



CAMBRIDGE CANOE CLUB NEWSLETTER

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

To get the club's diary of events and ad-hoc messages about club activities by e-mail please send a blank message to:

camcanoe-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

In case you already didn't know, canoeing is an assumed risk, water contact sport.

March 2006

If you received this Newsletter by post and you would be happy to view your Newsletter on the Cambridge Canoe Club website (with all the photos in glorious colour!) then please advise the Membership Secretary. Contact details are shown at the end of this Newsletter.

Chairman's Chat

Well, what a great start to the 2006 paddling year! Plenty of paddlers made the New Year's Day paddle out to Fen Ditton, and the Barrington to Clubhouse paddle was really well supported with nearly 30 paddlers making the journey despite the cold weather. A couple of weeks ago I enjoyed a lovely scenic paddle around St. Ives which included the river past Houghton Mill, and I have just returned from a whitewater trip to Snowdonia (and yes, there was evidence of snow on the mountain peaks). I am really keen for a repeat visit to paddle the river at St Ives and the Club, will doubtless be returning more than once to Wales this year. Keep an eye on either the Website or Camcanoe for details of our club activities for the rest of the year.

The Club is undoubtedly popular — just come along to the Wednesday Series in the summer and see the empty boat racks, or the masses of boats and paddlers at the Cam Marathon, the Hare and Hounds series, or check out the number of courses we run in the spring, summer and autumn — if you are in any doubt. We must be one of the larger UK canoe clubs and I remain continually indebted to both the Committee members and other club members who work tirelessly and entirely voluntarily to support all of these activities.

We have a responsibility to maintain our clubhouse and provide adequate equipment to support our increased numbers of paddlers. The consequent inevitable wear and tear on our kit also requires more frequent replacement. We are perhaps victims of our own success, and for a number of years now have managed to absorb many cost increases within our monies raised from membership and course fees, but if we are to remain a first rate club with good facilities and function under current best National

Governing Body (BCU) guidelines we will unfortunately have to increase our income.

During the past year, and more intensively over the past few months, the Committee has discussed our immediate and future plans to maintain CCC as the great club it is and we have set new membership fees as laid out in the Club Constitution. I have been a Club member for many years, since my children were at Secondary School in fact, and we have not had any increase in membership over this period. Consequently it was not an easy decision for myself, or the Committee to recommend, but we have set our membership fees for the April 2006 to March 2007 year as:

- £40 for Adults
- £80 for Family
- £20 for Junior and
- £20 for Student membership.

I hope you agree that membership fees do represent extremely good value for money and remain so even with this modest increase. I hope you all continue to support Cambridge Canoe Club, enjoy your paddling, take advantage of some excellent courses and fantastic trips, and continue to make CCC the great club it is and hopefully we will become an even better club in the future.

As always, on or in the water

Terry Elsey

Cam Marathon

Cambridge Canoe Club is once again hosting the Cam Marathon. It will be run from the clubhouse on Sunday 2nd April. It is an ideal occasion to have a go at a race: there are three courses, the shortest being only 4 miles. There is even a fun race for those who wish to take it easy or don't want to paddle a racing boat. An entry list will soon appear on the clubhouse notice board, so just sign up and book your entry (and boat.)

If you are not interested in paddling/racing we need lots of help on the day. Most of the jobs don't require any racing knowledge and will only take up a couple of hours. So please give me a ring if you can help.

Richard Stagg
01223 503414

Club Diary

Marathon Racing

Now spring is here, the racing season is about to start. Racing is fun and keeps you fit so give it a go. There are 3 distances, 13 miles, 8 miles and 4 miles. You usually start in Division 9 (4 miles) and as you improve you will get promoted into the next division. There are 9 races in the Eastern region, the closest being the

- Cam Marathon 2nd April
- Huntingdon Marathon 24th April
- Bedford Marathon 30th April

There will be a few paddlers from the club going to these races so come along and join in with us.

Beginners' Racing evening (Monday)

I hope to run a regular "Beginners' racing" session at the clubhouse this summer. It will be open to anyone, juniors and adults who want to have a go in racing boats or improve their paddling. This will probably start soon after Easter on Monday evenings, starting 7pm.

