

Paignton Canoe Club Member

Happy New Year Members and what a start to 2014 it is, wet and windy to say the least! Hopefully by now everyone has recovered from their hangovers and is looking forward to a great year of paddling. What with the recent high river levels it's great to see people paddling some of the smaller Dartmoor rivers other than the Dart, which has been close to record levels recently. There is a write up below about one such trip on the Tavy.

A new-year means a new password for the forum and website, see below.

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

Jeremy (vice chairman and your humble editor)

## **Contents**

- 1. From the Chairman**
- 2. Latest News**
- 3. Recent Events**
- 4. Upcoming Events and Trips**
- 5. Club Communication**
- 6. The Next Newsletter**

## **From The Chairman**

2014 is here!

After a brilliant Christmas meal organised by Jo at Oceans Drive & a very damp week; some great levels in the rivers have been enjoyed by many. Tim Jon & I got onto a couple of new (to us) rivers with the help of some paddling buddies (see below).

I always ask, but what does everyone want to do or where do you fancy paddling? You can email ideas to [newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@paigntoncanoecub.org.uk) or add to the topic on the forum:

<http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/members/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=1445>

Finally, thanks to everyone for a great 2013, including everyone's support at a difficult time for me & best wishes for a Brilliant 2014. I just can't wait to see everyone's love for paddling expressed by the fantastic smiles that this sport creates.

Cheers

Rob C

## Latest News

### Forum Password Change

**The password for the forum is to be changed to: water**

The username will remain as: **pcc**

This is planned to happen (hopefully) on the 8<sup>th</sup> January. Please do **not** give this out to non-members

### Upper Dart Update

There's a log in the rapid after Euthanasia, can squeeze past on the right ok may be a problem at lower levels. The huge root ball / tree has gone from the left bank at Surprise Surprise and the big tree in the 2nd to last rapid has moved, so pirouettes can resume! For those that don't like change, fear not, the dead sheep is still in the tree. (Correct at time of writing. Ed.)

*- By Carl from Facebook via Rob C*

### Holne Weir Collapse

The recent high river levels on the Dart have caused the river left side of Holne weir to collapse. There is a large amount of debris just underwater where the weir was, including sharp concrete blocks and metal spikes so although it looks clear and easy it best to be portaged until its cleared.

### Info for New Members

We are working on an introduction letter for new members. It will contain all the basic information about the club and how to be an active member. The idea is that this will be sent by email to all new members when they join the club.

## Recent Events

### Xcellent Xmas Dinner

Thanks go to Jo for organising a great Christmas dinner at Ocean Drive. It was well attended by around 40 merry paddlers and paddleresses. Highlights included Rob trashing an antique irreplaceable grammar phone during his speech, an interesting game of charades (on the senior executive table anyway) and for the first time a group photo, see facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/44208464189/>

## **New Rivers**

Rain's falling, forecast is Biblical. Not so much white water as horrendous mucky brown water paddling is expected. Time to explore & head to pastures new, through the medium of Facebook & with a group of friends from various clubs & locations a plan was hatched.

Adventure was sought & rewarded: new rivers, new lines & new vistas. Running something new means you have to engage your brain & plan your lines, this is so rewarding. Can you make that eddy? Is there room, should you get out & scout & even possibly should you have got out & scouted?

The Walkham was dropping once we got on but was still up! Waves all the way along it & the slot washed out. This made the short length of rapid like a mini three falls but in the space of twelve metres, great fun. Entering the Lower Tavy was great with a nice bouncy start & a good flow to push us towards the get out at Denham Bridge.... & onto the main event!

The Middle Tavy! Straight onto & into a rapid, no warm up & an interesting drop! The guidebook is right, no let up & concentration all the time. Lack of paddling was starting to show & missing a clean line meant a worrying few moments of frantic disaster management. Tim was unlucky to swim, plus once you have one, it seems to set you up for another... Confidence takes a short term knock but a little time to get back into the groove & all is well.

