

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 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 November, 2022.



Mark Corti, Editor
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Like leprechauns and the Loch Ness Monster, sunshine in Ireland was long thought mythical.

Letter from the Editor

It feels like the endless summer is drawing to a close. A hint of coolness in the evenings, a few showers greening the fields, a noticeable dimming in the evenings.

As outdoors people, the good weather has given us unprecedented opportunity and enthusiasm for getting out on the water. As paddlers, closer to the water than most, the sunny outlook has been tempered with direct experience of water levels lower than any on record. It's one thing to read about hunger stones becoming visible on lakeshores in Europe - it's quite another to see with your own eyes the Upper Dart reduced to a pathetic trickle, or to discover that sections of the Soca don't have enough water to float a kayak. Here's hoping for rain through the whitewater season.

At the Club, there's been more paddling than ever. Every time I drive in to the car park, there are people loading and unloading boats, making tea, or maintaining gear. We've run three hugely-popular open days, countless beginner courses, safety & rescue training,

PAA and Paddlesport Instructor training, had hundreds of children from local youth groups at our fun sessions, as well as the regular paddling, racing, kids clubs, and pool sessions, plus lots more trips, courses and sessions. There are few clubs in the country that have such a breadth of paddling - and such a strong community to support it. So give yourself a pat on the back - the Club wouldn't be half the place it is without you, paddling and giving up your time to contribute.

Of course no community exists in isolation, and in recognition of that we're working to expand our links with other local paddlesport groups. At the back of this newsletter you'll see adverts from local coaches, clubs and centres, sharing trips, courses and paddling opportunities open to paddlers in the area. We've reached out to as many of these groups as we can, but if you'd like to be included please drop us a line to newsletter@maidstonecanoeclub.net and we'll get you in next time. We're hoping that providing this (free!) platform will help all paddlers in Kent and the South East to get out more and broaden their paddling horizons.

See you on the river!

Mark Corti, Editor
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Medway Estuary Breakfast and Barbecue

On Saturday 9th July, 5 intrepid MCC paddlers (myself, Geoff, Tom, Steve and Simon) got up bright and early, met up at Gillingham Strand and paddled out to Darnet Fort Island.

Having paid for all day parking, we loaded up with food and drink for our breakfast and afternoon barbecue and headed out to arrive at the island at 9:00am (High Tide). Once landed, we would be marooned by Medway mud until the evening high tide.

Bacon butties and other platters were quickly prepared. Our long day had begun! We explored the island over the next few hours climbing into and onto the fort which gave us fantastic views across the Medway with many sailing boats filling the seascape in the warm summer

sunshine and refreshing estuary breeze. In the distance the Sheppey Bridge nestled into the horizon.

Time then to scavenge for driftwood in preparation for a late afternoon fire and barbecue on the beach and to enjoy some welcome "chill-out" time.

The photographs provide a brief insight into our day.

Well stuffed and imbibed we managed to get back onto the water at 8:30pm (2 hours before high tide!) for a gentle paddle back to the cars. We'd had a very rewarding day. Thank you for your company lads. Where were the rest of you?

By Norman Brooks

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The "Caution: Slippery When Wet" sign is just out of shot.



Foundation Safety & Rescue Training - FSRT

Done your beginner course and not sure where to go next? Been paddling for a while and looking to take the next step? If the answer to either of those questions is "yes", or even "maybe", then sign up for the FSRT on October 22nd.

This all-day course looks in depth at rescue skills, and is probably the most useful training you'll ever do. It builds confidence and will make you a valued member of the group - everyone loves to paddle with people who know how to get them back in their boat if they take an unscheduled swim!

The FSRT focusses exclusively on training - there's no assessment - and covers skills for kayakers, SUPers and canoeists. Limited spaces - please sign up via the website.



A traditional Irish breakfast includes plenty of tea for everyone as well as black pudding. And five sausages each.

Lough Derg, Ireland

As a skilled fisherman the month of May was one not to be interrupted by anything according to my late father - no funerals or weddings would be attended once the May fly had hatched and all my siblings would be called on at some stage to row him around Tinarana despite the fact it was the middle of exam season!!

