

NEWS LETT ER

VOLUME 3
ISSUE 2
SUMMER 2013

The success of this newsletter relies on contributions from **YOU!** If you've been on a trip, in a race, or just have an opinion or some news you want to share, please send it to newsletter@maidstonecanoeclub.net

Articles should be short (between 100 and 250 words) and can be accompanied by a picture. The deadline for submissions for the next issue is 10th August, 2013.



Mark Corti, Editor
newsletter@maidstonecanoeclub.net

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From the Chair

Who would ever have thought the words "Dad can we have a go" uttered at the Bewl Water Open Day in 2010 would have brought me to my computer three years later trying to explain to myself why am I having to write the Chairman's piece for the newsletter.

Bewl Water only have one open day a year, so why were we there? Well we were there to try and introduce my boys to sailing, something I always enjoyed, but God gave me a day totally devoid of wind and the whole experience went down like a lead balloon! However, those who were paddling were having a great time, hence the enthusiasm for "Dad, can we have another go".

So here I am, riding on the crest of the wave made up solely of enthusiasm brought about by two boys who had a wonderful hour on the water in a kayak at Bewl and

who slept soundly all the way back home without arguing. Bed time brought the cry "When can we do that again" and so the journey began.

Being good members, we went to the first AGM of our membership, that is Jacob and myself, to see what went on behind the scenes of a club that we were thoroughly enjoying being members of. I volunteered for the Committee, thinking there must be a way that I could support the group of people who were allowing my boys to have such fun. Having seen what a fantastic team of dedicated people were doing for others, left me feeling in awe of all the hard work that they put in. At the second AGM, I unexpectedly found myself in the position of Chairing this group!

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Rod Stoddard on a rare stretch of non-frozen liquid water on the Wye / Usk trip in February. Story on page 2

An Icy Epic on the Usk!

... cont'd from page 1

The advance party set off on Friday which was an exceptionally cold day.

We met up at the services along the way and decided to paddle the Upper Wye. Driving to the get in in nice warm cars our spirits were high, the thought of paddling a new and challenging stretch of river made us all keen to get on the water.

The levels were as low as the temperature and putting in late afternoon everyone wearing pogies or gloves. It was a lovely stretch of river, although as I've said challenging, and we had a few swimmers and a few portaging. As the sun went down so did the temperatures and ice started appearing on our boats and equipment. At the get out in Rhayader, because of the car shuffle, a few were left in a dark car park shivering and praying for the headlights to appear because it was so so cold. Mark Corti's van became the warmest changing room we had ever experienced. Then off to a brand new (to us) bunk house attached to a pub, thanks Julian for organising such a well appointed bunk house.

The following day a few more paddlers appeared and we set off to do the River Usk from Tal y Bont. The weather had warmed up a bit although



Aren't these supposed to bend? A frozen BA on the Usk.

pogies were still the order of the day. We paddled down to Crickhowel with no major mishaps along the route, a grand day's paddling as we were off the water before the water before the temperatures plummeted and back to the bunk house to watch the rugby and England beating France and enjoy steak sizzling on hot stones. Again thanks to Julian's choice of bunk house (Clive note).

On Sunday a shorter paddle from Sennybridge to Aberfeldy, again no major mishaps and back home in time for tea.

Many thanks to Julian and the rest of the gang for a great weekend, just wish the levels had been better. If we're in the same bunk house next year you can count me in.

By Rod Stoddart

rod@maidstonecanoeclub.net

Meet a paddler

Felix is one of the youngest paddlers in the racing team, but is already starting to make an impact with a series win at U12 level. We caught up with him after one of the regular Wednesday night training sessions.

Mark: So how long have you been paddling?

Felix: I've been paddling around two years, I think.

Mark: And how old are you now?

Felix: I'm twelve now, so I started paddling when I was about ten.

Mark: What made you get into paddling?

