NEWS LETT ER VOLUME 11 ISSUE 4

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 can be long or short (between 250 and 1500 words) and will ideally be accompanied by some pictures. The deadline for submissions for the next issue is 10th February, 2022.

Mark Corti, Editor newsletter@maidstonecanoeclub.net



New House Farm, Kemsing Road Wrotham, TN15 7BU Tel: 01732 886688 Open 10am - 5pm Tues - Sat Late Night Opening Thursday www.kentcanoes.co.uk





Happy paddlers at Newbridge. Just one of several MCC teams paddling on Dartmoor at the Adventure Paddler's Weekend.

Letter from the Editor

inter has arrived in full force, or so it seemed on Dartmoor last weekend!

With minus temperatures overnight, hail, drizzle, and ponies galloping beneath the most intense rainbow I've ever seen, it really was four-seasons-in-one-day that Britain's wilderness areas are famed for. We were blessed with excellent levels on the Friday, tailing off a little on the Saturday to facilitate new rivers for many Club members - the first time on the Dart Loop for some, the West Dart for others, and the Upper Dart for a couple more, as well as the Walkham and Tavy. In the bar at the legendary Dart Country Park paddler's bunkhouse on Saturday night, the sense of camaradarie with members new and old made for a wonderful evening, and was perhaps the highlight of the trip.

2021 has been difficult in different ways for almost everyone, and few of our members have been unaffected by the challenges this

year has brought. When speaking to them, I've heard time and again that our community provided much-needed support throughout this time. Whatever trials and tribulations we've had in our personal lives, a few hours on the water with friends has lifted our spirits and refreshed us. This has only been possible because of the kindness of others - people in our Club community who have given their time to help us paddle. Whether that's organising a trip, helping us lift a boat from the store, taking responsiblity for less-experienced paddlers on the water, or doing one of the less-visible but equallyvaluable jobs that keep us paddling - doing the accounts, dealing with the admin, designing training programs and structures to keep us safe, Maidstone Canoe Club is a community in the true sense of the word. This year more ever, we're grateful it. See you on river!

Mark Corti, Editor newsletter@maidstonecanoeclub.net



MCC Christmas Calendar



Saturday 18th December

Christmas Party 7pm til late.

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Sunday 19th December

Breakfast Paddle 8am-1pm

Cooked breakfast and a paddle

Tuesday 21st December

Santa Paddle 6-8pm. Come dressed as santa and paddle down to Allington for Festive refreshments

Hope to see you there





Please sign up on the website if you would like to come along to any of these events by Monday 13th December

New Build Design Update!

Members.

Many of you may have heard of the 'new boat store' referencing the former dive club building directly behind our club house. The MCC has recently acquired this property for expansion and have been busy putting together plans for its future to make our club larger and more accessible. I am proud to share with you today the proposed design of that building and the MCC Committee's vision of its

There are three places to currently view the drawings. First is on the peg board next to the kitchen in the Club House, secondly right here in the newsletter, but the third and more accessible will be on the website under the news story "New Build Design Update."

The last time the membership was briefed about the project was during our AGM in March of 2021. Since then we have been hard at work making sure all details, use cases and modern club needs have been added. We have hired an architect to help use get it right and assembled a new build committee to get it done. This design is the culmination of many months of discussion amongst the committee, informal conversations with the membership and feedback from our

reetings Maidstone Canoe Club professionals who are helping deliver it. Some of the feature include in the

- New boat storage space (roughly equivalent to the both the current Club Boat Store and the Back Boat shed combined!)
- More and purpose-built space for paddles, BA's and other kit
- An accessible shower and toilet for members who require more assistance
- A new changing facility with space for 20 members including modern cubical showers, one quick access for safety shower and a toilet for convenience
- A multi-functional space for courses. kit, other other uses as needed

I hope you are as excited as I am and we looking forward to hearing your thoughts. For the next 21 days we are collecting any feedback you might have. At the end of that period we will liaise with the architect to finalise the drawing building move to control.