Having a few days free in Ireland this summer and coincidentally so did Larry! We decided we would paddle said lake. It did not disappoint. We camped in Mount Shannon on the bank of the lake and headed out for a quick round trip over to Holy Island. The next day feeling confident and after a hearty breakfast, Larry armed with his trusty Iveta in the Kiwi, we decided to go all out to Dromineer. We had done a lot of research on the best route but obviously we knew it was basically straight down

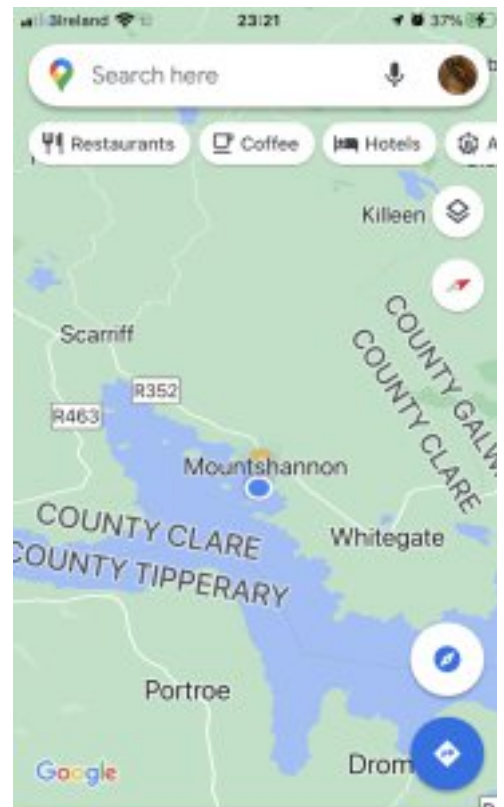
and around the corner! The conditions could not have been better. We had the most wonderful days paddling. The lake was full of boats of every kind and having carried the lunch and kettle to Dromineer I was damned if I was carrying it all back despite the fact that there was amazing smells coming from the burger van right beside us. Larry (reluctantly) made a mean ham and cheese sandwich and I made Iveta and myself a grand cup of tea!!

The clarity of the water astounded us - the plant life was like watching gold leafed vegetation floating below us as the sun continued to shine. Weather like this never happens in Ireland we were incredibly lucky!!

The next day we did a short paddle around some of the smaller islands on the lake and into Scarriff bay. We did as much as we could in the short time we had but we didn't quite manage to get to Tinarana - maybe next year!!

By Kathy Syplczak

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Maidstone Racing Hasler

Well what a turn out we had for our annual race.

This was the first race since the pandemic and it was well attended by other clubs within our region. The Marathon Hasler races are run between several clubs within a region; ours being that of London and South East.

However what was even more impressive was the massive turn out of the NON-RACING members of MCC who gave up their time to come and support our club to make the running of this event possible. To this end I wish to say an enormous THANK YOU to you all who came and supported us.

Along with this we had a few general paddlers enter the race and it was great to see them paddle so well and to earn points for the club. Racing is a discipline that means that we have to train 2/3 times a week and so are not always able to social with all the other events as much as we would like to and may sometimes not acknowledge you out on the water. Believe you me this is not because we want to ignore you but generally we are focussed or just too puff out to manage a hi.

However to give a run down of the day it was awesome. The volunteers turned out nice and early and all the catering and boards and tables and TV monitor and signing in laptops were set up in time for the hoards of racers arriving. We had great car park marshals along with help on the river; off the river at the turn buoys and the locks where the racers were portaging. The day went

really well and the feedback from other clubs was how the event was well run – a good kudos to hold for MCC.

The members that took part were:

- K1s: I aimed to race in Div 6 but due to injury had to retire after 1.5km. In Div 8 we had Paul Lane race for MCC for the first time having moved from Tonbridge getting himself a decent time and achieving 9th place. Div 9 being where most beginners will start we had Angela Hill who despite having fallen in at the start got back in the boat and achieved an amazing 10th place out of 20 Lisa Taylor having not had much practise bit the bullet and also raced in Div 9 and achieved a finish and bagged the club 34 points.
- K2s: Div 3 Aaron and Leanne achieved 3rd Div 5 Tom Kelly and Stephen Rowe also achieved 3rd and Brian Williams and Michael Wibrew came in 6th. Div 6 Bryn Price and Inese Buzzin got a 2nd place. Div 7 saw Joel and Cameron Crampton to a win and young Cameron being promoted from Div 9 straight up to Div 7 – well done boys and finally in Div 9 we had our newest pairing Claire Bennett and Alan Nevard win that race which was absolutely amazing with both of them being promoted to Div 8.

Well done all those who raced you were all fantastic.

By Catherine Ayling

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Yoga Led Practice Session

Yoga for Paddlers - sessions led by Tom Payne, qualified yoga teacher.

What's yoga got to do with paddling? How you work my body, mind and breath in a kayak or canoe is how you work my body, mind and breath on the mat. Centre of gravity, centre of direction, extension, space, precision, alignment: they're the same whether you're on the water or on dry land.

