

NEWS LETT ER

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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 November, 2018.



Mark Corti, Editor

newsletter@maidstonecanoeclub.net

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We're a very inclusive Club, and all kinds of people are welcome on our trips! Full story of the 2018 Thames Tour inside.

From the Editor

All joking aside, one of the reasons I love paddling, and paddling with Maidstone Canoe Club in particular, is because it is such an inclusive sport, and such an inclusive Club.

Age is no barrier to kayaking or canoeing -

we've got active members from 8 to 80 years old, some of them competing at the highest levels. It's pretty gender-neutral: well over half of our recent beginner course spaces were filled by females, all of our trips & tours are equally suited to girls & boys, and many of our best paddlers are female. It can be a sociable, or as solitary, as you want to make it. You don't need a lot of money to enjoy it,

Cont'd on page 2 ...

Interview with a Paddler

A somewhat-delayed publication for this interview, which took place at the Adventure Paddler's Weekend in Dartmoor last year. We caught up with Richard Caine over a pint at the Dart Country Park.

Mark: So, how long have you been paddling?

Richard: 18 months. I did the 1* with you round about May 2016

Mark: and what kind of paddling have you mostly done?

Richard: I started off on flat water up & down the Medway, and then I got the bug for whitewater! So I took a course at Lee Valley, a stage 2 course, and as soon as I felt that water hit the boat that was it, it got me! It really did – I did a little ferry glide, I felt the water push the boat, tip me that was and that was it – I got the bug.

Mark: What's been your most memorable day on the water so far?

Richard: My most memorable experience was recently passing the Legacy assessment, that was quite a good achievement for me. This is my second trip to Dartmoor, I've really enjoyed it both times, really enjoyed the mood. I suppose for me when it really clicked was earlier this year. I went to the Tryweryn, and I went out with Ben Watts. He took me out, and I was a very nervy paddler. I suppose you are when you start – you're quite rigid and don't rotate enough – but there was a point on the lower Tryweryn where I was just practicing on the rapids, and for that moment it clicked. The breaking in and the breaking out made sense. So I'd say the lower Tryweryn is probably my most memorable day.

Mark: Is there a particular bit of kit that you've bought over the last 18 months that you wouldn't be without?



Styling it in the sunshine! Definitely not Dartmoor ...

Richard: It goes without saying that it's the Nookie Charger drysuit! The amount of time I've spent underwater, it's been a godsend! All my kit, I've built it up over time – the paddle, the boat, it's all been second-hand. I didn't know what boat I wanted to paddle or what I was suited to. I got a cheap deal on Wavesport Diesel - £200 – and I thought that having a boat was better than not having a boat! I do intend on getting another boat in the coming months.

Mark: Why do you paddle?

Richard: I've always wanted to paddle. I am mature in years! I paddle to escape day-to-day life – the stresses of work – and there's nothing more peaceful than being out on the water. Especially when you come to a place like Dartmoor. Even the Dart Loop – I know it's nothing for

you, but you're on the river with the high banks, the hills, the pine trees – it's lovely, you can't beat it. It's that serenity, it's that time out. And it's keeping fit as well, a bit of exercise.

Mark: Where would you like your paddling to be in five years?

Richard: I find that question more tricky! Obviously I'd like to become a more competent whitewater paddler. At the moment I'm thinking that I'll get comfortable with grade 2, grade 3 – master that and stick with that. But from what I can see it doesn't quite work like that! You don't just paddle grade 2 & grade 3, you might move up. But I'm not immortal – I've got that sense of mortality – so just to carry on enjoying it. I really want to do lots of river trips, I want to go to Scotland, the Lake District, different places. I'm looking forward to Slovenia next year! I've also thought about – and I've not said this to anyone else – even taking up a bit of K1 paddling at the Club, because it's on my doorstep and it will improve my posture, my paddling and my fitness.

By Richard Caine & Mark Corti



Total concentration ...

Local Away Trips Suitable for New Paddlers

Once you've joined the Club and come on a few paddles down the Medway, it's time to broaden your horizons! We've got a couple of trips in September that are ideal for your first paddle strokes away from the Club (as well as being lovely paddles for more experienced boaters). On September 1st, Annie Davis is running a trip from Yalding down to Sluice Weir - meet at the Club at 8:30am. And a couple of weeks later, on September 15th, she's leading a trip on the lovely River Stour near Canterbury. Please see the Calendar for full details, and contact annie.davis@maidstonecanoeclub.net if you'd like to come!

From the Editor

... cont'd from page 1

particularly as a Club member - there's plenty of kit you can borrow, and even getting your own from eBay doesn't cost the earth. And even coaching is egalitarian - the last course I did was taught by a world-class expedition paddler, and I've been coached by world champions in their chosen disciplines. So make the most of it - join a Club trip, hang out with the racing team, come whitewater paddling. You'll be welcome - you're a paddler!

By Mark Corti
newsletter@maidstonecanoeclub.net

Thames Trip 2018

"Let your boat of life be light, packed with only what you need - a homely home and simple pleasures, a pipe or two, enough to eat and enough to wear, and a little more than enough to drink; for thirst is a dangerous thing." — Jerome K. Jerome, Three Men in a Boat.

This years Thames trip was the 'Middle Section', covering the 55 miles from Reading to Kingston.