Thursday evening

This is our regular training evening, we meet at the clubhouse at 6pm. Please come along and join us, we try to do something suitable for paddlers of all speeds. We would just like you to have been in a racing boat a few times before and be able to paddle in a straight line, turn around and look after yourself if you fall in. (If not, come along on Monday evenings).

Richard Stagg

Other upcoming events include:

- April 22nd: Spring Cleaning at the Clubhouse
- April 27th: "One Man in a Boat" – Robert Perkins talks about paddling from Greenwich to Aberdeen
- April 28th-May 1st: Trip to the River Wye and Symonds Yat.

Further details will be announced in the near future by e-mail and on the bulletin boards at the clubhouse.

Matlock Weekend 10/11th December 2005

As I'm now getting familiar with on these weekends away, Saturday morning dawned early but not so bright. Having met at Newnham and the kit stowed on/in Nigel's car we headed off to the North to seek the delights of the River Derwent in Derbyshire. A healthy crop of keen paddlers met in the large car park at Matlock Bath before heading up to Darley Dale, which was to be our launch point for the first day.

Although flat, the Derwent here seemed to be zipping along a bit (well, for someone used to typical Cam velocities) but everyone successfully negotiated the seal launch, and regrouping, headed off downstream. Large well spaced eddies allowed us all to practice breaking in and out of the flow, as well as ferry glide across the meandering channel.

After a brief lunch, the first real challenge came as we approached Matlock town, with a small set of rapids running under one of the road bridges. Carefully spaced out, we all queued to take on the bouncy river, and congregated again on a nice large eddy on river left, though the eddy line here was a severe test even for the most experience paddlers (or maybe I just stopped concentrating...)

Shortly after this bridge we passed the car park where we had all met. By this stage the river was flowing directly towards the sun, which was creeping towards darkness. Paddling in the middle of a "pack" (what is the collective noun for a group of paddlers?) and not being able to see

anything at all is a little unnerving to say the least. Luckily, the bend in the river helped restore our eyesight before the last challenge of the day — the slalom course.

Having a concrete wall on one side and a steep wooded hill on the other, this part of the river felt particularly claustrophobic. With this, the failing light and being pretty tired, many decided just to run the slalom course down river right and leave the bigger stuff for another time. We'd got another day here after all!

Off the river and changed, we charged around the Derbyshire countryside looking first for the bunkhouse and then for somewhere to eat. Successfully installed in a quiet corner of the not-so-local, the barman who brought over the drinks forgot that gravity still worked and took the pint from the wrong part of the drinks tray. Predictably (and in slow motion!) the other 7 pints did a lazy summersault onto the floor. And table. And pretty much everywhere. Those who hadn't gone for a swim during the day suddenly knew what it felt like (though the Derwent generally didn't taste as nice). As a precaution I intend to wear my nose clip in the pub from now on.

Day 2 saw us back on the river (post bacon sandwich from the posh-est tea shop in Derbyshire) adjacent to the car park in Matlock Bath. Although we had just paddled on through this bit yesterday, a lovely little set of standing waves on river left AND right (with a nice comfy eddy in the middle) meant that everyone could find something at their level to play on. And just a stones-throw from the car park too; how convenient. Eventually (and somewhat reluctantly!) we gave up this spot and drifted the 100 metres or so downstream to the slalom course again, though with more time and more daylight, a happy half hour was spent here as well.

Finally, with that paddling "itch" satisfied for another weekend, we headed off home. For sheer convenience, both in terms of getting there, and for getting from the car to the water, Matlock is hard to beat, and I hope I'll be back there again sooner rather than later. There and Slenningford Mill. Oh, and East Runton. Hmmm, going to be a busy year then...

Big thanks go to Tim Mitchell for organising the bunkhouse, and to all the drivers that got us there and back safely. Special thanks to Mike Price, who turned up on a whim and coached (or coaxed!) many of us down the river; it was very much appreciated by all.

Andrew Twigg

Snoozing on The Severn

The first weekend of February, I entered a wacky challenge event entitled 'The Full Monty'. It was a multisport event for pairs and teams of 4 involving kayaking, mountain biking and hiking, starting and finishing in Shrewsbury. Entering at late notice, I found an ex-marine via the internet (as you do!) and we met for the first time at his parents' house the night before the start.

