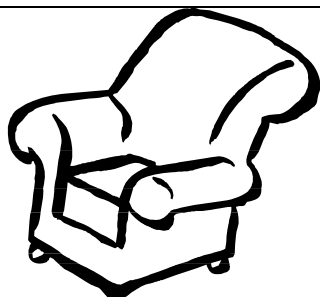




Waterfront

Issue104

Dec05



From the Chair...

Welcome to the winter edition of Waterfront. This has been an important year for the club as we finally achieved Club Mark from Sports England and the BCU. We have also seen an increase in club membership and the associated quality, quantity and variety of boats that we now have in the boathouse. Thanks to everyone who has supported these and other developments we have made.

Thanks for all those who attended the recent AGM. It was good to see our developing youth group make a positive contribution on their first public appearance. A special thanks has gone to Cllr. Pearce who supported us on this night. We have also now developed positive links with the local MP James Arbuthnot, following Richard Somerset and Brian Biffin's 'River Access' trip to the Houses of Parliament. These links will become increasingly important to us as we support the future of Paddling and the Canal. Can I

pass on my congratulations to all our award winners this year. It is great to see continued determination and the success it brings.

I would like to welcome some new faces to the Committee and say a big thank-you to those who have stepped down. A special thank-you must go to Richard Somerset who has supported the committee as Chairman and Secretary for a number of consecutive years.

We have had a very low water in the canal and other parts of the county this year but with hope of rain now being fulfilled we are seeing the rivers filling up. There is no reason to be hibernating and I trust you've all put in your latest Christmas wishes into Santa for some warmish clothing to help support some winter paddling!

May I take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year. I look forward to seeing you all on the annual Boxing Day paddle at Crookham Wharf from 10.30am. Funny hats and a decorated boat are a must!

Lee Matthews

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NEWS

The Basingstoke Canal - Current Issues and Funding

Some of the long standing members will remember me as the founder of the Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club when I wrote an article in the August 1979 issue of the Canal Society Newsletter suggesting the formation of a local canoe club on the recently restored section of the canal in Fleet. This was after two very successful Canoe Trials organised jointly by the Society and the Westel Canoe Club and based at Reading Road Wharf in Fleet.

I had been a member of the Canal Society since my family moved to Fleet in 1969 and the Society was campaigning for new members to help promote the aim of full restoration of the canal from dereliction and for public ownership by the two County Councils.

Restoration started in 1973 and the canal was re-opened in 1991, but only in a fairly basic condition, just enough for through navigation. Since then the Canal Authority and the Society have been steadily improving the canal and it's facilities.

The canal is funded by the two county councils and the six riparian boroughs and districts plus funds from the Society and in the form of voluntary labour. Our funds are mainly raised from the operation of the 'John Pinkerton' trip boat. In the current financial year the net revenue expenditure (expenditure less income) is budgeted at just over £457,000. The two county councils fund 50% of the sum between them and the six riparian authorities the other 50% on the basis of the length of canal in each borough or district. However, that is the theory, but in practice, budgetary cutbacks by three authorities, namely, Hart, Surrey Heath and Runnymede, mean that their combined shortfall amounts to £60,300.

With the canal infrastructure needing increasing funds to be spent each year on maintenance and repairs, the funding gap is increasing year on year. Bearing in mind that the locks and their surrounds were restored in the 1970s and 1980s, mostly by volunteers and government labour schemes, problems are now arising with increasing frequency. It is estimated that over £2M of work is required on the Deepcut flight of 14 locks alone.

After pressure from the Society about the increasing funding gap, the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee (which comprises all the riparian local authorities plus the Society and English Nature) have instituted a Report which looks at securing the long term future management and funding of the canal. The Report recommended that a detailed feasibility study be undertaken over the next six to twelve months to look at the following options ie:

- 1) Revised management arrangements
 - (a) cutting level of service
 - (b) formalise funding arrangements
- 2) Management by a third party
 - (a) British Waterways
 - (b) National Trust
 - (c) Set up an independent body such as a charitable trust or private company
- 3) Stop or limit navigation
 - (a) Retain water but stop through boat movements

Our Society, whilst welcoming and supporting the review, has, however, issued a Press Release stating that since the Society was formed with the specific purpose of campaigning to restore the canal and preserve it as a fully navigable waterway, we would not support any option which could result in the closure of the canal to through navigation or in the imposition of any restrictions on the use of the canal as a navigable waterway.

As the Canoe Club is one of many organisations making full use of the canal as a navigable waterway, your support for the Society and our work is vitally important. This year, the Society has contributed nearly £50,000 to the canal, including the value of voluntary labour. In the last 3-4 years we have

contributed £117,000 to the St.John's Locks backpumping scheme (to re--circulate water) with another £31,000 to be found to complete the scheme.

The Society is always looking for new members, whether as an active member or simply to support our aims. We produce a quarterly newsletter with news about the canal, forthcoming social events, working parties and articles of general interest. By becoming a member, you become a guardian of the canal.

Membership costs £10 a year, £12 for families and £3 for a junior under 18. Membership forms can be obtained from the Canal Centre, the Canal Cafe or from the Membership Secretary, Mrs Doreen Hornsey, Mallards,94a Aldershot Road, Fleet GU51 3FT Tel: 01252 623591 [E-mail:grador@totalise.co.uk](mailto:grador@totalise.co.uk) or from David Millett, 25 Frere Avenue, Fleet,GU51 5AW Te1:01252 617364 (ideally with an SAE)

David Millett, Vice President, Surrey & Hampshire Canal Society

Boat store

I gave a brief report at the AGM on the current uncertainty about the future of the canal. The problems are outlined in a bit more detail in the article by David Millett.

Possible sources of funding the canal works include spending £100,000 on digging a lay-by for canal boats at the Canal Centre would bring in £30,000 income per annum, it is estimated. I believe that the eventual approach to the canal's problems is likely to be a hybrid solution, which includes this development. In discussion after the meeting of the canal joint Management Committee, the possibility was raised of obtaining EU funding for as much as possible of the £2million capital projects backlog by "twinning" the Canal's projects with those of a waterway somewhere else in the EU. One possibility might be to twin the Basingstoke Canal projects with those of the Canal d'Orleans in France.

