

# **T**LES FROM THE **RIVERBANK**



**NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2007**

## ***In search of Icebergs***



## ***...and Polar Bears***





In the summer of 2005 I was asked if I would be interested in a trip to somewhere with wall to wall sunshine and 24 hours daylight – the east coast of Greenland. At 70° north, Scoresbysund is in the Arctic Circle and at 350km can claim to be the longest fjord in the world.

This summer saw 2 years of planning and training come to fruition, as 50 members of West Lancashire Scouts aged between 15 and 60 travelled to east Greenland for the adventure of a lifetime. My role would be to jointly lead a group of 10 kayakers on a 230 km paddle into the depths of Scoresbysund, with the remaining 40 people exploring the mountains and glaciers at the head of the fjord. My trip would be in 3 phases – paddling along Scoresbysund, hiking up to a glacier and exploring for 12 days followed by a second phase of paddling around the Bear Islands at the head of Scoresbysund.

Following an overnight stop in Iceland, we arrived at Constable Pynt to be reunited with all our food and equipment which had been shipped out 2 months earlier. Our clothing, tents, stoves and 10 days of food had to be packed into the kayaks so that we could be self sufficient for the paddle along Scoresbysund, allowing a couple of extra days

for possible bad weather. Following a 4 day delay whilst we waited for some borrowed kayaks to be delivered, we were almost ready to start our journey – there was a last minute panic as the kayaks arrived without any hatch covers, so some temporary ones were quickly improvised (I knew watching all those episodes of Blue Peter would come in handy eventually)!



The airport staff kindly chauffeured our fully loaded kayaks 2 km to the water's edge on their flat bed truck, and we set off into a strong and very cold headwind into the unknown. The first 2 days were mostly overcast and very cold, and we had to pick our way through tightly packed ice floes to

make progress down the fjord. The airport huskies, who had befriended us over the first 4 days, followed us along the coast for 1.5 days until the cliffs stopped them progressing further. By then they had over 30 km to cover back to the airport!

These first couple of days found us a little apprehensive, as we had little idea of what to expect and didn't want to paddle too far away from the shore. Our risk assessment was to keep close in to shore and quickly land anyone who capsized on the shore and warm them up in a tent and sleeping bag. Although there appeared to be better leads further out into the fjord and at times we were forced further out just to maintain forward progress, we kept cutting back towards the safety of the shore. At times this made progress slow, and although we had hoped to cover 30km each day we had only managed 24km by the end of day one.

We kept to a strict regime for paddling by getting up at 7 am each day and aiming to be on the water by 9 am – whilst most would make the 9 am start line, there was always someone who wasn't quite ready! The loose plan was to paddle 10km and then have a break, followed by a further 10km and lunch and then the final 10km before landing and setting up camp. Day 2 saw us reach our target of 30km, only to be rewarded by heavy drizzle all evening. However, this didn't stop one hardy soul lighting the customary campfire and burning all our rubbish.



After a spell of heavy drizzle for 18 hours running into day 3, the sun finally reappeared and the ice floes gave way to a never-ending procession of ever-larger icebergs. As the weather conditions improved and the ice floes were left behind, we made our greatest distance by covering 36km on day 3. This put us back on schedule and we maintained the 30km per day for the rest of the paddle in.

Each evening (although it was never dark!) we camped on the shore of the fjord and arose to fantastic views of icebergs and blue skies as far as the eye could see. We must have seen hundreds of icebergs over the next few days, but never tired of seeing the many varied shapes that had formed. Some were as big as football stadia, and there was a regular rumble of thunder as bits fell off and crashed into the water.



One afternoon we actually witnessed a large lump fall off an iceberg and then the whole thing turned turtle as it rebalanced itself in the water. It was amazing to watch, until we realised 5 minutes later that a small tidal wave was heading straight towards us! We were in shallow water, and from a distance the wave looked quite big – it turned out to be about 2 feet when it arrived, and wasn't even worth surfing! This experience made us very wary of the bigger icebergs, although it proved to be the nearest we were to get to a calving iceberg for the entire trip.

We also found a number of hunter's huts on our journey up the fjord, although these seemed to have suffered the passage of time.



They were badly looked after, with food left lying around inside and piles of rubbish outside – the philosophy seemed to be to walk to the door and simply throw rubbish as far as you could! One hut was quite large and had been used as a weather station about 30 years earlier, with the old radio still in place. Many travellers had left messages of their visit on a notice board on the wall, so we left our names as well. The most recent 2 names had visited the week before us by helicopter – cheats!



It's fair to say that that the paddling was generally a lot easier than that experienced around the UK – no tides to worry about, and most days the surface was like a millpond or only slightly ruffled by the wind. However, we had trained hard for the trip for over 12 months, including in heavy surf and numerous rescues, as a swim in arctic waters would be pretty serious.

Towards the end of our journey up the fjord, we cut across to the Bear Islands and found a small freshwater lake where we took a much-needed bath – it felt great once the numbness had worn off! This was one of our best campsites, with glorious views across to other islands and numerous icebergs, whilst we sat in tee shirts and shorts cooking tea!

As we'd crossed to the Bear Islands we had skirted the edge of O Fjord, where strong winds are the predominant weather pattern. We paddled a very hard 4km past one of the islands, where the wind pushed waves made it feel like paddling through treacle. Compared to previous days on the water, we knew that

the final day would be the most serious, as we had a 6km wide crossing to accomplish and there were very few landing opportunities as we would be surrounded by steep sided mountains.



On the last day, one of the group decided to have another bath as we crossed a 6km wide channel in choppy waters. This was the worst possible place to have a capsized, as we were a long way from land and were being pushed quickly at 90 degrees to our direction of travel. Although I was only a few feet from the upturned kayak, and the paddler was waving an arm for an Eskimo rescue, I couldn't turn my kayak quickly enough before he ran out of breathe and abandoned ship. The kayak was quickly emptied and was being manoeuvred into position for re-entry when 2 paddlers arrived to help with the rescue – good job as the guy was at least 16 stone! We soon had him back in the kayak and he didn't seem to suffer any ill effects despite the water only just being above freezing. However, he was nervous about paddling any further in the choppy water, so one guy rafted up with him (to support the kayak and make sure the paddler didn't deteriorate) and 2 of us then set up a tandem tow for the next half hour.

As the sea became less choppy, we stopped and persuaded the paddler to continue under his own steam, but he immediately wobbled a few times and almost fell back in! I quickly rafted up to him and paddled like that for another 5 minutes or so, until we were in very calm water and he paddled the remaining

short distance to the shore. Fortunately the other 4 kayaks (2 singles and 2 doubles) had successfully made their own way across the fjord, and we landed on the bouldery shore next to them for a well-earned rest and a chocolate rush. The last 9km of the paddle in was on mirror flat water in a Skilliebught Fjord to rendezvous with a stash of food and mountaineering equipment to get us up to the glacier.



After 8 days of paddling covering 230 km at an average of 30 km per day, we reached the head of a small fjord called Skilliebught where we left the kayaks and collected our rucksacks and mountaineering gear to hike up to the other 40 Scouts for the middle phase of our trip. The walk up took a gruelling 23 hours over 2 days, and due to the hard terrain we only covered 24 km. We waded thigh-deep across a glacial river, traversed 2 glaciers and conquered 5 km of moraine with boulders any size from footballs to houses!



At 9.30 pm on the second day we reached base camp and met the rest of our expedition group and pitched our tents on the rock covered ice. In the 8 days we spent at base camp (1500m above sea level) we went on 2 mini expeditions further up the glaciers and onto the ice cap. Having gone to Greenland for the sea kayaking, I felt like a fish out of water travelling over the glaciers, but the experience was very exhilarating if not nerve-racking at times!



After 8 days we had to face the 2 day walk back down to the coast, which I can't say was any easier than the walk up despite it being downhill! It just seemed to take forever, and was certainly a test of stamina, patience and at times humour. Four of us from the first phase of kayaking returned for the paddle round the Bear Islands, along with another 6 people from the mountaineering group. This phase would be easier than the first, as the group were less experienced and the distances covered would be shorter.



We returned to the island with the freshwater lake for our first camp, and this time I went for a short swim – very refreshing! Each evening we had a campfire and even did some baking using a collapsible oven. After 4 weeks of packaged meals and dried toast-like biscuits, fresh bread and jam was a great treat! Over the 4 days we covered about 80 km, and finally rendezvoused with the other 40 at a large bay on Milne Land, where they were to be collected by light aircraft and taken back to Constable Pynt for the flight back to Iceland and on to the UK.