Felix: Well, my brother wanted to start rowing, but he didn't get in, so we came and had a look here [at Maidstone Canoe Club] and I just went down with him.



Felix about to race

Mark: So what kind of paddling do you most enjoy?

Felix: Racing! I'm better at sprinting.

Mark: What's been your best paddling day so far?

Felix: I think when I won the under-12 Essex Winter Series.

Mark: When was that?

Felix: A couple of weeks ago

Mark: Do you have a favourite piece of paddling kit? Something you wouldn't be without?

Felix: Boat and paddles!

Mark: What would you like to be doing in the next couple of years?

Felix: I want to move up a couple of divisions. Win a couple more races! I'm in division 9 now, so I want to move up to 8 or 7.

By Felix Collins and Mark Corti



HELP! Club Marathon June 2nd

Our club marathon race will be held on Sunday 2nd June, based at the club. This is an annual event, part of the London and South East Hasler competition. Blondie Hasler was a member of the famous Cockleshell Heroes assault on Bordeaux by double kayak, launched from a submarine during WW2, and the national competition was named after him. Last Sunday saw the Wey Kayak Club Hasler event in Guildford with well over 180 paddlers. **We are aiming for more and need help.** If you are available on 2nd June and can assist, on the water, or on land, with any of the many small jobs, (e.g. laying turn buoys by boat), guiding traffic at the start, etc.. we would love to see you. I am away in Scotland until the week before the race, as is Geoff Orford, but Jane Addy (Club Secretary), and Dean Jordan both have lists of jobs, and if they are filled, we still need rescue/safety boats on the water

and a myriad of other things doing. If you see them, collar them and offer your help, or, turn up on the day and offer to help. All help gratefully received.

Help YOUR club to succeed in putting on a good event for all the other clubs in the area.

How about entering? Only to East Farleigh and back, an easy Sunday trip. All finishers get a point for the club.

Please contact Geoff Orford (memsec@maidstonecanoeclub.net), Leanne Brown (marathon@maidstonecanoeclub.net) or Paul Newman (president@maidstonecanoeclub.net) if you can help out or would like to enter!



Showing off the hard-earned medals

From the Chair

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Last year my experience of the committee was truly enlightening. Paul Newman and Geoff Orford had worked tirelessly, with support from others, to find a way of coping with the BCU's conditions imposed by their insurers. The need to move the Club towards achieving Club Mark. The insurers newly imposed conditions on how a club can allow people the opportunity of being on the water without being a member, yet still covered for any unfortunate eventuality, is proving very difficult to come to terms with as it has changed the whole ethos on how MCC operates.

Having Club Mark demonstrates to everyone that we take paddling seriously, ensuring that all risks are minimised and that we train new members to take over from our Founders. It will allow MCC to apply for grants that will enable so many more to enjoy our sport. Paul Newman, has spent his life educating and training people to enjoy and be safe on the water, his knowledge of this sport and the connections he has, has been an inspiration to me, as has Geoff, Norman and Dean. These members have created MCC, they have literally built MCC brick by brick and carrying the analogy even further, providing a strong foundation exemplifying the ethos that this is a sport to be enjoyed by all.

It is my intention to continue to strive and uphold the aspirations of these Founders, to continue building and seeing that the club adjusts to the ever changing demands, as they have done. We cannot live in the past, but must learn from it and adapt, showing respect for all that has gone before.

Continuing on from Paul's dedication and insight, the committee have implemented the decisions made last year. Many members have volunteered to take on a great deal of work, therefore we will see changes. I look forward to the "Open Days", the "Introduction to Canoeing Courses" and the "Canoeing Experience" events held for organised parties. We now have a considerable number of qualified coaches to train our young and not so young members, members who have agreed to organise weekend trips around the country, not just leaving it to Geoff and Norman, members who are looking after our equipment and our Club House...and so the list goes on, demonstrating that we can build on those sound foundations and not just rely on our Founders to carry on doing

all the onerous tasks.