Thank you all for your patience and feedback over 2021 and look forward to more progress in 2022. Please feel free to contact either myself or the committee secretary@maidstonecanoeclub.net

> Jacob Baisley, Vice-Chairperson vice-chair@maidstonecanoeclub.net

Hoo? Maidstone Canoe Club paddlers, that's who! Story on page 7.

Sewage in the **Medway**

o vou know about the state of the water in our Lovely Medway which vou paddle

Pleasure and House Boats are allowed to discharge their sewage, straight into the River. This is unlike the Thames where they have to use holding

There are EA Pumping out stations on the River but their use is not compulsory. British Canoeing actively campaigning for cleaner water everywhere, on our behalf. The New Environment Bill will help to stop deliberate dumping of Sewage by water companies and has put the onus on them to improve their infrastructure, however boats are still allowed to pollute Medway. Pressure from membership, can help to get a change in the law, to stop boats using our water as a toilet. This is a Public Health issue, with more of us, and others using the Medway.

E-mail to your local MP today, and ask them to table an Early Day Motion so that this can be debated in the House Commons and contact Environment Minister. If your MP is a Minister they cannot do this. However I have written to my MP, Helen Whatley, who is a junior minister, to contact the relevent Minister on my behalf. I will post a reply on our website. If you want a sample letter please contact me or look in the news section of our website. Send Any replies to us and British Canoeing email best. and is quicker.

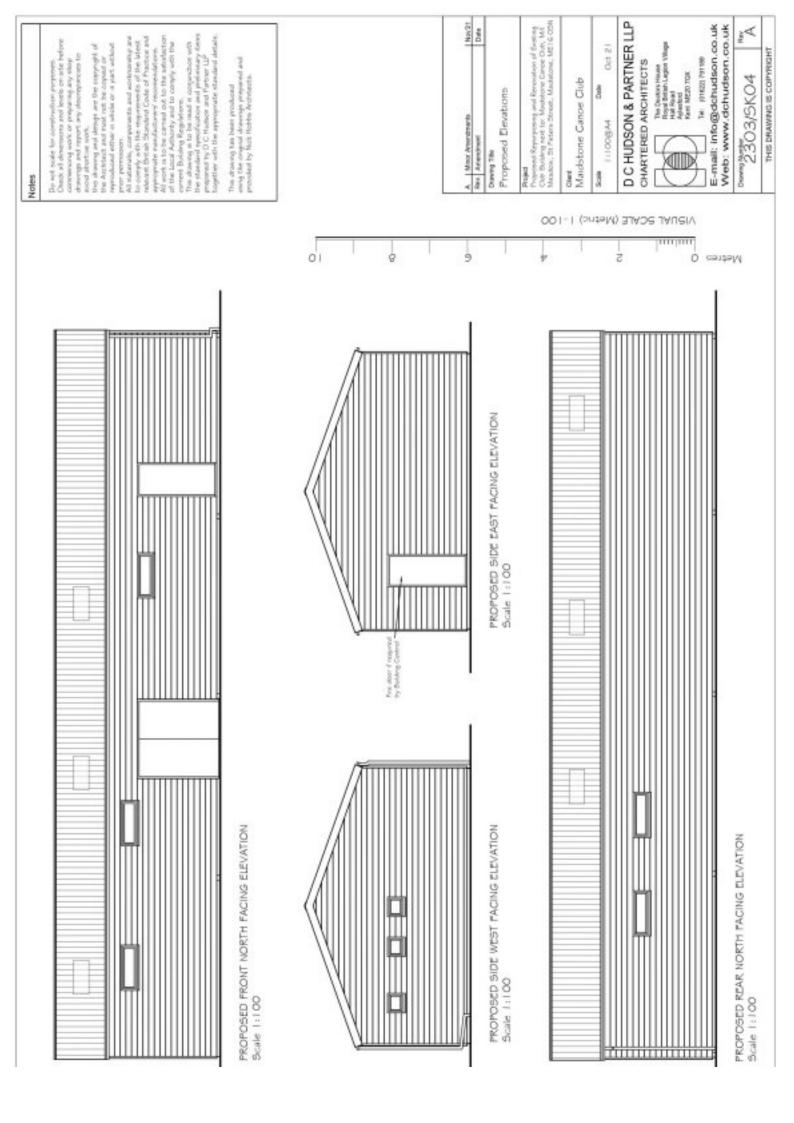
Together we can help to get our River cleaner for all of us to enjoy. Happy Paddling!

