

Eagle Canoe Club Newsletter

Autumn Winter 2013



Hello all. I hope you had an enjoyable Christmas and are looking forward to 2014 and the paddling related fun it may bring.

How are people fairing with Tim's 100 mile challenge. Are you willing to write in and tell of your trials and tribulations in getting to the magic number?

In this bumper edition of the newsletter we have loads of great articles including how a kayak is made, a mishap from three different perspectives, how to get freezing cold on rivers up North and how to become insanely jealous of other peoples holidays plus lots more.

If you have anything you would like to contribute then please get in touch. Do you have a piece of kit that you just want to rave about or a stretch of river that you think is much underrated and you want people to experience (maybe volunteer to organise a trip – the coaches will be meeting in Feb to organise the club calendar for the Spring/Summer so if you want to see something on there then get in touch with Stu and make your voice heard).

Oh and as an aside if I forget to put in something you have written then just shout at me, it will be because it has hidden its self in my email inbox. We are working to get something a bit slicker so this won't happen anymore.

Anyway I hope you enjoy this issue and it makes you suitably motivated to go out and get in your boats (once the weather is nicer obviously). Thanks. **Pete**

EDITORIAL



EAGLE AT THE TYNE TOUR

After a week end away paddling, Jas asked "ever thought of doing the Tyne Tour"?

After a bit of asking and internet searching, this turned out to be an annual event which attracts hundreds of paddlers for 2 days on the River Tyne.

The river is suitable for kayaks and canoes and water levels can be guaranteed due to a water release from Kielder reservoir.

An e mail to all members followed with interest initially been shown by 14, but dwindled to 8 over the coming weeks (4 kayakers and 4 canoeists).

At the last minute Mark & Kerry from TheCanoeMan joined us.



We'd booked a bunk house outside Consett and travelled up on Friday arriving late evening. In the morning after the mandatory bacon & egg butty we were off bright and early to see what was available. We arrived in Hexham to buy our day pass and to have a quick look around the trade stands and then we split into 2 groups with the canoeists (me, Kate, Ian, Colin, Mark & Kerry) heading to the upper sections (Bellingham to Barrasford) and the kayakers (Jas, Mike, Pete & Sam) heading to Warden gorge.

Our journey to the get in was a little adventurous! Following the closure of a road bridge at Wark, we had a cross country route down narrow lanes, through farm yards, up steep hills and nearly across a field - and all with the trailer ! (I was glad Ian was driving).

The days paddle was on grade I / II and include a mix of gravel rapids and boulder strewn areas. There were some longer stretches of flat water (some of which were quite windy) but overall it was a pleasant days paddle with stretches of moving water thrown in for interest (and the odd rock for Ian & Colin). We made it to our get out just before dusk, but by the time Ian & Kerry had fetched the trailer it was proper dark. Back to the bunk house for showers and then out to the nearby pub for tea.

Sunday took us to Durham and the River Wear which was a fast flowing river. We started in the city centre and headed out of the city. The river had a number of sections which provided opportunities to practice breaking in and out, ferry gliding etc. The trip finished at a ruin of a church with a little café which did a good trade in hot chocolate. It was then time for the long haul back to Norfolk.

A good trip for those looking to develop their moving water skills in kayak and canoe and maybe something we'll look to do again. **Stu P**



GREAT YARMOUTH TO ST OLAVES - VIA BREYDON WATER!

As part of our 3 Star Touring canoe course everyone was required to have paddled in an open water environment before taking the assessment. When deciding on where to go for a day trip, we had initially thought Barton or Hickling Broad would be the destination.

Spencer had other ideas, and suggested we go across Breydon Water. At first there was some nervous laughter, until we realised he was serious! I've been across Breydon Bridge on numerous occasions and looked out over the water at the rolling waves in the slightly breezy conditions and thought to myself 'I'm glad I'm not out there paddling today!' However, after some thought we were all agreed it would be a good challenge to plan and complete the crossing.

Spencer confirmed the tides would be favourable for the date we had planned for the open water trip. As I work in Gt Yarmouth, and had some experience in trip planning after I helped plan the Waveney trip earlier in the year (!), I agreed to visit Yarmouth Yacht Station to speak to the Quayside Assistant and to find somewhere suitable to put-in.



It turned out that the Quayside Assistant I spoke to had been a member of Eagle Canoe Club some 20 years ago! After I explained what we were going to do, he gave some helpful advice on times to set-off to catch the right tide. This was vital as it has been known for motor cruisers on full throttle to struggle against the tidal flows around Breydon Bridge! With low water at approximately 07:00 hrs on the Saturday morning, the best time to set off would be at 08:00 hrs, and 09:00 hrs at the latest. The low water level at the Yacht Station would make it difficult to launch from there, so a spot further upstream along the Bure was suggested by the Quayside Assistant which we could use. I checked this out and it looked ok. There was also the possibility of launching near Asda car park.

Also that day, Chris had phoned Broads Control and they had given him the same advice. Set-off early on the rising tide, with a time of approximately two hours to cross Breydon Water. They also suggested that we phone the Yacht Station on Saturday morning before we left to confirm the conditions were suitable.

This would have to be a one way paddle. Having measured the distances across Breydon Water and to St Olaves on a map with a shoelace, and double checked them, we were confident that we could get to St Olaves with the tide with us all way, as high tide was due at St Olaves at 14:30 hrs. Spencer knew someone who lived in the old signal box near Haddiscoe station which would be the get out, though he did say this may require some portaging of canoes to the trailer, more on that later!

We agreed to meet at the club at 07:00 hrs on Saturday morning in order to load up the trailer and get to Asda car park by 08:00 hrs to see what the conditions were like. Having checked out the weather forecast, it seemed the winds would be light and in a favourable direction. However, heavy rain and thunderstorms were forecast. Not so good being out in the middle of open water during a thunder storm!

