

Totnes Canoe Club



Newsletter June 2012

The season is in full swing and we are well into the second set of training sessions on both Mondays and Tuesdays. The sessions missed due to weather have been caught up and we have had the second of the monthly estuary trips. The Club continues to grow and we have around 170 members this year, most of whom are active paddlers. Do get involved in the formal trips, the peer groups, and let us know what you want from your Club. The committee is always looking for more members, especially people who are not coaches.

Exe Trip

The first Club trip of the season last month was very well attended and as Chas organised the trip the weather was kind. It was great to see lots of members of all ages on the water with beginners and more experienced paddlers sharing the fun. The trip started out with a run down the weir at Haven Banks to wake everybody up. The second weir (Countess) has a lively shoot at the side for the more ambitious. The less experienced were helped down both weirs so everyone could have a go.

As one member said in a email afterwards "Thank you one and all for making our first trip with the club so enjoyable! [My daughter] has been chattering excitedly to her mother about sailing down waterfalls and floating bubbles... whilst her ma looks on slightly perturbed..."



Exe pictures courtesy Alistair Shapland



Training

The Monday and Tuesday sessions are pretty much fully subscribed so do let Paul or Yvette know if you plan to continue into the third set of training sessions. We are also keen to hear any feedback you may have regarding the way the courses are run, whether good or bad! Drop me an email (even in confidence if that's what you wish!).

Pool Session

Remember, this is free to members and the next one is this coming Saturday, 30 June. Its 5.00 til 6.00 for beginners; 6.00 til 7.00 for more experienced. At Totnes Pavilion Pool as usual, no need to check in at reception just go through to the pool and change. Come along and get wet in the warm, and practice those support strokes and maybe even learn to roll.

Thanks to Ian Stockman we now have a very solid cage at the back of the pool to keep the boats in. This makes theft very difficult and also means we can put the boats away in a fraction of the time it took before, no longer do we have to thread a cable through each kayak.

Olympic Torch Relay

On the day the torch came through Totnes the Pavilion Sports centre held an activity day with a variety of sports on offer, with small teams competing across the range. It proved impractical to offer kayaking on the river or to include it in the challenge. We were however able to borrow a kayaking machine from the BCU South West. This is a modified rowing machine with a paddle connected by a cord, which allowed us to do timed 100 metre sprints.

It proved very popular and the fastest time was achieved by a non-paddler, despite some of our coaches best endeavours to beat him!

The Olympic whitewater slalom events take place between 29 July and 2 August; the flat water racing between 6 and 11 August. Good luck to all the competitors – Team GB could well get some medals here.

Dart Estuary Trip

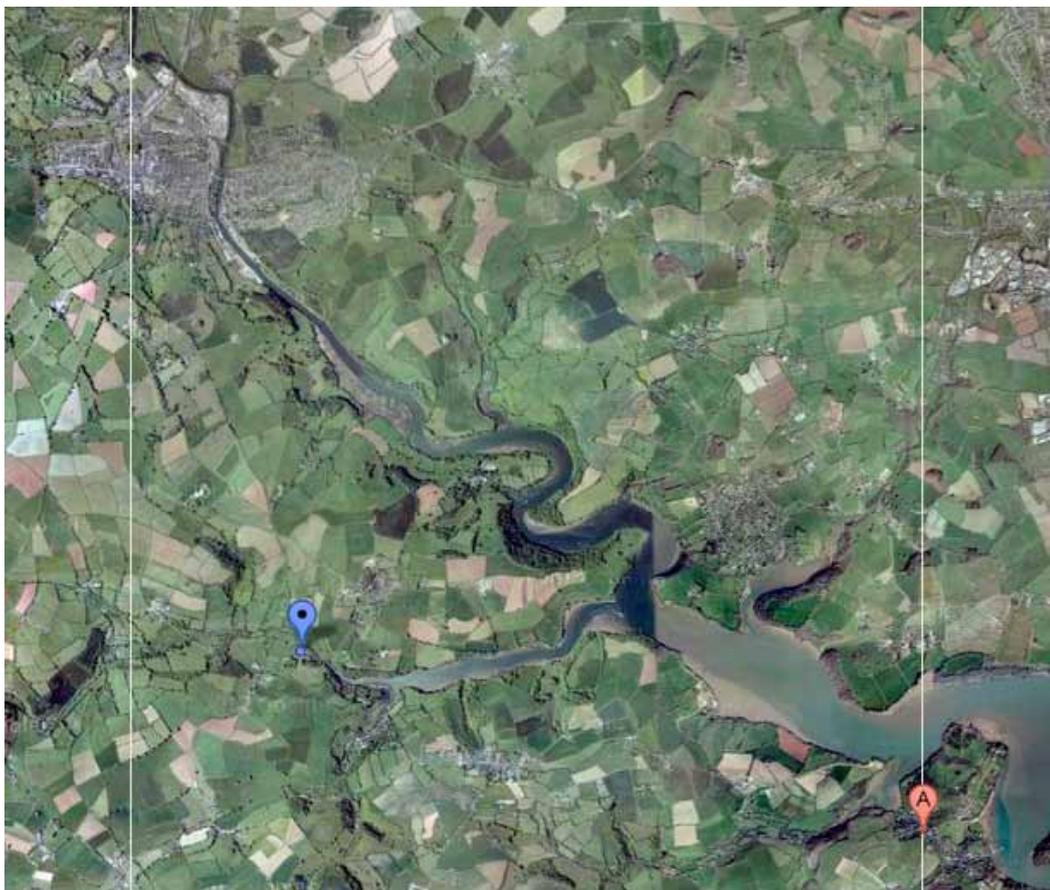
After a week of dodgy weather forecasts and intermittent torrential rain, it turned out fine on the day. The second half of the trip was even treated to some gorgeous sunshine. The extremely heavy rain the night before meant Totnes weir was in full flood. Even putting in below the weir was quite exciting and we had the benefit of a good flow to help us on our way downstream.

