



CANEWS

July 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.



"Yesss! At last, a wave with no open boats on it."

Barry D.

"Ross's excitement would soon turn to panic when he realised the ends of his paddle were missing".

Paul B

Hanging from a branch, even Ross had to smile!

Mike W

Mike Worth also suggests the "Ballad of Ross"

*Now I'm the king of the swingers
Oh, the rivers VIP
I start at the top and never stop
And that don't bother me
I wanna be a man paddler
And paddle white water well
And be just like the other men
I'm tired of hanging around!*

*Oh, oobee doo
I wanna be like you
I wanna walk like you
Talk like you, too
You'll see it's true
An ape like me
Can learn to paddle too*

JUNGLE CHILL

Exploring the mellow side of kayaking in Nepal



Nepal Kayak Expedition 2010

Team "Jungle Chill"

~~Thuli~~ Bheri & Kanarli

The Plan

Back to one of my favourite places – Nepal. It was another Rainsley tour – this time with a large group of 15. The intention – to split into two teams. Team Thuli were the hardcore group intending to spend 5 days on the continuous 4+5 Thuli Bheri. The Jungle Chill team principally comprised the SWAGS – Seniors, Wives & Girlfriends of Team Thuli. The Jungle Chill team was looking for something different - balking at the challenge of the Thuli and, owing to frailty, injury and/or inclination had elected for a more sedate 5 days on the Bheri. Both groups would then meet up at Surkhet to spend 5 days on the Kanarli river and a few days winding down in Bardia National Park.

Getting There

Driving direct from Delhi was, perhaps, a mistake. Delhi to Surkhet took close to 24 hours. The border crossing took 5 hours to clear – with dollars and rupees exchanged to smooth the way and a considerable amount of form filling. Immigration (at just one of the half-dozen checks) involved a remarkably slow officer hand scribing all the details we had provided on Form F11X3d into a huge leather bound ledger. It took him 10 minutes per entry and with 15 of us we had to rely on samosas to keep us going. It was amusing to see the uniformed immigration staff receiving backhanded rupees from all rickshaws, carts and bikes carrying loads across the border. There seemed to be a recognised backhand tariff that everyone knew. Approaching cyclists would watch the officers carefully and try to time their progress to best miss being collared for the charge.



We had all been travelling non-stop for 48 hours by the time we reached the dubious sanctuary of a hotel in Surkhet.

Bheri

Downstream of the 'hard core' Thuli Bheri, you find, in Pete Knowles words "One of the most scenic rivers in Nepal with golden cliffs, green jungle, crystal clear green water; white beaches, excellent fishing, good bird watching; coupled with a powerful current and sparkling rapids of moderate difficulty"



We spent a relaxed 5 days enjoying the 140kms of this river, from Devistal to the confluence of the Kanarli and down to Chisapani. Pete's description proved spot on – with a run through four beautiful gorges, punctuated by pristine beach camps, and some very mellow grade 3/3+ paddling.



We had read of boaters in this region of Nepal finding signs of leopards and tigers at beaches, and seeing pythons, crocs etc. We only had close encounters with scorpions and huge hornets. The latter objected to sharing my cag and gave me a sharp reminder to shake out kit at every opportunity. The birdlife on the rivers was remarkable





This was the 'Wild West' of Nepal – an area that sees far less tourism than the normal Nepal destinations. This was noticeable with the quality of the river beaches we found for camps each night and the reception we experienced from the local villagers and the constant and cheerful calls of "Namaste" and "Bye bye bye bye"



Tourism, particularly in this region, virtually ceased altogether during the Maoists 'Peoples War' from 1996 to 2006. While an uneasy Peace Accord and power sharing now exists, we had half expected to be collared by Maoists for a generous 'gift to the cause' to ease our passage. Indeed, on one occasion we were called over by a group waving the Maoists flag but carried on our journey with a wave from the sanctuary of the middle of the river!

