

Paignton Canoe Club Member

Many 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**

Starting off with a Bang! Congratulations to Laura Wynne on passing her MWE assessment and Tim Durrant on passing his 4 Star WW, which is a leadership award for guiding down the river. I took part as a body on the first day of Tim's assessment & saw some interesting leading from others, Tim's was full of sound judgement & we were safe in his care.

It's still been raining... the wettest Winter on record & while this has brought flooding & heartache for people in low lying areas but it has continued to provide great water levels on our local upland rivers. The Dart Loop has been running well & has allowed Laura to guide & coach a small number of the club's paddlers, honing their skills: edging, breaking in, breaking out & surfing. Our beginners have also received Laura's attention on the Lower Dart as well, allowing Rob Porter & Tim to take a breather & play.

Back on the loop, one trip, Feb 22nd saw 20 club paddlers & friends split into 4 separate groups. The group photo at the end was quite something! It was a highish level & everyone paddled well despite the swirling eddy-lines & big waves trying to grab the boats. It's fair to say that I have heard nothing but praise for Laura's coaching & guiding skills & wouldn't hesitate to recommend her to anyone looking for individual guiding or coaching.

It's been a good winter for new rivers to be run, Upper Upper Erme, Lower Plym & also a group on the Teign at a good level. Older faces have been seen, Charles & Roger on the lower Dart & on a separate trip Phil & Tina, always good to see. Phil also became our 200th Facebook page friend, added by Tina. Phil & Tina were previous Chairman(s) of the club & responsible for a lot of paddlers enthusiasm. Charles has been treasurer & one of the longest serving club members. He was

on the very first course ever run by the club (back in the early 80s and has introduced to paddling and instructed many, many people, including me! – Ed)

There is a paddlers party being organised by Rich O'Brien for April, with food drink & camping at the Plume of Feathers, Princetown; further details below, on the forum & the Facebook Page.

Now my usual plea... What does anyone want to do this year? Ideas on the forum & Facebook page please.

Cheers & Happy Paddling

Rob C

## **Latest News and Recent Events**

### **New 'Videos' Page on Website**

We now have a new page for paddling videos on the club website. Check it out here: <http://paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/Videos.html>

Thanks to Jon Roberts for creating this.

### **Unaccounted for Club Books**

Can all members please check to see if they have the following 2 club books: 'BCU Canoe and Kayak Handbook' and 'Kayak Rolling the Black Art Demystified'.

If you have them please either return them or inform a committee member you have them.

Just a general reminder that club DVDs and books are free for members but please put your details down in the blue folder when you take them out and rub those details out when you return them.

<http://paigntoncanoecub.org.uk/restricted/MembersLibrary.html>

### **No Cold Water Intro Course**

(By Richard O'Brien)

After careful discussions and considerations at the training meetings we have decided to scrap the "Cold water" intro course for the time being. Reasons are that the coaches are unavailable for this year with their work commitments. However it does give everyone more time to play in the Salty stuff.

### **Big Loop Group Trip**

Sunday 9th Feb saw one of our biggest groups yet paddling the Dart loop which was at a good level lapping the slab. 90% of the 20 paddlers on the day were from PCC (the largest river group I have paddled in 15 years, ended up splitting into 2! – ed). Some new goals were achieved by many of the paddlers.

A big thank you has to go out to Laura Wynne, Rob Cox and Michele Ellicote amongst others for their help in coaching and leading. People from other clubs are even mentioning how much fun it looks to be part of the Paignton Club.

By Richard O'Brien

## **Beginner/Improvers Course – October 2013 intake**

(By Bee Temple)

Last autumn I signed up for this course on a bit of a whim, to have a go at a new activity and hopefully meet some new friends along the way. PCC and the course have more than delivered on both aims.

The course is well structured and informative from the start, with never a doubt as to what we were doing, where, when, why, with whom, for how long.... (thanks Tim!) There was always a good ratio of instructors to participants to put everyone at ease and provide individual advice. Safety was at the top of the agenda from day one, we definitely felt we were in safe hands. Once the initial course finished before Christmas we were given the opportunity to experience a bit of white water, which most of us jumped at and the learning has continued apace through the winter.

I have been bowled over at the amount of time the coaches give voluntarily to endlessly support and enthuse newcomers to the sport. Thanks particularly to Tim, Sam, Rob P, Matt, Dan, Laura and all the other members – Rich, Rob C, Nigel and anyone I've forgotten - who have come along to provide a welcome hand, bring all the kit, and patiently put up with our slow pace and clumsiness. Thanks to their tuition, tireless encouragement and big smiles, all the course participants progressed incredibly well and it is amazing looking back to see how far we have come in 4 months.