Fourteen of us gathered at the Swiss Farm campsite in Henley on Thames on the Thursday night, of our long weekend. I would like to believe that Mike had selected this location because: it had a pub on site, Grace Jones was performing at the Henley Festival only a few hundred yards away and that we would get a firework display, which was truly spectacular. Next year I have great confidence that Mike will have us camped next to a Rolling Stones concert and a laser show.

The Friday morning started at five, with people, eating, drinking, dancing (sorry no dancing that was the night before) and getting ready for a 09:00 on the water. The statutory car shuffles ensued and sure enough we were out on time. Leaving from Reading Rowing Club, we headed down past Fry's Island towards Caversham lock. This was the first of five for the day. Beyond Caversham lock we passed the entrance to the Kennet and Avon Canal and onto Sonning Lock and Mill. It was here that we met 'Mr Toad', a houseboat that stayed with us for most of the day.

Our initial pace was to slow as the morning wore on. Partially so that the newer members of the club could relax a

little (myself and Jon) and because the temperature by mid morning was +30 C.

After the next lock at Shiplake it was felt that a little light refreshment was required. We stopped at the St. George and Dragon at Wargrave. You would think from the name that it's a pub. It is actually a tea room that sells beer, lager, wine, spirits and crisps. OK, it was a pub but it did sell pots of tea.

Once we were all fit and ready, it was back to the water and through Marsh lock, which leads on to Henley-on-Thames. Renowned the world over for its Royal Regatta, it is the home of the Leander Club, famous for its Olympic and world Champion rowers. Passing under the five arch bridge at Henley you are then faced with the regatta course. This is over 2,000 meters long. It was definitely one of the highlights for me to paddle, notwithstanding more sedately and in the wrong direction, along this stretch of the river. One of my fellow paddlers did point out the ¾ mile post and suggest that they felt we hadn't gone that far down the course. I let them know the start was actually at the other end. Passing the festival arena and our campsite from the previous evening we carried on to Hambleden Lock, which at 200 feet long and over 25 feet wide is one of the larger locks on the river.

Only a couple of miles further down stream was Hurley Island, which was to be our base for Friday night. Tents were put up, car shuffles proceeded, hot drinks were made. One of my fellow paddlers asked if I had done much camping in the past. I said that the last time I slept out in a tent was over forty years ago, in Germany working with Harrier Jump Jets. Their reply was "this lot will be a lot worse." Have to laugh.

Having set up for the night, some of us

went into the village and found a tea room called 'Ye Olde Bell'. It sold beer and food.

Saturday morning. Eat, drink, tents down, pack, car shuffle and back on the water. Written like that it sounds easy. I already have an understanding of the amount of planning that goes into a trip like this. That's what makes it look effortless.

We set off from Hurley, bypassing the lock and heading towards Temple Lock, which was less than a mile away. Just beyond this is the National Sports Centre at Bisham Abbey. From here we carried onto Marlow with its white suspension bridge and the beautiful All Saints Church. Carrying onto Cookham and passing the grounds of Cliveden House. Our midday stop was just beyond Boulter's Lock at Maidenhead, where we hauled our kayaks out and up on to the pavement. It was at this stop that Brad felt he would try to lift me out of my boat and on to the bank. I obviously look smaller in a kayak. Half way out we decided that the best course of action would be to just lay me down on the bank rather than sit me up (I really must get my knees sorted). Much to the amusement of passer-by's.

After a short break we were back on the river heading towards Bray Lock. Just passed here you go under the M4 and pass Monkey Island (I'm of an age that thought it was just a computer game). It appears though that the island was once owned by the 3rd Duke of Marlborough (he wasn't in). From here you pass Bray Film Studios, best known for Hammer horror films. The building is neglected and empty now. Boveney Lock was the last of the day. It was decided to portage around it. Why. Because it's fun. It was

Cont'd on page 5 ...



A certain amount of faff is inevitable when paddlers and kayaks meet the river. Getting ready at the put-in.



Fabulous paddling conditions on the West Coast of Canada. No whales in this photo, but they're out there somewhere!

Paddling with Teeee Drinkers in British Columbia

A couple of years ago, Geoff Orford and Mike Lambourne took a trip out to Newfoundland on a sea paddling expedition (see article in the Winter 2016 edition). They contacted a local paddle club out there - Paddle Newfoundland & Labrador, <http://paddlenl.ca/> - and made firm friends. Last year, they returned to Canada, this time to British Columbia, and invited their Newfoundland paddle buddy to join them. This article is his - reprinted with kind permission of Ebb & Flow, the Paddle Newfoundland & Labrador's excellent newsletter.

Every year Paddle NL receives enquiries from people around the world who would like to paddle our coastline and inland waters.

In the winter of 2016, I responded to a group consisting of two from England and one from Vancouver, who had decided on Newfoundland because it was halfway between their homes! As I got to know them, it was apparent the lure of a secluded coastline and the chance to see 'mega fauna' up close was their prime reason to visit the island.

I corresponded with the guys throughout the spring, answering the usual questions about the best time to see whales, icebergs and so on. Based on their limited schedule, I suggested a

paddle from Bellevue Beach to Irelands Eye, with a finish in Bourgoynes Cove. I provided a few maps and got them started with a tour of the St. John's area. I concluded from their questions that the guys had plenty of paddling experience, notably those related to tides and currents. They had a successful trip and were most appreciative of the support of PNL.