Friday evenings at the Club - see website for dates and times.

Exe & Barle 15/16th October

Our longest-running Club trip returns once again! Easy whitewater trip on classic rivers. Support available for less-experienced members.

See calendar for details.

www.maidstonecanoeclub.net

Bryn Gets Another Silver Medal

Bryn represented Great Britain in the European Masters Canoe Marathon Championships in Silkeborg, Denmark in July.

Competing in a race that was run in atrocious conditions, with wind speeds on the lake getting up to 40mph, the GB pair had an enduring battle with the Bulgarian Team for the lead. The conditions favoured them and after the lead had changed 3 times the Bulgarian team managed to out-sprint Bryn & Ian Bainbridge, from Exeter, for the finish line, leading the rest of the group nearly 1km behind them.

The British Masters team of 4

paddlers managed to get a clean sweep of the medals with each member getting on the podium.

Already having had a second place in the World Masters in Portugal in 2019 and 2 top 10 places in the 2021 World Masters Championships in Romania Bryn will again lead the British Masters Team for the World Masters Canoe Marathon Championships in Portugal in September, including 4 Maidstone paddlers in the 40 strong GB Masters Team.

By Bryn Price

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Conditions more like a sea kayak race than a flat water marathon, Bryn & Ian Bainbridge (Exeter CC) get their breath back after their Silver Medal-winning race

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Put-in at Bettenham. Easy slope access from the A262 bridge, about 30m from layby.



Take-out at Kettle Bridge, Water Lane, upstream of railway line and Beult confluence. Photos taken end of August - even after the dry summer, there's plenty of water to float a kayak. Vegetation will die back over the autumn.



Alternative put-in on Dig Dog Lane, Frittenden. Don't park in the passing place at the bridge - drop boats and park in layby 200m away. Two fat brown trout are just about visible in the photo!

Hammer Stream - In Kent, Rarely Completed By Anyone

Looking for interesting moving water, I scanned OS maps basing my surveys on areas I had paddled.

Included in this was the River Beult and looking for tributaries adding water to the Beult I found the Hammer Stream. This was to be a solo paddle with my wife, Jen, providing the transport. I first paddled the lower half of the stream, and then when high water was around after good rains, I looked further up the Stream to extend the paddle. One of the enticing aspects was that there were no anglers, and very few people around.

Map: OS Landranger 188 (or the modern equivalent)

Start: GR: 813 392 Bettenham (road bridge) [Ed: modern grid reference TQ 82077 38355]

Finish: GR: 826 444 500 yds W of Headcorn (road bridge) [Ed: modern grid reference TQ 82566 43951]

This is a small stream which increases speed and interest with good falls of rain. Even when low it falls well, with numerous small riffles and falls caused by summer sluices. I don't know of any other paddlers and the Stream abounds with wildlife and few humans.

At low levels the river is enclosed within high banks and reeds and

shallows move the water around well. Providing the paddler is willing to work at obstacles they can stay in their boat. Bridges are no problem, but may need portaging in very high water. There are the inevitable bushes on the outside of bends which need care.

This is an Autumn and Winter paddle only. Summertime, the sluices are closed, and water levels too low for good paddling, and vegetation can be overwhelming.

0miles

Bettenham Bridge. I can only recommend as a start in high water. Put in from easy entry point below the bridge. If concrete post is level with the water there are good conditions for a paddle. Parking available next to bridge. When I paddled it the first 200yds were dredged. It was fast with some standing waves.

1.2miles

Footbridge. Pipe across Stream just before bridge. Paddle under in low water, over in high water – anything else – portage. Very overgrown section, take care.

1.9miles

Buckhurst Bridge. River opens and clears. Fewer bushes. Usual start in lower water. From here to the take out there are some small sluices and

low bridges, normally no problem. 5.6miles

Headcorn. Finish either at the road bridge with a double culvert (blocked occasionally in high water, exit is easy, access to the road harder; or finish after the junction with the River Beult. Just before the junction with the Beult there is a railway bridge with an interesting shoot under a long culvert (inspect!).

Exit on the River Beult approximately 50yds below the junction, either above the bridge on the left, or immediately below the bridge on left or right. There is a 2' – 3' fall below the bridge. Inspect, it can be blocked with debris. Alternatively, paddle a further 100yds below the bridge to where the road and river close up on bends. Good parking at all exit points. Fishermen may occasionally be a problem on the Beult.

The boat used was a P and H Phazer, glass/diolen, 13' 6" long, wt. 8kg.