Blind drops, blind corners & constant paddling... Fantastic! Once the valley starts to widen, the grins appear as the knowledge that the river is slowly changing character & the end is near, a successful descent, the reward of an aching body, high spirits & a feeling of calmness.

Thanks to Sam W, Phil, Ross, Tim & Jon for a great days paddling. – *By Rob C*

## **The Walkham and the Middle Tavy**

Rob, Jon and Tim wanted to 'do' some new rivers. The water levels were very high and the forecast suggested more rain on Friday night. Working with Sam a cunning plan is hatched: The Middle Tavy! Ross and Phil join the party.

Saturday comes, it has been RAINING. Crossing Dartmoor, New Bridge is all but deserted, the Dart is a monster. So the little rivers seem a good option. Arriving at Harford Bridge, the river is inspected and declared too big at the moment. Leaving aside the 'most intense paddle of the grade (3+) in England', at high levels trees are a major hazard that caused a fatality some years ago, so Plan B? Plan B. The Walkham/Tavy from Bedford Bridge to Denham Bridge: Levels were pretty high but dropping.

This was a grand paddle that required a number of scouting pauses as the river winds around blind corners and likely recently fallen trees, of which there were a few. The trip gets progressively livelier, close inspection of the 'slot' showed it to be full of water but not the tree that had been a discussion just a few days before. Throw line cover was arranged for this and the next couple of drops. We also chatted to some locals walking dogs as part of a PR initiative which probably resulted in Port of Plymouth getting a couple of new sign ups.

Then on we went, joining the Tavy for some wider but still lively paddling down to Denham Bridge. A great paddle and two rivers notched up. No swim, no dramas, great fun. The rain had stopped for some time, and levels were clearly dropping; time was on our side and we were buzzing with adrenaline. So a re-inspection of the Middle Tavy was in order.

Here too the levels had dropped. We were good to go, so long as we did not dawdle for fear of losing the light. Launching from Hill Bridge, just below the weir the river launches straight into Grade 3+ continuous rapids! We all negotiated the early main features with no issues bar adrenaline levels rising still further. Then Tim tripped over a small rock and demonstrated four failed rolls in a row whilst inspecting the river rock features close up before swimming for shore. Bother!

On we went with lots more frisky drops, waves and constant weaving through rock fields. All of us span on rocks on occasion. Then Tim went over again. By the time he was half way through a roll he was going over a drop and bailed once more. A bit shaken he called time out for a few minutes, taking confidence in comments about more drops to come.

On we go. Then Jon gets lassoed by a tree branch and swims for shore. Once again teamwork rescues kit. Soon after Tim is caught by yet another small rock and goes over, paddle ripped from hand he is about to bail when he sees Jon come to the rescue. So a moving water T rescue is executed. Two boats one paddle with big rapids all around..... Tim's paddle is close behind, so Tim pushed Jon forwards so his boat goes back, the second paddle recovered and we are off again, cool.

Soon after this there is a bank inspection of some drops culminating in a narrow slot with a grabby stopper (grade 4 feature). Tim decides to walk this section. Enough can be too much. All others make it down safely with Phil making an excellent imitation of a submarine on crash dive.

Then all back on the water for more churning, bouncy and sometimes pretty frantic paddling in places with big ledge stoppers, wave trains and accurate hitting of lines needed. No let ups as can be found on the Loop to catch breath.

Suddenly it is all done as Harford Bridge hoves into view. Wow, what a river! It challenges the Upper as a technical paddle. We were buzzing. We had caught both river paddles at near perfect levels, which is hard given their lack of catchment areas and rapid changes in volume. Neither is to be undertaken lightly, the Middle Tavy in

particular needs treating with respect (think the hardest bits + a bit, of the Loop, continuously for 90 minutes).

Thanks to Sam for excellent leading, Phil for being tail end Charlie guardian angel and Ross, welcome to PCC. You all gave three Paignton lads several new notches on the paddle and a great day out. – *By Tim D*

## **Advice on the Tavy**

There are three main white water sections to the Tavy:

**The Lower** (easier and longer than the loop with lots of flat sections, and a great standing wave at the end)

<http://www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk/rivers/england/south-west/river-tavy-tavistock-to-denham-bridge>

**WARNING:** Don't paddle this in spate! There is a sewerage processing plant in Tavistock. When the Tavy is in spate the plant cannot operate with so much water pumping through it so it just releases everything into the river! What you will be paddling in will be.....exactly what you think it is. If you go over, you will get sick!