Malibu two-seater sit on top kayaks were provided and we were set off from Frankwells at 10 am on Saturday for a 30 km paddle. The first section was busy with fishermen, rowers and a weir to portage. All feeling very much like the Cam although a little wider and despite low water levels, a reasonable current. There was only one spot where we were forced to get out just before checking in with event officials about half way. In a little over 3 hours we arrived at Cressage and carried the boats to a nearby primary school where Lawrence's Dad met us in a van with hot drinks, dry clothes and our bikes - what more could you want?

From here we cycled to Much Wenlock and joined the Jack Mytton trail. This is a designated trail but is a bridleway for its full length and so accessible to mountain bikes. We were to follow it for 60 km along Wenlock Edge to Church Stretton, along the Long Mynd and down into Clun. Lawrence was in his element and I had trouble keeping up with him or sometimes even keeping him in sight although several times I caught him as he was getting up clutching his hip or ribs from falling off. He seemed to be enjoying it though. It became dark while we were on the Long Mynd so the descent and remainder of the route using lights did require concentration. Not surprisingly we were some of the first people to reach Clun and for this privilege we were given the choice of stopping for a couple of hours or doing an extra optional section, so we set off on a further 40 km mountain bike loop in the dark to the South of Clun — giving those behind us time to reach Clun. Well, it seemed a good idea at the time! We finished this about midnight and stopped for 15 minutes at the van for some hot food and another change of clothes and rucksacks to start a 50 km hike along the Shropshire Way and Offa's Dyke heading North. It was light before we did a final climb up to Rodney's Pillar before meeting with the Severn again at Melverly for the final 35 km paddle downstream.

So that's how we came to be forcing our aching bodies back into wetsuits outside a pub at 12 am on Sunday. This upper part of the river was a bit narrower and extremely monotonous. Every corner seemed to have rocks and trees in exactly the same positions so it felt like we were just stuck in some giant loop. Having been moving for 26 hours+, the lack of features made it very hard to keep concentration or even eyes open. One or sometimes both of us would wake up to find us just drifting gently with the current. Not to be recommended but at least there were no major hazards on this stretch of the river. One pair caught us up where the front person was laid out flat asleep while the rear person paddled alone. We contemplated stopping for a quick snooze on the bank but were worried about not completing before dark. We stuck with it and reached Shrewsbury just before 5 pm as two of only 19 out of 120 starters mad enough to complete 'The Full Monty and Some!' 130 miles in 31 hours. Definitely time for a cup of tea and a sleep.

A walk into town and a paddle down the backs will be quite enough next weekend thank you.

Russ Ladkin



Lawrence Smith and Russ Ladkin at Frankwell, on the River Severn.
Photo: Jean Sinclair.

Updates by e-mail

The CamCanoe e-mail list is used by Cambridge Canoe Club to distribute updates to the club's diary of events and ad-hoc messages relating to club events. This includes paddling opportunities that come up at short notice and last minute changes to normal club arrangements.

If you have urgent information for club members, e-mail any committee member who can post the information for you. Make sure to include your email address in the message if you want replies. Non-urgent information can also be sent to the newsletter editor for publication in the newsletter.

If you are not yet a member of CamCanoe, you can subscribe at any time by sending a blank email to: camcanoe-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
You can unsubscribe at any time by sending an e-mail to: camcanoe-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com

Newsletter

The newsletter relies on contributions from members for its content. The committee members get a regular nagging and usually come up with something but don't forget that you can have an input.

Have you been on any outings recently that others might like to hear about? Is there anything that you would like to know about? I can also include pictures – just e-mail a jpeg image or send a photograph, and it could appear.

Duties

Please keep an eye on the duty list! Make a note in your diary of when your duty is. Make sure you get there on the day; if you don't turn up for your duty you are letting other members down.

The Duty Rota for pool and clubhouse can be seen on the Cambridge Canoe Club website:
<http://www.cambridgecanoeclub.org.uk>



From the club trip to North Wales in February; waiting beneath the “ski slope” on the River Tryweryn. In the foreground (from the left): Tim Mitchell, Nigel New, Andrew Twigg, and Terry Elsey *Photo: ed.*

Your Committee – and how to contact us

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Membership renewal

If you have received this newsletter by post, a renewal form is enclosed, with your contact information from our database. If any of your details have changed or are incorrect, please make the appropriate corrections. These forms are also available on the club website.