All this unfortunately has an impact on our plans to build proper changing rooms, toilets and showers etc. beside the boatstore. We will need a 25 year security of tenure to attract outside funding for this kind of development, and the County Council is not likely to grant this before it has reached decisions on issues like whether to sell off the Mytchett site, for example. Let's hope that by this time next year things are more settled and we can make faster progress towards developing our premises.

In the meanwhile there is nothing to stop us getting on with our development plans and checking out possible sources of external funding, whilst raising capital ourselves through social events etc.

Charles Hicks

AGM

A good turnout this year and the Youth committee came and told us all about their grand plans for the year. We had Cllr. Pearce come and give out the prizes (Once Richard had been reminded that it was her job!). We adopted the new constitution. Merry Williams deserves a special mention for the weirdest foodstuffs provided at the American supper, spicy dried peas and tofu sweets, apparently they are big in Japan. A summary of who got which pot is below:

Wills Trophy (Fastest Man in Club Marathon)	Richard Somerset
Matthew's Trophy (Fastest Lady in Club Marathon)	Tracy Rees Clark
Fastest Man in Hare & Hounds	Tyson Simons
April's Cup (Fastest Lady in Hare and Hounds)	Liz Murnaghan
Hicks Trophy (Top Single in Hare and Hounds)	Liz Murnaghan
U16 Cup (Fastest Junior in Hare and Hounds)	Mike Lambert
Davy trophy (Fastest Double in Hare and Hounds)	Paul Batchelor and Pete Absolom

Millet Cup (Top Double in Hare and Hounds)
 Canadian Challenge Cup (for Hare and Hounds)
 Neptune Award
 Marathon (donated by Brian Gandy)
 Lockey Trophy (for Polo)
 Somerset Shield (For whitewater)
 Simpson Trophy (Best newcomer to Slalom)

Paul Batchelor and Pete Absolom
 Brian and Anne Biffen
 Keith Ambrose
 Isobel and Naomi Smith
 Harry Mudd
 Guy Pepper
 Steve Rees Clark

Jarman Trophy (Best performance by a ranked Slalom paddler), last awarded in 1993 to Helen Reeves, Olympic Bronze medalist. Not awarded this year, but Mike Simpson reminded everyone it was up for grabs in 2006.

Ted Ledger Trophy (for non-paddling contribution to the Club) This just has to be celebrated in verse!

Mrs Elaine Horner
 Stood in the corner
 Watching the burgers fry.
 When one was done
 It got put in a bun
 And sold to a passer by.

“New” boats

Yet more toys will be arriving in the boathouse soon. When we went to the Paddlesport whitewater race at Newbury we found that Newbury CC were having a clear out prior to one of their buildings being demolished. A WWR C2, an Espada stable K1 and a slalom K1 are to be given a bit of tender loving care before they can join our expanding fleet of boats.

News from the committee

The new Committee has now met for the first time and we thought it would be good to start some regular communication and updates in the Newsletter. The recent meeting set a precedent as it was finished before midnight but achieved movement forward on a number of issues (Notably demolishing a cake in record time). Some business was managed.

The Youth committee is now very active and has been bringing forward ideas for discussion. We have recently agreed to part support an additional play-boat but with a request that the youth team support additional costs by fundraising. They are presently working on the ideas of a midnight BBQ and Paddle and possible sleepover. The Youth web-site continues to prosper and is well worth a look. Thanks to all the children and Paul Robinson who supports this so positively. Paul has been co-opted onto the main committee to support stronger links with youth.

Much of the recent committee meeting looked at roles and responsibilities in the club. We are developing a stronger slalom sub-group to build on recent successes in this area. We also have a larger group of people supporting the boathouse, which Lee will oversee. Thanks also go to Keith Ambrose who will help support WW trips and Lisa Wardle who has offered to develop the BCU Cadet scheme for the older youth in the club. Carole Simons is now supporting Lee in looking at potential fundraising that can be achieved in the club. Thanks finally to Brian Biffin who has taken on the role of Child Protection Officer. Thanks to everyone else who have continued to support the club in their original roles.

The Committee works to a clear but sensible budget with boats and equipment with the aim of supporting all disciplines in the club. We can only support basic provision and still need all club members to support their own core area of interest. We have recently bought a basic Canadian trolley to support portages and boat movement. We are also looking into the costs for a Canoe Sail and proper Polo Buoyancy aids with protective side support. (Skills with Polo are growing rapidly and the waters on Sunday practice are beginning to get a touch dynamic!). We are presently looking at applications for grants and will look to use these to support Flat-water development boats. We are also looking at restoring and diversifying our present trailers to carry a wider range of boats. Thanks to Brian Biffin who is working on labels too better identify both private and club boats that are available to be used. We will also be looking at the notice boards in the boathouse as most are in disrepair and not functioning properly.

The club was well represented at the recent BCU Southern Region AGM and a number of the club are now representing disciplines in the wider Southern area. Liz Murnaghan is supporting both Touring and Placid Water. Paul Jeffs has now taken on responsibility for Slalom with Keith Ambrose looking at a project developing Polo matches across clubs in the area. Richard Somerset has been in early discussion with respect to developing a Southern region Sprint Regatta.

Charles Hicks has recently been involved in meetings of the Joint Management Committee for the Canal where the future of the canal was discussed. There is a more detailed update from Charles in the newsletter. Plans to develop the boathouse are still upper-most in the committee's thoughts despite possible future changes to the management of both Mytchett and The Canal. A basic extension plan is in place and we are making speculative enquiries and grant applications to a variety of organisations. We are proceeding cautiously at this time.

Thanks to Richard Somerset and Brian Biffin who paddled to Westminster to support the River Access campaign. As many of you are aware 98% of Rivers are not accessible for canoeing. There were good links made on the day and we have now developed positive contact with the local MP, James Arbuthnot. He is keen to come and meet us during an event or club activity night. We will keep you up to date with developments here.