Spencer, Shaun, Pete, Chris and I all arrived at the club on the Saturday morning, and loaded up the trailer in the pouring rain. The outlook didn't look good, however the good news was that the winds were very light. We arrived at Asda car park in misty and murky conditions, though the rain had eased off by this time. It looked a good place to put in as the water level was low enough at that time to launch from the mud-flats which passed off as the river bank!

With the canoes unloaded, the trailer was shuttled to the end point, and a car was left at Burgh Castle as an emergency get out. This did mean that the shuttle took longer than anticipated, so we didn't get on the water until 10:15 hrs, over an hour later than planned.



As we paddled out toward Breydon Bridge, we could see the different swirls in the flow and feel the current pulling us along. There was something of a feeling of trepidation about passing under the bridge and out into the gloomy open water.

After a few minutes of paddling everyone relaxed and began to enjoy the paddle. Being out on the open water it was difficult to gauge how fast we were moving, but with a strong tide and a favourable breeze, it wasn't until passing a marker post at speed that we realised just how fast we were going, we were flying along! It wasn't too choppy and it was great to be out there and experience something different to paddling along a narrow river.

The misty and murky conditions made for an atmospheric feel to the expanse of Breydon Water as we couldn't see the shoreline in all directions! We used the channel marker posts to guide us in the right direction.

There weren't many boats about that morning, however, the Broads Authority patrol boat did pass us by on several occasions. No tickets were issued by them this time, they just gave us a friendly wave as we paddled along!

With the tide and breeze behind us, we were soon across Breydon Water and at the Berney Arms, just over an hour after setting off. After a quick drink at the pub, we set off again towards St Olaves. We had to paddle a short section of the Yare against the tide to get on to the Waveney, this proved the hardest section of river to paddle, and made us appreciate just how strong the tidal currents were. Chris had time to test out his new sailing rig, which worked well, even with what little wind there was! The rest of the journey was straightforward and we made it to the get out at the time of high tide at 14:30 hrs, all as originally planned.

Spencer's' friends' house was amazing, with fantastic views over the marshes. The one downside was that we would have to get the canoes through the garden and along the railway station platform and across the track to the car park! With trolleys loaded, this proved the most difficult part of our trip!

We must have got some funny looks from some passengers as a train sped past while we wheeled two canoes along the station platform!

It turned out to be a great day's paddle and felt good to have done the trip across Breydon Water. After the 3 Star training we had all done to build on the skills learnt at 2 Star, we all felt confident once out on the open water with our co-paddlers. It was especially rewarding to put the effort into planning the trip and have it work out so well on the day. Though a bit more wind would have made it more 'interesting', but we were happy to save that for next time! **Damon**



THE SMALL ISLES (PART 2)

Some of you might remember that in September 2012 I went to Scotland for a sea kayaking trip to the Small Isles (Muck, Eigg and Rum), but the weather was too bad to try a big crossing, so we did a series of smaller paddles instead. It was still a fantastic trip, but as we hadn't done what we set out to do, we made plans to go again in July 2013.

So, the weekend in July comes along with a forecast of Force 7 winds with heavy seas. Not ideal sea kayaking weather...

Our revised plan was to go up to the West coast of Skye as we would have some shelter from the wind.

Day 1. We drove the last few hours from Fort William and arrived in time for lunch. Loaded the boats and did all the last minute faffing to get on the water by 5pm. We paddled for about 3 hours in the wind and rain to a sheltered bay on Scalpay Island. Luckily the rain stopped as we set up camp and enjoyed our first wilderness camp dodging the midges.

Day 2. Gusting force 7 winds and heavy rain until 3pm.

No paddling today. Ate, slept, ate, slept, ate...

Day 3. We made a dash in a weather window to Portree the main town on Skye. It was about 25 km so a good day's paddling. It was still quite windy, Force 5 headwinds some of the way with following seas the rest of the way. We had a lovely boggy (read midgy) camp spot in a bay just outside the town.

Day 4. Another windy day...

We did some skills in the shelter of the bay, then went to Portree for fish and chips, and then coffee and cake. We went to find some lumpy bits to play in on the way back to our camp, but it was the wrong kind of wind, apparently...

Day 5. A long day's paddle. We covered about 32km to Staffin. The sea was flat calm and the wind had dropped completely. We were joined by a common seal for about an hour as he played with the wash from our boats. The highlight of the day was a secret pool and waterfall hidden in the rocks. We all had a well needed wash in the (rather chilly) pool at lunchtime. Lovely. This was the most interesting day's paddle too as there were lots of caves, arches columnar basalt cliffs.

Day 6. Another day too windy to paddle, and the forecast wasn't improving so, we got a taxi back to the cars so we could leave Skye for the mainland and the more sheltered location of Plockton. It was odd that the journey that had taken us five days by kayak took less than an hour by car. We did go via an amazing tea shop that had 30 pages of different teas on offer...

Day 7. A beautiful day paddle from Plockton (Where Hamish MacBeth was filmed). Lots of rock gardening and playing in the waves topped off by an otter spotting.

So, another beautiful week in Scotland, even though the weather wasn't on our side. Our small Isles trip has been rescheduled for May. Will we make it? Third time lucky I hope...

PS. There are a couple of spaces on the trip in May if anyone is interested. You need to be a confident (2 star equivalent) paddler with some experience on the sea and wild camping. Come and see me if you are interested... **Ann**

AN ERROR OF JUGDEMENT ON THE TEES

Bit of an intro to the next three articles. Each one is written by the three people on the trip independently so any differences in the story will be just as the people remembered it.

Jaz - Well what else would *you* do? The rivers were up, the sun was out, the day was yet young!!

The 3 of us had ventured away for the weekend, it was our first day of paddling & we'd had a great little paddle that morning on a section of the Tees new to us all; we absolutely sped down boosted by some great water levels (the section which we thought would have taken us a numbers of hours was over in just 2 & half), so what next?