The next year, they invited me to join them in September for week paddling in northern Vancouver Isl and, through the Broughton Archipelago. I had always wanted to paddle in BC, so it did not take long to accept their offer. We met up in Vancouver, and drove in the van of our token local paddler, Steve Britten (subsequently nicknamed Lawrence) to Telegraph Cove, in northern Vancouver Island. Brian Smith ("Commodore") took the lead in planning the trip. Geoff Orford, "the merganser," did a masterful job of interpreting the tides and currents. Mike Lambourne, "Milky Mike," was new to the group, and I made the fifth.

Trip Prep - Toto, I don't think

we're in Newfoundland ...

I knew that tides and currents were an issue in BC. The Federal Government tide and current tables, stated we would have a tidal range of 15 feet and currents in excess of 5 knots (over 9 kilometres per hour!). Other than the Curtis Causeway near New World Island and the mouths of a couple of rivers, I had never paddled in conditions like these. What I learned from books and courses would have to be applied! Yikes, suddenly Vancouver Island paddling became much more than an academic exercise. I was reassured with the Brits knowledge in calculating tides and current. However, I was determined to be comfortable in calculating tides and currents before I flew across the country!

For a modest fee, I joined the BC Marine Trails network. They most helpful in the early stages, especially with recreational maps that included information such as the location of campsites, marinas, and resorts, the routes of the area, the directions and speed of the tidal currents, and native

Cont'd on page 4 ...

Thames Trip 2018

... cont'd from page 3

for some of us anyway. We finished the day at Clewer, just outside of Windsor.

The camp site for the last two night was at Chertsey. It had all the amenities you would expect and was within walking distance of the town and its Tea Rooms.

Sunday morning, no taking down tents, but still the car shuffle back to Windsor and the start of our day. Once on the water it was only minutes before we were in sight of Windsor Castle and Eton. Swans a plenty and the river to ourselves. Not for long. Pleasure boats, rowing boats, a barge or two and paddle boats. As we continued through Windsor, Romney Lock and Old Windsor Lock we passed the Home Park. No mooring, no fishing signs as far as the eye could see. So stopping under a willow tree by the bank, for a quick drink and to get out of the sun for a while, we wondered how long before someone would come along. About seven minutes, before a black van turned up. We carried on to Runnymede for our lunch time stop. From there under the M25 and onto Chertsey and the campsite. As Sunday night was our last, we all went out for a final meal. Speeches, thanks and good food.

Monday morning meant packing up, car shuffles and getting in the water for the last ten miles or so. At Shepperton Lock we encountered dozens of people most with big cameras and even bigger lenses. This was all for us, they quite obviously realised it was our last day. We waved, they took pictures and carried on



One of the great pleasures of paddling the Thames is the friendly lock-keepers.

through the lock. Approaching us could only be described as a flotilla. Small boats with the Queens crest on. I didn't realise Her Majesty paddled. It was actually the Royal Swan Upping. The annual counting and health check of swans on the Thames.

Carrying on towards Walton and Sunbury through more locks you did get a feeling that this trip was nearly at an end. We stopped just before Molesey Lock at Molesey Boat Club. They made us feel very welcome in their meagre club, with

its fully furnished café, terrace, all day breakfast and trimmings. We set off once again, passing Hampton Court and the Gloriana, the Queens Rowbarge moored opposite the park. Then on to Thames Ditton, which was as close to Kingston as we could get with car parking next to the river. Here we finished but only for this trip.

Things learned: Take more water than you think you will need. Being around positive people does have an effect on you. Stop paddling now and then and take in the scenery. When Norman says that you've come to the end of his map, it doesn't mean that you will fall off the end of the river. If on a trip you can't find something, it's not lost, it's just in another bag that you didn't bring!

I would like to thank Mike, Geoff and Norman for the exemplary planning of this trip. The drivers who shuffled us all about. And to my fellow paddlers who made the whole experience one to remember and cherish. For anyone who has not been on one of the Club's trips, I whole-heartedly recommend it. You will be rewarded tenfold.

Anton Godly
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Obviously there were no "Tea Rooms" in convenient reach for this paddle stop.

Get Paddle Fit

Training in a K1 or K2 is a fantastic low-impact way to increase fitness and core strength. Friday nights, 6pm - all welcome.

Paddling with Teeee Drinkers in British Columbia

... cont'd from page 4

land ownership. It was evident paddling in this archipelago wasn't going to be much like paddling the Placentia Bay archipelago!

As I learned more about the area - well over 100 islands - I had more questions. Would we be welcome on native reserves? Should we be concerned about areas or bears or both? Local information is so important! Kate Hive, PNL's retreat guest the previous

salmon business, and a World War II presence when the mill was taken over for military purposes. The cove is backed by steep hills, forcing the community to build along the shoreline as they do in outposts on Newfoundland's south coast. In recent years, the tourist industry has become very important in the Cove, with hotels, condos and some impressive looking cabins. We camped at the local campground, dwarfed by massive fir and cedars. Nothing like the rugged exposed

the group but had water left over at the end.

We were charged approximately \$2000 for the five kayaks, and spent \$500 on provisions. We had been encouraged to hire a guide because of the challenges of tides and currents, but that would have cost another \$10,000, which was pretty daunting. There would have been benefits, as we would probably have learned more about the area, but our advance research gave us a good base. With the benefit of hindsight and a safe return, there was no need for a guide! The North Island Kayak staff was most helpful, and were even happy to refund a day's rental when we returned earlier than we had planned.

