days of the Moot and I wanted to do all of them.

On Sunday there were 17 workshops available - Everything from wild food from the shoreline, medicinal herbs from the woods and so many other skills.

We all agreed it was a really good experience and everyone there was extremely friendly, roll on next year and this time I want to paddle too

Dot T

And a few more images from Mike W

