



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO.1



River rubbish round up in association with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership



Following numerous e-mails and a lot of running about Saturday 24th April finally came. We all met at the club house at 9.30am and started to load boats onto Paul Newman's' trailer, during which time more and more people arrived. I for one was overwhelmed by the number of people who attended and to all of you who did a huge thank you!

It became apparent that this would now have to be done in two lifts, as every general purpose club boat and the odd K1 went out on the water at East Farleigh, which must be a 1st! And so with much portaging and shepherding from parents of kids and members, we finally issued pickers and bags and after a quick brief on safety we put in. The press held things up for a bit, while they got the desired pictures, but hey the club needs good publicity so we smiled politely!

The trip down took far longer than anticipated due to the fact that we were all having a real good time and there was a lot of litter. The support from people on the banks and in the motor launches was superb and really made the day. On arrival back to the club we unloaded our cache of old bikes, car wheels and junk, then got every thing cleaned up and put away.

A huge thank you to all of you that attended and helped it was a great day out and I think you will agree that the river does look better for it's Spring clean!! To top it all off, we got a centre spread in the Kent Messenger...WOW!!!

Silly Hats Trip

On Sunday 25th April we all met in Yalding at the Blue Anchor Pub, where we were met by Norman Brooks who had organised the day. The figure of eight course was broken down into four sections, giving those with less stamina the choice whether or not to carry on and complete the course, or stop at the halfway picnic point.

We had 23 registrations plus a scout group of 12

who came along for the ride in the morning but did not register on the tour. Westel registered 8 participants - nearly as many as Maidstone CC members! Pity we couldn't get more of our own involved.

One of the highlights was seeing Big Bad John and Bernie from Westel Canoe Club paddling a touring double with Bernie's dog sitting in the third (middle) cockpit. There were a fantastic variety of different boats in all shapes, sizes and colours including kayaks, racing and the open top Canadian canoes. Congratulations to Jeff and Babs Simmons from Westel too... well into their 70's and still going strong! At the other end, congratulations to Hannah Anstee who was our youngest (pre-school) paddler. Over half of those registered did the afternoon paddle to Sluice Weir as well (total distance 10.4 miles).

The silly hats themselves were a huge success and apparently encouraged some of the younger members to come along, who may not have done otherwise. Best hat award must go to Tom Entwistle who came with a bag full of headwear options, which he chopped and changed all day. There was everything from animal hats to jesters and even home made versions, but most importantly everyone really enjoyed themselves, for which a big thank you goes to Norman and all those who made it such a successful day!



Racing News

Devizes -Westminster

The Waterside and Thameside Races, precursors of the annual Devizes to Westminster Race was very successful for the club. These races can be taken seriously or toured, but with the first race being in the depths of January, and the weather very variable at that time of the year, it is always a serious undertaking. Paul Elston managed to finish ahead of Mick Wibrew a couple of times, either Mick is feeling his age, or more likely reflects the amount of paddling Paul has done over the last couple of years.

The D-W Race is either held non-stop for senior doubles crews or, as Paul did it, as a stage race over 4 days, stopping each night at a scheduled spot.

Pat and Dean Terry, Aaron Jordan and Paul Newman set off with Paul to Devizes for the start, with the intention of feeding him with food and drink down the canal. Paul had the easy bit to do, only 125 miles of paddling, broken into four parts, Pat Dean and Aaron chased from portage to portage with bottles and food and cheered him on. Paul was disappointed with the times on his first day, without reason as it seemed to have gone quite well. A camp site, visit into Newbury and a rest saw him looking raring to go the next day. Again, Pat and the boys chased him, with Paul Newman taking some of the load and video for the record. Paul went much better, and at the stop at Longridge Scout Camp in Marlow, was in the top ten. Two days to go. Down the Thames the water widens and the

gaps lengthen between paddlers. Despite this, Paul went well and finished the day optimistic about his overall times and placing.

The final day is a mass start from the end of the tideway on the Thames at Teddington. The pack had to pass an island on the wrong side as Concorde was being moved by barge, and was blocking the river above Kew Bridge. Waves reflected from other river craft made for a bumpy ride for all the K1s. A few support stokes close to Westminster Bridge, and Paul successfully completed his first D-W, under 19 hours and in 10th place, Congratulations.



Wey Marathon

Aaron Jordan and Dean Terry, Dean Jordan and Tina Jordan, and Alan and Gemma Thompson raced in K2s on the small and winding course at Guildford on the River Wey. All had creditable results, and more importantly had a good day out.