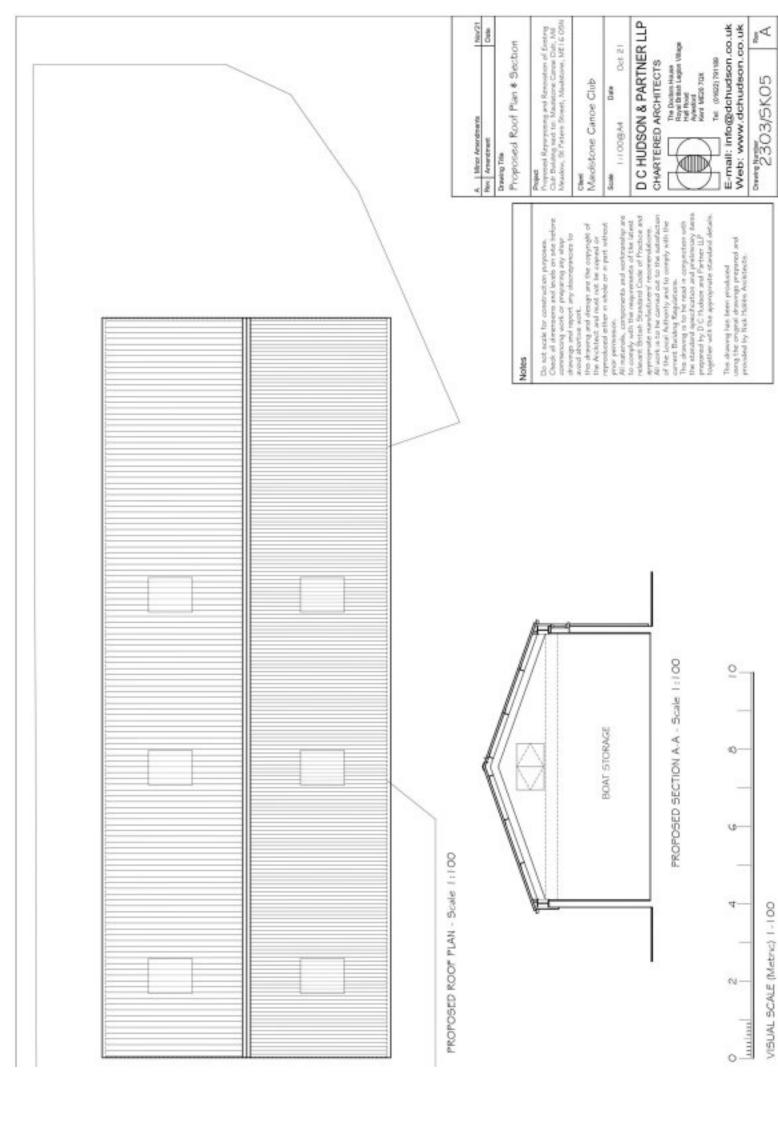
Geoff Licence

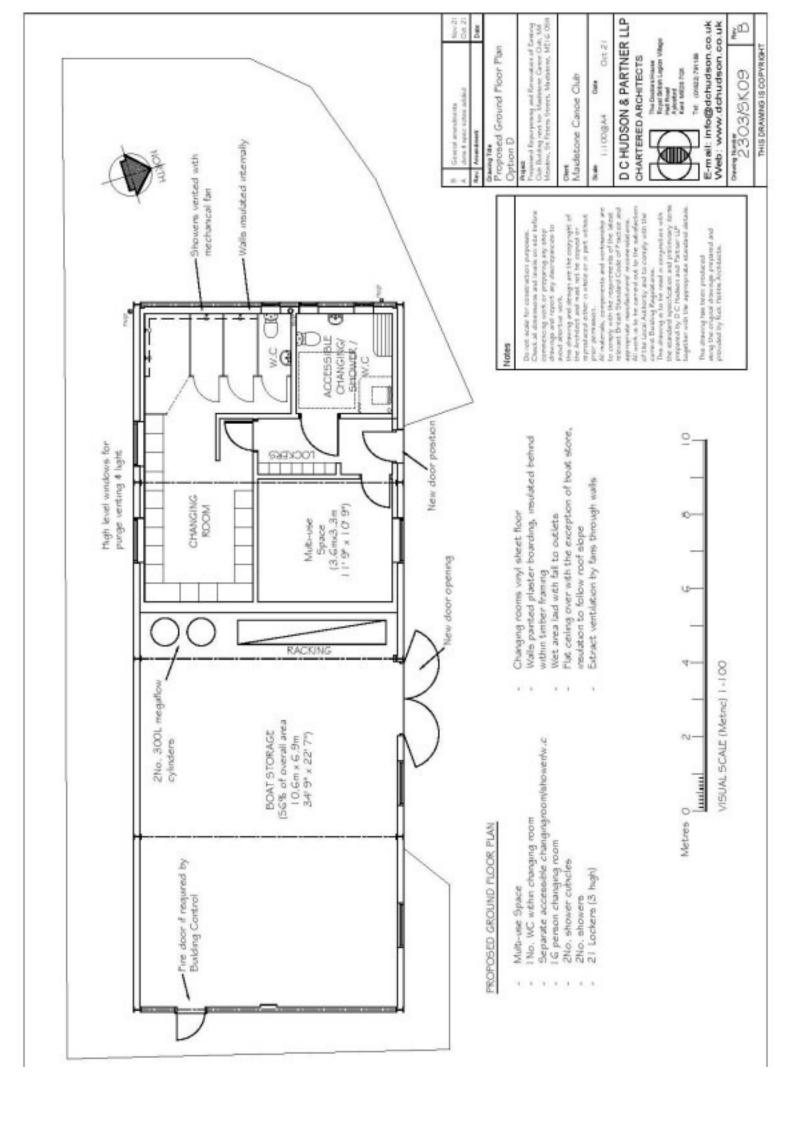
Seals, Sharks, Seabirds and **Scotland**

Join James Copeland for a talk about the wildlife in our seas and his most-recent Scotland trip watch

Saturday 11th December, 6pm









Camping gadgets galore in the Palmerston fort

Hoo

organised a very successful trip on the estuary on 20th November,

starting at the Strand and having the good fortune of Medway Watersports kindly allowing us to use their centre facilities. 24 people came along and we set off on the spring tide at 11.20 am meaning we didn't need to wade through the estuary mud to launch.

At the head of Hoo Ness we broke into two groups across the open water crossing to Darnet Ness where the speedy ones found time do do a quick lap of the marshes before meeting the rest of the group on the smaller island. We'd already see two seals, a Marsh Harriers, Lapwinigs and various other waders so the wildlife enthusiasts were having a feast. There was plenty more birdlife to see as we traversed around including Egrets and Red Shanks amongst

On the island we stopped for lunch where some of the group brought out their gadgets and boiled kettles and soup and heaven knows Mark Harris

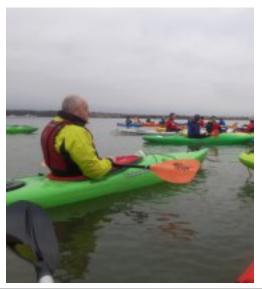
had in his magic box of tricks. People seemed impressed with the Palmerston fort and its vaulted ceilings and remnants of gun replacements, all this on our doorstep.