Please contact us if there are any ideas that you have and we will keep you updated as we look to move the club forward.

The Committee

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Boxing Day Paddle

Don't forget that venerable Christmas institution the Boxing Day paddle. Start planning your costumes now for a fancy dress paddle along the canal. The Biffin family have raised the stakes in recent years with an illuminated Christmas tree in their boat, can you top that? Meet at Crookham Wharf car park at 10.30 ish for a short paddle and maybe some mulled wine and mince pies. You can follow up with the Mummers Play outside the pub at noon.

TRIPS AND TOURS

Twenty Years of BCCC Camping and Canoeing

It is twenty years since my family and I first became involved in the BCCC Summer camps abroad. Since 1986 we have visited France 18 times and once each to Germany and the USA. Personally I missed just one year. During these years there has been a slow change of personnel, but a core of us have stayed throughout. We have always maintained the aim of providing a holiday for all, which includes canoeing.

In the beginning we all had fibreglass boats, not because we did not want 'plastic' ones, but because they had hardly been invented then. Our boats were generally low volume and of a slalom type. We organised trips every other day, leaving the spare days for sight seeing or for whatever each family wanted to do. In later years cycling was added into the activities organised for the group and therefore canoe trips tended to be every third day approximately. Each evening we would gather together by our tents and discuss future arrangements, which were very flexible, in order to accommodate everyone's wish list.

Another feature of the holiday would be a whole group visit to a restaurant. We were careful to get an appropriate menu for all tastes at the right price. Fortunately we always had enough good French speakers to do the negotiation. You can imagine the scenario: 'Good morning Madame. May I book a table for this evening?' The response would be 'Of course' Then the surprise, 'Yes, a table for 32 please'. Well we didn't always have that number on the holiday, but even at half that, it is a challenge for a village restaurant.

In the twenty years we have canoed on more than twenty rivers in France alone. In the early years we would arrange to camp by one river for the first week and move to a second river for the second week. Gradually this idea was dropped, as it was quite an effort to strike camp and set up again on one day in the middle of the holiday. We have camped all over France but there is a tendency for us to return to the more challenging rivers flowing from the Central Massif or the Alps and to the warmer south. For the first seven years we did not have a single day of rain. Generally for places influenced by Mediterranean weather it is hot and dry with occasional thunderstorms. Night-time temperatures are lower if you are camping in an alpine valley.

When we started we had our teenage children with us. (and some younger) They continued to come with us until they had grown up and left home and even then we have had some return visits.

In 1986 we had limited experience of moving water. The BCCC had given us a lot of experience on British waters with camps on the Wye and Severn and at Poole and Dartmouth. We had toured on local waters, the Thames, the Wey, the Arun, the Adur and the Mole and slalom was a popular activity. In France we learnt to read the water as it

flowed over rapids, round corners and over obstacles. We also learnt rescues in the most practical way possible. We developed our techniques of control and supervision on the water. We were lucky in having kayakists of outstanding skill to lead us through the tricky waters until we could do it for ourselves. (Three of our youngsters went on to gain national acclaim as paddlers.) We damaged our boats from time to time, but not the paddlers. The boats were easily fixed with fibreglass. When plastic boats arrived one of our youngsters managed to prove that they too are not unbreakable, but less easy to repair while on holiday.

Every river has its own special features and challenges. I am not going to discuss them here. Reports have been written for newsletters over the years. Suffice it to say, there are a number of members of the BCCC, who have a great deal of experience of moving water and rapid rivers. They would be delighted if you would like to join them for a Summer camp in France some time in the future. Don't forget – this is not a canoeing holiday – this is a holiday that has some canoeing. There is the usual sight seeing or sunbathing or walking or cycling or swimming or sitting in the shade reading, or whatever you want, on your own or with others. Oh yes, if you want to canoe, we have experts who will lead and supervise unless you want to go off on your own. It's your holiday. Watch the newsletter for details of next year or ask Mike Simpson or Charles Hicks.

Mike Simpson on behalf of our family of paddlers – Abbott, Biffin, Carpenter, Chance, Cox, Dressel, Fawkner, Gandy, Harris, Hicks, Horner, Mansfield, Merriman, Miller, Price, Reeves, Simpson, Steel.

Dart Trip – 26th November 2005

“Sledging or kayaking?” That is what we thought as we travelled down to Dartmoor, listening to endless traffic reports of how many roads were closed by snow and ice.

However, these are normal conditions according to those in the know (Richard Somerset, renamed Shackleton for this weekend!), and we carried on regardless. Arriving at the River Dart Country Park (temperature –15°C!), we headed straight for the closed café for a hot drink. They eventually opened once they realised our faces had actually frozen to the windows! “Just a cup of hot water please!”

Once we had all arrived, the plan was set and we were ready to kayak. We split our group of eleven into two smaller groups and headed for the access point at the top of the Loop section - amazed that we did not have to break the ice to paddle. Launching into the Dart – we were finally off!

Richard Somerset and Paul Kaine, the old timers, were leading our group, which consisted of Chris Hitchen, Jules and Harvey Wade – who were newer to the whole experience. We played about on the waves by the bridge and then moved on, as it got more crowded at the top.

The journey continued smoothly until we reached our first rock garden. Now, this was not the pretty sight that you will find in Wisley Gardens, but a “bump 'n' scrape” type of garden. Paul very kindly led these sections, so when he got stuck each time, we all headed for the other side of the river – what a gentleman!

Onward we went until we reached the “washing machine”. Although the water was low, it looked pretty fierce to us. “Head river left and then turn right to avoid the rock,” all sounds simple until you are on it! We got through, although Harvey, feeling a little too warm, decided to cool off by dunking his head. He choose the right time to do this, for in milliseconds, he was surrounded by 20 budding coaches doing their assessments, who couldn't believe their luck at the chance to show off the Eskimo rescue! Harvey, of course, had just capsized to help them out!