My sole aim is to allow everyone the opportunity of enjoying kayaking and being a member of MCC, whatever their background or ability, which is why I believe that the "interesting group" I call The Founders started MCC in the first place.

Brian Marston, Chairman
chairman@maidstonecanoeclub.net

Otherness - 45 Days on the Isle of Beauty

For the past eight years I've enjoyed canoeing the river Medway, my favourite area being the inner estuary around



Dave Wise spent 6 weeks on Darnet island in the Medway Estuary, foraging, photographing and exploring.

Darnet Island.

It's so full of history, wildlife and adventure. I used to think I had to visit Africa to get the large horizons and sense of space that the estuary offers, but when I discovered Darnet all that changed. Generally I visit the island three or four times a year, but last year I underwent big life changes - a relationship break up which led to me leaving my house and

job - and so, with nothing much to do or anywhere to live, I decided to take the opportunity to see if I could live on the island for six weeks, surviving as much as I could on the wild plants I could find there, and fishing.

It turned out to be the wettest summer on record, so lucky for me I had some good camping gear! I spent my days reading, collecting

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WATCH THIS SPACE: Upcoming Touring Trips

* **Tidal Thames** – in sections, Teddington to the Nore and back up the Medway to the club.

* **Tidal Medway** - Allington to Gillingham

* **Tidal Medway** Gillingham to Queenborough

* **Tidal Medway** Exploration of the Islands, Hoo Ness, etc.....

* **3 Star Training trip**, Belgian Ardennes weekend

Keep an eye on club noticeboards at the top of the stairs, and the club website, if you are not like

me, and regularly check these things, for details of dates, times and who can go. Nothing will be happening for the above until after I return from Ullapool, and the club race on 2nd June.

Paul Newman - Coach Levels 5 CCK, 4 Sea, 4 Placid Water, 3 Competition Racing, 1 Bell Boat Helm, 1 White Water Racing, and all round dabbler!

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Otherness - 45 Days on the Isle of Beauty

... cont'd from page 3

water for washing and cooking off the tarp roof, beachcombing and generally examining my place in society, and how I wanted things to be when I got back to the mainland. I added plants I found on the island to most of my cooking, mainly sea beet, marsh and golden samphire and purslane, and also did some fishing. I didn't find it too difficult to be alone, friends visited now and again, but it was difficult to keep a sound mind totally because of the wormwood that grows on the island. This simple plant can induce paranoia among some people simply by the smell it emits, it also induces insomnia. I had my dog with me on the island at first but a fierce thunder storm scared her and she fled the island. She swam the 1.2 miles back to Riverside Country Park, an amazing feat for a small dog who hates water!

I made a film of my stay there (I'd filmed whenever the solar panel I had managed to get charged my cameras), you can see it on my website - www.davewise.biz. On the site you can also see how to buy the book I wrote about the experience. The book is illustrated with pinhole photos. Some of them are taken with a camera I made whilst on the island, out of driftwood.

By Dave Wise
dave@davewise.biz
www.davewise.biz



View of the fort on Darnet Island, taken with the pinhole camera Dave made from driftwood during his sojourn there.

Thanks from the outgoing chair

As all of you should by now be aware, we have a new Chairman in Maidstone Canoe Club.

Brian Marston will do a good job and deserves support from all club members.

It just remains for me to thank all the club members, and members of the club committee, who supported me during my interim year of being in the chair.

Although not receiving support at the AGM for continuing with the work I had

been doing, I will still be active with the linear and racing boats, coaching when available, and also continuing with the courses, at cost, for club members such as 1st Aid, Star Tests up to and including 3 Star closed cockpit kayak, touring kayak and touring canoe, FSRT (Foundation Safety and Rescue Training), Bell Boat Helm (for coaches and club members).

Club members wishing to obtain Coaching Awards at Level 1 or 2 can also access the source materials I accumulated over several years of delivering those courses myself.