We always chose camps away from villages and on the opposite side of the river to any habitation. This was not, so much, to avoid the locals altogether, but to give us some privacy and avoid village 'latrines'. However, Dungas invariably enabled resourceful children to paddle across to us for a visit – to perch on rocks around our camps and watch our

curious goings on. They were keen to try on our gear, sit in boats and watch our fire making and cooking skills.



Self-sufficient multi day paddling in creek boats implies severe restrictions in the clobber that you can bring along. We slept in bivvy bags and ate freeze dried high calorie expedition food packs – amongst the group we had a huge range of these – although, with few exceptions, they all taste the same. Chilli flakes, tobasco and supplement Coconut Crunchies help – as did the Kukri Rum





We arrived at Chisapani on schedule to find chaos. Having carried our boats and gear up the steep stone steps, and through (literally) a pig sty to enjoy our first cold drinks (we had been living off filtered river water for 5 days) we learnt that the Maoists had called a two-day 'Road Strike'. We had intended to bus to Nepalganj, pick up our 'resupply' gear and join Team Thuli at Surkhet. The police, however, warned us that Nepalganj was blocked off, "too dangerous, fighting in the streets until 5pm tomorrow" (how they could timetable the cessation of violence was beyond me). Anyway, to cut a long story short, we ended up piling our boats into a couple of 'Press Jeeps' and headed for a lodge in Bardia National park. As luck would have it, we ended up at "Forest Hideaway" – the very lodge that we had booked to visit a week later – and Mohan (the owner) proved a great 'fixer'. After a morning trekking through the park looking for tigers, a bus was waiting for us, and we arrived at Surkhet, a day late, but within an hour of Team Thuli (who had their own story to tell)

Kanarli

The Kanarli is one of finest big volume rafting and kayaking trips in Nepal – and normally a 7 to 9 day excursion. We had allowed 5 days – which seemed optimistic, considering the fact that on the first day we didn't put on until 5:30 pm and we had some 200kms to paddle.



There were 14 of us now – the two teams joined - less one that we had lost in Bardia (not to Tigers, but wrist injury). A huge group – but it's a huge river, with huge beaches. The first two full days on the river provided us some fine Grade 4/4+ white water. The low levels experienced at this time of year

seemed to give the drops added gradient, and some fun technical 'hole-dodging' runs.

By early afternoon on the second full day things began to quieten down. "Red Canyon" didn't provide much action and we soon hit the flats. Occasional grade 2 headwall rapids offered some respite until we pulled over at what we affectionately called Buffalo Shit beach.



We had made remarkable progress, paddling over 100kms of grade 4/4+ water in a little over two days – but we now had 80kms of flat paddling ahead of us.

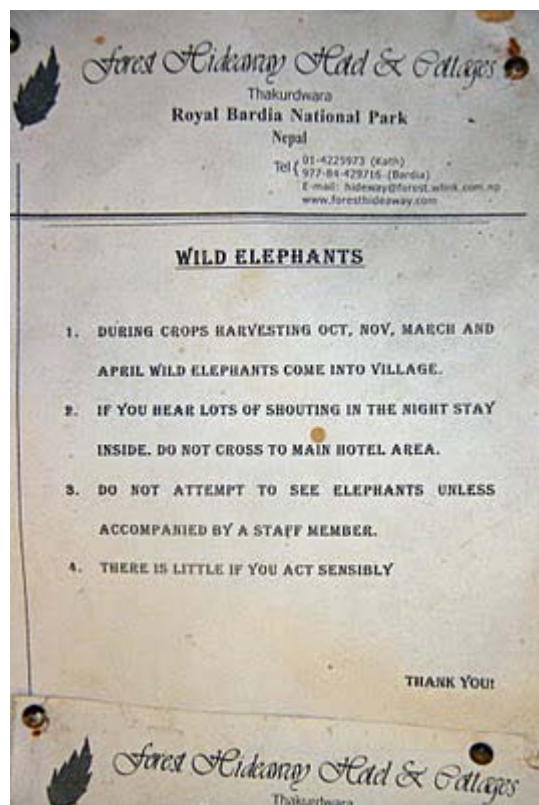
We elected to start early the following morning and make the most of the cool and the downstream winds (winds turn up stream in the afternoon). The Kanarli licks along at a fair old pace. I am one of those that need to know where I am at all times and I could tell how quickly we were eating the flats. When I reported on progress for some unknown reason certain team members started to consider going for the finish. I could see no benefit in this (as I would sooner be on a river beach than anywhere else) but cold beers were too tempting for others and we ended up paddling the 80kms in one day. And so, we had paddled the Kanarli in, effectively, 3 days and we were at Forest Hydeaway for some Everest beers a day early.