We then headed down a bit further and stopped for a bite to eat in the sun. This did mean negotiating a highly slippery small cliff on the bank, but the warm rays were worth it. After the calories were replenished, we headed off to Lovers Leap. Here Chris decided to cool off, and pulled a fantastic roll in front of the adoring crowd (the other group). Quite amazing considering the lack of water! We were now heading towards Triple Falls, via another rock garden, again, thank you to Paul for showing the way not to go!

First fall was successfully negotiated and we then took a look at the second fall. Here we noticed a scary man with a camera – now the pressure was really on! Second fall completed, with time for a play on the wave and a smile to the camera! Then on to the final fall, “head right, but not too right, and then left, but not too left” were the instructions, which did actually make sense when you were on the fall - the bottom was reached, again smiling for the paparazzi! Richard even had the presence of mind to negotiate a club discount! (Check out the photos on www.dartphotos.com - go to “galleries”, choose the 26th November and the group appears from page 21 onwards.)

We carried on towards the weir, where Richard wanted to show off his latest trick, “how to get stuck on a weir” – amazing! Over the weir he plunged, and then, “Oh, there's no water - what do I do now?” Fantastic! Having taken over the lead from Paul, we all went to the other side of the river and popped over!

The spin dryer was successfully negotiated and following a few more rapids, we were at the bottom of the Loop. Here we joined the other group – Merry and Hazel Williams, Jon and Harry Mudd, Nigel Telfer and Keith Ambrose, and headed down the Lower Dart. No time to play on this section, as we just had to paddle fast to reach the end before dark.

Not too many features to negotiate here, apart from the large weir at the end. On day two of the trip, some of the braver paddlers ventured very impressively down the steps river left, to “play” in the stoppers! Today, however, we all headed over the edge river right, which christened all new boats with some “go faster” scratches! We had done it - the Dart had been conquered! Off we went to change in the lay-by to return again the following day!

Harvey and Jules Wade

The Barle

The water level was up compared to the last two times I've been, I was hitting my boat against the rocks less this time as well, and also with the water level so much higher the waves were a bit bigger. Having a higher water level was good, but also bad, one particular part of the river had a tree root on the far left next to the bank. Misunderstanding directions, Craig and Dave Horner went towards the tree root, suddenly realising it was the wrong way they tried to get away but the current was too strong. They both went under and capsized. They managed to hold onto the bank but their kayaks went downstream. Luckily there was a very large tree that had fallen into the river and both the boats got caught in it; unfortunately Craig's paddles weren't so lucky and went floating downstream never to be seen again. After Craig and Dave had got to the other bank everyone was thinking of some way to get the boats back out of the water. My dad got in the river upstream from the boats and tied a rope to both the boats, then he looped the other end of the rope around a tree, he then managed to pull the boats up and out of the river. Other people on his side helped him pull the boats out of the water. He then tied the rope to one of the boats and chucked the other end to me, with the help of Dave Horner we managed to get both the boats over to the bank that Craig and Dave were on, we moved a little way down the river and set off again.

The rest of the river was pretty much the same, a few big waves but we didn't have time to play in them. We then arrived at the Salmon Steps at first I saw no difference to the last time, but when I looked closer, I realised why we were going to portage (when my parents first said it I'm sure they said porridge) it after the first step there was a massive boil and unless you were going very fast you would never make it, and all the other steps had very powerful toe-backs. So we all got out and carried our boats past it, we got back on a bit further down and carried on, we made it to the end without anymore problems.

Nick Biffin

More of the Barle

(Ed's note, read Nick's article first)

On the 4th of December Barle trip it had been raining for several days and there was a lot of water in the river. At the island I got caught out by a tree across the river and I lost my paddles. Fortunately Richard had bought the club splitties and Brian had them in his Coleman. It was good fun with the river so high but we never found my paddles despite looking everywhere and asking everyone we met.

From where I lost them the river goes under Marsh Bridge and down to Dulverton. If they got that far they might have got stuck circulating in a stopper for weeks. If they get past Salmon steps they will eventually end up in the river Exe and go past Exebridge. If they keep going they will pass UP Exe, Nether Exe, and Exeter where the river is tidal. If no one finds them they would go backwards and forwards a bit past Exwick, Exminster and Exton before reaching the sea at Exmouth.

If they are still floating they will end up in the English Channel so Could I ask all those of you who go to France for your holidays next year to look out for them for me.

STOP PRESS (Saturday 10th)

The phone has just rung A nice man from Yeovil found my paddles perched up in a tree. I told you the river was high.

I'm glad they had our telephone number was on them.

Now I don't need new paddles for Christmas I wonder what I'll get!

By Craig Horner

White Water Safety- the technical stuff

Friday, 30th September saw Paul Jeffs, Richard Somerset, Denis Rees-Clark, Paul Mant, David Mantell, Lisa Wardle, John Mudd and myself, heading up the M6 for Bala to attend a weekends' whitewater rescue and safety training. Lee Matthews and Keith Ambrose went up on the Thursday to clock up some additional whitewater paddling, only to find that we had chosen the one weekend in the year that the Tryweryn's tap was turned off! So JJ's mill at Llangollen on the Dee became quite popular.

After sampling a dubious Chinese takeaway in Bala we were treated to the hospitality of Bala Backpackers and Lee's snoring. Meanwhile Lisa had her first tantalising encounter with Paul Jeff's pants. Saturday morning we met up with one of the locals, a certain Tim Roper. The day dawned wet (would we have it any other way?) and we headed for the Whitewater Centre on the Tryweryn where we were kitted out with immersion drysuits and given a briefing.

All together now, what is the safety code when it's rescue - time?

Shout to the swimmer to swim to you.

Reach with anything which comes to hand.

Throw line and if possible, getting a helper onto a rock (upstream of the line!) to accurately deliver the line to a swimmer while the far end is held on the bank.

Row (or even paddle out to them)

Go swimming after them yourself (suitably attached to a rope via your cow's tail and secured by a non-knot at the other end.