As the kayaks couldn't fit in the light aircraft, we were to be transported back along the fjord in open powerboats. We then had a 3.5-hour ride in the powerboats at nearly 60 km/hour, with an unplanned stop when the local drivers spotted a chance for tea in the shape of a seal – fortunately it got away. Although the plan had been to take us back to Constable Pynt and meet up with the rest of the group, the ice floes near the airport were too thickly packed for the powerboats and we had to be dropped off 32km short of the airport – our adventure wasn't quite over.



In fact the next 2 hours proved to be the hardest paddling, as we had to dodge past large blocks of ice which were moving

sideways and up and down by several feet! We had to back track many times to find a route through the ice and at times the party became separated as gaps suddenly disappeared. After 2 hours nervous paddling we had covered less than 2 km, and in another 15 minutes we finally spotted a suitable landing place and stopped for the night. It was 10 pm by the time tents were pitched and tea cooked, having missed lunch due to the rush to catch the powerboats, so for the first time we didn't have a campfire but went straight to bed – it had been a very long day. These 2 hours put the rest of the paddling into perspective, as this seemed to be more like the arctic experienced we have been warned about.

Next day the sea had settled down and by climbing up the cliff a little we could see a reasonably clear channel in the middle of the fjord. With a strong but cold following wind, we covered the last 30 km in record time and got back to the airport by mid afternoon. Although the intention had been to travel all the way back by powerboat, it seemed quite fitting that we had covered the last leg under our own steam.

We had a couple of days stopover in Iceland on the way home for a rest and sightseeing, as well as a gentle return to civilisation! This had been the trip of a lifetime and the camaraderie whilst we had been away had been immense. The Arctic is a very special place and I feel privileged to have spent a few weeks there with friends. Surprisingly we saw very little wildlife apart from sea birds, although a polar bear was spotted only 5 miles away from the airport a couple of days before we returned! Maybe next time?

***Phil Haworth***

## ***Christmas Greetings***

There's a gap down here - just big enough for me, on behalf of the Committee, to wish all club members a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



# ***The Stig holds on to the Presidency by 177yds***



## ***Tryweryn: the story goes on***

This is the one you have all been waiting for, the biggest challenge yet for the Swimmers Club, well tough because Burger Boy is doing a full and complete report tactfully penned in his unique style unless he has already told everyone about it. However for fullness of fact (enable you to see a true account) and to carry on with the Swimmer series, read on.

The Tryweryn was our next step in swimming progression, a genuine grade 3-4 river running with a release of 9cumecs (read - lot of water and swimming opportunity). Burger Boy and I had booked onto a Intermediate paddler course with the idea being to take us up to the next level of paddling, we were the only

Swimming Club members on this trip as River God was whooping it up at the British Championships and Jo 'The Knees' Hacking was shaving her legs (see last issue's article by BB and you'll know why) however Uncle Clive joined us to see if he could pick up any tips - from us. At this point let me just say well done to River God, one swim at Nottingham as well as 24th in the kayak and a fantastic 2nd in the open Canoe, pushing a GB team member into 3rd place. Back to the Tryweryn and the interesting stuff then, unfortunately Uncle Clive had enrolled into a different group than BB and I so he missed out on gaining lots of useful tips from us, but it must be said his coach probably passed

some on to him, though we weren't too sure if they were to do with kayaking, especially when he turned out in a sequined ballroom dress on the second day – ask him about it.

The group BB and I were in also had 2 members who we didn't know but turned out to be fantastic company and great fun, Diana and Roger from Totnes CC.



It seemed that the Tryweryn had got advanced warning of our 'paddling skills' as at the initial get together we were asked how good our roll was? – why ask about sandwiches thought I, still it was Wales, and it was at this point that BB blurted out that I was president of the Swim Team, tactful as ever! And cue a sickening pallor descending over our coaches.

In a vain hope of teaching us something we were fixed up with a top class coach, a level 5 coach assessor, what a waste. What an amazing paddler he was, I could teach him nothing but he taught us lots as he put us through our paces, he even got BB into making eddies, sometimes without the need to hold onto the trees – oops I let that one slip.

Anyway the first day saw us absolutely shattered after progressing down the 'graveyard' with only one swim for BB and a roll for me, we had really done the business on some big water and were rightly pleased with ourselves. BB's suggestion that I was getting too good and if I didn't swim soon he would take the Swim Team Presidency off me was met with the derision it deserved, the cheek of him.

The second day had us starting above the 'chipper' doing more routines ready to move on down to the bigger sections. After a quick break when we were working the 'graveyard section', BB showed his true class with the best swim so far, a swim so damaging he again threatened to take the Swim Team presidency off me. BB swam down the 'graveyard' being dragged upside down in his boat unable to get his spray deck off. When he eventually got out his face was a mess, yes I know it is, but I mean with blood streaming from a cut above his eye.



Unfortunately that was the end of his day, but on the bright side it was now 3-1 coaching for us and we had someone to take pictures. We progressed down the 'graveyard' again and



then ran the 'ski slope' a couple of times with me rolling up at the bottom of it before breaking for lunch. BB was all patched up by this time and had stopped crying and was ready to record what I must say was some pretty impressive paddling scenes on his new camera.

Our group was working its way down the bigger drops, running most of them a couple of times when we ran the drop under the stone bridge. Looking at BB's video as I came down I was leaning back and not paddling hard enough which allowed me to do an impressive aerial pirouette to land upside down in some seriously rough water. A half hearted attempt at a roll and a couple of smacks on the head and I was out and swimming.

What a swim, I couldn't get to the bank and whichever way I tried the water just pushed me the opposite way. Eventually after a fair battering I managed to get out just above the café wave with my boat getting caught at the café. BB's video is available on special release and shows the swim until he can't zoom any further and I go out of sight, we paced it afterwards at 177 yards. Job done and presidency retained in style.

When I was suitably calmed down and luckily with only a little bruising I dragged my boat back up to the bridge and we ran the rest of the river to the NRA Bridge with no further mishaps. What a fantastic experience it was, so good we're going to do the same course again next year, although BB and my aches and pains suggest we may make it a one day event as two days is really tough.

Apart from pretending we knew what we were doing on the beginners 1star course the next trip out was the Burrs Paddle Festival, which was a little low key due to the poor water levels, with only a couple of swims on the day, but none for the swimming club members.

Just going back to the 1 star course, it is worth mentioning that Paul Wicks – Level 3 coach - managed to swim in the canal. From what I hear he was demonstrating forward paddling and it was so long since he last paddled that he caught an edge and toppled in, although I have heard he's saying that he was pushed in when getting out of the boat. Make up your own mind on that one, but if you've seen him paddle then...!

Ahh Halton, a local venue at last to paddle. BB and I made our first pilgrimage to Halton at the crack of sparrow fart as I was working in the afternoon. We coped quite magnificently with the low water level and BB looked marvellous in his new helmet, he is looking more like a real paddler all the time.

By mid morning I was off to work just as the rest of the swim team arrived leaving Jo 'The Knees' and an unusually sober River God joining BB to keep him safe. Bugger me if BB didn't manage to trash himself without me there, I really think he is becoming a 'self harmer', still as I wasn't there I'll not bore you with the true facts but ad-lib and make fun of the afflicted just like he would do to me.

BB's demise came about when he was messing on the wave below the last groyne when he became distracted by a 1star paddler on the 'Introduction course' who was surfing alongside him pulling cheerios & banjos on the wave, poor BB gave up without a fight and forgot the first rule of winter paddling: 'try to keep the humany bit on top and the plasticity bit on the bottom' - next thing you know and up he came covered in blood with another scar to mar his grotesque features – no, not all of them just his face again, sadly he missed a swim opportunity and rolled up.

That's it for now, next up for the Swim Team is Teesside, yippee see you there.

***Bjorn Swimmer, crap but consistent***

# *First and Last At Washburn*



**Paddlers:** Allan, Jo & Steph Hacking, Norman & Mark Green, “Old” Albert Risely.

I visited the River Washburn last year, but only as a spectator. I was impressed with its speed, and determined that it should be on my “to do” list for this year. Time rolled by, and it was only when I realised that October 7th would be the last release of the year that I resolved it to be the day for my first descent.

Allan Hacking, who had kindly agreed to guide me down the river, was almost ready to get on the water as Kath and I arrived at the (almost full) car park. My pathetic excuses that “I didn’t want to hold him back” and “I would watch his fist run from the path” cut no

ice with him. “Get ready!” he ordered. (Oooh, he is so masterful.)

The Greens had now arrived, and in record time we were all on the water and warming up below the massive dam. Allan gave me a quick briefing on signals and river etiquette as we waited for another group to set off ahead of us. Jo and Allan led us down towards the first bridge, with Steph and me close behind, Norman and Mark bringing up the rear.

