

# Totnes Canoe Club



## Newsletter October 2012

The nights are closing in and the traditional white water season is now underway. I say traditional because the reality is now all year paddling when rainfall is sufficient and after the ridiculously wet summer that has been quite often!

The weather has caused a few problems with trips cancelled or postponed leading to disappointment, but we must always put safety before anything else.

### Christmas Meal



The social event of the year is now rapidly approaching on the 7th December. You will have seen an email from Jeremy so do get your booking in quickly as we expect the event to be very popular.

The evening starts at 7.00 at the wonderful Riverford Field Kitchen with a sumptuous meal. Don't miss the annual Club Awards – who will take home the coveted trophies this year? Look out for Paddlepower Paddler of the Year, Junior Paddler, Senior Paddler and cast your vote on the night for Club Personality of the Year (usually – but not necessarily – one of the coaches).

This is your chance to meet your fellow members in the dry with no neoprene in sight and is a bound to be a very entertaining evening.

### River Clean ups

On Saturday 27th October Wildwise, based at Dartington, are organising a river clean-up for the tidal sections of the Dart as well as the area around the Dartington Estate from Staverton. They are looking for volunteers to help, both on and off the water. If you are able to help them please contact [rebeh@wildwise.co.uk](mailto:rebeh@wildwise.co.uk). They are particularly interested in anyone who can paddle an open canoe to help carry any rubbish to collection points.

There is an unrelated clean up of the Rivers Dart & Tavy on 11 November see the *Rivers Source* article below.

### Raft Race

The Club will be providing kayak marshals for this exciting event which is running on Sunday 21st October. Come



along and watch the fun. If you are an experienced white water paddler capable of rescue you are welcome to come and help – let Roger know if you want to help out by emailing [secretary@totnescanooclub.org.uk](mailto:secretary@totnescanooclub.org.uk). Many of the coaches will be positioned on the course as marshals, but it would be useful to have extra paddlers escorting the rafts downstream too.

See <http://www.totnesrafttrace.co.uk/> for full details.

### Second Youth Freestyle

Sam, Rowan and Connor recently attended a second national Youth Freestyle Competition at Hurley Weir on the Thames. Keep up the good work chaps!

We are all very proud of what you are doing and look forward to seeing you take the winners podium in due course.

### Pool Session

Tadpool who run the Totnes Pool have asked that we do not bring any outside boats into the pool. We are trying to get this amended but at present please respect their request.

The next session is on Saturday 27th October. 5.00 until 6.00 for beginners, 6.00 to 7.00 for improvers. Its not just about rolling, its a great place to push the limits with your bracing strokes and eskimo rescues in the warm ready for those cold wintery white water sessions!

## Whitewater

The first whitewater training session took place recently. Thanks to Rob Dack for organising this as unfortunately Jeremy is unable to run a course this Autumn. The next official session will be in a few weeks time, subject to Rob's availability.

In addition to this official course do keep looking at the Yahoo Group to see suitable beginners peer trips - we had an excellent such trip this last weekend. There should also be an intermediate level peer group, co-ordinated by Mark, Sam & Connor for those of you who got to do the Loop at least once last year. Make yourselves known via the Yahoo Group!

Peer trips are a group of friends paddling together, they are not formal club trips. That said, please do not just turn up on the day if you see one you fancy on Yahoo - you must contact the person proposing the trip and work out whether the level of the trip is suitable for your skills, especially in the context of river levels on the actual day.

Here is how the first whitewater trip was experienced by Roger Brown, our honorary oh-my-goodness-what-have-I-let-myself-in-for correspondent:

A huge "thank you" to Rob, Chas and all the rest for a great day on the river. If white water kayaking is always as much fun as that, no wonder it has so many ardent fans. I loved every minute, even taking a swim! I think I might even have learnt a bit too! A great trip! I felt completely safe as the ratio of experienced paddlers to white water virgins was so good that I had absolute faith that even if I did capsize, I was in no danger at all and help would be immediately on hand. As it proved to be.

There was enormous support given and a constant stream of help and advice about how to paddle what lay in front of me (or was boiling all around me). This was just what was needed for an old fart who can't remember more than one thing at a time! But the fact that so many experienced paddlers had turned out is an important point. I think it's a tribute to the club that youngsters like Sam, who is clearly way beyond such tranquil waters, were there to run down lost boats, retrieve paddles, that kind of thing. Not only that but on one occasion I saw Sam actually carrying a boat back along the bank, to return it to its previous owner who was some distance upstream. A completely selfless gesture, that somehow epitomised the spirit of the day.

It was also good to be part of such a large group of fellow paddlers, all of a similar standard, who were equally keen to be on the water. We were all in the same boat (Ha Ha) and the sense of camaraderie and the joy of the shared experience was palpable. By the time we reached Staverton all of the newbies had the most enormous grins on their faces and were giving off a real glow of pleasure. Something it was wonderful to be part of.