We only had 1 vehicle so shuttles were time consuming and although it was still early, dark would come surprisingly soon, so decisions were made for a quick blast on the upper Tees. Pete & Si were keen to tick Low Force off their 'hit list'.

For me large falls ain't ever been my thing (yes for those of you who don't know me, I'm a wuss) and the additional prospect of quite a long 'walk-in' carrying boats with my very heavy boat (& it was my first weekend back paddling after the 'latest' injury problem) made me quite justified (to myself this is) to go in support of the other two and to take the camera but not to paddle (a key skill - always ensure you can justify your wuss levels).

So at the 'get in' the guys got kitted out, I went to grab my throw bag.....however Pete told me off.....I wasn't wearing BA and helmet so I shouldn't carry a throw bag. I have always thought highly of Pete's safety ethic when it comes to paddling and so was pleased to hear this despite still wanting to carry my bag 'just in case'. Of course I could have got kitted up again, or at least put my BA & helmet back on, but Pete & Si were good, safe paddlers, they'd be fine!

So, we set off. Walking upstream from the get out to the get in gave us the opportunity to inspect the river. We passed low force – a nice level for throwing oneself off a waterfall if that's your thing. Middle force was the next drop above – we all knew the reputation this drop held in the paddling community – a horseshoe shaped drop with considerable tow back and a rep for 'taking out' the unwary! Many paddlers who tackle this section of river paddle the section above then portage Middle Force before throwing themselves off Low Force. All three of us re-iterated the reputation Middle force has as we passed it by (particularly at higher water levels). I started telling the tale of the time Mark's boat (sans paddler) had found itself in this very stopper and had spent 25mins bobbing about in there before it had been spat out.....I was told off for scaremongering.....!



Middle Force

Further upriver the guys were to launch above 'Dog-leg' rapid so a quick look from the bank....once again I offered to take a throw bag and to cover safety at the bottom – once again I was denied the throw bag as I “wasn't properly kitted” – they were being very sure to keep me safe! They both paddled it with style and continued down toward Middle and Low force. Reaching the falls before I did I ran to catch up with the guys to position myself with the camera; battling for a good view amongst the considerable crowd of tourists the pair had attracted, all trying to catch their daring acts on camera! As I took position it looked as if they were going to run Middle Force – that was unexpected! After our previous discussions I thought they would opt out & walk around Middle Force. I could see some deliberation between them before Pete pulled out of the eddy and took a line over the top of the Middle Force. I got the piccy as Pete disappeared into the 'fluffy stuff' at the bottom of the drop.

Instantly I knew my fears were to be realised – Pete literally disappeared, his boat stopped dead. Camera work was immediately forgotten, but what could I do? I had no throw bag, no safety kit.....I could only look on as Pete struggled to make surface at all – occasionally there was a glimpse of his helmet or one end of his boat (which was also being worked in the hold alongside him and which he had bailed out of pretty soon when he'd realised rolling and paddling out of this one wasn't an option)!

I ran to a position where Si had vision of me and I frantically signalled to him 'go hard right' (ie get out) – from where he was, he couldn't see the pickle Pete had landed himself in. He initially hesitated but then got the message as my frantic signalling continued (to anyone else I'm sure they thought there was a madwoman loose from the local asylum)! I have to say though, once he got that message – he moved fast! He got to the bank & grabbing his throw bag was beside me on the rocks beside the stopper – Pete by this time was STILL in the stopper and still hadn't been getting air – surely he couldn't hold on much longer, we didn't have much time.



I had spotted Pete had been trying to 'pull some shapes' in the stopper to no avail (not this is not a 'strictly come dancing' style paddling reference - for those who don't already know, sometimes making yourself a different shape when swimming in a stopper can help you flush out – being big, being small, star shaped, balled up etc). I was about to shout to Si to get his boat so that we could use it as a buoyant object to tie to a line and throw it into the stopper with Pete in the hope that he might notice the boat bobbing around him had changed colour from blue to orange and take a hold of it.....I turned back to see how he was doing but Pete had disappeared. I held my breath in the hopes that this could be a good sign (the thoughts of it being a bad sign weren't something anyone wanted to think about)!

Then Pete's head popped up about 5m downstream of the stopper and about 5m upstream of Low Force a 20ft waterfall!

This was that moment when all that random training pays off.....all those times you've spent running around the grass at Eagle throwing bags at one another, shouting their name etc etc.....this was it and as if it was second nature from Si, the shout went up "PETE!" Pete, just about still with it, looked across and Si's throw line landed squarely across his chest – he grasped it. As he swung toward me on the rope I was repeating 'keep hold of that rope', 'do not let go', 'keep hold'. I didn't stop until I had firm hold of Pete's BA. I'm sure he wondered why I was repeating myself and stating the obvious – he probably wanted to say 'what do you think I am? Mad?!' – but I think a) he didn't have enough breath, b) he was so pleased to be on the bank he didn't care I was stating the bl**dy obvious & c) my obvious retort was going to be something along the lines of "You think I'm Mad?? - I'm not the one who just threw themselves in to Middle Force!"

Things I knew after the event for sure was:

1. We were all going to have a drink that evening!
2. Thank god we were all able to have a drink *together* that evening.
3. I would carry a throw bag beside a river if I wanted to, BA or no BA whatever Pete & Si said (although in reality it would have been unlikely that this one thing alone would have had any change in the resulting rescue in this case but there were a lot of 'what if's' where it could have mattered).
4. If I was with a group paddling white water, even if I was going to be on the bank, if it was possible for me to have BA & helmet on 'just in case' – I'd put them on (ESPECIALLY if there were not many members of said party)!

Simon - So I'm sitting above the drop with Pete in a mid-river eddy, Jaz on the bank, having paddled for most of the day already. This is our second river of the day, just a few hundred metres of the Tees, with Low Force the main attraction. We've just run Dog Leg, with much higher levels than last time. Pete went first, having 'won' at rock, paper, scissors. With both ran it no problem at all, it was fun.