I was quite nervous at first, with thoughts of the Washburn’s legendary ‘hard to get’ eddies, and convinced that I would take a swim at some point on my first run. I had been sufficiently worried before we set out,

that I had taken the precaution of taping-in the loose foam pads on my seat to stop them floating away when the 'inevitable' happened.



I need not have worried, as a half decent breakout to where Allan & Jo were waiting signalled the start of a confidence building exercise that would see me safely down to the next bridge. With each eddy and drop I was getting into my stride, with Allan briefing me on each manoeuvre in turn. I had a little wobble coming down the 'big drop', but managed to recover and catch the big friendly eddy immediately below.

We hauled out at the second bridge, where Kath (who had been walking the riverside path with Pat and Janet Robinson) was waiting. They gave us a hand carrying the boats back to the car park, and we all sat by the river while we had our lunch.

## ***Polo night***

The 30th November will be a polo session at Fulwood Pool.

Polo is a fast paced game with 5 players on each time trying to score in a net raised above the pool. Like a wet version of five-a-side football. Think of the end of coaching session games with a few rules to make it safe (dull I know). It's brilliant fun and an excellent way to practice your boat and paddling skills - there's no experience necessary for the



For our second run we elected to go all the way down to the bottom, and arranged for Kath and Pat to drive the cars down and meet us there. Meanwhile, they would follow us down to the 'big drop' on foot. This run was a hoot, with my confidence level on overdrive, I hammered into as many tight eddies as I could find, revelling in the volume of fast moving water I had not experienced for months. We stopped at several points on the way down so that Jo and Allan could indulge themselves, playing happily on the bigger waves, while I sat tight, not wanting to blot my copybook with a swim at this stage. The lower section of the river was a delight, with Norman and me playing a game of 'eddy stealing' like a couple of big kids.

I thoroughly enjoyed my first trip to the Washburn, and my thanks go to the Hackings and the Greens for looking after me.

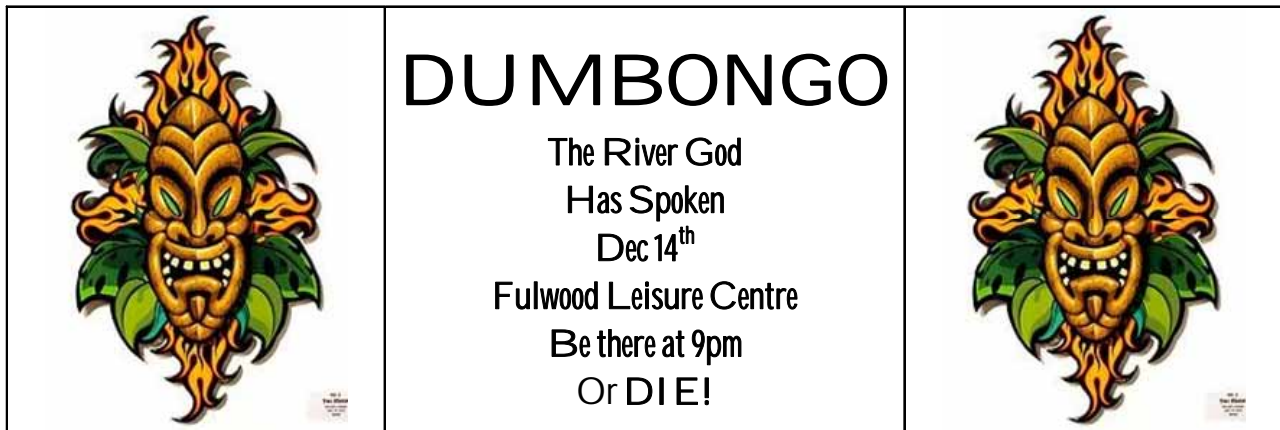
***Albert Risely***

session. Just turn up with your trunks and a t-shirt (you need to cover your shoulders) and get stuck in. All ages and abilities welcome.

The club have entered a polo tournament later in the year if you develop a taste for it!

The session starts as usual at 21.15. Please do not go onto the poolside before this. There will be the usual fee to paddle.





To celebrate the feast of Xmas, the hallowed, famous River God...

**DUMBONGO** has demanded that four teams made up of the finest and most pathetic white water wipe-out warriors meet at Fulwood Leisure centre on the 14<sup>th</sup> Day, **Friday** in the Month of Noel 2007 (that's **December** Grant!) to compete in the 'it's a knockout' contest for the ... **DUMBONGO** Trophy.

**DUMBONGO** has requested one of his most finest wipe-out warriors to collect the entrants names..... he is the man of Fat, usually found upside down in the water or if he is dry he will most probably have a burger in his mouth.

Cost of entry is £20 per Tribe (Team) and there will be **Prizes!**

See Adam for details..... He's taking names **NOW!**

**Any profit that is made from this event will go towards the cost of coaching upates for present and future Ribble Canoe Club coaches. The coaches at Ribble C.C. provide their time and services free of charge and pay money out of their own pockets to do so, by supporting Xmas DUMBONGO you are supporting the people who support you**

# ***AGM 2007***

Notice is hereby given that the Ribble Canoe Club AGM will be held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008 at 7:30 for 8:00pm at Fulwood & Broughton Cricket Club.

This meeting is open to every Club member and is your opportunity to raise any issues you may have about the Club, its organisation and the way you want the Club to be run in future. Items of discussion for inclusion on the Agenda and proposals for new committee members are therefore invited and should be notified in writing to the Hon. Secretary, Antony Marsh no later than 31st December 2007.

Current Committee members are:

Chairman	Terry Maddock *
Secretary	Antony Marsh (Standing down as Secretary)
Treasurer	Kath Risely
Competition Secretary	Susan Shaw (Standing down from Committee)
Quartermaster	Steve Swarbrick
General Committee	Tom Byrne
	Grant Dillon
	Mark Dillon
	Adam Fielder
	Allan Hacking
	Peter Jones
	John Kington
	Mark Loftus *
	Nicky Marsh
	Clive Robinson *
	Iain Robinson
	Martin Stockdale
	Brian Woodhouse (Membership)

Those marked \* are due to retire by rotation (every 2 years) and being eligible offer themselves for re-election.

Proposals for the role of Secretary and Competition Secretary, as well as any other proposals for committee members are most welcome and should be notified to the Secretary as described above. Agreement will then be sought at the AGM.

The full Agenda for the AGM will be posted in the January edition of the newsletter.

***Antony Marsh***



## Would you like to learn to canoe?

Ribble Canoe Club is running a beginners' course in March which will teach the basic skills necessary to paddle a kayak.

The course includes a classroom session to look at the theory of canoeing, three pool sessions to gain practical experience, and three outdoor sessions, at the end of which students will be able to take (and hopefully pass) the BCU 1 star award! No previous experience is necessary.

The pool sessions will take place on Friday nights in the swimming pool at Fulwood Leisure Centre, Black Bull Lane, Preston. The club has all the equipment necessary including kayaks and paddles, so all you need to bring is yourself - and your swimming costume, of course! (Flip-flops or water shoes and an old t-shirt would also be a good idea.)

The outdoor sessions will take place during the day on Saturdays at the Hand & Dagger or at other locations near Preston, details will be confirmed on the course. Again, the club will provide all the equipment, but you will need to wear warm clothing and a cagoule (but they may get dirty or wet so don't wear your best gear!), and bring a change of clothes.

The course dates are as follows:

Date	Location	Time
March 7 <sup>th</sup>	Pool	7:45pm – 10:15pm
March 8 <sup>th</sup>	Hand & Dagger	TBC
March 14 <sup>th</sup>	Pool	8:45pm – 10:15pm
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Hand & Dagger	TBC
March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Assessment, venue TBC	TBC

The course will cost £30 per person, which includes the cost of the instruction and pool hire. In addition you will need to be a member of Ribble Canoe Club, maximum cost £20 per person.

For further details, or to book a place please telephone:

Tom Byrne



# ***Whitewater Swim Team Conquer the Tri... Trew... Tra... a Big River Somewhere in Wales***

It was an early morning in October when President Stig, Burgerboy and some serious Ribble type coach guy called Clive set off for the big, huge, Welsh river. There was a slight delay because Clive who emailed us his address for pick-up, forgot to give us his house number so at 5.45am we were looking in people's windows and whispering through letter boxes, "Psssssst Clive are you in there?"

Eventually we spied him through the window, sat in his Y fronts eating his chucky egg and soldiers. He then refused to leave until he had eaten his 3 Weetabix and put on his lucky socks - a sign of big things to come!