On down to JJ's and time to get seriously wet. I have never mastered the crawl and my breast stroke cuts very little ice in a G 2/3 river. I did much better "swimming" sideways. This technique of "barrel rolling", clawing at the water as you roll is recommended for "breaking out" of the flow into an eddy. We practiced defensive swimming (feet first, knees bent) before moving on to throw lines.

On Sunday we dealt with entrapments. With the size of modern cockpits, I found it easy to climb out of a vertically pinned boat. The risk of entrapment today is feet or legs getting jammed between rocks on the river bed. I was most impressed with the systems for containing, then dealing with this situation, using at least 3 or up to 5 throw lines.

The weekend was run in a thoroughly professional manner by Steve Paice and Richie Watson and was well worthwhile. We may not all be experts in ww rescue, but we all are more aware of how to set up protection and the values of various rescue strategies should it all go pear-shaped.

Brian Biffin.

White Water Safety**On the River Dee (Dangerous, Exiting, Exhausting!)-the bits Brian left out!**

So late on Thursday the phone rings, A spare space on the white water safety course this weekend, its in Wales do you want to go?. Well to cut a long story short I said yes!

Come the great day we all set off. 10 miles later the car starts to play up, but that's no problem because we only have to go home and jump into another car. You get that nice warm feeling, knowing that help is just around the corner. We have just turned round when the phone rings with all the help we need, "Wales is in the other direction, you need to turn around". Yup we've been spotted; you can't even keep this one a secret. So we creep home and quickly change cars.

Next thing we know we're almost there. A little voice in the back then says, "oo look I've been on that bit of water, lets have a quick look" so we did, we nipped into the car park swung the car around and trained the headlights onto the water. The river Dee, they said, and look it's at level 5 on the marker. That wasn't quite how I would describe it; perhaps BIG even RAGING but almost certainly you could say VERY FAST! Glad we are not on this river I thought.

Off to the digs we went, and heads down for the night.

The next day we get up and off to the centre. Our instructors face was a picture, his mouth on the floor; well he shouldn't have asked where we are based, "On a canal" we said. What do you hope to get from the course? To avoid those big logs, they're just like crocodiles someone said.

As with most things Steve and Richard, our instructors, get their own back. This river is closed they announce. So we will get kitted out and move on to the River Dee, hang on I think that is the river we looked at yesterday, Can you hear those alarm bells now, I did.

Yes it is the same river, so off we set, by now the level is 7 to 8 and the top mark is 9. And it's in broad daylight. HeIIIIIIIIp

Dry suits on, we are told, get fully kitted, then a quick check, followed by a quick lesson, and in the water we get. Why!

I have never had many thoughts about cows, and how much they affect global warming, after eating grass. However I now know that they are not the only ones to blame, it became very obvious that in a very sealed dry suit I was also to blame. Why oh why am I here?

This water is much bigger than anything that I have ever been in with my boat "bathtub" and I am just about to go swimming.

Well we did swim, Steve's instructions were very good, but it was hard work. You really move a long way, so you have to swim very hard. How do you get into an eddy? Well its easy just roll over and over and in you go, just like he said. How do you stand back up, bring your knees up lower you feet then slowly stand, but beware the footing may be slippery. Have you ever tried to lower your legs when the dry suit yet again becomes fully inflated, (I must change my diet).

By the end of the first day we are all tired we must have swam for England.

Live baiting, use of throw lines – basic / applied / advanced, belay, vectoring (a new language I hear you say!). Oh! Did I mention the water level? By now it was above the measure stick. Yes above the 9 mark. Back to the digs again, big meal for all, we need our energy. Some even ventured out for a drink. Either way sleeping was not an issue.

Next day arrived, fast breakfast, in the cars and back off to Llangollen and that wonderful river Dee.

Good news the river has gone down, we can just see the top of the measure stick. But the relentless instructors didn't notice, after all this is a "little splash" to them.

Dream of all dreams, we are now getting into our boats, does this mean no swimming? Wrong!! That's in about an hours time, oh well, what's new.

Back to the boats – we try some eddy hopping and last man on. That was easy we were told, let's do eddy hopping with no talking. This works well if all parties are paying attention, but when one member is "away with the fairies" what do you do. I'll tell you what we did; we used our boats and paddles as drums. Not in perfect time I know, but it felt good.

Once out of the boats, we then use throw lines, to ferry people and boats across the flow. A bit of tidying up our techniques. Swift goodbye with many thanks. Load the boats, stow the kit and back home we go.

A tiring weekend but certainly an eye opener. Would I do it again? YES. Many thanks to all who went.

Then in Steve's words "You're a good bunch with team spirit". Once again thanks to all.

Denis Rees Clark

The Exe Descent 2005.

For sale: Racing K2 vacuum packed construction ideal for sprints!

Boat: Stiletto K2

Paddlers: Pete Absolom & Richard Somerset

Alarm 6.00 am, no problem.

Pete & Margaret arrive at 6.45 and load car, no problem.

Freezing fog, typically -5 but little traffic en-route to Exeter, no problem

Check in with race control, boat & equipment scrutinized, changed and attend briefing on the event, no problem.

Launch get feet wet, paddle upstream for 200metres, line up and off, no problem.

Good start in the middle of the pack hold the line for the single file salmon steps, avoid collisions and swamping but rudder takes a crunch, no real problem.

Short stop to straighten rudder, re-locate spray deck and off, no problem.

Run several rapids, really getting the hang of paddling a racing K2 down moving water, no problem.

Catch up and overtake several slower boats that seem to be having problems with rudders and water ingress, no problem.

Approach Tiverton weir (in Tiverton!) moving left (the best line is river left), no problem.

Shoot the weir avoiding the main stream which runs right into a concrete wall with a large cushion wave know to flip boats over, no problem.

Grind across some rocks in the shallow water beside this notorious wave, slight problem?

Overtake some more K2's and some swimmers who did not get the correct line, no problem.

River slows down now and winds around the Devonshire countryside, feet are noticeably damp, no problem.