And so here we are, about to drop over Middle Force, a river-wide, open horseshoe-shaped drop of about a metre, to a metre and a half. Ten or twelve metres beyond it is Low Force, a three metre straight drop; a really nice waterfall to paddle over. A few seconds ago Pete had paddled to the bank, scouted the first, smaller drop, got back in his boat and paddled back to me. He asks once more if we're going to run it, to which I give a blasé nod. And so, off Pete goes. Nice break in, perfect line, exactly where he said he was going to go over the drop, and he disappears from sight, as expected. So now, I can't see Pete, but I can see Jaz, who can see him from the bank. Now Jaz shouts "Si!!!!" and waves. Right then, I think, my turn, I'll go meet Pete in the eddy.

But no, as I break in I realise that Jaz is hollering that Pete's swimming, he's out of his boat and clearly, from her reaction, in a bit of trouble. So I paddle as fast as I can to where Pete had got out to scout the drop, jump out of my kayak and dash the short distance to where I can see Pete's boat getting a bit of a trashing in the hole at the bottom of the drop. It's a big boat, but it's getting thrown around as if it's a twig, it's a powerful stopper. I can't see Pete. Shit. Paddler's worst nightmare.



The next few seconds go rather slowly.

I regret not buying a buoyancy aid with a harness on it, cos it means I've got no safe and easy means of securing a line to myself to go live baiting, to jump in and try and fish him out. I regret letting Pete talk Jaz out of taking a throwline. I look at the drop, and how to get closer, and realise that to get within a useful distance I've got to cross a fair sized jet of water that makes up the closest part of the falls, which is going to take more valuable seconds that we don't really have. Shit.

During this time, I think I've caught sight of Pete coming up and getting pulled straight back down again by the circulation of the stopper, but I'm not sure. I have my throw line in my hands, but it's useless, there's no one to throw it to. Still can't see Pete. I am, it's fair to say, rather scared now. As is Jaz, who I've never seen like this before, she's scared too. I have no concept of time, but it must have been forty five seconds to a minute since he ran the drop.

The worst consequences of what we're watching don't bear thinking about.

But then, after what seems like forever, a few metres downstream from where we're looking, appears Pete. Relief, absolute relief. Somehow, miraculously, he's flushed out of the stopper, he's safe. Or at least he would be if he weren't heading swiftly for Low Force, now only six or seven metres away. So I use the only tool I have, my throwline. Happily, when it really really counts my aim is good, and he's grasping the line and on his back like we drill in training over and over again, and I'm pulling him as fast as I can out flow, away from the lip of the waterfall. Adrenalin is pumping in all three of us, particularly Pete cos he's stumbling over the rocks in the shallows, struggling to get a stable foothold. Jaz and I grab him, grab his buoyancy aid, and help him from the water. Holy moley, that was close...

Pete – So 3 of us headed up north to get some paddling in while it was raining. We were lucky, the sun was out and the rivers were full but not too high. Looked over the guide books the night before and settled on a section of the Tees none of us had done before. Should take a reasonable amount of time and we thought we could get a day from it. 2 hours later we are at the get out thinking "that was fast, and it would be a shame to call it a day now".

I have to admit rather selfishly I said that I would quite like to paddle some parts of the Low Force section of the Tees. Last time I was here in 2009 I swam at the top and hurt my knee so I watched the others have fun dropping off waterfalls (and a few mishaps – ask StuP about Olly's boat) from the safety of the path that runs parallel to the river. Anyway I got some buy in from the other two and after biking the shuttle, collecting the van and driving up stream, we were there.

Si and myself got kitted up, Jaz said she would be official picture taker and went to pick up her throw line. I remember saying that probably wasn't a good idea if she wasn't wearing a helmet and buoyancy aid. In hindsight I should have thought 'who am I to question Jaz's judgement – she has paddled a million more rivers than me, is infinity more experienced in these matters and you can always just let go of the rope'. Anyway I didn't think this and we didn't take an extra rope other than the ones myself and Si had in our boats.

So we made the plod to the river and walked up to Dog Leg Falls. We ran that with no problem and I have to admit I was feeling really pleased with my boating that day. I was hitting the lines I wanted to and everything was clicking. In hindsight this was probably problem number two! I am usually a bit of a scared-y cat on the river and probably walk around more things than I need too but today was different as I was boating well and myself and Si were going to drop off Low Force a few times and get some great pictures.

In the eddy above Middle Force I asked Si if we were walking this one and I think the reply was somewhat nonchalantly "Nah lets run it". Mistake number three! I had read the guidebook a million times and knew this stopper was sticky and had made my decision to walk around this on the way up the river. Simons casual reply made me change my mind (usually your first instinct is your best in these cases) so I went to have a final scout. I thought I saw a line and went back to Si and got ready to run it.

I hit my line and then hit the really deep stopper at the bottom and then it was all bubbles and darkness. I tried rolling a few times and then pulled the deck and popped out only to find that the situation hadn't really changed.

I think this is where your mind only remembers what it thinks you can process as everything went into slow motion and it seemed like I had loads of time to contemplate the situation.

I vividly remember thinking that the only throw line we had that could be used was in Simons boat (the other was in my boat) and he couldn't see me. I also remembered that he didn't have a rescue harness on his buoyancy aid and even if he did poor Jaz would have to pull two adults from a stopper on her own, I also thought for a while that this will be a shit place to drown.

After what seemed like an endless cycle of one tiny breath, then being sucked into the fall, being pushed to the bottom of the river then popping up only for it to be repeated I think my brain had finally got to the draw marked "What did you read in the White Water Safety and Rescue book" and I got into the smallest ball shape I could so when it was my time to get pushed to the bottom of the river again I stayed down there for a lot longer than before. I popped up, heard my name and turned to see a rope coming my way.