Lastly, as the longest serving member of the club I have seen many things come and go in our club, and representation at clubs and National and Regional Committees has given me a good insight into how things might work to our advantage at Maidstone Canoe Club, so I shall still be prodding away at any poor practice I am aware of, and trying, still, to improve the coaching and paddling and social life of the club.

See you on the water!

By Paul Newman, President
president@maidstonecanoeclub.net.



Paul Newman racing a K2 in the Wey Kayak Marathon this season.

Meet a paddler

Richard's a familiar face to all who paddle at the Club, and can usually be found on the water paddling, helping people get fitted out with boats and kits, or doing any of the hundred-and-one jobs that keep the Clubhouse functioning smoothly. We caught up with him after some race training one Wednesday night.

Mark: So, how long have you been paddling?

Richard: Well, for the Club, about 9 years. Before that I paddled as a kid with Scouts, stopped as you do when family come along, but then got caught by my nephew who spotted a couple of glass-fibre kayaks in the back garden and he asked "do they work?". "Yes, just about!". So I got them out and got the bug again!

Mark: And what kinds of paddling do you do now?

Richard: Anything that's got a blade on both ends!

Mark: No canoeing for you, then?

Richard: No, doesn't interest me in the least!

Mark: I know you do some whitewater, you've been doing some racing recently, you've got a sea boat - what kind of paddling do you most enjoy?

Richard: It really depends on the mood! And what you're doing.

Mark: Do you have a favourite trip that you've done?

Richard: The best trip was probably Loch Lomond. It was a strange trip, but Steve and I went up there for a week for a bit of "sea paddling", in inverted commas, on the loch, and found you can surf a sea kayak for a quarter of a mile! We had a campsite on that occasion rather than wild



INTRODUCTION TO MOVING WATER

We have planned series of trips to introduce paddlers to moving water. We are going to start with practising breaking in and out and ferry gliding at Shepperton.

This will be followed by a trip to the Nene White Water Centre. It is easy to get on anywhere on the course and build up to running the whole thing, or you could just stay where you feel comfortable to practise your skills.

If you enjoy both of these events, you will probably want to join us for a river trip on a weekend away in Matlock, where we will paddle the Derwent, subject to water levels. The Derwent is a gentle grade 2 river in one of the most beautiful parts of the country, and an ideal first trip away with the Club.

Dates

* **Shepperton - Saturday 8th June** - meet at the clubhouse, ready to leave at 10am. Arrangements for lifts/car sharing can be made once we know who is coming.

* **Nene WW Centre - Sunday 30th June** - meet at the clubhouse, ready to leave at midday. Entry to the course costs £12

* **Matlock Weekend - Friday evening 13th September to Sunday evening 15th September**. Arrangements for this weekend will be confirmed nearer the time.

If you are interested or would like more information, please email me or catch me at the club.

Niki Norman

niki@maidstonecanoeclub.net

camping, very civilised! That was a good week. Slovenia was a good week [a Club overseas whitewater trip in 2012]. I've had some "interesting" days racing – surviving would be a better description!

Mark: Did you swim in a race, then?

Richard: I haven't swum in a race boat at all, touch wood! With the exception that I once got in the blue Vajda that I paddle at the moment one afternoon, sat in it and promptly fell out of it without even putting a paddle in the water! I put it away and got the Eclipse out and went round the block in that instead! So no, so far I haven't fallen out of it in anger.

Mark: Fantastic – an impressive record! What about kit – do you have a favourite piece of kit that you wouldn't be without?

Richard: A good BA.

Mark: Where do you see your paddling going in the next 5 years?

Richard: Still doing what I'm doing! I can't see me improving a great deal, I'm the wrong side of forty! I hope to have done the DW by then, and in two years time I'll be a SuperVet for the Essex Winter Series so I might possibly be competitive!

Mark: And finally, what do you do for the committee and the Club? I know you're Bo'sun for the general paddling boats..