Bardia and Forest Hideaway



We enjoyed our 2 days at Bardia – a long jungle trek was

rewarded by the sighting of one of the 25 one-horned Rhinos in the park, together with wild Elephant, Blue Bull antelopes, Swamp, spotted and Hog deer, wild boar, Langur and Macaque monkeys and a huge number of birds. We visited Elephant and crocodile breeding centres and danced with a local dance troop and Bardia staff – even demonstrating a poor rendition of Auld Langsyne. We never saw those Tigers though.



Volcation

It was on the long 24 hour bus trip back to Delhi that we heard rumours of a volcano eruption in Iceland causing havoc. Sometime overnight I received a text from Virgin telling me that my flight was cancelled and to please contact them to re-schedule or get a refund. On our eventual arrival at good old Hotel Lohias in Delhi we congregated to sort out our Virgin flights. We managed to book on 27 April (9 days after our scheduled 18 flight) – and only then by agreeing to pay for Premium Economy (an additional £110)

The Hindustan Times reported that Delhi was experiencing its hottest April in 52 years at 44 degrees. A smog haze hung over the whole city and the air was stifling and sultry. We spent our 'Volcation' days variously in markets, forts, temples, tombs, the United Coffee house and western Malls.

But we also spent four or five hours each morning, in queues at the airport, trying to secure stand-by seats back to the UK – being fobbed off by harassed Virgin staff and moved on by machine-gun toting security. I now choose to forget the details of the extended Volcation in Delhi!

Conclusion

Initially I had been keen on the Thuli trip – drooling over videos and images of such fine whitewater. However, I was becoming increasingly aware that I could no longer pretend to be a hardcore paddler. Hard continuous boating and portaging 3kms along dubious paths with fully laden creek boats was no longer a realistic proposition, allowing for advancing years and a dodgy back. Several months before the trip I had battled with the idea of 'downgrading'



However, there is so much more to expedition paddling than the thrill of hard white water. I enjoy such trips for more than the action – for the journey, taking you to different places, different cultures, the wildlife, the camps, and the camaraderie of river mates. This 'Jungle Chill' trip ticked all the right boxes.

In terms of the all too important Paddle-to-travel ratio that I always use to weigh up adventures, it was supposed to be a 17 day trip with 10 days of paddling (well over my 50% rule) – but, with the enforced Volcation in Delhi and the rushed job we made of the Kanarli, the ratio of 24 days to 8 days was a poor 1/3 - Just as well the paddle days proved so much fun then.

My thanks goes to Mark Rainsley for putting it all together, and to my river mates for such good craic

Graham Bland

KENNET / AVON (FLATWATER) PADDLE SUNDAY 25TH APRIL



It was a good start to the day, sunshine, a good turn out and persons tipping up at a good time. The canal was flat calm, we launched and a group of us headed down to the top lock to

take in the great bridges and architecture and a little warm up. We got back to the put in to find Tom had decided to take the first swim of the day . Luckily Pip had stayed dry.

Off we went for a small paddle down to the Dundas Aqueduct. I had prepared well, put the map out, which had all the interesting things to look at on the way, but then left it at home, so my quote of its only 2.5 miles was just slightly out, and soon the whimpers of 'are we nearly there' 'how far' were heard, by all the adults!!

Pulled in at Dundas Wharf for ice cream and coffee and general chit chat of the difference between 4.5 and 2.5 miles, not a lot on a lovely day I say. Mind you Cathy had done a good job getting to grips with going solo, it probably did feel like 4.5 to her.