To be honest I didn't really care at that moment if I was going to swim over Low Force, broken legs was better than being in that stopper.

Luckily for me Simon knows how to throw a bag and Jaz grabbed me and I was saved the fall. I was knackered and ruined. I think my boat played in the stopper for a while more, I didn't care where my paddles were, just glad to be on the bank.

As we were collecting boats and paddles from a nice group below the drop (they had managed to fish out the kit while we were running down stream to get it) one of the people in the crowd watching the mishap unfold showed me the whole ordeal on the video they had taken on their mobile. That will probably make it onto the internet at some time.

Luckily this was Saturday and we had still had a day of kayaking on Sunday so that didn't leave anytime to get too introspective about what happened and enabled me to get back on the horse so to speak. Still haven't paddled Low Force but my boat has solo-ed it! **Pete**

NOV 2013 CANOE ENGLAND COACHING CONFERENCE

Firstly, whilst this may have the word coaching in the title, it is an article applicable to all paddlers so please read on. The theme of the conference was based around maintaining engagement and participation of all ages and disciplines in paddlesport and I was kindly sponsored by the club to attend.

The first Guest Speaker was Deb Pinniger, a professional kayaker, who has competed at the highest level twice becoming world freestyle champion, twice silver medallist, European Champion and five times British Champion. Deb's passion is to work with young people, encouraging them to engage with the active, educational and enjoyable benefits, that the diverse sport of kayaking offers. Deb is a director and the co-founder of Watermark Experiences C.I.C, a non-profit organisation that runs kayaking expeditions, training and mentoring for young people. Whilst an inspiring speech, it did feel as though Deb was wearing 'rose-tinted glasses' as whilst we should provide our young paddlers with opportunities to nurture their paddling choices in every discipline, not every club is able to provide. We are incredibly lucky as a club to have a wealth of experienced and knowledgeable coaches who are able to put on trips for a wide range of abilities.

The second Guest Speaker was Julian North who is Research Director of Fusion Research Limited and Senior Research Fellow at Leeds Metropolitan University. Julian has undertaken sport and social research for a variety of organisations (private, public and charities) in the UK and Australia for two decades. The presentation was focussed on paddle sport participants and performers and how their specific wants and needs help to shape sporting environments, activities and coaching approaches. The lecture was based on segmentation work commissioned by the British Canoe Union and Canoe England over the last 2-3 years. Segmentation is a means of understanding the similarities and differences between different types of paddlers identified through their age/stage and motivations for engaging in sport. The segments are to help clubs and coaches to think about how they shape the sporting/coaching environment differently depending on the participant/performer type. If anyone would like the link to the PowerPoint please let me know or can be found in the Canoe England website. A survey with 3200 Canoe England members produced the following results about their reasons for continued participation in the sport. I would be interested to know your reasons for paddling.

Finally, the last Guest Speaker of the weekend was Chris Hodgson who is a BCU Level 5 Coach and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Chichester teaching on the Adventure Education programmes. He has been fortunate to have been involved in adventure activities for over 30 years after an introduction to skiing, climbing and kayaking with the local youth club as an eleven year old. As an adult he has been part of groups undertaking adventures from the Arctic Circle to the Himalayas. He has a particular interest in the process of coach education and is involved in research on human performance and environmental stress.



Segment	Description	%
Environment	Strong interest in the outdoors, water, scenery, wildlife	66
Special interest	Strong interest in bird-watching/fishing etc.	11
Social	Strong interest in paddling with friends and family, making new friends, learning to paddle, and helping others Note: this segment may contain some coaches	30
Touring	Strong interest in undertaking trips, expeditions and seeing more of the world	24
Fitness	Strong interest in the 'fitness' dimensions of the sport	31
Activity	Strong interest in learning and mastering sport, getting physically ready to paddle, de-stressing through active participation	45
Personal goals	Strong interest in achieving personal goals e.g. improving rankings, breaking records etc.	10
White water	Strong interest in paddling in 'difficult water' e.g. higher grades, bigger drops, bigger waves	19
Low Level Competition	Currently competing below Division 1/Division A	18
High Level Competition	Currently competing internationally or in top division of discipline	3
Coaching	Current coach (qualified and unqualified)	39

Chris outlined some current motivational and reward theories and explained how these can help us understand motivation and continued participation in adventure sports such as canoeing and kayaking. He explored how understanding rewards can help coaches plan interesting programmes and sessions that maximise the potential rewards for participants in a variety of adventure sport and educational settings. It was an opportunity to reflect on the underlying principles that promote enjoyment and learning during recreational, competitive and educational activities.

I also participated in 3 workshops which provided an opportunity to talk to other coaches. As usual with Conferences, it's hard to know which to choose but here is a snippet of each of workshop below...

Workshop 1: Keeping the Paddler in Mind, Richard Ward, Exeter Canoe Club Racing Coach

It's easy to think that the only thing that matters for paddlers is running a good session. It certainly helps, but there is much more to lasting involvement than one good session! The workshop looked at identifying practical ways for coaches, clubs and centres to support paddler development for the long haul. So I ask you to think about what is your passion in paddlesport? For me, it is about personal paddling development to be able to coach other people interested in learning the sport but also to build relationships and create memorable experiences. We looked out reasons for continuing in the sport and the reasons for dropout and what the solutions are.

We, as coaches are salesmen and women! It is our job to sell the sport, to sell the paddler their dream, but also be ready to adapt when the dream changes.

Workshop 2: Canoe England Resources - Making Your Life Easier, Canoe England Participation Team

Keep your eyes out for new programmes/ events in 2014!

Workshop 3: Winter Paddling Indoors, Dr Gillian Mara, Sports Consultant and Freelance Coach and Coach Educator

An incredibly inspiring session for me personally about gaining methods to help maintain paddlers' interest during the winter months when it is not always suitable for paddlers to be on the water. I look forward to building in these sessions into next year's winter programme.