**The Middle** (what these guys did, no flat sections, lots of trees, a step up from the Loop!) <http://www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk/rivers/england/south-west/river-tavy-hill-bridge-to-tavistock>

This is hard to catch at the right level as the levels go up and down very quickly. At low levels it is far too shallow and at high levels there are many trees to get pinned on.

**The Upper** (Carry your boat over a mile through a MOD firing range to get to the put in!) <http://www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk/rivers/england/south-west/river-tavy-tavy-cleave-to-hill-bridge>

For info on river levels see: <http://www.paigntoncanooclub.org.uk/WaterLevels.html>  
The Tavy was 0.8 on the gauge when it was paddled in this write up!

## **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.paigntoncanooclub.org.uk/ClubRules.html>

## **Introduction to White Water**

We are planning some more 'Introduction to White Water' trips for weekends in January (ideal for beginners to White Water. Ed). The main target audience are those that have recently completed the Beginners/Improvers course, but if there is space other members are welcome. Keep an eye on the Forum and FB for details. –  
*By Tim D*

## **Kayak Football**

14<sup>th</sup> January 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.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/KayakFootball.html>  
A Kayak football session is also planned for 11<sup>th</sup> February

## **Big Boat Pool Session**

28<sup>th</sup> January pool session will be for big boats only!

Bring anything bigger than a dancer: touring kayaks, sea kayaks, double kayaks etc. This is for people to practice in the pool with their longer boats and for people to try different types of paddling craft.

We will not be bringing the trailer but if you haven't got a long boat don't worry, instead we will be bringing the club boats that never normally come to pool sessions i.e. sea kayaks, double kayaks and canoes. This is a new, highly experimental event for PCC so we will see how it goes!

For this one session please do NOT bring any boat shorter than a dancer (e.g. play boats and creek boats) and as always make sure boats are CLEAN before bringing them into the pool.

## **Pool Buddies**

Volunteers are requested please to be pool buddies in January and February. We need one pool buddy for each of the following Tuesday night club sessions:

- 21<sup>st</sup> January
- 4<sup>th</sup> February
- 18<sup>th</sup> February
- 25<sup>th</sup> February

To see more details and volunteer go to:

<http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/members/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=1399&p=5198#p5198>

## **High River Levels**

At the time of writing the river levels are very high with more rain forecast. This gives the opportunity of paddling rivers in spate conditions. Yes, it is dangerous! And we paddle only for fun, so there is no shame in saying no, the river will always be there another day.

Just remember rivers in spate are very different creatures than when they are within their banks. The water goes brown. Features become stronger, faster and less forgiving or weirdly, sometimes totally disappear (washed out), with new features sprouting up where there would otherwise be nothing. Small eddies often vanish and normally big safe stable eddies become strong and re-circulating. The banks of the rivers don't exist as it just flows through the trees, making kit recovery difficult and in some cases impossible and everything happens very quickly.

Club kit is not to be used on any river in spate.

## **Yoga for Kayakers**

Totnes have set up a 'Yoga for Kayakers' course, evenings for an hour. It may be possible to set something similar up based in Paignton. All ages and shapes welcome. In the order of £6.00 per evening, £48.00 for an 8 week course paid up front. Costs dependent on numbers and room price, so not yet certain. Would anyone like to participate? No commitment made yet, just flying a kite. *-By Tim D*

For more details on this yoga course go to:

<http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/members/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=1448>

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 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                      **Old Password:** stopper

**New Password (as of 8<sup>th</sup> Jan):** 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:**

[http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/restricted/Members\\_Contact.html](http://www.paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/restricted/Members_Contact.html) 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.

## **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 that you want to put into the newsletter.

Newsletter Info (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