

Totnes Canoe Club



Newsletter December 2011

Its nearly Christmas and there has been lots of activity within the Club. There has been a reasonable amount of water over the past few weeks enabling members to paddle a variety of rivers locally. Its the time of year to look back at the fun and games of the last year and to look forward and plan our adventures for 2012.

Christmas Party

Well over fifty members took over the Riverford Field Kitchen for the annual Christmas Party. The food was as tasty as ever with more than enough for everyone. The assembled throng enjoyed chatting with their paddling friends as well as meeting some non-paddling partners, all this in the comfort of a warm dry building and with no neoprene in sight!

The beautiful barn was decked out for Christmas and adorned with pictures from the year's paddling. The annual awards were presented to people who have shown outstanding dedication and progress within the Club. Additional certificates of merit were awarded to those paddlers who came close to getting the main trophies – it is always a hard decision for the committee to make. Well done to all of you!

Paddlepower Paddler of the Year:

Frankie Perren Smart

Certificates – Diori Laidlaw, Martha Williams, Ollie Tysoe, Ross Pratt, Alastair Shapland, Jake Richards

Junior Paddler of the Year:

Kierah Jones

Certificates – Rowan James, Anna Hargreaves, Lewin Turner, Sam Dixon

Senior Paddler of the Year:

Mik Wells

Certificates – Ben Williams, Bill Hargreaves, Bex House, Morwena Marshall

Club Personality of the Year:

Jack Gorman

If you have any suggestions for next year's party please get in touch with any member of the committee. Should we stay at Riverford (not the cheapest, but an exceptional venue) or go somewhere else? Do you want additional entertainment or do you enjoy having the time to relax and mingle?



◀ Jack



Season's Greetings

Card image above lifted from Australis Canoes



◀ Kierah



▲ Mik

▼ Frankie





The River Teign

Pictures courtesy Jerome Shapland

From above Castle Drogo down to Fingle Bridge. A beautiful run, grade 2 with a few 'fun' weirs and lots of big rocks to negotiate. Several of the group attempted the salmon steps (see above) and only two of them swam in this messy cauldron.

Walkham/Tavy Report from Rob Dack

Both pictures are from a previous trip, included to show the style of river



The Walkham was at a low water level for this tributary of the River Tavy and we had a group of 14 so we split into 2 smaller groups. The river was very busy as with the Gene 17 Advanced Paddlers' weekend on the Dart most local paddlers had gone to other rivers such as this one.

The famous slot/drop was like Picadilly Circus with the bank full of people from three other large groups, all inspecting the rapid and several groups had set up their own rescue parties. Running the slot was giving lots of entertainment and Don's paddle broke just to add to the fun.



Chas in the slot/drop

The Walkham runs into the Tavy at Doublewaters and the level on the Tavy seemed a little higher – the rain doesn't fall consistently over the moors. One of the feature rapids caught a few people with its cross waves and different style of water from the smaller Walkham.

River Dart Peer trips

There have been a number of peer white water trips each weekend, with something for all abilities. From gentle introductory trips on the lower sections of the Dart, to challenging technical runs on the Upper Dart, we are so very lucky to have it all on our doorstep.

When paddling the Loop and Upper you often meet people who have travelled from all over the country to paddle our local patch.

Those Dart runs explained:

Lower-lower: Buckfastleigh to Staverton Grade 1/2

Lower: Country Park to Buckfastleigh Grade 2

Loop: New Bridge to Holne Bridge/Country Park Grade 2/3

Upper: Dartmeet to Newbridge Grade 3/4

Upper West: Two Bridges to Dartmeet Grade 3/4

Remember that higher levels of water increase the grade and given the nature of the moors, if you paddle in heavy rain the river can easily rise considerably in the time you are out.



Sam on The Loop (Pic courtesy David Ellison)

It has been wonderful to see paddlers progressing through the season. Some have worked steadily and built their skills and confidence methodically, perhaps over a few years. Others have thrown caution to the wind and fast tracked, leaping from starting 2* in the summer to running the Loop at high levels as well as discovering the Upper with the big guns! Respect is due to everyone, whatever their style and approach. The fundamental rules are Have Fun, Be Safe.

Here's hoping for some decent rainfall over the Christmas holidays (preferably at night, with sunshine for paddling during the day!).



Paddling up hill on The Loop (Pic courtesy David Ellison)



The Dart Loop in November

Pictures courtesy Jerome Shapland

Top: Making a splash at Holne Weir

Left: "Lets go Surfing"

Below: Typical grade 2 water

Bottom: Holne Weir again



Introduction to White Water Course

Report by Jeremy van Riemsdyke

Pics courtesy David Ellison



The Beginners White Water Course went really well once we got some water in the rivers. We started on the lower sections of the Dart and progressed up to the Loop for the final two sessions. The standard was really high with the final session culminating in people doing break outs down Lovers Leap Rapids.