Anyway, off we set through the fog and into the valleys, we wandered around for 2 hours before we discovered we were at Lluckinglost, somewhere near the Shitweryn Wales. A further ½ hour later and we found our way and arrived at the Welsh National Whitewater Centre.



***Quick! Run!  
The Swim Team's back in town!***

Before I continue I should give you some background to our adventure. It all began with the new E.E.C. directive about river mapping, geological density surveys and reducing water qualities which were beginning to threaten the existence of the endangered Welsh leek.

Anyway the cost of said surveys fell to the Welsh Canoe Association, who upon investigation found the projected costs to be in the £300,000 bracket for the big, huge Welsh river. Obviously they found this to be unachievable but luckily they were directed by the BCU who asked for Whitewater Swim Team consultants; Stig and Burger Boy to take a ganders at it.

I'm getting boring and anorakky-scientific now, but not many people are currently aware of our Swim Team Environmental Projects (We've just recently returned from an emergency aid expedition in the North Pole, where due to global warming Norman of the North's house was beginning to melt and his whale meat supplies were beginning to curdle – without thought for our own safety, we air-lifted him a freezer and cut the arms off all his parkas to prevent sun stroke). The Stig has just emailed me – stop picking on Norman!

Anyway I'm drifting off again..... We arrived at the centre and met several other swimmers from canoe clubs around the UK, who spoke of grade 2's, 3's and 4's, as I never got any GCSE's I stayed out of that conversation. Some of them wore full face Darth Vader helmets and kept saying awesome, mega, eddys and hello to someone

call draulics. I don't know much about this canoeing lark so I kept me mouth shut and occasionally rubbed me chin, saying mmmmmmm and nodding me head. I think they fell for it.

We then met our level 5 river god type coaches who asked us to introduce ourselves. Everyone had vast experience of being a coach, I've only really had experience of buses so I said nowt and rubbed me chin again, mmmm.

Eventually everyone introduced themselves with the exception of myself and Stig..... then the Stig began – “I've mainly got experience of level 2 and 3 rivers, I've been paddling about 2 years, I'm currently training to be a Level 2 Coach and from this course I hope to gain yyaaaaahhh!” That's when I kicked him and called him, “You big lying git.”

I grassed him up for what he is; the Swim Team President, 79 swims last year, has swam most of the Lake district rivers, winner of the 2006 D'Ribbler Award and is sponsored by Bazooka Verruca face cream! He then sulked for a bit whilst I regaled all with tales of my many swims, my bombproof ham, cheese and Swiss rolls as well as my experiences on buses.

The coaches then split us up and with uncanny accuracy split Coach Clive into one serious group and the Swim Team into another, sort of more remedial type kayaking group. The Coach then asked us to follow him to the start of the river, Stig immediately reverted true to form and followed the coach. Fifty yards later the coach said, “Don't you think you should bring your boat, it helps you know” – BUUUUUSTED!

Anyway we paddled all day with the exception of a little swim I did whilst checking for depth at the entrance to the graveyard. In a nutshell our coach told us to forget everything we've ever learnt and to learn just 2 new paddle strokes; the Shagga and the Squeeze. When Diane, one of our

fellow paddlers stated she had a problem with one of her strokes, the Coach jumped on us before we could even open our mouths – we weren't going to say anything, honest!

We now adjourned to our B&B where we were offered 2 rooms – once again they split us up – me and the Stig together and Clive in his own room. I was getting a bit paranoid now, why do they keep putting me with the Stig. I'm a serious paddler not a D'Ribbler! We then went to Lballla to get some grub and booze.



***Clive letting his hair down at the pub in Lballla***

Three hours later and after a few beers, we start telling stories and confessions – then Coach Clive dropped the bombshell.....

Not many people know this - but prior to taking up the Kayak, Clive excelled greatly in another recreational activity, the art of Dance. Clive felt pleased and relieved knowing that he could confide his secret with the swim team and stated that for one of the first times in his life he no longer really felt repressed. Later whilst leaving the pub, Clive did a cartwheel and declared to the world, “I'm Loud! I'm Proud! I'm the Lord of the Dance!” Little did we know the demon we had released.

The next morning we kitted up, got our boats and waited with the other paddlers outside the centre. It was then that Clive came out, he strutted from the changing room, sashaying past the other paddlers with his boat and head held high, I could have died on the spot. He

was wearing his WRSI helmet, a pair of wetlook patent leather shoes, a sequined catsuit unbuttoned to the waist and a number 66 on his back (later to become 99) and he once more proclaimed to the world, "I'm Loud! I'm Proud! I'm the Lord of the Dance!"

He was next seen 1 hour later doing the 180° upside down Rumba down a stretch of the big Welsh river.



***Clive in his latest Latin American paddling kit***

Anyway back to anorak stuff – as promised I completed a full riverbed survey of the graveyard section of the big Welsh river. Whilst swimming upside down in my boat I forced my helmet back onto the nape of my neck and used it to scrape a selection of weeds and fauna from the riverbed, which I then deposited down the neck of my cag for safe keeping.

With sampling completed I then commenced the rock density testing, for this I used my head. I ensured that a full head on collision, just like a conker, took place with a selection of varied sized rocks, ranging in sharpness and density. It was then that I remembered my Whitewater Swimming Masterclass: Lesson 1 and the scientific difficulty in extracting air from water so I decided that it was time to pop the spray deck... lean forward and pull the ejector strap.....oops can't lean forward... watch that rock with my chin... sh\*\*...

bang!... oops another rock... sh\*\*... bang!... I know, I'll smash me knee through the spraydeck..... bang... right into another rock... bang!... sh\*\*... I think I'm drowning..... aah bliss... I've escaped... swim... rock... bang!... s\*\*t... paddle... bang!... sh\*\*... bang!... you get the picture.



***Graveyard rash from that big Welsh river***

Whilst I continued with the survey, Stig made himself busy monitoring river current patterns using the red stain emerging from beneath my boat. With the Graveyard riverbed survey now complete, Stig tested the water quality. This was achieved with a secret, mystery playboating move called the '180° Up & Under', Stig being the pieonear of that particular move.

It's sometimes easy to see why he's the Swim Team President, 177 yard swim, upside down whilst river tasting for water quality. Anyway we then adjourned to the National White Water Centre First Aid Room to discuss our findings.

The medic stated that it was of paramount importance that I immediately report to the Casualty department of the nearest hospital.

President Stig stated, "I'll get him there immediately, time is of the essence, just give me directions to the nearest hospital, we mustn't waste time!"

"It's in Wrexham about 50 miles south" said the medic.



“Whoaaa! Whoa! wo! It doesn’t really look that bad now when you look at it, if he lies down and we slope his head to the floor I’m sure he’ll stop bleeding, I mean, he isn’t even unconscious and he’s still breathing, I can take him to the hossi’ tomorrow,” said the President.

“Why don’t you give him your car keys,” said the medic.

“Whoooah! Wot! It’s a Mazda and I’ve got calf skin seats... yada, yada yada...” get the picture, anyway tick followed tock and after much in depth discussion it was decided that the Stig would monitor my condition closely for the next 24 hours.

Anyway, so ends another Swim Team adventure; the Welsh Canoe Association got their riverbed surveyed on the cheap, Burger Boy got thrown off the course, Stig broke the Swim Team record with his 177 yard swim, Clive rekindled his passion for the Cha Cha Cha and we all went home for tea and cakes.

**Adam Fielder**

# ***Freestyle Update***

## ***Boulters***

Final round of Youth Freestyle Series  
22/09/07

Ribble CC represented in three categories: -

Girls up to 15: Steph Hacking 5<sup>th</sup>

Girls up to 18: Jo Hacking 1<sup>st</sup>

Boys up to 18: (A very competitive entry)

Dominic Brayfield 2<sup>nd</sup>

Grant Dillon 6<sup>th</sup>

Ben Brayfield 7<sup>th</sup>

## ***Youth Freestyle Series***

Overall results:

Girls up to 15: Steph Hacking 4<sup>th</sup>

Girls up to 18: Jo Hacking 1<sup>st</sup>



***Stig closely monitoring Burgerboy’s health throughout the next crucial 24 hours, it was a little touch and go at times.***

\*No canoes, sheep or Burger Boys were harmed during the writing of this article and any resemblance to Eskimo type characters, living in igloos, hunting Polar Bears and called Norman is purely coincidental.

Boys up to 18: (A very competitive entry)

Dominic Brayfield 1<sup>st</sup>

Ben Brayfield 2<sup>nd</sup>

Grant Dillon 7<sup>th</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> Season)!