The night before our departure we reviewed the weather, route alternatives and tide and current information. I had brought lots of notes, but hid them in my back pocket once Geoff unveiled spread sheets, charts, and graphs filled with currents, speeds, and directions. An academic lesson in coastal oceanography was all there on a single piece of paper that he shared with us, and I have shared with you. The graph even showed how the tides and currents built up with the cycle of the moon. I was duly impressed!

Departure

Like most trips, five minutes after departure the preparation, planning, flights, and drives were forgotten. We paddled out on a slack tide and calm water under a clear sky, heading east across the Johnson Strait. This water body is 190 kilometres long and one kilometre wide at its narrowest. Although it is hard to fathom (pun intended), three billion litres of water pass through the Strait per hour. These large flows have resulted in a very productive ecosystem, which supports large populations of salmon and marine mammals.

About three quarters of the way across, we were suddenly in white caps, with not a breeze in sight. I asked Brian for his explanation - probably just a tidal pool or an eddy. Nope, this is not St. Philips to Topsail Beach!

We saw a few whales, which excited the Brits, but not this jaded Newfoundlander; after a summer in Witless Bay, my camera remained in my lifejacket. However, my nonchalance disappeared at the barking sounds we heard as we approached the first of the Broughton Islands! Somehow my research had not surfaced the thousands of sea lions that migrate from Alaska to California every year. There are an

Cont'd on page 7 ...



World-famous, and world-class, sea kayaking around the Broughton Archipelago

year, was a great help. On Vancouver Island, Steve introduced us to a couple who had paddled the area earlier in the summer. They fed us an incredible lunch and told us which were the best camping sites. Some sites we had considered were no longer available, others that seemed possible on satellite imagery turned out to be questionable. With this first-hand information and hospitality, excitement was building. One more sleep and we would be on our way.

Getting started!

Vancouver Island is 460km long. Telegraph Cove, our launch site, has seen sawmills, a sawmill, a salted

Newfoundland coastline!

We found the North Island Kayak Company easily. With 80 kayaks on site, it was clear that kayaking is an important part of BC tourism. The boats were solid and big enough to take all the provisions we would need for the week. Put it this way, we didn't have to think about where to pack our gear - just throw it in! However, the company guides confirmed that we had to bring all our water for the week, which filled all the available space. Most of the islands did not have rivers or ponds, and there had been forest fires all summer, so we could take no chances on finding water along the way. We estimated about 12 litres per day for

Paddling with Teeee Drinkers

... cont'd from page 6

estimated 25, 000 sea lions in BC, which can grow to 2500 pounds. Later I learned that each sea lion can eat 3000 tonnes of herring year. As the populations have increased there is concern that the salmon are losing an important food source. It was a thrill to paddle within 50 meters of the colonies to listen and watch. But once they scrambled off the rocks for a closer look at the intruders, it was time to move on!

Our first campsite was a tight fit, but it was near a point of land where we had an outstanding view of BC topography. Mountains, sea, a pod of areas, all finished off with a splendid sunset. It was exciting to think what we would witness in the week ahead. The excitement of exploring a new area has been a big reason why I keep paddling.

Over the next week we paddled through many passages; in Newfoundland they would be tickles. As we headed further east we were attentive to the tide and current schedules, but they were not as a big factor as we had expected. Once of the reasons was the difficulty of anticipating the direction of the ebb and flow because there were so many islands and passages. I compared it to Pinchgut, St. Marys Bay. The current could flood through two openings and converge at some point. In one case, campsites, timing, and destination dictated that we not consider current direction. The guys started a long straight slog across one passage, but by luck I decided to follow the coastline of a large cove. Suddenly I realized I was going considerably faster; despite my longer route, I would get to our destination ahead of the boys. I wish I could say I figured out the back eddy in advance; however after that stroke of luck, for the remainder of the trip I sought out every cove where I thought I might get a lift from an eddy!

First Nations

In preparing for the trip, we clearly needed consider carefully and with sensitivity that we would paddle in an area that continues to be the home of first nations people; this was new for all of us. When white people first arrived in what is now BC, there were about 15,000 natives on Vancouver Island; this soon dropped to 7,000 due to disease. Today there are about 30,000 aboriginals, almost 5% of the island's population. As we understood it, there are islands owned by various indigenous groups, islands owned by the Crown, and islands where land ownership is in dispute. Our research helped us decide where we



might camp, and to identify an abandoned community that we could visit without staying overnight. At the end of the trip we learned that we were supposed to have paid a landing fee, but it would have taken some effort to determine whom to give the money to.

At one of our campsites we met a few guides leading a tour in the area. They told of about native burial sites and pictographs, which we found. Having heard of painted rock walls in various parts of the country, it was interesting to see evidence of native history, a first for me. Unfortunately, we didn't see the totem poles on Village Island (Mamallilaculla). Our visit there was on the only rainy day of the week, and we paddled off before finding them, my only disappointment on the trip.