Another set of rapids, moving water is not as nasty to racing boats after all, run over some more rocks, oversteern rudder K2's are not as easy to steer as understern versions, no problem.

Rapids dislodged my spray deck and feet definitely wet, pull in and empty boat, check rudder, no problem.

Overtaken by two K2's, launch our boat and catch them up fairly easily, no problem.

Certain dampness around the nether regions, shout to Pete, 'have you p***ed in the boat?' bit of a problem.

Definite wet bottom now and Pete's the same, pull over to check things over, bigger problem.

A few scratches and loose fibre glass revealing the fact that the boat is a vacuum packed design having two layers with a foam sandwich, empty boat & launch, water ingress problem.

Travelled less than half a mile when nether regions awash again, greater water ingress problem.

Pull over and inspect boat, definite daylight through hull and severe flexing, great big problem.

Turn on mobile phone to report to support crew, mobile not answering, greater problem.

Can not leave message, phone home to ask my daughter to try to contact support crew and report our position in respect to route and water ingress, what do we do next problem.

Launch and continue towards next popular viewing and support crew point, expecting a problem.

Boat clearly filling with water faster which makes steering difficult and hit some more rocks, feel like a submarine and head for bank, heap big problem.

Phone rings but can not get to it in time read message but not from support crew, communication problem.

Empty boat and hail open canoes that have caught us up, though they can not help us we ask them to shout 'will Mrs Somerset turn on her phone!' on at the next support stop, support problem.

Launch and press on but head for the bank in less than 500 metres, big submarining problem.

Phone message from support crew, 'where are you?' short discussion before signal fades, big communication and support problem.

Another 300 metres before we sink this time we are close to a feature called 'Broken Weir', investigate field of sheep and route to support crew rendezvous point, transportation problem.

Reach 'Broken Weir' obtain directions to the road from safety marshals, finding support crew problem.

Get to road and within 5 minutes our support crew arrive which is flagged down, DNF (did not finish) problem.

Change clothes, re-fuel with sandwiches and coffee and head home, what do I do with a broken boat problem?

Richard Somerset & Pete Absolom

COACHING

CST courses

A big well done to all those who attend the CST (Canoe Safety Test) courses on the 12 or 13th Nov. Thankfully the weather held for us and the sun was out. Congratulations to the following for their hard work and putting up with all those hours in the cold water and me doing my assessment!

Tracy Rees-Clark
Steven Rees-Clark
Chris Hitchen

Mark Henstock
 Nick Biffin
 John Peregrine
 Gordon Miller from BVCC
 Colin Healey from BVCC

Also I passed my CST assessors assessment over that weekend so I will be running courses regularly next year on May 7th, June 4th, July 2nd, Aug 6th and Sept 3rd. If anyone is interested in more info on the course then please call me on 01252 511813 or email me on l.wardle@virgin.net Lisa.

Marathon Time Trial Awards

Congratulations to the following who achieved Marathon Time trial awards on 29 October(from Swing Bridge to Kings Head Bridge and back)

<i>Charles Winnall</i>	<i>23'02"</i>	<i>Blue</i>
<i>Andrew Jeffs</i>	<i>17'06"</i>	<i>Silver</i>
<i>James Matthews</i>	<i>17'30"</i>	<i>Silver</i>
<i>Keith Ambrose</i>	<i>17'34"</i>	<i>Silver</i>
<i>Paul Jeffs</i>	<i>16'38"</i>	<i>Gold</i>
<i>Howard Smith</i>	<i>16'21"</i>	<i>Gold</i>
<i>Jon Mudd</i>	<i>16'09"</i>	<i>Gold</i>

You don't have to paddle a racing boat to take part. Jon Mudd paddled , his plastic Wavehopper. Respect!

POOL & POLO

Session times remain the same but note changes to Polo.

1st session: 6.00 to 6.40pm. Polo. On the first pool session of the month this will be to full BCU rules with pushing in etc. The second session of the month will be modified "Youth" rules which is less aggressive and suitable for younger members of club, though adults can join in to make up teams numbers or assist at poolside.

2nd session: 6.40pm to 7.20pm. Training / fun play.

3rd session: 7.20 to 8.00pm. Training.

Please, please remember to thoroughly wash out your own boat before taking it into the pool area. Make sure that you take all your property home afterwards.

Those who wish to attend please let me know via e-mail:

Keith.ambrose@ntlworld.com

YOUTH

Jokes

Did you hear the one about the two marathon paddlers who tried to light a fire in their K2 in order to keep warm? The boat sank, which goes to show that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.

COMMITTEE: A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours. (very apt for the BCCC...)

Parents: Please print off this page and show it to your children!!!!

The Youth Committee Are Here To Help You!!!

If you have an observation, comment, suggestion or even a criticism about the club and no-one can help then you can talk to the youth committee.

<p>The youth committee are:</p> <p>Sarah Robinson Joshua Bevan Annadel Horner Harry Mudd Hazel Williams Lucy Mantell Steven Rees-Clark</p>	<p>Visit the BCCC youth website...</p> <p>www.b3c-youth.org.uk</p> <p>There is a forum on the website which you can sign up to and it's free.</p> <p>It means you can keep up with all the gossip.</p> <p>We have big plans to improve your club and make it better of you, the youth of BCCC.</p> <p>And we are going to make fun things happen.</p>
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Sinkers & Swimmers???

Who are they you ask? These are this year's team names for the BCCC teams taking part in the BCUs Southern Region Paddlesport Challenge. This fun series of events is held from September through to May, giving our younger paddlers the opportunity to compete at a fun level in a wide variety of disciplines.

As you read this in December, we're half-way through the series and have already taken part in Marathon, K4, Slalom, Wildwater and Fun Pool events.

We've had some great placings (many firsts) by individual team members and each team has achieved at least a second team place (in the slalom and the wildwater race).

The next event will be a 3-evening series on January 7th, 21st and 28th of polo at Willink pool, hosted by ourselves.