A very good set of results!! Many of the paddlers will be entering the selection event in December for entry onto the GBR Team for 2008. Some will be moving up to compete against seniors, so for them the competition will be stronger this time around.

## ***British Championships***

Dominic and Ben were in the top 10 K1 Men (not juniors!).

Grant came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Open Canoe Single Class and 24<sup>th</sup> in the K1 Men.

***Allan Hacking***



**Paddlers:** Norman & Pat Green, Albert & Kath Risely.

We were lucky to get the last four places on the last Cwm Pennant Sea Kayak Festival. The festival is held annually at the Cwm Pennant Mountain Centre near Porthmadog and in the Snowdonia National Park. A mountain centre may seem a little strange as a venue for a sea kayak festival, but the facilities are ideal and it is only a short drive of about 15 minutes to places such as Criccieth on the coast. There is a choice of a camping field or dormitory style accommodation, and whilst Pat & Norman elected for the dormitory, we had decided to tough it out and camp. However, after the delights of the club camps this year when our tent collapsed in gales at Rhosneigr and we wallowed in a Glastonbury style mud bath at Coniston, at the last minute we chickened out and booked an en-suite room at a farmhouse B&B a few minutes away. What luxury it was

to climb into a warm soft bed at the end of the day and have a delicious breakfast cooked in the morning! We may be wimps, but we were warm, dry & comfy. The mountain centre is, or rather was, run by the London Borough of Hillingdon and due to a lack of funds was to close the day after the festival finished. A great loss for many people.

We travelled down on the Friday, and as the weather was sunny we met at the harbour car park at Pwllheli for a quick paddle in the bay. We didn't venture too far as there was a stiff off shore breeze blowing, but it was good to limber up and make the most of a lovely day. The first evening of the festival was very informal with people arriving from all over the country and a tasty buffet laid on.

The Saturday morning briefing at 9am explained the plans for the day. This was basically to meet at Borth y Gest and complete a trip up the Dwyryd estuary past

Portmeirion. We were to split in to two groups according to experience – ‘Six Star’ under the leadership of Peter Roscoe would do a slightly longer trip. Still up the estuary, but then back with the tide and round the headland to finish at Cricceth, while ‘Sea Virgins’ would have some coaching in the harbour prior to the trip and just go to Portmeirion and back. We chose the latter group and under the expert guidance of Andy Nicholls from Dorset we received instruction on forward & reverse paddling techniques, basically concentrating on body position and rotation.



We were then given the opportunity to try demo boats from P & H and Valley before setting off across the estuary. Avid readers of this newsletter may recall that we completed this trip in July with much trouble route finding and Norman had at that time declared that he was ‘never, ever going to do that trip again’ (for at least two months as it happened). But this time we had ‘the experts’ and had sensibly waited for the tide to come well enough in to cover all the sandbars which caused us so much grief last time, and what a difference! We were able to admire the scenery more and for far less effort were soon past Portmeirion.

The only problem this time was that the tide was so far up that all the beaches which were suitable lunch spots last time were covered leaving just one small cove (Minfford) crammed wall to wall with over 50 sea boats. Quite a spectacle. Having found yourself a large enough spot to park your boat it was

then a slither and scramble over rocks and boats to find somewhere to park your bum, but it did mean that we at least got to know some of the other paddlers.



The ‘Six Stars’ set off back first on the rapidly receding tide, followed by ‘Sea Virgins’. We saw the advanced group out of their boats and dragging them across the sandbars in an attempt to get out of the drying estuary, while we just managed to float across with minutes to spare. Albert had paddled (and fallen in love with) a composite Capella 167 which he said handled like a dream, so back at the harbour Norman and I both tried it out. I also tried Norman’s paddle as Albert and I had been told that our paddles were basically rubbish and we needed to invest in something better. Seems like it may turn out to have been an expensive day.

The evening at the centre consisted of a sit down dinner (bring your own booze) followed by a couple of slide shows. The first, about paddling on the Lleyn peninsula was



presented by Jim Krawiecki who, with our very own Andy Biggs, co-wrote the book 'Welsh Sea Kayaking' (highly recommended!), and was followed, unsurprisingly, by a suitable retail opportunity. The second was about a recent expedition to Greenland - what fabulous inspiring scenery, if a little chilly. To round off the evening there was a bonfire and booze outside (in the rain).



It was raining and breezy the following morning as we arrived at the centre for our briefing and then all headed to a small beach called Traeth Crugan about 1 mile to the east of Llanbedrog. The 'Six Stars' were off to the St Tudwal Islands (Tuddies) while us 'Virgins' were aiming for Abersoch further along the coast.



At the get in the sea was fabulous – flat and turquoise, although it did look like it may have been a little choppier beyond the headland. And it was! As a first experience on 'proper' sea it was quite a challenge, and

beyond the second headland it became even more so. We were told it was now a good Force 5, with big waves and swell making for a rough ride. As the novice in the group I was looked after by Dave Evans from the centre. I later found out he is a BCU Level 5 coach and chairman of the BCU's Sea Touring committee, so I couldn't have been in better hands, but I wish I'd known that at the time.

We landed through the surf at Tan y Myndd although no-one really seemed to know why. This was at the north end of a long sandy beach called The Warren and seemed to be a maze of caravans. After a brief respite we then had to launch back through the surf to complete the last leg of the journey to Abersoch. The wind and waves were fierce which made our progress slow, and I knew conditions were deteriorating when Dave suddenly became very talkative, asking questions such as 'where do you live', 'how long have you lived there' and 'tell me all about your job'. But at last the pretty harbour came in to view, the sea became calmer and we were soon out of our boats and having lunch.



As I felt mentally and physically tired, although elated that it was possible to actually survive in such conditions, I decided to wait in Abersoch with Pat for company while the others surfed most of the way back to collect the cars. Our group hadn't been gone long when a small pleasure boat arrived with one of the 'Six Star' paddlers as a passenger, minus his boat. We were asked to look after him as his rescuers were concerned he was

bordering on hypo-thermic having capsized seven times in rough conditions out towards the 'Tuddies'. Whilst chatting to him, we were unsure whether he always talked like that, or if hypo-thermia had indeed set in, so after feeding him oatly bars and giving him a hat, Pat & I set off in search of a hot drink as we had finished the contents of our flasks. Those of you who paddle with us will be amazed that our kitchen goddess was caught without the usual selection of beverages, but I kid you not! A hot drink on a wet Sunday afternoon proved tricky to find, but we eventually found a small take-away with a large queue, which we jumped to the front of as we had 'an emergency'. Our 'patient' thankfully seemed OK after a cup of hot sweet tea and a good chat, and shortly afterwards the first contingent from his group arrived with the news that some paddlers had headed straight back to the get in to collect the cars. It wasn't long before the drivers

arrived and we could all get dried and changed.

Some paddlers were returning to the centre for coffee and cake, but as it was quite late we had a meal of tasty lamb stew in Abersoch and chatted about the day's events before setting off home.

Although the Cwm Pennant Centre was to close, it was mentioned by the organisers that there may be another festival next year albeit at a different location. All I can say is, if you are interested in sea paddling and get the opportunity to go I am sure you will have a fantastic weekend. A couple of paddlers had decided against the Sunday trip as they hadn't been paddling long, but most of the others were very experienced and friendly and happy to encourage 'Sea Virgins' like ourselves. Highly recommended.

***Kath Risely***

# ***Two sides to every story***

## ***The River Access debate***

Through all of the on-going quest for greater river access and debate with anglers and canoeists I feel I have become more aware of issues affecting both parties. I would like to offer through this article my view of canoeing and the angler regarding river use - from both perspectives - and hopefully get us all to consider other people's views and situations, and at this point I should say I have one foot in each camp as I have been an angler since childhood.

River Access isn't just going to be about allowing us to drift down a stretch of river when we feel like it, its going to be far more complex situation to resolve than that, because even if canoeists win the access campaign they will still have to 'live' with anglers and land owners and vice versa. I understand all EU countries apart from England and Wales have access agreements that permit canoeists excellent river access

but England is different from the EU (forget the Welsh). In England land ownership - possibly due to the amount of people on this tiny island or through our enterprise - has evolved differently to most other countries. Our whole culture and viewpoint is different to that of other nations and a situation has come about where almost every piece of land is owned by someone, and if they can get a return from it they will. This also applies to some stretches of the coast which are privately owned.