So if you have read this far- congratulations! It is very hard to condense a whole weekend but still get all the information across that is going to be interesting and relevant to all. Please do talk to me if you wish to discuss any of the above further.

So, a thought to leave you with... This came out of Workshop 1- Keeping the Paddler in Mind and mainly aimed at coaches but also you can read it from the perspective of being a learner...

Developing a Learning Culture - Blue Tit or Robin?

In their book 'The Living Company', Arie de Geus and Nicholas Brealey describe how in the early 20th century milk bottles in Britain had no top on and birds quickly learnt to siphon off the cream from the top of the milk. Robins and blue tits were particularly adept at this. Then, between the two world wars, aluminium seals were placed on milk bottles. By the early 1950's the entire blue tit population of the UK, about a million birds, had learned how to pierce the aluminium seals.



Regaining access to this rich food source provided an important victory for the blue tit family as a whole; it gave them an advantage in the battle for survival. Conversely, the robins, as a family, never regained access to the cream. Occasionally, an individual robin learns how to pierce the seals of the milk bottle, but the knowledge does not pass to the rest of the species. In short, the blue tits went through an extraordinarily successful institutional learning process. The robins failed, even though individual robins had been as innovative as individual blue tits. Moreover, the difference could not be attributed to their ability to communicate.

As songbirds, both the blue tits and the robins had the same range of communication methods: behaviour, movements and song. The explanation could be found only in the social propagation process - the way blue tits spread their skill from one individual to members of the species as a whole. You can see the same phenomenon if you put food such as nuts out for birds. Quickly 'word' will get around the blue tit population and you will have a steady stream of visitors. Whereas you will typically only see the same solitary robin.

So, which bird are you most like - the blue tit or the robin?

Do you openly share your experience with others?

Do you seek input from others to help you come up with solutions?

Are you open to building on others' ideas?

Do you seek opportunities to meet, mix and talk with others?

Do you seek opportunities to learn from others?

Do you facilitate a learning culture within your team?

Food for thought? We are all learners and teachers in one way or another. **Emma D**

ANN & MARK'S KEFALONIA ADVENTURE SEPTEMBER 2013

First week of September, Ann & I went off for a week's sea-kayaking around the Island of Kefalonia.

Landed at the airport & immediately hit by the +30degree dry heat - it hadn't rained for about three months.

We had met our guide Giles, from Glenmore Lodge (the organisers), were collected from the airport by Sea-Kaying Kefalonia (the company whose equipment we would be using), & that afternoon we were fitted out with boats, taken to a supermarket to buy rations & shown apartments for the first night. There were seven of us on the trip including the guide & all went out for a meal the first night to get to know each other & plan for the trip.

It turned out we were all experienced paddlers so expectations were of good, steady paced days exploring the coast as we go. The boats were big plastic one person sea kayaks - plenty of storage if a bit heavy.

Trip was planned as a mix of wild camping & some nights in apartments.

Next morning 0700 we were collected, taken & dropped off on the beach by the airport. The beach had a turtle nest roped off so as not to disturb it (not seen that at Brancaster!). All starting to feel a bit real... Boats loaded & off we went.



Within a quarter an hour we were exploring sea caves & weaving between rocks. Blue skies, no wind & water like a tepid bath - bliss. We paddled North to Argostoli lighthouse, & did a twenty minute crossing to Lepeda beach. At this point I needed to bail out of my boat & soak myself in the sea to cool down, almost suffering heat exhaustion. After a cooling iced coffee (this was to become our standard drink) it was agreed by Giles that due to our skill levels & the weather conditions it would be safe enough to strip off some layers / buoyancy aid / spray deck. A short paddle around the headland, coffee break at Xi Beach & a second twenty minute crossing to Vardiani Island, we called time for Day One. Camp was set up in front of a disused church & our only visitor that evening was a solitary Barn Owl that almost landed in our camp.

Day Two saw us recrossing to the mainland & continuing North along the coast. By now I was paddling in shorts, t-shirt & hat. Sun lotion the most important accessory.



The day was taken up by more sea cave exploration, regular coffee stops & keeping an eye out for turtles. When we stopped there was always a swim or two & usually a bit of snorkelling. The coast was mostly cliffs dropping from on high straight down to the sea. If you looked closely you could see goats picking their way around - we wondered what they found to eat, it looked so bare. That night we wild camped on Petani Beach. This was a public beach so we waited for most people to go home before putting up the tents & cooking dinner.

Day Three - more sea caves & turtle spotting (couldn't stop laughing when someone called 'I can see a Turtles Head', don't think they knew why & couldn't bring myself to explain! I got an opportunity to swim into a sea cave via some choppy water which was a bit exciting. There is not really any tide in the Med so the water is always at mostly the same height which felt weird to us. Also, even when there was quite a swell or larger waves they didn't have the force behind them we are used to in UK. We slept that night at our most remote location, a few miles West of Zola, beautiful white beach only accessible by foot. Pity about the bloody cicadas that kept us awake most of the night!!! A small price to pay for the experience.

Day Four took us to the gorgeous port of Assos - sheltered, shallow, warm as a bath. By this point we were paddling in swim suits, sandals & sunhats. Ann & I took the opportunity to practice our rescues, rolling, re-entry rolls, & support strokes. don't think we will ever be as eager to do this in England! This was also the end of the wild camping bit, tonight the luxury of an apartment & first fresh water wash in three days.

Day Five we continues North, round the top of the island to Fiskardo, another apartment. During the day the best stop was at the Salt Pans near Agrilias. A picture postcard rocky cove, sandy beach, clear water bay with a beach bar overlooking it.

We nearly got a hitchhiker too! Everywhere we went there are feral cats. When I asked a local who owns them he said, 'Noone owns them, they are free...'