The course is incredibly good value for money (mine's a G & T, thanks) with annual membership thrown in which immediately helps to make you feel part of things. Which brings me to a few more unexpected outcomes of that decision to sign up: the genuinely warm welcome encountered in the club, and an unexpected great new friendship (that's you Harriett!); the dreadful style tragedy of paddling apparel that they don't warn you of in the small print and the absolutely enormous amount of FUN that paddling has turned out to be! Thanks to the PCC Beginners/Improvers course I have been sufficiently bitten by the bug to have started making inroads into every paddler's long shopping list – boat, helmet, paddle, waterproof mascara.....

I would thoroughly recommend this course to anyone. If you have made it reading to here then thanks again to everyone in PCC who has helped to make it such a positive experience.

Bee Temple

## **Canoeing on the River**

(By Sam Kite)

Whenever I have seen people paddling canoes on the river, I have always felt a little in awe of their skills - manoeuvring such a large boat through the rocks and foaming water seems to take such focus and power; calling the right strokes to the paddle at just the right time with such precision, moving confidently around the boat... These skills always felt beyond my grasp. I was comfortable in my kayak.

As my own coaching progressed, I realised I needed to build up some canoe skills, and having covered the basics to achieve 2\* canoe, I did some 3\* improvers courses. But still I felt apprehensive about the combination of canoe and white water.

Rob Porter and Tim Durrant organised some white water sessions this January on the Dart after the improvers' course, and I decided to take the plunge, and joined the group of kayakers - with a club canoe. The night before the trip came, and I couldn't sleep, fear gripped my insides...was I mad?

Jo Lihou and I tandem-paddled the canoe from Austin's Bridge to Staverton, and all those skills began to sense! We made it down without a swim! Jo's first white water paddle was a success, a great achievement! That first trip saw us paddle backwards down a rapid, hug a rock, bounce through waves ... Second trip we managed to surf a wave (just), and I had a quick solo paddle too. It was such an amazing feeling, like paddling white water again for the first time!

Last weekend I was paddling the canoe alone. Again, the fear crept in, and by the time I reached the get-in, I had every excuse ready to explain why I couldn't get on the water with the canoe. Thanks to some reassurance from Rob Porter, Tim Durrant and Rob Cox, plus the fact that the level was perfect, I was persuaded to give it a go. I launched the boat, and all of those doubts fell away. It was a brilliant trip, and there were loads of opportunities to practice ferry-gliding, turning the boat, shooting through the flow with the improvers kayakers!

When we reached Staverton I felt on top of the world! I was buzzing with the thrill of the ride! Success! I am converted to canoes and white water, and looking forward to the next trip!

This experience has made me realise how some of the paddlers I coach must feel when they approach white water for the first time, as well as pushing my own skills forwards. The size of the boat means planning manoeuvres further ahead and this has made me look more carefully at the flow of the river, as well as thinking about

those precise moves and how they affect the boat. All of these will transfer across to kayaking too, so things can only get better. I am enjoying canoeing far more than I expected, glad I had the courage to give it a go. If you are thinking of trying something out, I urge you to go for it - the experience is worth the effort!

By Sam Kite

## **River access and the Lower Dart**

(By Tim Durant)

There is amongst some paddlers absolute certainty regarding free access on English rivers. This is not a universal and legally secure view held by all paddlers and certainly not by all fishermen and land owners. Indeed there are some fish spawning areas legally protected by the Environment Agency and are no-go areas. For instance 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.

Moving away from this minefield I would like to write instead about access to the water, not being on it. Land rights are much more legally clear (usually). There have been occasions when thoughtless kayakers have poisoned relationships with land owners previously happy for paddlers to use their land. This has caused real problems for every paddler: A few instances to come in later newsletters (The Butterfly Farm and nearly River Dart Country Park), more on these two in the future. This month here is one that is in the air at the moment and you can influence the outcome.

The Lower Dart (from Austin's Bridge to Staverton), is an ideal introduction to white water kayaking and canoeing. It is a beautiful stretch of water with some features ideal for relaxed (if experienced) or high excitement (if novice) paddling.