Native communities are involved in salmon farming in sea cages, a technology that has become increasingly controversial in the past few years. In Newfoundland, there is debate about a proposed farm in Placentia Bay; in Washington State, there was a large unintentional release of farmed salmon. There is concern about interaction with wild salmon, and whether diseased fish are safe for human consumption. One response is to suggest that salmon farming should be halted in the oceans and replaced with "on land" sites. As we paddled by one sea cage, we saw a small plastic hut with signs of protest against the farming of salmon in the area. One of



the workers waved as we paddled by, but none offered any fish, as they had on the south coast of Newfoundland!

Respecting the environment

Although we love talking and taking pictures of our beautiful coastline, we are constantly dismayed of the amount of garbage on our beaches, notably those facing the ocean. In the fall of 2018, CBC showed DFO photos showing garbage covering the ocean floor in coastal communities. In BC, despite the thriving tourist industry and active logging, we didn't see one piece of garbage until the fifth day of our trip! And that was a single cigarette butt. Why is that? How do we change behaviour in Newfoundland so Canada's east coast can be as clean as its west coast?

I thought I would throw pork chop left overs in the ocean. The alternative was to store them in the boats for a week, a rather alarming idea. The Brits were adamant, though, and those bones joined us for 150 kilometres. Later in the trip, I cut down a two-inch diameter dead tree to make a campfire. The Brits were



not impressed. In hindsight they were right. Imagine if everyone who camped on these sites cut down one tree!

Another day, a sailboat anchored about a kilometre from our campsite. That evening they paddled by in a small plastic "play" kayak. The two women aboard told us they had sailed around the world. One of had been a commercial fisherwoman, and had also worked as a lighthouse keeper. They had spent most of the summer cruising the coastline of mainland BC, including excursions into fjords cut deep into the mountainous terrain. When they could go no further in the sailboat, they kayaked up the rivers into grizzly habitat. They explained it was a mix of excitement and terror, especially as they returned to the ocean paddling by sand bars where the bears waited for salmon. Yup, that's one kind of excitement!

As you can see from our photos, the forest cover on these islands usually extends to the ocean's edge. In the distance we would see white beaches,

Cont'd on page 8 ...

Paddling with Teeee Drinkers

... cont'd from page 6

but they weren't made of sand. They were a result of centuries of disposal of sea shells by the first nations people, and were located throughout the area we paddled. They were great for landing and handling equipment, at least when we were dragging rentals and not our own boats! At least we never had sand in our gear, which all paddling campers would appreciate.

We meet some interesting people

When Kate Hives attended last year's PNL Retreat, she told me about a young fellow who was then paddling around Vancouver Island. She had paddled a few days with Finn Steiner, and while she was in Newfoundland, she sent him advice and encouragement on his journey. It took Finn 39 days to circumvent the island, a total of 1130 kilometres.

As we were packing up one morning, a tour company arrived with kayaks, clients, and a few guides. I asked if anyone knew Kate; a young fellow by the name of Finn piped up! That was a fun moment. Finn is a cheery youngster who excluded a mature confidence. It will be interesting to hear of his future adventures.

One day we dropped into a resort, where the buildings floated on rafts tied to the shore. The caretakers of the resort were living on a 35-foot sail boat. The boat's owner told us that they had tried to take it all the way through the Northwest Passage. They almost made it all the way through, but had to turn around at Gjoa Haven, a community on the coast of King William Island. seemed even more proud, though, that his girl friend was

younger than his daughters. Clearly a different approach to life from us old guys!

Teeee drinkers

The Brits and I got along great, but we had some differences of opinion on pronunciation. After a few days, I simply had to explain how to pronounce "Newfoundland." Understand?

Their response was to explain that one could not simply ask "who's for a cup of tea?" In British culture, we must inquire politely, in a strong British accent, "would anyone like a pot of teeeee?" I thought the Brits and tea was a cliché, but they do love their tea. It took me a few days to find out why we were always off the water by 4:00. Turned out it was teatime! Would anyone like a pot of teeeeeee?

In return for the teeeeeee, I made fish and brewis for the guys. Not a crumb was left over, clearly men of excellent taste! The screech was not nearly as popular, though. I carried it home, and ended up contributing it to a Christmas fruit cake.

Done, alas...

We finished our trip with an hour paddle across the Johnson Strait, where we hit the strongest wind we'd had all week, perhaps 20 kph. We cleaned out the boats; set up our tents, showered, and headed off to the restaurant for a meal. The post trip meal was the same as our routine in NL. We enjoyed the meal and a beer, discussed the trip, and made plans for the next one - here's to more adventures with new friends!

*By Hazen Scarth, reprinted with kind permission of
<http://paddlenl.ca/>*

Well, how did I get involved in this!?



Well how did I get involved? Sometimes I ask myself why!!!

It started a while back; I thought it may be a good idea to try out the long pointy slightly skinny boats; I am sure most of you by now will be familiar with them as you see us making our way up and down the river.

Well it all started about a year ago. My first go in a K1 was in one of the Discovery 17 K1 boats. I went for a paddle with Richard up to East Farleigh and back but then took a bit of a break before trying a few other K1 crafts; of course there were the odd mishaps and I found myself swimming, but with Richard's help, I managed to empty the boat and continue. I then stopped paddling K1 over the colder months and went back to my nice stable kayak.

At some point Bryn offered to take me out in a K2 (mad fool) and we paddled off and everything went fine. A little later on, I tried a K2 with Barry and although we were a little shaky at the start by the time we had got to Town Bridge and made the turn, we were good to paddle all the way to Allington and back.