Anglers put a lot into the environment in order to benefit from it and rightly share a sense of ownership and bonding with their fishing venue. For example I know of stretches of river owned by members of the Barbel Society where at their own expense they brought diggers in to create riffles and deep holes, planted the banks, created eddies and slack spots to encourage young fish

survival and improve catches, they have also stocked the river with a variety of species - note that these fish are not caught for eating and will not be removed from the venue. This type of caring and nurturing should be encouraged as the environment will be better for all of us and because often the EA view on rivers is from a flood defence point whereby all bank-side growth is removed and rivers are straightened and canalised to improve run off. However I will quote from an entry in the Barbel Society Newsletter that prompted me into discussions with them about access and also into penning this article. It should be noted that the quote below is made by the owner of the stretch of river developed as I have just detailed.

'I am aware that the BCU remains determined to keep pushing for a free for all, regardless of the implications for wildlife, other water users and riparian owners. They seem to reject the idea of negotiated, agreed access, and it is a mindlessly selfish attitude that we all have to resist. I would love free access to fishing every stretch of river in the country. That is what they want the equivalent of, at no cost. I always politely and firmly challenge any canoeist I see who is trespassing on my bits of river, and I think we should all do the same and record these instances, perhaps we should let our wildlife trusts know too'.

The riparian owner (in the case above) does own the river bed (stated so in his deeds), and therefore any travelling on the river could be determined as trespass, furthermore the stretch of river he has nurtured is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest where he has limited fishing to maintain the environment, as well as for his own benefit.

The comment above sent me into a heated correspondence with the writer and after some discussion I could start to see common ground for both parties, and understand the concerns of the person, let me give more examples of angling and other community involvement in the rivers we paddle before I go on.

One of my favourite rivers, the Crake, has recently had 1200 saplings planted by a group of volunteers called the South Cumbria Rivers Trust, the funding for this was from DEFRA. Some fishing on the Crake is controlled by an 'organisation' called Penny Parrock, they call membership a 'lifestyle investment' not a financial one as you have to apply to purchase shares in the limited company - 118 shares are available with maximum ownership of 3 - then pay an annual membership subscription to fish. Its worth pointing out that not all share holders are anglers, hence the additional cost to fish and the share value changes only minimally so they are a poor financial investment. Just consider for a minute that you have invested in the 'Lifestyle Experience' or in order to protect a particularly nice place spent a few weekends planting trees alongside your local river, would you feel attached to that place? The next time you're on the Crake take a second to put yourself in their shoes as you paddle along, and appreciate their efforts.

I have heard lots of arguments levelled at both angling and canoeing regarding the access debate and would like to consider them here in what I hope is a balanced manner with a view to airing and exploring some of them. Its free to canoe but anglers have to pay, is a common argument raised, some canoeists also suggest that they also pay through their United Utilities bills so shouldn't have to pay again. But let's consider this argument a little more and as everyone has to pay their utility bills we'll leave that one out of it.

Canoeists do contribute to paddle, they pay through their BCU membership to the British Waterways, however the BW only control sections of navigable river and canal with little else and our contribution is small, whereas boat users pay £344.84 per year for the smallest craft with increasing prices dependent on type of use and craft.

A fishing licence from the EA is required by every coarse or game angler no matter where they are fishing apart from the sea and there are no free non tidal fishing stretches that I



know of on the Lune, Wyre or Ribble. The EA licence for Coarse Fish is £24.50, on top of this anglers need to pay to fish at many venues or they are usually club members as the club will have bought or negotiated fishing rights. I am a member of Ribchester & District AC and membership is £80 per year plus a one-off joining fee of £100, this gives me access to fishing in several small pools, 7 miles of one bank of the Ribble, a bit of the Calder and Hodder and some trout reservoirs which are stocked by the club.

All of the fisheries are also maintained by the club members through working parties that carry out bank strengthening, tree cutting and planting, stile and fence erecting etc. If you are not a club member then day ticket fishing at many privately owned venues is in the region of £7 a day.

To fish for Salmon and Trout the costs increase and the EA licence for Trout and Salmon is £66.50 per year with additional charges to fish the venue, such as £15 per day in summer on the River Kent, some more highly regarded Trout and Salmon rivers have Day Ticket charges that run to figures much higher than this. Such venues are exclusively maintained with fishing huts and shelters and are well stocked for the anglers' benefit with a part of the fishing fee being put back into stocking and breeding policies that help to ensure angler success. Lansil angling club who have rights to sections of the Lune charge £120 per year plus a £55 joining fee for Salmon angling.

Greed and paying to fish has been cited as a problem that anglers have generated for themselves, also the fact that we supposedly paddle for free sticks in many anglers' throats. The fact that anglers pay to fish can be said to be of their own making as prime stretches of river and stillwater are reflected in their fishing costs, but as in all things the market price is determined by what's on offer as well as demand.

I agree anglers have possibly made a financial rod for their own backs, but how about

applying this situation to canoeists, is a Day Ticket fishing fee not a similar situation to paying to paddle at Teesside or the Washburn. Consider also Manchester Canoe Club, haven't they invested heavily in their stretch of the river by building a club house and sculpting the river and its banks, would they like it if anglers fished there when they 'own' the river?

The same can be said of the Tryweryn - the National White Water centre, why do we pay to paddle there when we can paddle through a couple of times for free? And what about Halton, supposing both banks came up for sale, would Ribble CC buy them, or would we continue to see it as something we can use without paying? Surely if we bought Halton access we would need some return for our investment ie making paddlers and anglers pay for access or would we write-off the purchase cost and upkeep, does the same not apply to the potential venue being developed at Brockholes, or after we have paid for our lease on Brockholes would we let other people use it for free, including anglers?

I wonder how OAG would feel if the boating pool at Fleetwood suddenly became very popular for some type of activity that clashed with their club nights at the venue and in light of it competition for their lease was generated, would they not be prepared to pay extra for their lease? If they did pay extra would they then charge the other users or would they let people use the lake for free because 'hey that's how it is for canoeists when we run the rivers?'

It is easy to say anglers are stupid to pay for the fishing and that they have created this situation, but I hope I have shown that we can all end up in the same position. In fact aren't we already in it, don't we pay to access the Washburn releases and also pay to paddle through the Dalemmain Estate land on the River Eamont? I personally think it would be a good idea if canoeists paid the EA for access in a similar way the angler pays for a EA rod licence, if we did this we would be in a far better position to lobby for greater access, we

would be able at a stroke to remove most of the argument against us paddling for free and be able to press for proper access and egress points as well as more all year round paddling.

Our non-paying situation is similar to that of the sea angler who doesn't need a licence, they often complain about declining sea fish stocks and wanting full coastal access but when they pay nothing they have no voice or weight to their argument: a point well made when you consider that anglers' EA rod licence fees contribute more than £20m to the agency annually.

I have heard it suggested that if access rules were changed then anglers could use it to drive down the price of their fishing, that would be nice, but what about the riparian owners or landowners, how excited will they be to have to accept reduced payments for an asset that they own, would you like it if you had invested in land with known income from water based sports only to find that your asset is devalued, would you then welcome with open arms the people who have helped to devalue your asset?

If the owner's deeds say that they own the banks, access across the fields and river bed I think they would have got a really poor deal from it, imagine the same happening with your home or livelihood, it's almost like someone making a path across your lawn or camping on it, it's bad enough when someone parks outside your house. I'm sure landowners will love canoeists when we have driven their revenue returns down and upset agreements that have been in place for years.

At present we get limited 'access' to some rivers from November to March but we should remember that angling may take place on these rivers all year round, look at the angling closed season dates below and see how anglers can be present and fishing legally at any time of the year. The Coarse fishing closed season is 16th March to 16th June, Salmon closed season 1st November to 31st January and migratory trout closed season 1st

October to 31st March. At the start of this paragraph I put the word 'access' in inverted commas, the reason was because I'm not sure that the limited access is based on any real agreement in many cases.

The Lune at Halton has a genuine access agreement in place that we should all respect, however it seems that some other agreements are perhaps based on the idea that if the river is not in use by anglers then we are free to paddle, in the case of the Kent, if you look at the website of the Kent Angling Association you will see that they say 'no canoes allowed' on their waters.

I have paddled the Kent myself during the Trout and Salmon closed season (Nov – March) and feel it is fair to do so even though we have no agreement as the likelihood of angler related problems is limited, however I know of several people who have paddled it in summer months when angling is at its peak – the same with the Leven, a river with a proper agreement – and to paddle at these times is in my mind irresponsible, looking for future problems and must be discouraged.

If no access agreement exists then I feel we are just antagonising anglers if we paddle when we know they are likely to be present. One day we may need to sit down with these people to sort out an agreement and the last thing we need is to already have given them ammunition and upset them.

It is inevitable that at some stage you will encounter anglers, if you do don't make excessive noise or linger in pools or areas where they are fishing, if they are playing a fish wait until they have landed it before passing, if possible make eye contact, if you talk to them try to be polite and take a line down the river that they may indicate and pass as smoothly and quickly as possible with little disturbance and remember they could be casting up or down river some distance.