The group had to do Ceilidh dancing at the beginning of each session to develop rhythm and timing. There was a lot of complaining about this and yet the photos (see right) show everyone smiling and laughing.

There was the obligatory Holne Bridge Jump at the end of the Loop sessions with some great photos showing the fun the jumpers were having.



A big thank you to the participants Amitrajit, Bex, Daryl, Emily, Graham, Lewin, Joe, Kierah, Mark, Morwena, Tony and Trevor for making it such a good course. And a big thank you to the coaches Jack, Jo, Roger, Jerome and Andy who helped me on various occasions. A special mention should go to Jack for helping me on every session bar one and for performing so many rescues it must be a record. That was on the session we had the students side surfing a stopper with no paddle!!

What fun we had! Now lets see you all on the white water peer trips!



Below, right: "Jeremy – can you please let go now..."



Devon Sports Awards 2012...

This is from Active Devon



The nomination process for the Devon Sports Awards 2012 is now open and will close at 12pm on Friday 6th January 2012. With the Christmas period very soon upon us, you are urged to ensure you get your nominations in on time.

Quick and easy nomination process

Take advantage of the simple nomination process and make more than one nomination, helping us to identify and reward our sporting heroes from across the county in this momentous Olympic and Paralympic year! Just visit www.activedevon.org/awards2012 to either download a nomination form, or to complete the online version.

AGM

The AGM (Annual General Meeting) takes place on Friday 3rd February (7.00pm at the Dartmouth Inn, the Plains, Totnes). Please consider attending as it's where we discuss how the Club is run and what we spend your money on. We would love to hear everyone's views. The meeting is for everybody, not just coaches and committee members. The agenda will be circulated in January, let Rob Dack know if you would like anything included.

In addition, if you fancy joining the committee in whatever capacity please get in touch with Rob Dack, Club Chairman. All coaches are de facto members of the committee and the committee officials are elected at the meeting. The positions and current officials are as follows:

Chairman: Rob Dack

Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Sarah Rea

Secretary: Roger Lane

Training co-ordinator: Yvette Steele

Equipment officer: Chas Billing

Welfare Officer: Paul Tweed

Website: Mik Wells

Social Secretary: Jeremy van Riemsdyke

Juniors

The junior paddlers have now done three whitewater trips – the first on the Lower Lower Dart was reported in the last newsletter. This proved so popular that two further trips were organised whilst temperatures were still reasonable and the water levels not too scary!

A large group took the Lower Lower again, this time with more confidence and building on the skills learnt on the first trip.

A trip further afield to the lower sections of the Exe provided a different introductory whitewater experience of similar level. A smaller group of three juniors (and several adults) had a good trip.

Sea Kayaking Symposium

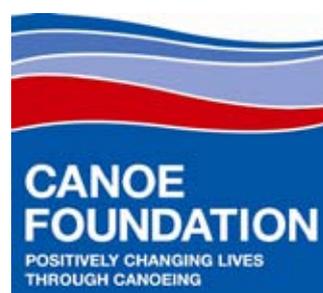
For almost three decades the annual Anglesey Sea Kayak Symposium has taken place over the first bank holiday weekend in May and for 2012 they will be back again. The main event will take place on the 5th – 7th May 2012 with additional courses available.

They cater for 150 participants with a variety of guest instructors from all over the globe, as well as local paddlers who will be able to guide everyone safely around the wonderfully wild coastline. The Symposium is a relaxed event which changes with the weather to offer a flexible, fun and action packed weekend. There are practical courses and workshops for all abilities. The cost of the Symposium and the full programme will soon be published, but you can register your interest now by e-mailing:

courses@seakayakinguk.com

Canoe Foundation Website

This information was received from the Canoe Foundation – it looks a worthy and useful cause



www.canoefoundation.org.uk

The principle functions of the Canoe Foundation are to raise money; inform and educate; and allocate funds, in line with the Charity's mission statement: 'positively changing lives through canoeing'.

In the last eight years the Canoe Foundation has awarded in excess of £131,000 worth of grants to more than 142 projects, which have in turn benefitted over 18,000 individuals. Applications and successful awards have increased considerably over the past few years, with almost £75,000 awarded in the last three financial years alone.

We hope that our new website will be a really useful tool going forwards, enabling us to engage further with you, the paddling community, and a wider audience beyond.

Female Focussed Paddling Network

As you may have seen in an earlier email, there is a new group based in Plymouth aimed at developing female paddling. Their next event is in February (weekend of 4th and 5th) and will combine paddling through the day with informal discussions pertinent to female paddlers into the evening.

If you are interested please contact:

claire.eatock@cornwall.ac.uk

Pool Session December

Please remember that there is no pool session this month due to the holiday celebrations.