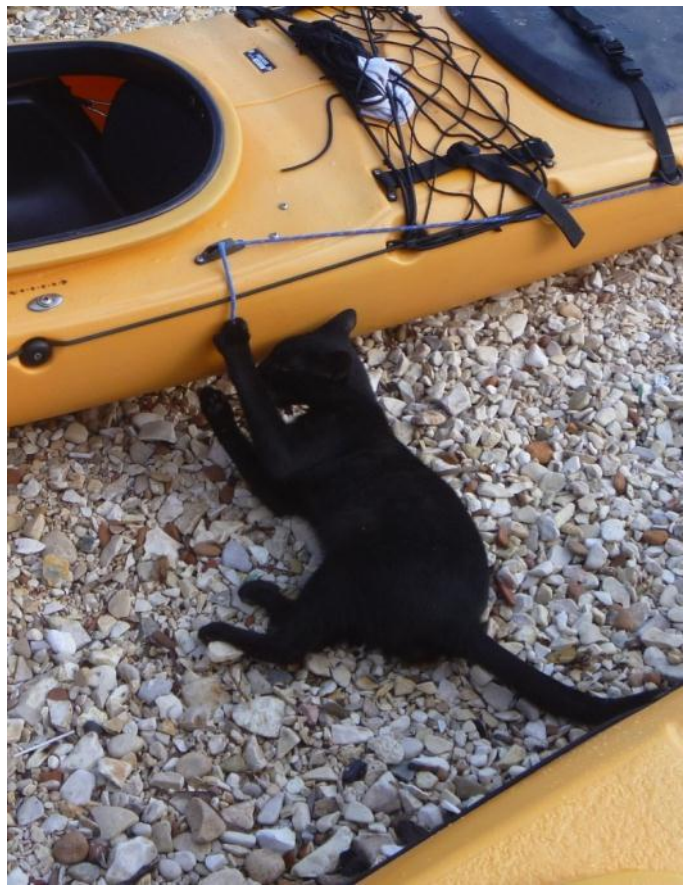
Day Six - Last day! Having gone round the top of the island we paddled South to Agia Efimia, the longest day's paddle at a little over twenty kilometres, in total we paddled about 120 kilometres (that's nearly all of Tim's 100 mile challenge in one trip!); by now we had toughened up & it went by all too soon. The coast on the East of the island was greener & less rocky than the West which made for a pleasant change of scenery. It also made us wonder why all the goats we had seen struggling on the bare rocks on the West, didn't wander over here?

Best memories?

Warm water, blue skies, friendly breeze, fantastic scenery, goats, iced coffee, snorkelling, so many colourful fish in crystal clear water, impromptu mud therapy, cats, turtles, that lone Barn Owl... Oh & did I mention the WARM WATER?

All in all, we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, want to do it all again someday, & would certainly recommend a trip like this to anyone else - happy paddling!

Ann & Mark



EVER WONDERED HOW A KAYAK IS MADE?



Have you ever wondered how a kayak is made? Well, Eagle organized a visit to the Tootega factory in Attleborough to see kayaks (and other boats) being transformed from a bag of plastic powder to a finished item.

On a warm sunny evening in June, 22 curious men, women & children responded to the invitation to visit a large American style industrial unit. A team of bright creative Tootega employees greeted us. The designers Steve & James, graphic designer & marketing Jonathan and a team of production staff had devised an exciting tour of the processes from concept to bubble pack wrapping for dispatch. Paper designs, 3D printed models, prototypes, polystyrene models illustrated the stages for the range of top quality products, which have an international market. The facilities were a combination of high-tech polymer production with ingeniously engineered moulds, computer controlled rotating modern heating & cooling ovens,

high quality outfitting & finishing. Exacting sourcing, constant checking production behaviour of supplies, using thoroughly tried & tested components were matched with highly competent product knowledge, craft skills & sophisticated graphics.

Divided into two groups we were able see manufacturing at its best.

We were told the company name comes from ancient Inuit mythology. Tootega a goddess who could walk (& probably relax sitting) on water, created a protectorate for Inuit fishing fleets. Each Tootega boat has a unique number, which logs the material batch used, who has done what in the production, providing the paper trail for the lifetime guarantee. The methods for obtaining the



strengthened body profiles, swirly blend of colours, subtle textures were captivating. We were allowed to get in close at each stage, feeling the heat and stepping aside as chains lifted & moved each item along a dramatic gantry. Finally when cooled enough, men pulled the colourful molded familiar kayak shape from the dark multi-sectioned metal mould. Occasionally things go wrong as a consequence rejects are recycled. The firm has an ethos of ensuring only top quality products leave the factory.



Having tried a sit-on once I found it easy to manoeuvre & relaxing. As I was not wear simple swim-wear, I vividly recall empathizing with the incontinent. I was thrilled to hear Tootega are planning to go into production with a 12 kg carbon fibre canoe, which would suit adventurers who prefer drier paddling comfort.

The story of how a kayak was made by Tootega was bewitching and enthralling. If you didn't manage this visit I'd urge you go along next time. It was a cracking event with real fizz. **Kitty**

CANOE SYMPOSIUM 2013



Every year a canoe symposium is held. This is a national event where hundreds of canoeists get together for a week end of paddling and activities associated with canoeing.

In 2011 a group of us attended the English symposium in the Lake District which was great fun and so we decided to go to this years symposium which was held at Bala in Wales. Jenny, Jane, Kate & I headed across after work and arrived in time for last orders and to book onto which sessions we wanted to attend on the Saturday.

I chose to attend a session in the morning of freestyle canoeing with poling in the afternoon, while Jane went canoe sailing followed by paddle boarding. Jenny and Kate headed off to the River Dee for a day session on introduction to moving water.

Free style is something I've always wanted to do and had hoped this year to do sessions with Chris. It always looks so graceful and brings so many canoeing skills together (along with a very high chance of falling in!). Our coach made it all look so easy, and the session was good fun and introduced me to some new coaching techniques and a greater understanding of the mechanics of how the boat moves.