There are many rivers in Kent and Sussex which rarely, if ever nowadays, get paddled. All have different attractions, levels of difficulty, ease of access, and are worth a look, and do not involve long and expensive road trips.

Paul Newman - Club President
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Catherine bags 2 gold medals at The Sprints Open

Having started paddling in August 2017 and taken up racing in September 2017 my main focus has been racing in the Marathon Hasler series and the longer races.

However this year at MCC we have enabled Becky Pemble, a very capable sprint paddler who has represented GB abroad as part of the British Sprint team, to continue her training whilst studying at Uni in Canterbury.

Becky had mentioned to me several times what a great place the Nottingham Sprint regattas are and the fun of the weekends there competing. She is a member of Addlestone Canoe Club and they attend these events regularly. I had never done any sprint racing until early this year when I attended a local club sprint race at Wey joined by Tom. Here we both competed in a 1km race, 500m and 200m race. We did ok and had enjoyed the event enough but did not think I would consider it again.

However, in mid-May, on good old Facebook, I came across a post where there was a request for a Masters lady who would be up for joining a K4 crew for the June Nottingham Regatta. Now a K4 boat is a racing boat with 4 people in it and is something I have wanted to try for some time now and so I thought yes why not! I sent a message and that is

where this journey began. Eventually, I signed up not only for the 500m K4 race but also for the 1000m and 500m K2 race with a lady called Sally from Addlestone that I met through Becky and also for the K1 200m and 500m races; 5 in all.

The weekend started nice and sunny and calm but then a wind picked up and the lake became very choppy and the conditions were a challenge. But I was not deterred and on the Friday I took part in 3 races – K1 500m where I achieved 2nd by just 1.5 secs behind the winner. In K2 500m Sally and I won our race and in K4 500m, a combined race with 2 all male boats, we achieved 3rd for which we got a bronze medal. We were very happy with our day's success.

The Saturday was the worse of the 2 days for the wind and the lake was positively sea like. What an experience that was. I lined up for my K1 200m race in the start bucket, got blown sideways by the wind and wedged onto a buoy – I tried my best to dislodge myself but there was nothing I could do and after a while I knew that my only option was going to be to have a swim. So in I went and then the rescue boat came and retrieved me and my boat. Not to keep the other ladies waiting in these horrible conditions I took the decision to retire from that race.

My last race and the last sprint race of the event was the Masters ladies K2 1000m. Sally and I had to line up again only a couple of hours later from my swim. We were both quite nervous as we knew we had won the 500m but could we really do it again knowing that the 2nd crew had been on our tail and catching us up! Well we had to just do our best. So we got on the water and paddled hard against the wind and practised a couple of starts. We then had to turn the boat to head down the lake again to get to our starting positions – we were 4 boats in all and we carefully all lined up in our respective lanes and cautiously got into our start buckets; this time the starter wasted no time and we were set off swiftly. From that moment on Sally and I just flew; our start was textbook and we just paddled hard and steady and together and with a bit of surfing on the waves we finished the race in 4 mins 59 secs and 20 secs ahead of the 2nd crew. An awesome achievement and another gold medal.

My results in the 4 races were therefore 2 firsts; a second and a third place – not bad for my first ever National Sprint Regatta :-). Now just to do it all again next year lol

By Catherine Ayling

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Back Page Adverts

Free listings for local clubs, centres and coaches. Maidstone Canoe Club is proud to support our local paddlesport community.



Grahame Moss, Professional Coach

Selected Upcoming Dates

8/9th October: Core Coach Training

22/23rd October: Sheltered Water Coach Training

Lots more dates and info at

www.escapeoutdoors.co.uk



South East Kayaking

Rob Davis, Professional Coach

Selected Upcoming Dates

15th October: Sea Kayak Safety Workshop

8th January: Trip to Margate Sands

22nd January: Trip from Kingsdown to Langdon Bay

One-to-one coaching available. Lots more dates & info at

www.southeastkayaking.co.uk



Seapoint Canoe Centre

Selected Upcoming Dates:

17th September: Sea Kayak Award Journey

22nd October: Sea Kayak Award Journey

Lots more dates and info at:

www.seapointcanoecentre.co.uk



SUP community and coaching centre

www.paddlecabin.co.uk



Your local canoe, kayak, SUP and sit-on-top shop

www.kentcanoes.co.uk



Pirates Canoe Club

Ashford

www.piratescanoeclub.com



Bewl Canoe Club

Bewl Water Reservoir

www.bewlcanoeclub.co.uk



Tonbridge Canoe Club

Tonbridge

www.tonbridgecanoeclub.org.uk

Hastings & District Canoe Club

Hastings

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