We decided that to continue on to the Avoncliff Aqueduct was not a goer although the knowledge of a pub at the end was a draw, so we funnelled out through the piece of the Somerset Coal Canal and onto the aqueduct to portage the boats down to the Avon.

Adrian was saying how much he liked the club boat !!!!!!! and decided it was his turn to take a swim and to see what the depth of water was and to give all the coffee drinkers in the café something to look at. He appreciated how light the club boat was as he pulled it out with a few gallons of water in it !!!!

Anyway all boats portaged down safe and we started lunch, and it started to rain a bit on and off. We set off down river and the heavens opened, like stair rods, bouncing off the water, it was a fantastic sight. Nick has put some pictures up on the site. Elliot seem to be enjoying himself as he was dressed for sunshine, Debbie was glad she had come down to the river and Maya Jasmin and Marshall were being great considering they were sitting in a boat fast filling with rain water. A bit further and we came to the first weir which was a great muddy portage, blame the rain meself.

A nice bit of river to paddle now on down to the Toll bridge and the thought of a drink at the pub alongside the weir. Paul shot the weir, well you cant leave it like that so Nick went Ben and I did. Ritchie declined, he should have, to practice for the rollers of doom. Into the pub a little warm up and then back to the river where a few of us re ran the weir, as it was so user friendly.

Onto Bath and the portage round the Bath weir. Its got rollers and its great fun to just give the boats an extra push, all kayakers down safe but canoeists a few wobbles and major brace stokes (eh Dot, it nearly had you), but for Ritchie it was a swim, as he slid down the rollers he put both arms up and presented his paddle to the Almighty, who declined the offer to grab it, and hold him up straight, so he's done it, first swim in the open. (should have done the other weir Ritchie)

It was good day out for flat-water swimming and the sun was shining at the end, we had had a couple of pit stops, so we had crammed a lot into such a short paddle !!

Mike Worth

AVOCET SEA KAYAK

I just fitted a new skeg cable for the Avocet, the old one having been kinked preventing the skeg from being lowered. This is a weak point on many sea kayaks. If a stone finds its way into the skeg casing, which is highly likely when launching from a beach, it often jams when the skeg is moved. If you try to lower the skeg when this happens, it is tempting to pull hard on the control knob to get the skeg to move. Unfortunately this

just bends, and probably kinks, the cable where it is unsupported by the knob. It can't be unkinked effectively so it has to be replaced. Not expensive but a nuisance, and easily avoided. The skeg has a bit of string attached to the bottom. If it jams and you are afloat, don't force it, go alongside someone else and get them to pull the skeg down using the string. If this doesn't work you'll need to wait until you go ashore and get your knife out to remove the stone.

Barry

CLUB KIT IN GENERAL

Recently we've had the inconvenience of missing painters, paddles being separated from boats, etc. Please try to keep all kit together with the boat it belongs to, and let me or Mike Farnden know if something is broken, worn out or missing. The club can afford to replace things at the end of their useful life, and it is no pleasure to paddle with crappy kit. If you just need to borrow a paddle or a deck, let me know as I probably have spares, and it is better to buy another than borrow one that should be with a club boat. With the best of intentions, bits of kit that get separated rarely find their way back together again, and nobody wants to set off up a creek without a paddle.

As a postscript I just heard that one of our members dug up a pair of the club's canoe painters in his garden! A tub of Vitalite goes to the first person to guess his identity.

Barry.

RIGHT ROUND WIGHT



It's about time I made a trip around the Isle of Wight. It's on the doorstep and it has been on the agenda for a long time, but, somehow I had always found an excuse to enjoy some of the more scenic paddles along the local coast instead.

And so I joined Rich H, Chas and Ross one glorious June weekend – setting off on a Friday afternoon for a 'circumnavigation'.

Unfortunately the weekend fell closer to neaps than springs and we were facing Force 3/4 Northerlies. We had also chosen the weekend of the JP Morgan Round the Island sailing race which boasted more than 1,700 entries!