After an exploration and lunch we headed to Hoo Ness where David decided to try to get his sea kayak through a wreck. He managed that with ease then 10 minutes later finally managed to reverse out. It was fun to watch. We played in the lagoons then I led everyone up the wrong dead end creeks to try and leave the lagoons, oops. Finally we found our way out. The tide was racing against us now as we began a lap around the island before navigating back to the Strand. As we hit the eastern end of the island it took a big effort to paddle past the ridge, 3 strokes and you've barely moved. We started on the ferry glide across towards the Strand then the shout SWIMMER. One of our veteran paddlers was in the water. We got him back in the boat wet and breathless but safe and smiling again.

It was interesting how the trip brought together a fusion of veteran, longstanding and newer club members

that have never met before. 24 went out in a spring tide and 24 came back seemingly quite fulfilled after an eventful day paddling. A super local day trip with a nice friendly bunch of paddlers. Perfect.

Alan Nevard <u>alan.nevard@maidstonecanoeclub.net</u>



A Couple Of Lessons From The Summer

t's been a busy time for Maidstone Canoe Club with high numbers of new members joining and lots of courses being run over the summer months.

In the warmer weather we have seen large numbers of paddlers on the river enjoying the pleasure of paddling. Whilst our first aid coaching team are well versed in the fundamental first aid required to ensure a safe and enjoyable time on the water, there are a few simple steps that all paddlers can consider especially when the weather is warm and the sun is at its height. And a couple of these I can speak about from personal experience this summer.

I generally love insects and other bugs. Anyone who paddled with me regularly will know I will take spiders that stowaway on my kayak back to the safety of the bank (usually with an identification and the rest of the paddle being taken up me happily chatting about the life cycle of spiders if you ask). But the one time I didn't bother with insect repellent on a Tuesday evening in May resulted in a trip to A&E and two weeks of antibiotics.

I got bitten by a horsefly (or one of its equally painful relatives) whilst sorting my kayak out at the end of a session. Three bites and within two hours I had a swollen leg and within 24hours it was infected. By the time I got to the hospital I was informed that I was very close to

being admitted for intravenous antibiotics. Needless to say, I have been as careful as possible since with long sleeves, leggings and using insect repellent. I should say that the antibiotics I was given required me to stay out of the sun as well so that was my outdoor activities curtailed for the following two weeks.

The next mishap occurred September. I mistook my regular sun block for one that wasn't waterproof. A morning on the sea and sitting on the beach afterwards with friends resulted in five days off work and lot of pain. It is easy to forget that it is quicker to get burned when near water and even in September the sun can be very strong. My second mistake this time was losing track of time and not topping up my sun block. Not only did I lose income by not being able to work, I also had to present my workshop for the British Canoeing Coaching Matters day via Zoom as I wasn't well enough to travel.

Simple actions on my part could have prevented two of my most painful and notable events of the summer. Other happier events should be foremost in my mind when asked about the summer of 2021.

Remember: Use insect repellent. Check sunblock and reapply.

Annie Davis annie.davis@maidstonecanoeclub.net



 ${\it Claire \ Bennett \ and \ the \ Whomping \ Willow. \ In \ theatres \ now.}$



Let's be social!

or those of you that are not already aware Jon Lock and Claire Bennett have taken on the responsibility of being joint social secretaries for the club.

In the short term the plans are to finalise the arrangements for the Christmas party on the 18th of December before looking at other possibilities for the New Year. Don't forget to sign up on the website and let Claire or I know if you are bringing a partner so as we are aware of numbers. There will be a buffet and soft drinks but you will need to bring your own alcoholic drinks. We have some fun games, music and a raffle, lets all club together to make it the best Christmas party!!! Then we have the Breakfast paddle the from following morning

We also have a Santa paddle planned for the evening of Tuesday, the 21st of December just turn up in your favourite Santa outfit or anything Christmassy, decorate your kayak and join us for a paddle up to Allington look for some mulled wine, hot chocolate and mince pies. Again, if you could sign up on the website so we have an idea of numbers that be greatly appreciated.