Fast forward a little bit and I volunteered to help with the Invicta Girls when they came to the club to do their PE GCSE along with Brian, Bryn and Ewan where my job was to provide safety cover in my kayak. However as the girls got faster, I could not keep up, so I moved to a sea boat. Soon this was also not fast enough to keep up, so I transferred to a K1 again. This went on for a number of months, with thoughts of racing being the furthest thing from my mind as I am not in the least bit competitive (well I wasn't) and did not think myself fit enough. However after the girls finished, I continued to paddle in a K1 to keep the practice up and to be honest for the run up to East Farleigh I found it a lot easier, the boats are lighter and faster, and require less effort to paddle over the longer distances.

Having done this for a little while we had some new paddlers amongst us. Catherine joined MCC in August 2017

Cont'd on page 10 ...



The 2018 MCC Expedition to Scotland - The Isle of Mull

The Participants:

Geoff Orford (Organiser and Leader), Mike Lamborne, Norman Brooks, Brad Wright, David Alexander, Carolyn Hawkes, Keith Dacey, Catherine Dacey

Friday 25th May

Over-night drive to Oban for the 7:30am ferry to Craignuire. Then the long single track drive with passing points to Fionnphort on the west tip of the Ross of Mull opposite Iona. Turned south and arrived at Fidden Campsite (GR302217). Had a "Bimble" in the bay. Wind too strong for planned crossing to Iona.

Sat 26th May

Paddled south then east along southern shore of Ross of Mull to Campsite1 (GR339174). Calm seas but moderate winds.

Sun 27th May

Paddled eastward aiming for Ardalanish Bay but strong easterly headwind so prudently abandoned trip at GR359162 despite calmish sea state and returned to Campsite1.

Mon 28th May

Decamped and returned to the cars left at Fidden Camp Site. Loaded cars and drove to Loch Na Keal parking cars on the lochside (GR504365) as a springboard for the crossing to Ulva. Paddled to Campsite2 on north coast of Ulva (GR413413) now known as "Midge Alley" via the Boathouse hostelry at the Ulva Ferry crossing (GR445398) where we stopped for tea and ice cream. A juvenile Golden Eagle (white under-feathers) was to be seen hunting above the tree line during our stay.

Tues 29th May



Fantastic weather, blue skies, light winds.... So we took on a round trip of 22 miles as follows:

- Paddled west then south through the "Gometra Gap" (GR381413). Had to drag the kayaks a short distance as the outgoing tide was just too far past the high tide level.
- With STAFFA clearly in site, we paddled the SW open crossing of 3 miles to the island. We were presented with the stunning hexagonal basalt columns the island is famous for and then the magical "Fingal's Cave" (GR325350) that inspired Mendelssohn to compose his Hebridean Overture. Conditions were perfect and we all paddled into the cave in turn. Puffins both in the air and on the sea entertained our departure.
- The return open crossing took us past the north side of Little Colonsay to lunch in a bay on the south Ulva coast (GR385393). Paddling east from there, we did a "reccy" of our intended Campsite3 for the next day, before

continuing anti-clockwise round Ulva back to Campsite2. This took us past the Boathouse once again where we stopped for tea and cake. Just before the turn north to the Boathouse we caught a brief glimpse of a Sea Otter.

Wed 30th May

Fine weather again. Left Campsite2 and paddled west then south through Gometra Gap once again, this time closer to high tide so kayaks floated through. We spooked a heron into flight as we passed. Continued anti-clockwise round Ulva to Campsite3 (GR391386). The day was then spent chilling out and walking the foothills of south Ulva. Some midges but much more manageable.

Thurs 31st May

Yet more fine weather and light

Cont'd on page 12 ...

Try the Mull 2018 "Who is in which tent?" Quiz!





Well how did I get involved in this!?

... cont'd from page 8

after doing her 1* and Ben and Jez suggested to Catherine that she may like to try out a K1 as she seemed to have the knack (some of you may know that Catherine used to do competitive Roller dance and was very good at it) so Brian took Catherine out in a K2 first then encouraged her to try out a K1. Not being that fast, I joined the new people on the river just so there were a number of us in a group and in case we had an issue. This went on for a couple of months and during the cold weather! As Catherine was paddling really well she was persuaded to compete and she went on to do 2 K1 races (her first one in January) finishing both times, and getting reasonable results.

It was then suggested to Catherine to try K2 racing, as you get double the points in a race. Initially she paddled a K2 with Emily but due to Emily's studying commitments they were unable to paddle as much as they would have liked. So it was put forward that myself and Catherine had a go together in a K2 and we set up a boat for us and off we went. As with Richard it was really wobbly at first but fortunately so far have managed to stay on the water. Soon we started to get used to each other's paddling; Catherine up front me in the back and so we started to paddle together. My main thought was to help Catherine out and also to find out if I could get on with paddling a K2. Quickly we started to paddle slightly more seriously together;

running up and down the river; timing ourselves and then the crunch came when we were persuaded to enter a race together having been told we were doing really well. During this time I was getting more relaxed in the boat, and learnt to trust what Catherine was doing up there in the front (not easy to give all the control over after years of paddling on my own in my own kayak!).