There is a tide in the affairs of men, Which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat. And we must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures (William Shakespeare, of course)

Well, because of one thing and another, we left Keyhaven shortly before slack water and, with an anti-clockwise plan, paddled into the evening up to Grange Farm, against the

ebb. We had just managed to pitch the bivvies and walk to the pub before they stopped serving food.

The morning gave us one of those crystal clear sparking skies that you only get when the clouds clear after a night of rain. And there was a true spectacle on the horizon – a long string of hundreds of yachts as far as the eye could see.



(Photo Rich Hampson)

With 25 kms under our belt – we faced an easy day on Saturday, riding the flood 35kms to Foreland – time for coffee and Carrot Cake at Ventnor too. It was a long camp at Long Ledge (either that, or turn the corner into stiff Northerlies for an alternative exposed site) – we chilled. The VHF blurted “Northerly Force 4/5, occasionally 6, veering West”

Time and tide wait for no man (Geoffrey Chaucer)

True enough – that’s why we had to get up at 3am, to ensure that we were away in time to catch the ebb back to Keyhaven. No worries though – we were in for a ride on the renowned Solent tidal conveyor belt. Rubbish, the conveyor belt was broken for most of the day and we paddled 8 hours non-stop through sloppy seas and annoying wind to cover the 45kms. Getting to Hurst just in time (before the flood through the narrows kicked in)

Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn. Harriet Beecher Stowe

Good fun, hard work, great company – not to be repeated!

Graham B

EXPEDITION KAYAKS - TRYING OUT SOME NEW SEA BOATS



A new Lymington based distributor of sea kayaks "Expedition Kayaks" kindly volunteered to join us one Tuesday evening in June - giving us all the opportunity to try out some new boats.

Expedition kayaks import and distribute a selection of high spec carbon Kevlar boats from a German designer, together with plastic and glass models from RTM. They brought a good range of boats for us to try (it's a shame that I hadn't checked the tides when arranging a date though - we could have done with a little water to float them.



Ben trying out a 'Hunter'



One of the sleek machines on offer

Some models are constructed using a vacuum infusion foam sandwich, with epoxy onto Kevlar/carbon laminates reportedly giving an immensely strong kayak, with an impact loading of around 500 kgs! The 'Stingray' is a full-on expedition boat 5.70 metres long but weighing in (including hatches and fittings) at an amazing 15.5 kg



If you are interested, talk to Dave Pitman at Expedition Kayaks to arrange a test

www.expeditionkayaks.co.uk

BEST WISHES TO PAUL

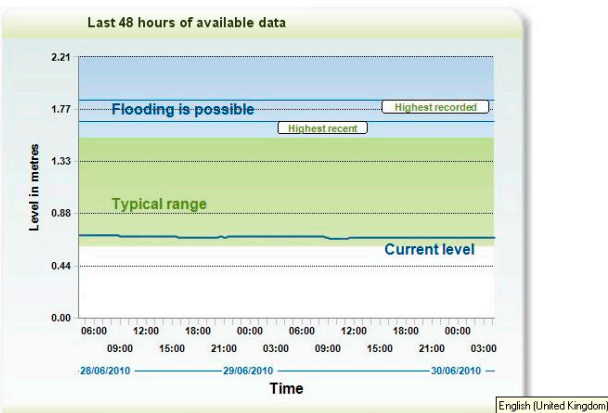
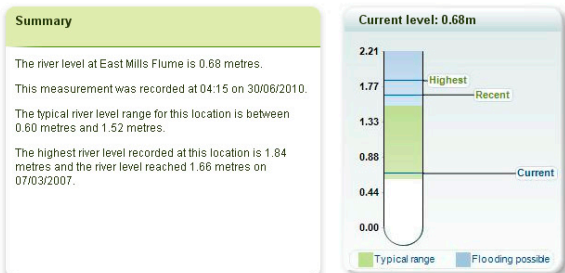
Paul Toynton had keyhole surgery at the end of June, to install some stents in arteries. A couple of days afterwards his wife, Mary, reported that he was doing fine; was in the garden eating his soup and considering the doctors orders to take things easy for a while. Those who know and love him will understand how devastated he is that he is banned from bathing or showering for a week. Best wishes Paul.