Richard: I think I'm the dogsbody! If it needs doing, ask Richard – if he can't do it, he probably knows someone who can!

By Richard Clark and Mark Corti



Richard in his whitewater boat on the Wye and Usk trip earlier this year.



FROM THE EDITOR

This issue marks my one-year anniversary as Editor of the newsletter, and I wanted to take the opportunity say a huge and heartfelt "thank you" to all those who have contributed to it so far. We are always looking for new content - photos, race reports, trip write-ups, or reviews of gear you've tried or courses you've been on - if it's about paddling, send it over! It doesn't have to be long - just a few paragraphs and a photo or two - so if you haven't written anything yet, do it now! The deadline for the next issue is 10th August, 2013.

Mark Corti

newsletter@maidstonecanoeclub.net

Featured Upcoming Events

Please see the website for full details of these and other upcoming events, trips, tours & training.

Sunday, June 2nd: Maidstone Marathon

This is the big event in Maidstone's Racing Calendar. Volunteers urgently needed - please contact Geoff (memsec@maidstonecanoecub.net), Paul (president@maidstonecanoecub.net) or Leanne (marathon@maidstonecanoecub.net) to offer assistance.

Wednesday, June 5th: Beginner's Course Start

New 4-week course starts this week - if you know of novices wanting to join the Club, this is the course they need to book on. See website for online booking.

Saturday, June 8th: Intro to Moving Water - Shepperton Weir

A coached session for paddlers looking to move up to moving water. The first of a series of events - contact Niki Norman, niki@maidstonecanoecub.net for more details and see advert elsewhere in the newsletter.

Saturday, June 8th: Pool Session

Regular pool session. Learn to roll, practice braces and capsizes. Don't forget to clean your boats!

Sunday, June 9th: Beginner's Course Start

New 4-week course starts this Sunday. For novices wanting to join the Club. See website for online booking.

Saturday, June 15th & 22nd: 2* Course

Two star course run by Lee. Contact him on lee@maidstonecanoecub.net for details.

Friday, June 28th: Annual Medway Estuary Barbecue

Paddle to one of the Estuary Islands on one of the longest days of the year for our annual barbecue. Camping optional. Contact Norman, normanwbrooks@yahoo.co.uk

Saturday, June 29th: Aquatic First Aid

Recommended for all paddlers and compulsory for coaches - lee@maidstonecanoecub.net

Sunday, June 30th: Intro to Moving Water - Nene Whitewater Course

The second in the series of coached sessions. The Nene is a small and safe course, fantastic for developing moving-water skills. Contact Niki, niki@maidstonecanoecub.net

Wednesday, July 3rd: Beginner's Course Start

New 4-week course starts this week - if you know of novices wanting to join the Club, this is the course they need to book on. See website for online booking.

Saturday, July 6th: Pool Session plus Demo Night

Kent Canoes will be bringing some boats to try to our regular pool session. Discount for Club Members!

Sunday, July 7th: Beginner's Course Start

New 4-week course starts this Sunday. For novices wanting to join the Club. See website for online booking.

Saturday, July 20th - Sunday, July 21st: Nottingham Trip

Weekend away to play at the Nottingham National Whitewater Centre at Holme Pierpoint. Contact Niki, niki@maidstonecanoecub.net

Wednesday, July 31st: Beginner's Course Start

New 4-week course starts this week. See website for online booking.

Saturday, August 3rd: Pool Session

Regular pool session. Clean boats only please! Plenty of help & coaching available.

Sunday, August 1st: Beginner's Course Start

New 4-week course starts this week. See website for online booking.

Friday, August 9th: Beginner's Course Start

New 4-week course starts this week. New Friday night course!

Friday, August 30th - Sunday, September 1st: Washburn & Northern Rivers Trip

A new Club favourite - the Washburn, plus whatever else is running Oop North! Contact Niki, niki@maidstonecanoecub.net