Tonbridge Marathon

Held the same day as the Silly Hats and at Maidstone Canoe Club, this was originally billed as a selection race for the GB team. A date change for the selection race reduced numbers, but not too drastically. Several paddlers from Maidstone raced/paddled. Paul Newman and Aaron Jordan cruised round in K1 Division 9, while Dean Terry, who was on a mission, raced another paddler and won his race.

Dean and Tina Jordan repeated their successful paddling at Wey in K2, with Gemma and Alan Thompson also paddling well in K2. Gemma gets faster all the time. Just as well because her dad seems to go slower.

Elmbridge Sprints

These were held on the Thames by the club which has produced a couple of World Champions and numerous National Champions. Pat Terry took Dean T and Aaron J up for some experience, before the races at Nottingham later in the year. Both did very well, although the bumpy water and fast flow had Dean in for a short swim at the start of one race. Racing separately in K1, and then in K2, both boys surprised the home paddlers with their expertise, speed and endurance. Obviously a lot more to come from both.

Future Events

(Please note that you do need to be a BCU Member for most of these events)

- 16 May** Hastings 1066. Held at Tonbridge CC. An excellent intro to a gentle paddle around the island or going a bit harder, a friendly race.
- 23 May** Basingstoke Canal. Not too far to travel, and a very picturesque part of the world.
- 5/6 June** National Sprint Regatta, Nottingham. Also Lightning Races for the Under 13s and U10s. A camping trip for the weekend. Excellent spectator area, lots to see and do.
- 20 June** **Maidstone Marathon. Please make sure YOU are there**, if not to paddle, then to help at turn points, parking, timing, results, refreshments, etc, etc.....It would be more than good if there were a big group of paddlers entered from the club. You only need to be

able to get to East Farleigh and back. Times are academic! Entries to Geoff Orford.

Coaching

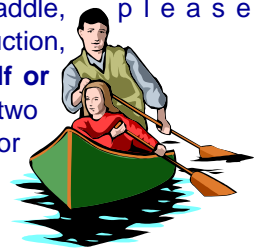
As part of the cunning plan to get more Coaches in Maidstone CC, I intend to carry on where Norman stops, by training and testing both **Placid Water Canoe and Kayak** (this refers to the type of boat not the water, see http://www.reading-canoe.org.uk/racing/sa_races.htm and **Closed Cockpit Kayak** up to and including **4 Star**. There will also be Canoe Safety Test theory sessions in the evenings, and practical/test sessions to ensure people are up to speed.

A Level 2 Coach needs to have, as pre-requisites, Canoe Safety Test (appropriate to CCK, PW etc...) Minimum of 3 Star in the appropriate boat (canoe and kayak for PW) Minimum 4hr First Aid Award, be a swimmer and be over 18. There is a training, as well as an assessment, component. This will cause people no special problems, providing they are paddlers not aiming at a "fast track" to qualify. We may also introduce Level 1 Coach Awards into the Club repertoire for parents and helpers who wish to get a bit more involved.

Notices will appear on the Club Notice Boards with dates for these opportunities, or chat with Paul Newman, who can tailor some of the dates to suit paddlers who are interested.

Junior Boats and Bits

The Club signed up to an initiative from the BCU to obtain much cheaper PW equipment for junior use. This involved obtaining grant aid of over £1.2 million, with £4K from our Region in addition. Our club paid half the cost of the gear we are getting. Those of you who have been upstairs in the club in the last few days will have seen the first bit of kit. A paddling ergo meter, paddling machine. Great for developing young techniques without the chance of getting wet (no capsizing). However, it is not a toy to be abused and has a computer which can give information on distance/time/power/stroke rate etc. Before getting on and enjoying a dry paddle, please contact a club coach for some instruction, **otherwise you could hurt yourself or damage the ergo**. Still to arrive are two Lightnings (junior PW boats good for U12s), some paddles and two stable intermediate PW boats from Marsport, a Raven and a Laance.



With the extra equipment, we do need to be very careful about keeping the boat stores tidy. Please look after boats, sponge them out after use, and put them back where you got them from – not the first empty spot you see! Also the blades need racking carefully. My last PW K1 was 25 years old before I felt I wanted to buy another, but it is still good for a few thousand miles and if we look after the club gear, it too, will last. **Never** sit in a PW boat when on land. Adjust the seat and then try it on the water. I look forward to seeing more juniors paddling appropriate boats on our home waters in the future coming months.

If you have anything you would like to see included in the next issue of this newsletter, please contact Steve Anstee by e-mail: seanstee@blueyonder.co.uk or alternatively Tel: 01622 716325, thank you!