The club has had many new members join in 2021. Going into 2022 Claire and I have some ideas to bring more of us together socially but we would love to hear from any of you that have ideas or would like to contribute in any way. With this in mind please feel free to contact either of us directly Jon Lock 07770773962 jon.lock70@gmail.com or Claire Bennett 07585003794 claire-

norman@hotmail.co.uk

Christmas Quiz - Just For Fun!

Try it without Google - just some random questions for fun in these dark winter evenings

Answers

below.

- 1. How long is the River Rother?
- 2. Where is 'the Pirates Canoe Club'?
- 3. Where is the Harty Ferry Slip?
- 4. Where is Isfield Weir?
- 5. Where is Birling Gap?
- 6. Where is Bucklers Hard Quay?
- 7. How long is the tidal section of the Kentish Stour?
- 8. The Suffolk Stour crosses into Essex near which village?
- 9. Which artist painted 'Haywain'
- 10. The Ouse which flows through York starts off as which river?
- 11. Where in the sea off the Kent coast is the area called 'The Downs'?
- 12. Where was the Royal Sovereign light vessel?
- 13. What type of bridge was used to carry the railway over Folkestone harbour?
- 14. How many RNLI stations are there on the River Thames?
- 15. Which other ferry company than P& O operates from Dover to Calais?
- 16. What is AIS?
- 17. Which is the most southerly lighthouse on the England mainland?
- 18. What is unusual about the fishing Boats in Hastings?
- 19. Where does the River Len Join the River Medway?
- 20. How many Christmas jumpers will be worn at the 2021 Club Christmas Party?

Geoff License



Quiz clue!

Quiz Answers

light on a plattorm)
13. Swing Bridge (now a footpath)
14. Three Tower Pier, Gravesend and
15. DFDS
16. Real Time Computer Positioning
16. Real Time Cornwall
17. The Lizard Cornwall
18. They launch from the beach and
are mainly wooden boats
are mainly wooden boats
are mainly wooden boats
are mainly wooden boats
20. Come to the Party and Find out!

12. Off the Coast of Eastbourne (now a

(no EA Licence needed and no locks)
2. Ashford Kent
3. Isle of Sheppey
4.On the River Uck East Sussex
5. Sussex Coast between Seaford and
Eastbourne
6. Hampshire
7. 5.1 Miles Fordwich to Pegwell Bay
7. 5.1 Miles Fordwich to Pegwell Bay
9. John Constable
10. River Ure
11. Off the Coast of Deal

So much to do but so little time

got back on the water after an enforced rest at the end of September and wanting to make up for lost time.

I've been back on some of the regular pedals and was really pleased to see all your friendly faces again. Two fantastic club paddles with Alan from the club to Rochester and more recently around the islands of Hoo were stand outs for me.

Enthusiasm from other members of the club is infectious!! To my complete surprise I've now taken up paddle boarding. I said I would never do so as why would I choose to stand up on an SUP when I could sit down comfortably in a more balanced kayak?

in a more balanced kayak? However, following encouragement from fellow paddlers Claire, Greg and Anj and hearing them wax lyrical about what fun it was I decided to give it a go. Well it was hilarious and I spent most of time in the water and that was on the completely flat and calm Medway. Undeterred I agreed to accompany Greg on a trip to Whitstable and again improved my swimming skills rather than SUP. But for some reason I was hooked

Cont'd on page 10 ...

35 Miles from Rotherfield to Rye Bay



Definitely better than portaging! Thanks goodness someone brought a lock key ...