Barry

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY – RIVER LEVELS

River Avon at East Mills Flume

Last updated 04:15 on 30/06/2010



This month the Environment Agency launched a new rivers and sea levels on line service at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels/default.aspx>

The website will include information from 1756 monitoring stations across England and Wales. The information will be updated daily and in some cases, when water levels are high, the information will be updated more regularly.

Might be helpful?, Graham B

JULIAN BUTLER MEMORIAL RACE 2010

We had a great turnout this year, with lots of new members entering into the spirit of the event. Thanks for coming. It was a lovely evening, but a stiff breeze to work against on the outward leg up the harbour.

Handicapping was a bit chaotic, being done on the spot as I never know in advance who is coming or what boat they'll bring. Caitlin Adams, probably our youngest kayak paddler at 10 years, went afloat with her Dad as an escort while I guessed the rest of the handicaps and start times. There was plenty of banter and barracking of the handicapper, but unfortunately the competitive spirit wasn't enough for anyone to resort bribery. Not even a pint! At the other extreme, Graham Mussett said I was too generous and he started five minutes after the time I had given him. There were several people I haven't paddled with very much, so their handicaps were a bit of a guess, and there was much surprise that I told Dave Forsey to start with Jake, five minutes after most of the sea kayakers with cries of "He's not been paddling very long" and "He's in a fat boat". Well, I don't know him well and I thought he looked a big fit guy, but I relented and he started 1 minute behind them. I should have stuck with my instincts though as he had the second fastest time.

The only open boat on the water this year was a heavy club Scout, with the Wells family of four. They are new to the sport with two tiny tots, and so were a novice team that should have started with Caitlin, but didn't arrive in time for such an early

start. It was great to see them taking part anyway, as it was to see Caitlin and 12 year old sister Zoe paddling slow boats round the course on a breezy evening. Well done.

Unfortunately I was too generous to the early starters and there was a bigger gap between the first and last than I would have liked. All the times are presented in the results table in minutes, with start and finish times relative to the start time of the first boat away. They are in order of finishing but the lapsed times are there too in case the more competitive among you want to compare them.

Nichola was bewildered and disbelieving that she could have won the event, but the trophy was thrust upon her by our Chairman at the meeting that evening, so she had to accept the honour. Well done Nichola. An extra ten minutes handicap for you next year.

Position			Start time	Finish time	Lapsed time
1	Nichola Ross	General kayak	10	78	68
2	James Mussett	WW kayak	10	79	69
3	Dave Forsey	Sea kayak	31	82	51
4	Zoe Adams	WW kayak	5	82	77
5	Ben Adams	Sea kayak	30	83	53
6	Mike Worth	Sea kayak	30	85	55
7	Simon Burke	Sea kayak	30	86	56
8	Jake Deakin	Sea kayak	35	87	52
9	Greg Adams	WW kayak	0	89	89
9	Caitlin Adams	WW kayak	0	89	89
11	Barry Deakin	Sea kayak	40	90	50
12	Phil Smith	WW kayak	20	91	71
13	James Collins	General kayak	20	91	71
14	Graham Mussett	Sea kayak	30	91	61
15	Richard Jennings	Sea kayak	40	95	55
16	Richard Wells & Family	Open canoe	20	112	92

For my part, I was too ambitious with my own handicap and hardly caught anyone as I worked my way round the course from the back. Most people finished well out of sight ahead of me. It might have been the lack of anyone near to me to urge me on in the second half that made my time slower than last year, or perhaps the fact that it was calm last year. It certainly wasn't what our Chairman suggested, that age may be a factor. He was in a sea kayak for the first time, and put in a very respectable time for a mature gentleman.

Looking back at some recent history, I see that Richard has improved his time by 11 minutes since the 2008 race, and Simon by 12. Graham Mussett knocked 2 minutes off his time last year. My son Jake is the only person to have paddled the last 3 races in the same type of boat, and he has improved his time from 58.5 minutes in 2008, to 54 minutes last year and 52 minutes this year; only 2 minutes behind me. I think we'll start together next year Jake.

Barry