Its always great to hear your experiences of the Club and any paddling adventures so do let your editor have any contributions for future newsletters.



## Tryweryn

A number of Club members spent an entertaining weekend at the Welsh National White Water centre last month. The Tryweryn is a dam release controlled river, with a serious amount of water. For those just starting out on whitewater this is something to aspire to ...maybe. There were about 10 cubic metres of water per second flowing down that river.



## New Boats

The committee is in the process of purchasing some new kit to broaden out the Club offering to the members.

We have ordered three club spec sea kayaks so we can offer proper sea kayak training next spring and members can borrow these for peer trips as well. Sea kayaking is in many ways quite different from flat or white water, perhaps its time you experienced this exciting world for yourself!



Three different sized Playboats are also being purchased so anyone can have a try in these. These are very short and have sharp edges so you can learn such wonderful moves as cartwheels, loops, backloops, blunts, air blunts, kickflips, wave wheels, hammers, pan-hammers, hail marys, split McNastys, phonics, lunar orbits, tricky woos or even a splitwheel\*



\* Editors note: I pinched these names from the UKRGB website and I have absolutely no idea what most of them are, but I think I would go out of my way to avoid a split McNasty.

Other recent purchases include two second hand whitewater boats which have already seen good service, and will provide good stable boats for learners next season. And we have a second surf boat available for trips to the beach.

Thanks to Bill Hargreaves we have lighting in the shed which is a huge benefit for safety. This has been battery run over the summer but the Club is now investing in a small generator to ensure the lighting is always available.

Thanks are also due to Ian Stockman for constructing a secure cage to store the boats and kit at the swimming pool.

### **Night Paddles**

The weather has been against us and both the senior and junior paddles had to be postponed. Here's hoping the weather is kinder for the proposed new dates. See the various emails about these, senior now scheduled for this Friday – contact Jeremy if you plan to attend. Junior tentatively scheduled for the following Friday – Julie will be emailing shortly.

### **Rivers Source**

We are fortunate to have the fabulous River Dart as our local paddling resource. This also brings some wonderful events to our doorstep, one of which is best described themselves by Gene17:

We would like to invite you and your club members to the River's Source, hosted by Gene17kayaking at the River Dart Country Park the weekend of Nov 9-11th. This event was run for the first time early this year, and following on its success we are now making the River's Source an annual event, taking place every autumn.

This is a gathering for all white water paddlers, clubs and individuals alike, and we have a fully packed weekend ahead with on and off the water clinics, talks and seminars. The workshops range from practical kayaking technique clinics to instruction on how to correctly outfit your kayak or open boat workshops, and more, and the workshops are run by leading coaches, manufactures and other experts of the paddlesport industry. For full programme and bookings please see [www.riverssource.co.uk](http://www.riverssource.co.uk), we also have a range of free clinics in the programme! Online Booking is now available.

For younger paddlers we have a 2 day programme run by Watermark Experiences, a youth kayak expedition concern. Plus on the 11th November we'll run a river clean up on both the Dart & Tavy organised by a team of local paddlers.

We are also offering a fundraiser Tee Shirt for Dartmoor Search & Rescue (Ashburton), see <http://gene17.com/riverssource/news/dartmoor-search-rescue-fundraiser-tee-2012/> for details

This events caters for both day visitors and weekenders, and we hope to see you at the River Dart Country Park in November! Please check the event website [www.riverssource.co.uk](http://www.riverssource.co.uk) for more information, and feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

The team at Gene17Kayaking, Simon Westgarth. Email [kayaking@gene17.com](mailto:kayaking@gene17.com); [www.gene17.com/kayaking/](http://www.gene17.com/kayaking/)

### **Weir**

Things are progressing well and if all goes to plan we will have a proper launching platform beside the river ready for next season. No more lugging the tarpaulin about, and no more muddy riverside scrambles to get off the water.

### **Bonfire Night**

Rob Dack is offering to hold a bonfire party for all Club members at his house (which has a suitable field attached) on Saturday 3rd November. Let me know if you fancy attending by email: [secretary@totnescanoclub.org.uk](mailto:secretary@totnescanoclub.org.uk). There will be a bonfire and barbecues available, and you should bring some food and drink and large (!) fireworks to put in the kitty. More details to follow once we have an idea of interest. Rob's house is in Collaton St Mary, en-route from Totnes to Paignton.

### **Coaches**

The Club is funding the training of another three Level One coaches who should be qualified ready for the new season. Thanks to Ali James, Connor O'Shaughnassy and Mark Dixon. We should also be funding the training for five of the current Level One coaches up to Level Two which will be a fantastic resource for the Club. A few other courses have also been paid out of Club funds.

The coaches all provide their services voluntarily and we are very fortunate to have so many willing and able people.