There were 24 paddlers on the water, from beginners through to the more experienced, from children to OAP's. A variety of craft were in use and those in touring or sea kayaks had the easiest time. We paddled down past Vire Island & the Steamer Quay, then past various rowers at Longmarsh. Leaving Totnes and the traffic behind we could appreciate being in the natural environment and enjoyed the tranquillity. The Dartmouth ferry passed us a couple of times and we saw one or two yachts, and apart from a few other kayakers we had the river to ourselves.

We stopped for lunch at Sharpham Quay, just below the vineyard and many of the group decided to remove various layers of clothing as the weather was getting warmer by the minute.

There was another stop at Stoke Gabriel for ice cream, by which time the tide was dropping fast and exposing rather a lot of mud.

Our guinea pig (name hidden to protect their embarrassment) sank up to their knees providing sufficient warning to others to find a cleaner path to the ice creams. Stoke Gabriel is also home of Totnes Kayaks where you can hire sit on tops or take kayak and canoe courses. It was good to catch up with the owner Tom Morris who originally trained with the Club. As our muscles started to feel the impact of paddling seven miles or so, Dittisham was a welcome destination. Although the tide was very low we managed to avoid the worst of the mud by carrying the boats along the foreshore. It was only then we saw that two of the party had found a slipway, hard to see in the mud, that meant they only had to carry their boats a few yards.



Three of the group decided to carry on down to Dartmouth and at the time of writing we can only assume they came back before nightfall.

The shuttle back worked very well and we even had roofrack space to spare. Thanks to all the drivers and to everyone on the trip for making it such an enjoyable day out. Look out for the next one!

Dates for your diary

6, 7, 8 July – Surf Weekend at Watergate Bay

All welcome, paddling optional! Bring the whole family. Details as per Jon's email – let me know if you haven't received this (secretary@totnescanooclub.org.uk)

14 July – Up & Down the Erme

Meet near Mothercombe beach for a paddle up the estuary with incoming tide, picnic lunch by the weir at Fleet Castle, then back down with the outgoing tide. A very beautiful trip suitable for all. Watch out for more details – an email will follow in the next week or so.

Date TBC – Beach Day

We are hoping to hold a family day out on the beach at Bigbury or Bantham, again with paddling optional. This will be weather dependent and if it happens will be announced by email near the time.

7, 8, 9 September – Intermediate & Advanced Whitewater, Tryweryn, near Bala, North Wales

Although the paddling is definitely not for beginners it is a very entertaining weekend and there are plenty of other things to do in the area including beautiful hill and mountain walking. More details to follow.

23 September – River Avon: From Bantham to Aveton Gifford & back

Another stunningly beautiful estuary, a run up and then back with the tide, with a picnic somewhere near the top. Experience paddling along the tidal road. And after the trip has finished you can head for the beach!

5 October – Night Paddle

Paddle in the dark for a fire, food and ghost stories.

12 October – Junior Night Paddle

As above but aimed at the younger members and with even scarier stories.