We then have 3 more events:

25 February 06 - Generation Game (dry!), Pangbourne

18 March 06 - Orienteering, Pangbourne

13 May 06 - open canoe sailing, prizegiving & barbecue, Dinton Pastures, Black Swan

We welcome new participants. A small (£2.50) charge is made for each event. The series is open to juniors only - under 16 as of the 1st September 2005.

Just one of the organised winter activities open to younger paddlers, in the meantime don't forget the Hare & Hounds, marathon training, pool sessions and various trips!

See you on the water, Paul J

TECHNIQUE

WARM UPS



White water



Marathon



BCU World Class Performance 6AM

Thermals

Now that winter is here it is time to review your paddling kit and what you wear whilst on the water. That ancient cotton T shirt that “will do for now” in the summer is an open invitation to hypothermia in the winter. Whereas thermal kit absorbs less water and is warm when wet. You don’t have to spend lots of money on the big brand names, supermarkets and discount stores often have kit at bargain prices. So one Thursday morning Tracy and I found ourselves rummaging through the bargain bins at Aldi in Blackwater. We collected armfuls of base layers, slightly thicker mid layers, hats and running trousers before discovering the bin of thermal underwear. This is underwear in it’s true sense, knickers and bras in all shapes and sizes, we found this included thongs! Now what is the point of a thong in thermal fabric? Can somebody please explain?

Liz

MARATHON

Marathon Report

After the first 5 races of the 2005/6 Hasler season we are currently lying in 5th place. We are only 1 point behind Wokingham in 4th, but Southampton (formerly Woodmill) are only 1 point behind us in 6th. To go to the Hasler final in September we need to finish in the top 4 of Southern Region Clubs. The next race will be our own on 14th May, helpers and racers required. There are further races on 28th May at Reading, 18th June at Oxford, 25th June at Wokingham (Thames Valley Park) and finally 27th August at Southampton (Woodmill).

Meanwhile there are plenty of other non Hasler races to enjoy. The Club has been well represented this year at the Wey Hare and Hounds, a 6 mile course with 2 portages. Well done to Howard, Naomi and Isobel Smith, Tracy and Sam Rees Clark, Debbie Carpenter and Chris Absolom. There are 2 more events on Jan 15th and Feb 19th. For longer events, you have missed the Exe Descent, but don’t miss Richard’s account on page 9! The New Year brings Frank Luzmore, (13 miles with a friend on the Thames), the Watersides and Thames-side series, now is the time to start training for the longer races!

Hare and Hounds resultsSept 05

Mike Lambert	56'59"	10pts
Tracy Rees Clark	1hr07'15"	9
Howard Smith	1hr09'35"	8
Richard Somerset	53'49"	7
Liz Murnaghan	58'05"	6
Lis Coleman	1hr10'33"	5
Alan Coleman	1hr05'21"	4
Pete Absolom	58'42"	3
Charles Hicks	1hr04'45"	2
Brian & Anne Biffin	1hr29'50"	1

4miles

Tim Truesdale	56'54"
Andy Croft	1hr02'10"
Greg Miles	1hr07'45"
Lyndford Miles	1hr08'55"
Rob Miles	1hr16'10"

2 miles

Ryan Truesdale	25'00"
Charles Winnan	26'00"
Alice Winnan	26'00"
Sarah Murnaghan	27'00"
Michael Truesdale & James	33'00"

Oct05

Paul B and Tracy RC	59'10"	10pts
Paul Jeffs	1hr10'50"	9
Richard Somerset	54'40"	8
John Fawkner-Corbett	1hr27'25"	7
Lis Coleman	1hr10'35"	6
Brian Gandy	1hr05'15"	5
Howard Smith	1hr10'30"	4
Brian & Anne Biffin	1hr31'45"	3
Mike Lambert	RTD	
Tyson Simons	RTD	

4 miles

Naomi Smith	48'30"
Tim Truesdale	55'35"
Mike Truesdale	58'40"
Dave & Annadel Horner (C2)	1hr21'20"
Elaine & Craig Horner (C2)	1hr24'30"

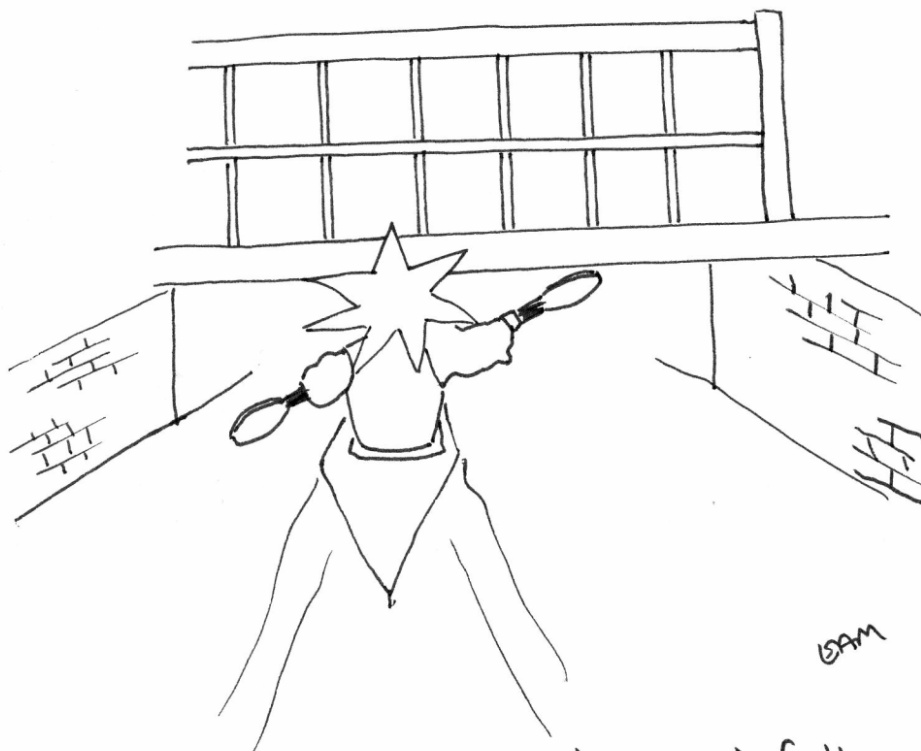
2 miles

Jon Mudd	21'00"
Charles Hicks	24'45"

Nov 05

Great Bottom Flash frozen, everyone RTD

Hare and Hounds results are now online, you can check the latest scores and series points at <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/richard.somerset/results.html>



Note! After all the rainfall, the swing bridge is much lower than it was all summer

For Sale

Club Knitted hats Limited stock, navy blue embroidered with Club Logo only £3 each. Contact Liz. 01276 514766 If there is sufficient interest I will order more club kit in January. Hoodies, polo shirts etc.