It is possible/likely that they may not welcome your presence as you may not be the first group of paddlers they have encountered

that day or week. If they challenge you, continue to be polite and agree or admit to nothing, act as if accepting advice and guidance from them, see if you can get the persons name or body they are representing, if they are a bailiff they will be carrying identification and if threats are made take note of times and dates and if it gets serious report it to the BCU Regional Officer and the Police, whatever happens don't get into arguments and put yourself in danger.

As an angler myself I have had little contact with canoeists whilst fishing but I have good evidence that canoeists do little to affect the fishing for more than a few minutes, indeed on a still water that a friend used to fish the disturbance caused by wind surfers capsizing improved fish activity to such a degree that he used to only cast where someone had capsized.

We can all cite the times we have met grumpy anglers or been abused by them as well as other river users and I am not going to get into that argument as many of my fishing colleagues are only too happy to tell me how canoeists have paddled through their line deliberately or generally been a pain.

Abuse goes all ways, and sadly an example of canoeists abusing the public was raised last year by the lady who owns the cottage on the banks of the Rothay at Cumbria when she was abused by canoeists who were crossing her lawn and sitting on it whilst taking a break from paddling the river, I'll not go any further with this line but just wanted to establish the point that we can all do better.

It has been suggested to me that the difference between canoeists and anglers is that anglers 'park' themselves on the river where canoeists 'pass through', yet fly fishermen travel light and can cover many miles of river in a day and have canoeists never themselves 'parked' on a venue? Could a day at Halton, Garstang weir or Burrs not be described as being parked, if not then surely the use of

venues such as Hurley and Boulters is definitely parking.

Speaking of Boulters weir - the venue for the Youth Freestyle Kayaking Championships - the weir was also being fished by anglers, do they not have rights, they could have been there since dawn baiting the river or could have travelled hundreds of miles to fish there. Did anyone ask their permission to hold the competition, I didn't see any signs saying the venue would be closed to anglers for the day, I assume permission was granted by the EA or whoever but I wondered how the anglers felt. Luckily there was no conflict but there could easily have been. Would we have felt the same if we got to Burrs and found a fishing match in progress or if we found anglers 'camped' on the weir?

I hope I haven't upset anyone with this article as that was not the intention as I myself am an active campaigner to improve river access and have 11 personal replies on file from MPs that I have written to. The campaign for better access needs all your help so I suggest you all actively help the campaign by writing to your MPs and also to Ed Milliband who is coordinating the Labour Party manifesto and has already had contact with canoeists regarding access, in addition check out 'The UK Rivers Guide Book' website which is running a petition that needs your support.

Next time you go out paddling consider other users and locals and please keep group sizes appropriate for the venue, be courteous, park sensibly, get changed discretely and act responsibly and remember there are two sides to every story.

Complaints regarding this article should be addressed to:

**Will Paddle**  
**Soddam Hall**  
**BuryHead-in-Sand**  
**cc: Mark Dillon**



# *Chairman's Chat*

Yippeeeee! Halton has arrived and we've had our Intro to Moving Water Sessions. I think they went very well with plenty of swims from budding members of Adam's Swim Team. Many thanks to Allan Hacking for organising it and to all the coaches who coached and to all the experienced paddlers who helped out.

We've just had the November Committee Meeting with some lively debate (Adam, you're snoring) on the Coaching Forum's proposals. Most were approved but the finances were more closely controlled than had been proposed - probably a good thing. Norman Green aired his vast experience of Club history when he warned of possible splits in the Club if separate entities were pursued too vigorously. Something to keep an eye on there then.

Congratulations to Nicky and Tony Marsh on the birth of their first baby, a little girl called Holly. A lass, she's already creating havoc for the Club. Our new Secretary, Tony is finding work and new baby commitments too much to carry on after the AGM in February and so is standing down then. If anyone can think of someone else to lumber with this important job please let your Committee know. Many thanks to Tony for having a go.

Not as many takers for the Christmas party this year - is it my dancing putting people off - surely not? We're back at The New Drop above Ribchester - now where was that bouncy bit on the dance floor?

You'll see the official Notice for the AGM elsewhere in this epistolic edition, inviting any items for inclusion on the agenda (by 31

December). Unless an item is on the agenda, a decision on it cannot be taken at the AGM although of course you can always make your views known and the Committee will give them serious consideration at the next meeting. If you've any suggestions for who should get which of the various trophies please e-mail me or ring me on the number below. Lastly, don't forget to bring your cheque book to the AGM so that you can pay the coming year's fees. We're going to issue an application form with the January edition of this enviable organ so that you can have it (and the cheque) ready filled in when you come to the AGM. This year Brian has promised to send Gill out to her birthday dinner on her own just so that he can be there to collect your forms and fees. What a brave man!

The disruption of our long held traditions continues. There are the recent changes to our canoe courses due to the BCU's reorganisation of the Star Awards; there was the change of ownership of the Slenningford Mill camp/caravan site which led to our not being booked in there for our second summer camp; there was our change of venue from Ullswater to Coniston for our third summer camp which was then disrupted by rain; and now the uncertainty over the future of the chalet site where we have our Easter and October Scottish Weeks is making life difficult for Tom Byrne organising this Easter's trip; and that was after the change of schools' Easter Holidays which some schools have adopted and others not. It must be something in the water!

***Terry Maddock***

[www.adventuresinuk.co.uk](http://www.adventuresinuk.co.uk)



Although we have not been paddling so much lately - except for the odd trip up and down Coniston, Thirlmere, Windermere & Lune Estuary, just to keep our shoulders loose.

We have been exceedingly busy in setting up a new web directory of all things outdoors in the UK.

The site is live now, after 2 years of effort, our mission is -

To encourage folk to stay in UK to find their adventures  
To help in planning trips & weekends, by having all info on 1 site  
To promote all involved in providing outdoor activities, courses, products, events & services

Please check out the site - [www.adventuresinuk.co.uk](http://www.adventuresinuk.co.uk) - and refer us to friends & family, then help us populate it by forwarding details of any business's or services you can recommend in the UK.

Chris & Caroline

Chris Packman (sales director) - Adventures in UK Limited  
Office - 49 Bispham Road -Blackpool - FY2 0SX  
E mail - [chris@adventuresinuk.co.uk](mailto:chris@adventuresinuk.co.uk) - Tel - 01253 680 174  
Mobile - 07773 854607

# ***Ribble CC Library***

To borrow a book or video, ring Clive Robinson or see him at the Hand & Dagger. Donations of books or videos are always welcome.

## ***Technique:***

BCU Handbook  
 The Practical Guide to Kayaking  
 Canoeing & Kayaking  
 William Nealy's "Kayak"  
 Bombproof Roll and Beyond!  
 Eskimo Rolling for Survival  
 White Water Safety & Rescue  
 Weir Wisdom Rapids  
 Canoe & Kayak Games  
 The Playboater's Handbook  
 Complete Book of Sea Kayaking  
 Sea Kayak Navigation  
 Path of the Paddle  
 Canoeing  
 Open Canoe Technique  
 Anglesey Sea Paddling  
 Rowing it Alone  
 The Handbook of Survival at Sea  
 BCU Coaching Handbook  
 Sea Safety: The Complete Guide

## ***Guidebooks:***

English White Water  
 Scottish White Water  
 White Water Lake District  
 An Atlas of the English Lakes  
 Canal Companion: Cheshire Ring  
 Welsh Sea Kayaking  
*by Jim Krawiecki and Andy Biggs*

## ***General:***

The Rough Guide to Weather  
*Robert Henson*  
 The Liquid Locomotive  
*John Long (ed)*  
 Many Rivers to Run  
*Dave Manby*  
 Norwegian rivers  
 Canoe Focus  
 Working out of Doors with Young People  
*Alan Smith*

## ***Expeditions:***

Travels with a Kayak  
*Whit Descher*  
 On Celtic Tides  
*Chris Duff*  
 Blazing Paddles  
*Brian Wilson*  
 Dancing with Waves  
*Brian Wilson*  
 Paddling to Jerusalem  
*David Aaronovitch*  
 The Last River  
*Todd Balf*  
 Paddle to the Arctic  
 Don Starkey  
 Canoeing across Canada  
*Gary & Joanie McGuffin*  
 The Canoe Boys  
*Sir Alastair Dunnett*  
 Odyssey among the Inuit  
*Jonathan Waterman*  
 Barbed Wire & Babushkas  
*Paul Grogan*

## ***Videos:***

Liffey Descent  
 Deliverance (18)  
 Extreme Sports Canoeing  
 A Taste of White Water  
 Wicked Water 2  
 Drill Time  
 Destination Nowhere  
 Path of the Paddle: Doubles Whitewater

## ***DVDs:***

Tony Morgan in the Grand Canyon  
 LVM Lunch Video Magazine  
 Ribble Newsletters (CD)  
 Doubleyouess  
 Without a Paddle (13)  
 Whitewater Kayaking  
 The Cockleshell Heroes (U)  
 Mags Brayfield in Nepal  
 EJ's Advanced Playboating  
 The Chaos Theory  
 Jackson Kayak Promo  
 It's Different Every Time  
*Norman Green*  
 EJ's Playboating Basics  
*Eric Jackson and Chris Emerick*  
 Wavesport: Sessions  
 Fort William 2005/06 Trip  
 My Tartan Adventure (VCD)  
 Ribble Canoe Club in Scotland, 2007  
 The 7 Rivers Expedition  
 Locks and Quays  
*Featuring Ribble Canoe Club*



# ***Pool sessions***

The following lists the pool sessions booked at Fulwood Leisure Centre, the contact for the courses and the Supervisor and Committee member on duty.