The get out at Staverton was always across the small "beach" just downstream from the bridge. Until a developer bought the old Mill, converted it into flats and sold them with their own "private beach"

[http://media.rightmove.co.uk/42k/41045/39741128/41045\\_XRD100207\\_IMG\\_01\\_0016.jpg](http://media.rightmove.co.uk/42k/41045/39741128/41045_XRD100207_IMG_01_0016.jpg).

Then the "No Kayakers" signs appeared. Generally paddlers now climb out just upstream from the bridge to avoid confrontations but this is straight onto the narrow lane, making this potentially the most dangerous part of the whole trip and not suitable for less able paddlers.

I sympathise with the flat buyers as they have been given the impression, backed by the legal process of home purchase, that the beach is theirs. And they have parted with hard cash. But the fact is that the beach just below the bridge has been used for many, many years by villagers, visitors, fishermen, painters and paddlers. Now sensible paddlers do not use the beach, in order to avoid some very threatening behaviour from a couple of the mill occupiers. A few paddlers have been involved in confrontations. No one come out well from these.

On behalf of all River users Bill Hargreaves applied to Devon County Council under the rights of way legislation to have the old route to the water declared public, based on over 30 years of use. This was a Schedule 14 Application, "Staverton Mill Bridge to the River Dart", lodged with Devon County Council on 21 Feb 2013. DCC stated in Feb 2014, having received the paperwork 12 months ago, that it can be up to 3 more years before they make a decision.

If you feel strongly about this, and you should, you can help. Lobby your local MP or other relevant individuals or other relevant bodies. In all cases being civil and reasonable is important. In general the order of influence for such things is:

- Meet and talk in person (very strong)
- Write a snail mail letter enclosing a stamped addressed envelope
- Write a letter without a SAE
- Send a targeted e-mail
- Sign an-e-petition if available (very weak)

In this case I suggest that until DCC make their decision contact with the flat owners is avoided by using the egress just upstream river left of the bridge. If anyone from the flats approaches you politeness is key.

Change discreetly. And of course park with awareness for the many road users. If you use the railway carpark pay £0.50 at the station. The station has a toilet, a donation in the tin is a goodwill investment for all our futures.

Access is a chewy subject area, I do not hold the only view, or necessarily the right view. So I shall post this on the club forum should members want to take issue or otherwise discuss. There will be two posts, one for land access and one for river access, though the river access has been well discussed many, many times on many forums.

Tim.

## **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>

## **End of Season Paddle Party**

(By Richard O'Brien)

A usual yearly event has been the "End of season party" held at the River Dart Country Park. But this year this is a no go as they are fully booked with weddings. So I have taken it upon myself and appointed Tristan, my partner in crime, to organise one. So a Paddlers Party now has a date and venue.

Saturday 12th April 2014. At The Plume and Feathers Inn, at The Square, Princetown PL20 6QQ.

Please call them to book your Bunk or camping. 01822 890240. Bunk & Breakfast is £17.00pp (bring your own sleeping bag) and Tent and Breakfast is £11.95pp. They have 38 bunks and some posh rooms, so book early please. If you don't want the breakfast minus £5.

An expected donation of £5 pp on the door will go towards the cost of the DJ with the remainder if any going to the Dartmoor Rescue Service. So if anyone knows a DJ for free the DRS will get the lot. Frivolities will start about 18:00 with a possible raffle later. There is food in the pub for dinner and also a lovely Café on the green for Fish & Chips. Please invite as many people as you can and lets make this a great night to celebrate the start of the summer paddling, (not the end of the winter paddling) This event is open to all paddlers and friends alike. Prizes for the raffle are also starting to drift in.

I think we have had an exceptional year so far for WW paddling and hopefully we will have even better summer paddling, so here's to a change in boat and weather.

By Richard O'Brien

## **South Devon Sea Kayak Meet – July 2014**

The venue will be at King Edward VI Community College (KEVICC),  
Dates: Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th July 2014.  
Cost £35.00 per person,

Numbers will be limited to 100 people (whether paddlers or not) See the UK Rivers Guidebook for full details.

<http://www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=15&t=109946>

## **Canoe Trip**

(by Sam Kite)

Next Saturday (8th March?) I'd like to take a canoe down the river, solo or tandem, possibly RDCP down to Staverton? Time TBC but probably meeting around 10 am for a day on the river.

This would be practice for my pending 3\* assessment and I'll need a club boat. Experienced canoeists needed for support and a bit of guidance please. Cake can be supplied if required! Message me on Facebook or text my mobile 07734003250

Cheers, Sam Kite

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's 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](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.

Happy Paddling  
Jeremy