

Totnes Canoe Club



Newsletter October 2010

The summer is starting to recede into memory and the evenings are closing in, but the good news is the white water season has started! The Club's annual trip to the Welsh National White Water centre was a great success and gave a taste of things to come. As I write the River Dart is pounding, and will hopefully settle down to reasonable levels shortly.

Too Much Water

You don't often hear us complaining about too much water, but we had to postpone both the Night Paddle and the Whitewater Safety and Rescue practical session for the peer group due to excessive levels on the river. Look out for new arrangements in due course. With the water at our usual put-in above the weir lapping at the footpath safety had to come first.

Erme Estuary trip – Mothercombe beach

The last Club Estuary trip of the season turned out to be a lovely sunny day allowing a peaceful paddle up the river with the incoming tide. The wide estuary



(above) narrows down to create a very special tidal environment with lush vegetation on the banks.

About 19 paddlers joined the trip, including a family of three in an open boat. Many of the party played on the little weir by Fleet House – both with and without boats! Connor and Mik both went down it backwards, only one of them on purpose. There was a nice barbecue afterwards and the kids played rounders and jumped off things (as kids do).

Thanks to Mik for the photos (above & right) and thanks to Yvette for making the arrangements.

Pool Session

Next one is on 30 October at Totnes Pavilion Pool. As usual its 5.00 to 6.00 for beginners, 6.00 to 7.00 for improvers, depending on numbers. Only Club boats stored at the pool are allowed - unless arranged with the committee in advance and then for one session only.



National park

This text is taken directly from the UK Rivers Guide website:

Dartmoor National Park Authority are in the process of preparing their recreation and access strategy 2010 to 2017. They have published a draft and are inviting comments to be received by the end of November.

The current draft is supportive of access for canoeists. Canoeing is referred to on page 9 of the introduction, page 26 of Theme 4 and Appendix 1 on page 30.

Although being supportive, it is important that canoeists write in (on the prescribed form) to support their approach. Otherwise, the danger is that the opposition [ie people who don't want canoeing allowed] object to their supportive approach in sufficient quantities to persuade the National Park to change their minds.

The link to the consultation is www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk/recreation-strategy.htm

As the rivers of Dartmoor National Park offer canoeists the best white water paddling opportunities in Southern England, it is important that our feelings are reflected in the Park's policy. Don't leave it to somebody else – have your say...

Tryweryn

The river is fed from a dam at the head of the valley which is literally switched on and off to provide around 9 cubic metres per second for rafting and kayaking. The course is a natural river which has been shifted around to provide lots of eddys and features making it a great place to practice and learn new skills. Lots more pictures can be seen on the Yahoo Group or through links to people's Facebook pages.

A party of over 25 members made the 6 hour drive, most staying in the luxurious bunk barn accommodation where we were well looked after by our hosts with huge breakfasts and hearty evening meals. Not everyone was paddling but those who were each found something to suit their paddling skills and push them onto the next level.

The evening entertainment included silly games which caused much merriment, followed by some kayaking videos including an expeditions to Greenland, and white water techniques.

Pictures by Roger



Taps Off



Taps On (but where are Jeremy & Rob?)

Membership

We are updating the Club mailing list and have now correlated all members against this – some missing forms had made this difficult but we have at last captured everyone's details. The Club has over 136 members and this is still rising! If as a member you ever realise you have not seen any club emails for a while do please let us know as mistakes do happen.

White Water

On the Yahoo Group you will see people discussing different trips on the River Dart. The paddable sections can be classed as shown below. Do bear in mind that even the 'easier' sections can become very challenging after sustained rainfall. It takes around 6 hours for rain falling on the moors to reach the lower sections so the rivers can continue to rise after the rainfall stops. Never paddle alone and always paddle with someone experienced with that section of the river.

Lower-lower Austen's Bridge (just downstream of the steam railway at Buckfastleigh) to Staverton Grade 1 to 2 – suitable for beginners, relatively gentle rapids

Lower Holne Bridge (just upstream of the River Dart Country Park) Grade 2 - suitable for beginners to intermediates, sustained but forgiving rapids, a few small features

Loop (New Bridge to Holne Bridge) Lots of good grade 2, several grade 3 features

Upper (Dartmeet to New Bridge) For advanced paddlers only. Grade 3 to 4, more when in spate. Alpine in character and quite technical. Reckoned to be one of the finest stretches of white water in England.

Levels are often judged in relation to the rock ledge at the put-in under New Bridge. If the level is below the lowest part of the slab its low, more than about six inches below means the river is too low to paddle. If level with the highest part of the slab its a good sporty level, fewer rocks to bump into but less forgiving. Once the slab is completely covered the river is getting high, once its flowing through the third (river left) arch its for experienced paddlers with a bomb-proof roll only. Then as it rises up the steps it is reckoned to be in flood and is for the severely adventurous only - getting caught in trees becomes an issue, any swims at this level are likely to be long and dangerous. It was "up the steps" over the past couple of days...

Contacts

General club enquiries: tcc@41.eclipse.co.uk
Website: www.totnescanooclub.org.uk
Membership: adrianandsarah@aol.co.uk
Peer trips Yahoo Group: totnesc-subscribe@yahoogroups.co.uk

Library

Various books and videos available for borrowing free of charge through the Club Library. Yvette holds this and brings the library to the pool sessions. Topics covered include Whitewater Safety and Rescue, Playboating, Sea Kayaking, Rolling skills and many others.

Devon Hospiscare One Mile Swim

Chas, Paul T, Paul L, Rob, and Roger provided kayak marshalling for this second annual open water swim at the Roadford Reservoir near Okehampton. There were over 400 swimmers taking part in this major fundraising event for Devon Hospiscare, including an elite swimmers race. The fastest time on the day was 18 minutes, but most participants did it for the challenge taking an hour or so to complete.



The swimmers deserve all the glory, but the kayak team (some 60 or more paddlers) were much appreciated and helped make the event safe and enjoyable. We rescued one person with breathing problems and helped others adjust or remove their wetsuits (at their request, Officer...honest).

Next year they plan a half mile and a two mile swim in addition to the standard one mile, so if you



fancy trying your hand at distance swimming, or as a kayak marshall please let Roger know in due course.