Date	Session	Contact	Supervisor	Committee
Nov 30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Polo practice (note change from previous calendar!)</b>	<b>Allan Hacking</b>	<b>Grahame Coles</b>	<b>Allan Hacking</b>
Dec 7 <sup>th</sup>	River Safety/Rescue	Clive Robinson	Mark Green	Terry Maddock
Dec 14 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas fun night	Adam Fielder	Clive Robinson	Mark Dillon
Dec 21 <sup>st</sup>	** No session**			
Dec 28 <sup>th</sup>	** No session**			
Jan 4 <sup>th</sup>	Open	N/A	Clive Robinson	Brian Woodhouse
Jan 11 <sup>th</sup>	Beginners' Freestyle	Allan Hacking	Grahame Coles	Mark Dillon
Jan 18 <sup>th</sup>	Introduction to Polo	Nicky Marsh	Allan Hacking	Peter Jones
Jan 25 <sup>th</sup>	Open	N/A	John Kington	Kath Risely
Feb 1 <sup>st</sup>	Rolling Course	Bob Smith	Mark Green	Terry Maddock
Feb 8 <sup>th</sup>	Rolling Course	Bob Smith	Mark Loftus	Brian Woodhouse
Feb 15 <sup>th</sup>	Rolling Course	Bob Smith	Grahame Coles	Martin Stockdale
Feb 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Open	N/A	Allan Hacking	Kath Risely
Feb 29 <sup>th</sup>	Fun Night	Adam Fielder	John Kington	Adam Fielder
Mar 7 <sup>th</sup>	Beginners' Course	Tom Byrne	Mark Green	Terry Maddock
Mar 14 <sup>th</sup>	Beginners' Course	Tom Byrne	Mark Loftus	Mark Dillon

Prices:

1 Star Course £30, Rolling Course £15 (both plus club membership). All other sessions £3.

Please book in advance for the Beginners and Rolling Courses by phoning the named contact.

## ***Editor's bit***

### **Thanks...**

Another bumper edition for Christmas – hopefully there's enough reading here to keep you going well past the pudding and mince pies and half way through the Queen's speech – it may even be enough to make you miss the beginning of the big film, whatever it turns out to be this year!

As usual, my thanks to everybody who contributed an article, especially since I had absolutely nothing to go in the newsletter a week or so ago: I was getting worried that it

wouldn't even be long enough to last through the Midnight service!

### **Dates and deadlines**

The next committee meeting will be on January 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm at the Hand & Dagger. The next newsletter will be published on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. All submissions to me by Saturday January 19<sup>th</sup> at the latest please.

***Martin Stockdale***

Ribble Canoe Club

Help List



Area of Interest	Ribble Canoe Club																							
	Contact	Telephone	Committee	General Information	Access Agreements	Canoe Courses	Instructor or Coach	Lifeguard	Hand & Dagger Keyholder	Social Events	Flat Water & Lake Trips	Beginners River Trips	Intermediate River Trips	Advanced River Trips	Sea Trips	Open Canoeing	Canoe Surfing	Beginners Slalom	Advanced Slalom	Mens Polo	Ladies Polo	Junior Polo	Other	
	Andy & Debbie Dowe						✓								✓									Christmas Party (Debbie)
	Bob Smith					✓																		Rolling Course
	Brian Woodhouse		Memb. Secretary	✓	✓		✓					✓	✓											
	Chris & Janet Porter										✓													Website
	Clive Robinson			✓																				Library, Training Coordinator
	Ian McCreerie								✓											✓				
	Jacky Draper																			✓				
	John Kington			✓				✓																
	Kath Risely		Hon. Treasurer																					
	Mark Loftus			✓																				
	Martin Stockdale		Newsletter						✓															
	Mick Huddlestan																		✓					
	Tony & Nicky Marsh		Hon. Secretary				✓													✓				
	Peter Jones			✓					✓											✓				
	Susan Shaw		Competition Secretary																	✓		✓		
	Steve Swarbrick		Quartermaster				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓										
	Steve Wilkinson							✓				✓	✓		✓									
	Terry Maddock		Hon. Chairman, Calendar				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓							✓				
	Tom Byrne			✓																				d'Ribbler's Award (swim reports)

# CALENDAR

Last minute trips organised on the on the forum on the website, at the Hand & Dagger on Wednesdays or at Fulwood on Fridays.  
If you have any dates for the calendar please contact **Terry Maddock**

Ribble CC development trips are in **bold**.  
Ribble CC recreational events (assumed risk) are in **bold italic**.  
Other Ribble CC events are in *italic*.  
Events in normal type are external events listed for information only.

## River information:

Burrs 0161 764 9649

[www.burrs.org.uk](http://www.burrs.org.uk)

Canolfan Tryweryn 01678 520826

[www.welsh-canoeing.org.uk](http://www.welsh-canoeing.org.uk)

Tees Barrage 01642 678000

[www.4seasons.co.uk](http://www.4seasons.co.uk)

Washburn/Wharfe 0845 833 8654

<http://www.yorcie.org.uk/>

## Trips / Events

### Nov

25 *White Water*  
**R. Crake**  
**Coniston Water to Greenodd**  
**Clive Robinson**

### Dec

2 **Beginners' Trip**  
**R. Rothay**  
**Grasmere to Windermere**  
**Terry Maddock**

9 *White Water*  
**R Wharfe**  
**Linton Falls to Barden Bridge**  
**Terry Maddock**

15 *Eatin' n' Dancin'*  
*Newdrop Inn*  
*Ribble C C Christmas Do*  
*Too late to book*

16 **Flat Water Trip**  
**Leeds-Liverpool Canal**  
**Tom Byrne**

22 **Novice Pool Polo**  
**Horwich Swimming Pool**  
**Allan Hacking**

23 UK Canoes  
Buying new canoes  
and other goodies

30 *White Water*  
**R. Crake**  
**Coniston Water to Greenodd**  
**Steve Swarbrick**

30/01 *Barn Camp*  
*Dodgson Wood*  
*East side of Coniston Water*  
*Steve Swarbrick*

### Jan

6 **Beginners' Trip**  
**R Greta (Ingleton)**  
**Ingleton to Wrayton**  
**Terry Maddock**

8 *Committee Meeting*  
*Hand & Dagger 7pm*

13 *White Water*  
**R Greta (Keswick)**  
**Threlkeld Bridge to Keswick**  
**Andy Rushton**

20 *Moving Water*  
**R Lune**  
**Kirby Lonsdale to Crook o' Lune**  
**Allan Hacking**

27 *White Water*  
**R Lune**  
**Halton, Lancaster**  
**Clive Robinson**

### Feb

3 **Beginners' Trip**  
**R. Wenning**  
**u/s H. Bentham to Wennington**  
**Terry Maddock**

10 *White Water*  
**R Wharfe**  
**Linton Falls to Barden Bridge**  
**Terry Maddock**

17 *White Water*  
**R Greta (Keswick)**  
**Threlkeld Bridge to Keswick**  
**Albert Risely**

27 *Ribble CC AGM*  
*Fulwood & Broughton Cricket*  
*Club 7:30pm*

NOTE: Last minute trips are often arranged on the forum on the website ([www.ribblecanoeclub.co.uk](http://www.ribblecanoeclub.co.uk)). If there isn't a trip listed here, check there before giving up and going shopping instead!

Trips may be changed or cancelled at short notice. Always get in touch with the trip organiser the day before to check!  
If you don't, and you have a wasted trip, don't blame us.