Catherine has always been the confident one. She appeared to cope well in her previous races, so I was relying on some of this when it came to us racing together. Our 1st race was at Guildford in the Wey Hasler Division 9. I was a little nervous and did not want to let Catherine down as we gently paddled off towards the start. The race started and we were off. It was a bit of a slow start for us, but we then began to catch some of those that were ahead of us and by the first turn we were out in the front of everyone else; we made the second turn fine and then back to the last turn still in the lead. By this time we were starting to get a little tired and lost a bit of timing at our last turn due to inexperience and getting pinned to the bank by another K2 who undertook us, allowing the 3rd boat to pass us both. By the time we got going again we were in 3rd position but we put in all of our last efforts and got our act together to overtake one of the boats and came in a pleasing 2nd place; the odd thing is that during the race we were actually being cheered on by other clubs, so thanks to those people who

encouraged us. The time we achieved was much better than we could have dared hope for.

Having achieved such a good time meant that we got promoted to Div 8 and so onto the next race. This time it was the Hastings 1066 Hasler, which strangely enough takes place in Tonbridge. Again we struggled at the start (more practise required here) but we soon made up the gap and we were overtaking everyone else keeping the lead till the end. Here we came in in 1st place with another great time; d'oh another promotion and up to Div 7. So we then entered the Maidstone Canoe Club Hasler, this time a little worried we may not be able to be quite so competitive, however yet again we had a good race, a better start, a bit of a duff turn at East Farleigh, and managed to finish in 2nd place with a respectful time of 47 mins 23 secs.

The curious thing about Hasler races is that although you see some really elite paddlers, the series is aimed at all abilities. There really is no discrimination, you have the old competing with the young, male against female, mums and daughter, dads and son and like Catherine and myself, mixed gender crews. There really is something for everyone.

In the time I have been paddling with the racing lot, I have noticed that the number of people paddling K1 and K2 has increased and we are now seeing quite a few of these boats on the water. Along with the touring paddlers, it is putting a big presence on the water, and that has got to be good for the club to have such an active membership, It's

Cont'd on page 12 ...



Leanne and her partner in the K2, working for an impressive 2nd place in the Nationals at Reading last month

Recent Racing Results

Medway Marathon 29th July 2018

The Medway marathon is a K1/K2 class race from Allington to Tonbridge just under 17.4 miles with 9 portage's. A class being for divisions ranked 1-3, B class 4-6 and C class 7-9.

Class A K2 Aaron Jordan & Leanne Brown finished 3rd place overall and 1st mixed boat. 2.21.50

Class B K2 Mick Wibrew & Brian Williams finished 1st. 2.40.36

Class B K2 Rob Molnar & Steve Rowe 6th. 2.56.40

Class B K1 Paul Curtis finished 3rd. 2.43.43

Class C K2 James Rayner & Jess Good finished 3rd 3.22.38

Class C K1 Roy Rayner finished 4th 3.47.20

Reading Marathon Nationals 21st - 22nd July 2018

The national marathon championships are held every year in marathon racing. It is where all the best paddlers in Great Britain compete to get ranked in their age group. A group of Maidstone paddlers / club members raced and below are the results.

Leanne Brown 2nd Senior Ladies K2
Aaron Jordan 10th Senior Men's K1
Chris Ashcroft & Steve Rowe 14th O44 K2

Paul Curtis 15th O44 Men K1
Brynn Price 17th O59 Men K1

By Aaron Jordan

Newsletter & Website

Our fantastic community is only possible through communication. The best communication happens face-to-face - but the second-best happens on our website and in our newsletter! Your Club membership gives you the right to post news items on the website; to add events to our calendar; to upload your photos; and, most importantly, to tell us about your paddling in the newsletter!

Newsletter stories to newsletter@maidstonecanoeclub.net by November 10th, please!



Aaron Jordan powering for his 10th place in the Senior Mens, and Chris Ashcroft and Steve Rowe coming into a portage in the over-44 K2 race at Reading



Well how did I get involved in this!?

... cont'd from page 10

really nice to see. Us racers are continuously trying to get some of the other paddlers to join us even if it is just to have a go but most appear to come up with the same excuse 'oh it's a bit tippy I will not be able to paddle it'. Well yes the boats are less stable than the general purpose kayaks or sea kayaks or canoes (possibly even the SUP), but if you try out a Discovery these are really stable and we do have a couple of other new stable K1s; give it a go on a really warm day so If you fall in you will warm up again quickly (though once you start paddling again you soon warm up when paddling in a racing boat). If you're not confident on your own in a K1, we can give take you out in the back of a K2. Give it a go, especially in the warm months of summer, and you may be pleasantly surprised, it has been said paddling a K1 helps with your balance; paddling style and this then feeds back in to your other paddling activities. It's also a brilliant way of keeping fit. We are not suggesting that you give up your other paddling disciplines, but should you try it out you may find it is for you and if so, there will always be someone around to give you a helping hand.

You will find out that we are really a

friendly bunch and we will not bite (honest). We always have coffee and biscuits after our paddles. And I figure that if I can do it, then anyone can.

Having longer boats we tend to be on the water slightly earlier as this helps with landing stage congestion - our boats being a little longer take up a little bit more space.... we can make East Farleigh in well under 1 hr and tend to be back at the club 1st which means we don't often get the opportunity to mix with other club members. I do miss that, on the other hand like white water paddling (my other love) you do meet a lot of people from other clubs, so we are out there promoting MCC showing that we are an active club.