21 October – Raft Race

The Totnes Rotary Club are trying to get this off the ground again so this is a tentative date. The Club will be providing safety cover, but members are encouraged to think about entering the race too. It will be rubber and string only, and a lot of fun.

End October – Dart Clean-Up

Details are being finalised but there should be a major anti-pollution clean up of the Dart from source to sea. Kayakers and canoeists will be helping collect litter. Many local organisations are getting involved, so watch this space. It is also an awareness raising project.

10 November – Tavy Clean-up

Another litter picking event being arranged through the Dart Paddlers Facebook Group. More details in due course.

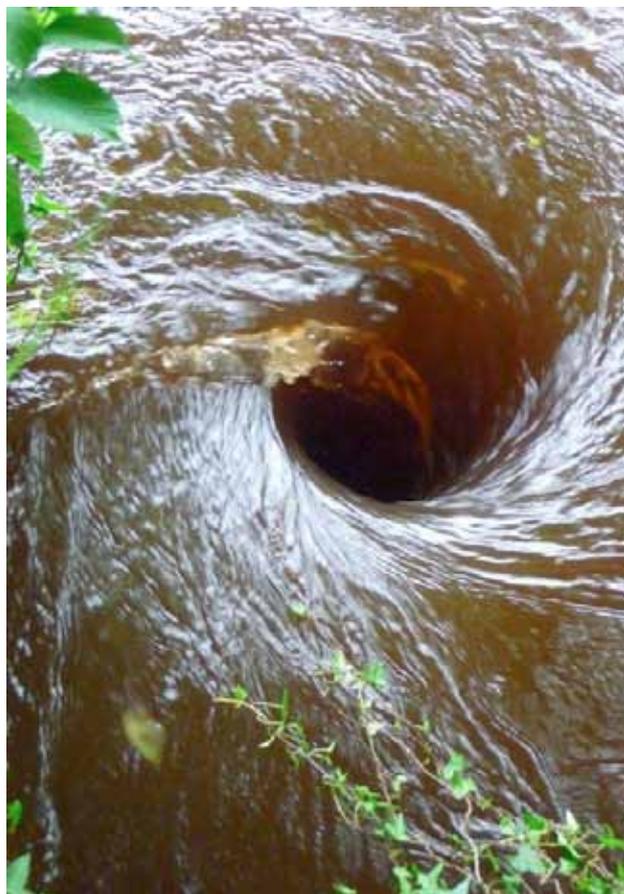


These pictures of the Exe trip courtesy Paul Rutherford

Coaches

Please remember that all your coaches are volunteers who give their time freely because of their passion for kayaking and canoeing. Please be kind to them!

We want you to enjoy your kayaking and we endeavour to provide a broad cross section of activities. The Club does contribute to some of the coach training to ensure that you are given appropriate training in a safe environment.



*Some pictures by Trevor Nosworthy.
These are the Salmon steps in typical (for this year)
June weather, ie in flood.*

Totnes Weir Hydro Scheme

Revised plans have been submitted to South Hams District Council with turbines on the opposite side of the river to where we put in. There will be a new metal fish pass to help the Salmon & Trout migrate upstream, and the flow of the weir will be changed. For full details see:

www.southhams.gov.uk/spec_planning_apps_detail-m3.htm?SHORTID=1282/12/F for full details.

Any comments or objections need to be with the council by the end of next week

BCU/Canoe England and Access

The BCU appear to have clarified (and indeed amended) their approach to river access. The gist seems to be that they no longer support access agreements, ie negotiating with landowners and fishing organisations holding riparian rights for permission to paddle at certain times of year etc. The statement now supports paddling when conditions are suitable – as defined by the individual kayaker, a de facto recognition that we don't need anyone's permission to paddle on rivers.

That said, please remember that access and egress points not on public land do need permission.

The full statement can be seen here:

www.canoe-england.org.uk/media/pdf/AA%20Position%20Statement%208%20June%202012%20.pdf

Stay Informed

Forum:

www.totnescanooclub.org.uk/forum/index.php

To see instructions on how to join the forums:
www.totnescanooclub.org.uk/forum/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=36

All sorts of discussions about the Club and activities

Yahoo Group:

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/totnesc/>
For arranging peer group trips and sharing information about kayaking. Boats and kit can be borrowed by Club members for use on peer trips free of charge. As mentioned before, these are not official club trips run by a coach – they are purely a group of friends paddling together, sharing their knowledge.

Archive newsletters can be viewed here:

www.totnescanooclub.org.uk/ClubNews.html