On Saturday evening there was a hog roast followed by a series of talks relating to paddling in Canada and down the River Dee.

On Sunday I tackled a challenge I have been building up to for years. I have paddled the lower Tryweryn on many occasions in a kayak and Jas has been trying to persuade Pete & I that we should run it in an open boat for the last 18 months. I have often tried to visualise the canoe line down the river while paddling the kayak, but the time had come to bite the bullet !

For those not familiar with the river, it is a fairly narrow river which flows very quickly and has A LOT of rocks in it which you need to avoid. This can be a challenge in a kayak, but I was going to try and do it in a 16 foot long canoe, and what was worse MY canoe. I had visions of a very bent boat at the end of my day !

Our coach was great and after a nervous decent of Chapel falls, we were on our way. Most of the others with us had never paddled the river before so I had the advantage that at least I knew where most of the rocks were and what was around each corner. I made 1 silly mistake early on by tripping over a kayak in an eddy, but after that I focussed and had a great day. Our coach was really supportive and encouraged me to lead various sections and provide safety cover on others. A few of us ran the last section down to Bala Mill Falls, but took the canoe route over the last drop (I'd seen too many broken boats in the past here and was pleased my boat was still in 1 piece at this point).

While I was doing the Tryweryn, Kate and Jane had been doing white water safety and rescue while Jenny had been free style paddling. The week end was great fun and I learnt loads. It is a tremendous opportunity to meet people of all abilities and to experience new aspects of canoeing and be coached by people who don't know you and consequently push your paddling to new levels.

The 2014 Symposium will be in the Lake District again and will be on the week end of 31 October to 2 November 2014. The week end costs about £100 and includes your accommodation, all your food, including lunches and coaching for 2 days. We will share transport costs and can take boats on the club trailer to keep costs to a minimum. A group of us will be going, so if you are interested in coming, put the date in your diary !

WOMEN'S SCOTTISH SEA KAYAKING FESTIVAL AUGUST 2013

As someone who is only just getting the hang of accepting help with carrying boats, what was I doing at a women's specific coaching event? Well, initially I signed up as I had missed out on all the other sea kayak festivals I had tried to get a place on. But, I quickly learnt this was no second best event.

So, off I went on the 10 hour drive to the Isle of Bute. Facilities at the campsite were basic, but the views across to Argyle were stunning, and there are fantastic Victorian showers in the main town.

There were around 50 paddlers for the weekend, including coaches. Most people were relatively local, but there were plenty of paddlers from all over the UK and even further afield, so lots of people with fantastic paddling stories to tell.

I signed up for skills sessions rather than daytrips (I slightly regretted this on reflection as due the strong winds I paddled in the same area every day, rather than getting to see much of the Island).





Day one was rescues and towing, day two was manoeuvring and last but not least was 'loving the wet stuff'.

I had covered most of the tows and rescues before, but it is always good to practice with different people in different places. I had time to work on my re-entry roll, but quickly discovered the sea temperature in Scotland in August is a lot colder than down here, dry suits definitely needed!

Dinner was a cold buffet followed by pizza. Yummy.

The next day was a dry day. Hurrah. Lots of practice of technical strokes and forward paddling. I finally got the hang of bow rudders and cross deck bow rudders, despite the windy conditions (force 4-5). I also learnt that any stroke that works in a canoe will work in a sea kayak, and vice versa as they are a similar length. It seems obvious when you think about it, I just never had.

Dinner tonight was the grand festival dinner, well, as grand as possible when wearing five layers of outdoors clothes... Local salmon, and the most amazing selection of cakes. Double yummy!

The last day was the wet session. Some of you may have seen some of the things we got up to as I ran a similar session at the club... It was lots of fun, paddling the boat in all sorts of crazy positions. I ended up with four passengers at one point. My stomach muscles were aching from laughing so much as much as from clambering in and out of our boats. Definitely recommended as a fun confidence boosting session. A stable boat makes it a little bit easier, if only I had a stable boat.

So, all in all I had a fantastic time. The coaching was top class, and I heard all sorts of inspiring stories about trips to add to my list. I really enjoyed the relaxed environment, and that everyone in the sessions I had chosen were interested in improving skills rather than clocking up the miles. I also found that having inspirational female coaches made the challenges feel a bit more achievable somehow. I am definitely planning to go this year. There will be room in the van if anyone else fancies it too. I will let you know when bookings are open 😊

PS

Going to this event has really got me thinking about gender specific coaching sessions, and when I saw the photos from the last club Dart trip and noticed there wasn't a single female on the trip I decided I need to find out more...

Is it a purely numbers game and there are more male than female paddlers in the club, so of course there will be more men on trips. (Although from memory most of the introductory sessions I helped with over the summer were a roughly 50/50 split.)

Or is there something else happening?

I have a few theories, but I want to know if other female paddlers have the same thoughts. So I have some questions for all the female paddlers in the club.

Do you want to do more adventurous paddling? -Either on white water or the sea, canoe or kayak, or take part in longer club trips.

Why aren't you doing it?

Are you worried that you're not good/strong/fit/brave enough/or any other reason?

Come and have a chat next time you see me and let me know what you think.

I would love to find a way to encourage more female paddlers to go on more adventures. **Ann**

POEM TO STUART

Being a perfect chairman must be hard to do
But if that person exists it might be Stu
If someone needs help, I mean me or you
Whether you're learning to kayak or paddle a canoe
If you're 12 years old or 62
If you're fit as a fiddle or fighting the flu
He'll teach you strokes and rescues too
He's committed to the club through and through
For shy beginners you won't feel so new
His advice is wise and his compliments are sometimes true
If you're feeling down he'll stop you feeling blue
Stuart Pontin is definitely a man who.....
to shake his hand and say "thanks for everything", you'll have
to stand in a very long queue!

Joel