As an interesting aside, I was chatting to someone from the Royal Canoe Club, and saying that we are not just a racing focused canoe club and that we tend to promote all paddle sports whereas at the Royal it is predominantly a racing club with a tiny bit of general paddling. He did say he was slightly jealous of the number of activities we have available at the club, and the number of trips we have...

Thank you for reading and happy paddling!

By Ian Dann & Catherine Ayling



MCC Expedition - Isle of Mull

... cont'd from page 9

- breezes. Paddled out from Campsite3 and back via:
- a. Inch Kenneth, landing on eastern beach (GR444363). Walked west up the wedge shaped island to the peak. (GR433356).
 - b. The Boathouse at Ulva Ferry for lunch consisting of baps and beer, cake and tea.
 - c. Returned to Campsite3 for last evening celebrations and to drain the remaining single malt.

Fri 1st June

Left Campsite3 and paddled east into Loch Na Keal and back to the cars. Unpacked and returned to Craignuire for the ferry to Oban. Fish and chips then on the road home over-night.

In Summary:

Blue skies all the way 'til Thurs. Strong winds on the first 2 days. Wonderful high temperatures and light winds through Sun to Wed while we heard reports of lightning and all-sorts back home (tee hee hee!). Various long distance sightings of Golden Eagles were seen throughout the week as well as the usual plethora of sea birds. Seals were to be seen off the rocks we passed on most of our paddle trips, sometimes singly, sometimes in groups. Sadly dolphins never came to the party.

Enormous thanks go to Geoff for his calm but assertive leadership. We all had a great time and are still speaking to each other!

By Norman Brooks
normanwbrooks@yahoo.co.uk

Club Contacts & Committee

Brian Williams (Chairman) chairman@maidstonecanoecub.net	Richard Clark (Bosun & Buildings) bosun-gp@maidstonecanoecub.net	Kyle Hoban kyle.hoban@maidstonecanoecub.net
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Bryn Price (Racing Bosun) bryn.price@maidstonecanoecub.net	Mick Wibrew mick.wibrew@maidstonecanoecub.net	Reece Nelms (Youth Representative) reece.nelms@maidstonecanoecub.net

Featured Upcoming Events

Please see the website for full details of these and other upcoming events, trips, tours & training. Follow us on Facebook or Twitter to be notified when new events are added to the Calendar.

Saturday, September 1st: Yalding to Sluice - New Paddlers Welcome

The first of Annie's "Next Step" trips, showcasing a lovely paddle down from Yalding. Experienced paddlers welcome also - please contact annie.davis@maidstonecanoeclub.net

Saturday, September 8th, 8pm: Pool Session

The Medway's warm, but Larkfield Pool is warmer! Get your braces, capsizes and rolls sorted out before the winter.

Sunday, September 9th, 10am: Demo Day with Kent Canoes

Everyone's favourite paddle shop brings the Big Bus to the Club this Sunday, with a selection of shiny kit for you to try out. If there's something in particular you want to see, contact Sam - www.kentcanoes.co.uk

Friday, September 14th - Sunday, 16th September: River Wye Trip

The most popular multi-day touring river in the UK hosts MCC this September. A truly gorgeous river, friendly people, and riverside camping! See calendar.

Friday, September 14th - Sunday, 16th September: Tryweryn Whitewater Trip

For those looking for a bit more excitement in their paddling lives, Paul Hignell is organising a trip to the whitewater centre on the Tryweryn, staying at the ever-popular Tyn Cornell. See website for more

Saturday, September 15th, 8am: River Stour - New Paddlers Welcome

The second of Annie's "Next Step" trips, this time to the Stour near Canterbury. Contact annie.davis@maidstonecanoeclub.net to book boats and arrange transport.

Sunday, September 23rd, 7:30am: Cuckmere Valley Tidal Tour

Always a lovely trip, and if Norman's got the timings right, a gentle paddle with the tide! Please see calendar for details.

Sunday, September 23rd, 10:30am: Medway Valley with Meridian CC

Tim Harlow of Meridian CC has invited us on their trip exploring the Medway from Strood to Halling. Details on calendar.

Sunday, September 30th, 8:30am: Royal Military Canal

Lee's leading a trip along the Royal Military Canal to Iden Lock, a distance of approximately 7 miles. Suitable for fairly new paddlers - speak to Lee for details.

Saturday, October 6th, 8pm: Pool Session

You know the drill. Boat cleaning at the Club in the afternoon, pool session at Larkfield Leisure Centre in the evening.

Saturday, 13th October & Sunday, 14th October: 3* Touring Kayak Course

Intermediate course looking at efficient paddling, trip planning, navigation and safe group management on "touring"-style rivers. See website for pre-requisites and details.

Saturday, November 3rd, 8pm: Pool Session

Larkfield Leisure Centre, clean boats only please. The lovely people from Kent Canoes will be showing off their wares, so it's a good time to come!

Sunday, November 4th, 9am: Tonbridge to Yalding:

All-day paddle down from Tonbridge Castle. Contact Lee for details.

Saturday, November 10th: Newsletter Deadline

There are loads of things happening this Autumn, which bodes well for the Winter Newsletter - but only if you put pen to paper and write something for it! Articles, gear reviews, poems and comic songs to newsletter@maidstonecanoeclub.net, please.

Sunday, November 18th, 7:30am: Kentish Stour Trip

Another trip to this popular touring river, splendidly finishing at a pub! See calendar for details.