River Thames Trip 13/14th November 2021

ast weekend a group of 12 club members set off to spend a weekend on the Thames led by Mike and Geoff.

The group was a mix of Discover and Explore level, and for most it was going to be the longest - and perhaps hardest - paddle they'd been on.

An early Saturday morning start meant that we were at our launch location by 9.00am. The plan was to paddle from Longridge upstream towards Henley-on-Thames, stop for lunch then return to Longridge. During recent weeks, the Thames had been on Red and Amber alerts due to the heavy

Prom Longridge
Activity Centre,
Marlow...

Upriver, all the way
to somewhere hereand back.

rainfall, but today it was back to normal levels which was a big relief to everyone!

By 10.00am we were in our boats and paddling up to the first lock. The weather was perfect for our trip; dry, sunny yet cool. Mike was ahead of us all and jumped out of his boat to operate the lock. It was a huge lock, probably three times the size of Allington, and we held onto the rather slimey chains as the the water level rose.

We continued on for 10 miles, passing through some beautiful countryside. We went through two further locks before reaching our lunch spot. We were half way through before someone spotted a sign on the back of the bench saying picnicking was not permitted! We quickly finished up and were back on the water before anyone spotted us!!

The journey back was quicker with the flow in our favour. As we arrived back in good time, Mike had us practising various paddling strokes to improve our skills. Meanwhile Geoff couldn't resist the temptation of the white water by the weir we were passing proving he's still got it!

We got back to Longridge and after loading up the cars we drove to our hotel in High Wycombe where we freshened up and headed out to a restaurant called Cinquieme for dinner. The venue had live music and some of us ended up on

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So much to do but so little time

... cont'd from page 9

and was determined to improve my skills. I've since had some coaching with Lee, purchased my own board and despite being far from competent am now looking at where I can take my SUP on long weekends in the UK and in Europe.

Next steps? I've had a session with Bryn in the K-1 and Catherine has promised to pair me up with someone in a K2. Could I make it onto the racing team? I've also joined with some other paddlers and signed up for a Spartan race in May next year and I'm taking on some private Whitewater coaching so that hopefully I can join some of the clubs trips at some point this season. I have sid this before, but the club and its members are so inspiring.

If you're enjoying your kayaking that is fantastic, but if you have not done so already try some of the other options. The club have recently purchased some paddle boards and there is always someone around ready to help and encourage you.

You never know you may even see me in a canoe at some point, but I think I might need to go part time at work to cram everything in I want to do!!!!

Jon Lock



Jon squeezing in another trip

Strand to Rochester

There's a good spring tide on 19th February which should allow us to paddle to Rochester and back. Meet at the Strand in Gillingham at 12pm.

See calendar for full details

River Thames Trip 13/14th November 2021

... cont'd from page 10

the dance floor having a boogie. We were so good that shortly after a couple of young ladies asked if they could join us!!!

Next morning we met in reception at 8.00am, mostly bleary eyed and nursing headaches. We drove to Datchet and launched off upstream. This is a beautiful stretch of the Thames with Windsor Castle in view for most of the time as the river curves round it to the north. We stopped off for an early lunch at Windsor and couldn't help but admire the rather impressive boat shed belonging to Windsor & District Canoe Club.

Back in the water, we had a vote on whether to continue upstream or to turn back at this point. A slim majority was in favour of returning to Datchet, which turned out to be the best choice as it shortly began to rain, although not for long. We arrived back at Datchet at 2.00pm, loaded up and headed home.

We all had a great weekend of paddling and having fun. Many thanks to Mike and Geoff for arranging and leading us on this trip.

Weekend

Mike Lambourne

Geoff Orford Gerry Dunn

Claire Norman

Greg Carapiet

Mark Willard Gillian Andrews

Carol Robson

Annie Dean

Anita Hirsbrunner

Richard Reader

Bridget Reader



By Greg Carapiet



He's still got it!



A long but enjoyable trip

Club Contacts & Committee

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