Holiday Let

3 bedroom (1 double, 1 twin, 1 single + lots of floor space) terraced house in Swansea. A short car or bus ride from the glorious Gower peninsula. Great for surfing, sea kayaking, climbing or cycling. Close to the city centre. Good food shopping and restaurants 5 minutes walk from the house. Sandy beach and beautiful parks near by. Theatres, cinemas, museums, swimming pool and lots more.

£100 per week/ £30 per weekend.

Contact The Biffins on 01252 616692/e-mail brian.biffin@gmail.com

Editors bit

A big thank you to all our contributors, what a magnificent effort. Please keep up the good work next year! I'm proud that Waterfront has grown in size, if however you are less happy your your waist line has grown this winter then I invite you to join myself and Brian Gandy for some "Fitness paddling" on Saturday and Tuesday mornings. Copy date for the next issue is 12th February 2006.

Email articles to me at liz.murnaghan@ntlworld.com

Following a recommendation from the BCU we must draw your attention to the following statement: "Canoeing and Kayaking are "Assumed risk"- "Water contact sports""

In addition to the events listed on the calendar, don't forget the following "regular" sessions:-

Tuesdays 9.30am Mytchett Introduction to Placid Water (term time only) **Lose those Christmas pounds!** Contact Liz Murnaghan 01276 514766

Tuesdays 7.15pm Mytchett For Marathon training, Contact Charles Hicks 01252 850657

Thursdays 9.30am Marathon training Contact Charles Hicks 01252 850657

Saturday Mornings at Mytchett Flat water coaching Contact Brian Gandy 01252 622630 and general paddling contact Jon Mudd 01252 629800

NEW! Saturday 2pm Beginners and Improvers to racing Contact Brian Gandy 01252 622630 Starts 7th Jan and will run every Saturday except Hare and Hounds days

Most Saturdays Trip to local weirs or Nene Whitewater Centre Contact Dave Bevan 01276 502524 or Keith Ambrose 01252 523579

Items suitable for younger paddlers are marked with a *

Further information on some events may be found at www.b3c.org.uk

A few dates for the calendar.

Dec05		
17 th	*	Hare and Hounds Contact Richard Somerset 01252 683584
26 th	*	Boxing Day paddle 10.30am Crookham Wharf See inside for details
Jan06		
1 st		Upper Wye/Irfon Contact Jake McLaren jake.mclaren@nokia.com
7 th	*	Paddlesport Polo Also 21 st and 28 th Jan Contact Paul Jeffs 01252 615412
8 th		Frank Luzmore K2 Contact Liz Murnaghan 01276 514766
15 th	*	Wey Hare and Hounds www.weykayak.co.uk
21 st	*	Hare and Hounds Contact Richard Somerset 01252 683584
21 st	*	Paddlesport Polo Also 28 th Jan Contact Paul Jeffs 01252 615412
22 nd	*	Pool session Contact Keith Ambrose Keith.ambrose@ntlworld.com
28 th	*	Paddlesport Polo Contact Paul Jeffs 01252 615412
Feb 06		
1st		Usk Trip Contact Merry Williams merry.williams@nokia.com
12 th	*	Pool session Contact Keith Ambrose Keith.ambrose@ntlworld.com
12 th	*	Copy date for Waterfront send articles to liz.murnaghan@ntlworld.com
18 th	*	Hare and Hounds Contact Richard Somerset 01252 683584
19 th	*	Wey Hare and Hounds www.weykayak.co.uk
19 th		Waterside A Contact Liz Murnaghan 01276 514766
25 th	*	Paddlesport Challenge Contact Paul Jeffs 01252 615412
25 th		Thameside 1 Contact Liz Murnaghan 01276 514766
26 th	*	Pool session Contact Keith Ambrose Keith.ambrose@ntlworld.com
Mar06		
5 th		Waterside B Contact Liz Murnaghan 01276 514766
12th	*	Pool session Contact Keith Ambrose Keith.ambrose@ntlworld.com
12th		Thameside 1 Contact Liz Murnaghan 01276 514766
18 th	*	Hare and Hounds Contact Richard Somerset 01252 683584
18 th	*	Paddlesport Challenge Contact Paul Jeffs 01252 615412
19 th		Waterside C Contact Liz Murnaghan 01276 514766
26 th		Royal K1/K2 Contact Charles Hicks 01252 850657
		Forthcoming Events
Apr		Cardington Weekend Contact Lee Matthews 07950 232193
29 th		
May		BCCC marathon Helpers and racers wanted Contact Brian Gandy 01252 622630
14 th		
July 9 th		Youth Fest at Dorney Lake Contact Paul Jeffs 01252 615412

2005 is the year of the Volunteer. The BCU Southern Region would like to recognise and reward it's volunteers. You can nominate someone using the form below. It doesn't just have to be for coaches, don't forget those who give up time to run the races and fun events you take part in. Please send completed forms to Gill Goodchild,, Adventure Dolphin, Dolphin House, Whitchurch Road, Pangbourne, Reading, RG8 7DA

BCU Southern Region Awards

Nomination Form

Name of Individual:
Name of Club:
Name of Proposer:
Reason/s why being nominated:

Name of Individual:
Name of Club:
Name of Proposer:
Reason/s why being nominated: