

Paignton Canoe Club Member

As we start February we leave one of the wettest January's for 100 years! River levels have been very high and consistent and there has been a real spread of activities in the club, from beginners paddling the first time on the lower section, to people paddling open canoes to high level runs on the upper levels of various rivers.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this month's Newsletter. Please feel free to contribute to the next one.

Jeremy (vice chairman and editor)

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## **From The Chairman**

Hi All

Firstly, great to see everyone down the pool & big thanks to Si (Moonpig) & Rich who have been excellent pool buddies on numerous occasions. Even Jeff has been helping to teach and encourage new paddlers with rolling. So big thanks to you all.

Rob Porter & Tim have been running a white water intro course for the paddlers who were on the last improver's course. I'm happy to say there has been great enthusiasm from the paddlers & they have shown great confidence & improving skills: thanks to everyone who has come along & supported this adventure, including Sam, Dan & especially Nigel & Rich for bringing the trailer along to the river. Great to see Sam & Jo in the club's canoe too.

I'm always impressed by the diversity of paddles going on within the club... With our friends from the FB page & other clubs combining to make up safe paddling groups on the Upper; club trips on the Loop & intro WW on the lower; plus Tristan, Si & Papa Nosworthy canoeing from Holne to Totnes. Saturday 25th Jan saw all the sections of the white water Dart paddled: Grade 5\* to Grade 1, weirs, waves & wonderful weather, quite an achievement by any standard.

Those warm wet south-westerly winds have been continuing to roll in with some great water levels. As is usual when the Dart rises & the river changes from a

predictable run into a wild swirling boily beast, adventures happen. Clubs down for the weekend get caught out & even we have little adventures. These remind us all that we are all between swims, just one wrong edge from a swim. Luckily, teamwork, knowledge & a little luck (?) hopefully keeps everything safe.

It is worth noting how when the water is up, the trees become more of an issue, especially when trying to rescue people, kit & equipment. Eddies are harder to catch safely & it might take longer than normal to find a safe spot to get to the riverbank. On our last Loop paddle with a river that was up through the third arch at Newbridge, a swim above Three Falls meant that Simon Berry had to run the falls blind & chasing a boat & paddle. With a fine roll in the middle of the rapid he managed to retrieve both the boat & the paddle before Spin dryer. Nice work Si & great paddling from everyone else.

Sometimes it's the little incidents that make a paddle memorable & because of this, it makes everyone want to return to paddle the river again.

Cheers Rob C

\* Argue amongst yourselves about the grading!

## **Latest News and Recent Events**

### **New Web Pages**

The Newsletter webpage has now been updated to have all the latest newsletters on it. And from now on will be updated with each newsletter after it comes out. So if you want to read the older newsletters go to <http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/restricted/Newsletters.html>  
This will be for members only.

There is also a new page about Tuesday night sessions. This has been created to answer any questions potential new members may have about club nights. So please feel free to direct anyone to it.  
<http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/ClubNights.html>

Many thanks to Jon Roberts for this and all the other great work he has done on the PCC website.

### **Membership Cards**

Any members who haven't got them already you can pick up your membership card from Jo (treasurer) at the poolside. These prove your PCC membership so that you can get discount from local kayak shops (10%).

### **Introduction Email to New Members**

We will now (try to) send out an introduction email to brand new paid-up members after they join. So that everyone knows what's in it, it's being sent to all members as a second email along with this newsletter. It includes passwords and info about club kit so it's for members only please.

## **Access to the West Dart**

As there is a lot of water about some people may wish to paddle the West Dart (the section above Dartmeet). This requires a lot of water to be do-able (at least 1.5 on the Dunnabridge Gauge). Please heed the following advice from Simon Westgarth.

You should NEVER paddle down Cherry Brook to access the West Dart from October to February. 60% or so of all the salmon born in the Dart catchment are from that 200m stream. If the EA Fisheries Officer caught you or even had witnesses to that fact, he can easily & successfully charge you under the Salmon Fisheries Act 1975.

Simon Westgarth (via facebook)

## **Introduction to Moving Water**

(By Rob Porter)

Obviously it started with a beer or two. Following a chat at the Christmas meal with Rob Cox between charades and Christmas pudding I'd agreed to do some river coaching.

A new year was always going to bring a new challenge to us all. For some it was getting a spraydeck on after Christmas. For others, from the recent Improvers course, this challenge was to try White Water River Kayaking. The dates were set and logistics battled: boats, kit, people, shuttles and safety cover. With the rivers reaching record levels over Christmas it was all fingers crossed in hope that they dropped to a more suitable level.

## **Week 1**

They did! The Austin's Bridge gauge reading around 94cm. So with 6 people from the recent course and 2 other beginners, Tim and I and 5 others along with 2 people learning to use the Open boat on the river we paddled from just below Salmon Steps to Staverton.

The usual surprise of the difference between the sea at Paignton and the river was evident and excited pulses were racing. With thoughts going twenty to the dozen, paddling, steering, looking and the realisation of 'ah, that's what edging is for' we paddled down the river stopping to break the river up and settle nerves. There were a couple of swims from the 'others' quite early on, but after settling down no more. One beginner did attempt an epic swim but failed and it turned into falling over in an eddy.

With the sun shining, lunch was well received and no one at that stage wanted the number for the Badminton Club. After looking at the recently run rapid from the bank, the bank side view gave a sense of achievement. 'We ran that!'

As they say it went downhill from there. Not in a bad way only that's the way the water flows - downhill. Excitement levels high we paddled on down trying moving water techniques and experiencing crashing through waves. Only once were rescue skills required after a beginner tried an ambitious manoeuvre. With the boat going to one bank and the person the other the use of a sling was demonstrated.

Arriving at Staverton with a 'that was scary but fun' consensus the logistics of retrieving many boats and people from the river over a fence were achieved. With the kettle boiling away it soon became apparent that not only were they good paddlers but were a dab hand at cake baking. So with more cake than a church fete we were able to reflect on the recent achievement.

## **Week 2**

This week saw the majority of beginners unable to make it. So with a river rusty new club member and the Open Boat we tackled a slightly higher level river. The plan for lunch in the sun was thwarted by rain, huh. With the aim of blowing out the cobwebs for Annie we used the river to refresh edging and river skills. The sound of running water was drowned out by the cheers of joy as Sam and Jo are found in the middle of the river surfing a wave in an open boat.

Unusual eddies were found and waves played on. The cobwebs were deemed to have been blown away after surf on the Reed Bed wave which didn't go quite to plan ended with a well executed roll. Well done Annie.

Nige had arranged for the rain to stop just as we got off the river for us to get changed. Thanks Nige.

## **Week 3**

Well they all wanted a second go. So we did. The forecast for Friday was heavy rain, more rain and rain Saturday. Hmmm, the rain did come; the river rose and then dropped. Saturday was perfect: Sunshine and no rain.

The river was slightly lower than week 1 surprisingly. So after a recap of river techniques with the word POWER in mind we were on again. Then nasty rocks were peeping through a bit more and caused the river to be very different with more eddies and some boily eddy lines. 10 minutes in and surfing was being attempted. Sam joined us again in the open boat this week, no Jo to keep her company this time, so just like Tom Hanks in the film Cast Away she brought along her own special little friend, we'll call her 'Sandy' (the bag of sand she purchased that morning for ballast.)

Lunch was again taken in the sun as an ever encroaching heard of sheep tried to edge towards our sandwiches. Then, we whipped our throw lines out. By the way Tim was ferreting around under the front of his spray deck my first thought was that he had miss-heard me. The sheep didn't want to know the contents of Tim's lunch box either and scampered off, however the group gave a sigh of relief when Tim flashed us his throw line from under his deck – much relief from all present. Dry practice was followed by real practice. Like true stars Nige and Tim volunteered to be swimmers, some quality Penelope Pit-stop impressions were made by our 'floaters' (as we like to call them). Don't think Hollywood will come knocking for stunt doubles any time soon – sorry guys. Obviously they had not seen the dry practice. A good 'attempt' at line throwing was made by all. Note: Should you want your Christmas tree decorated or a demonstration on the correct way to deploy party poppers I know some real experts. Apparently the tree was less than 20 metres away; the swimmer however was in the opposite direction. Not to be outdone and proving he could swim also, Rob Cox joined the fun. It was then that Tim got the Swim Motivator out, namely a paddle demonstrating REACH.

With a strong headwind in our faces and the sun low we carried onward down river. Pulses were slightly slower Eddies were made and techniques practiced and sections were run backwards, intentionally. Upon reaching Staverton the sense of achievement was made more by the fact that we had had no swimmers, time for celebration tea and cake, if ever there was a reason required.

My thanks go to those that assisted in making the sessions a success: Tim, Nige, Richard, Rob C, Dan, Kay and Annie, and all taking part. Sam would like to thank Sandy for assisting during the windy sections.

By Rob Porter

## **Paddling skills**

I thought I would write down a few of the skills and techniques that I have picked up over the years that will help people improve their river running abilities. So I have decided to introduce this section on paddling skills. For this first one I will start off with a little bit about body position.

### **Relax, Sit up and Forward in Your boat**

This is something that every experienced paddler knows but it is so important that I am putting it here first. It's a stronger, safer, more stable, more flexible and physically and psychologically more pro-active than leaning back.

When you are sitting your waist acts like a hinge and (to bring in some physics here) every action has an equal and opposite reaction: When you lean back you are also pushing your heels down! This pushes the nose down which reduces the control you

have over the boat. Whereas when you lean forward, you are also lifting your knees up: which raises the nose and improves control.

You need to sit in your kayak like you would sit on the floor and are watching something really interesting, tense and exciting on the TV. Many people call this the action position! You then also need to relax your body so that any force and movement that is applied to the boat by the river is absorbed in the relaxed movement of your hips and knees. These are both basic things but you have to make a conscious and concerted effort to do this when paddling!!! People naturally lean back and tense up (I have done it many times and still do) when they approach a feature and this instinct has to be overcome.

The principle of leaning forward applies to all aspects of rolling too! When upside down, get into the habit of getting your head forward onto your deck: this will protect your face from any stray rocks which will hit the back of your helmet. It is technically harder but rolling up into a forward position is highly recommended as you are then immediately in the right position to carry on paddling!

## **Upcoming Events and Trips**

All Paddle sport has a certain risk to it. It is not and never will be 100% safe. Anyone attending any and all Paignton canoe club activities does so at their own risk.

Pcc rules can be found at: <http://www.paigntoncanoeclub.org.uk/ClubRules.html>

### **Kayak Football**

11<sup>th</sup> February pool session will be a kayak football session. Cost £5pp, you will need a boat, paddle, spray-deck, buoyancy aid and helmet to play. For info about kayak football go to: <http://www.paigntoncanoeclub.org.uk/KayakFootball.html>

### **Beginners Course**

There will be a beginners' course beginning 25<sup>th</sup> February in the pool. As usual they will have the far third of the pool roped off for them and priority use with club kit.

### **River trips**

The river levels are very high at the moment so there are lots of trips going on. Please feel free to use the forum and facebook to organise and join these trips. But again, please be careful paddling rivers at high levels

### **Cornwall Summer Trip**

(by Rob Cox)

North Cornwall Camping Weekend proposed for June at Dennis Farm campsite. Camping, surfing, hopefully sea kayaking and trips on the Camel trail. All interested, add your names on the thread on the club forum or Facebook. The exact weekend and dates still to be confirmed.

Cheers Rob C

All paddling trips and events are entirely weather dependent and because of this are often organized (and can be cancelled) at the last minute. So please keep yourself up to date with what is going on using.....

## Club Communication

**Emails:** [info@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk](mailto:info@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk) to be given out to Non members who want to get in contact with us.

[newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk) Please use this for anything relating to the newsletter and only the newsletter. Please do **not** give this email out to non-members.

**Website:** <http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk> If you have a question about the club then odds on you will find the answer on it. Please feel free to give this address to non-members.

**Club Forum:** <http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/members/phpBB3/index.php> this is for members only. To access this and any other password protected part of the site you will need.

**Username:** pcc                      **Password:** water

This is for all members and only members to use. Feel free to contribute, your input matters and we want to hear it. Please do **not** give out these log-in details to non-members.

**Facebook:** Love it or hate it, it's used a lot. PCC has a facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/44208464189/> which we allow anyone to join and use, so please only put on there what you want the whole world to see.

**Committee Telephone Numbers:** All Committee members are unpaid volunteers with separate full time jobs. We trust all members to use their common sense and judgement regarding their use of these.

<http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/restricted/Members>Contact.html>

## **The Next Newsletter**

We want you to contribute to the Newsletter! ALL MEMBERS please email to [newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk) anything you want to put into the newsletter.

Newsletter Info (including what we are looking for) can be found at:  
<http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/members/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=1434&p=5196#p5196>

We store members' names and email addresses on a Gmail account, if you do not wish to have your details stored in this way then please email [newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk) and request to have your details removed.

The cut off date for content for the next newsletter will be the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month.  
[newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk)

Happy Paddling  
Jeremy