



CAMBRIDGE CANOE CLUB NEWSLETTER

<http://www.cambridgecanoeclub.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.

July 2005

Chairman's Chat

It's really good to see the number of people out on the water this year. Since we introduced a little structure to the Wednesday evenings, we are seeing around 20-40 people every Wednesday to go and do something canoeing related, whether just playing games, dodging slalom poles or just paddling somewhere. It's excellent to see the enthusiasm. The other club opening times are also getting well used too!

As most people already know, we were sadly hit by an arsonist at the end of May. We were very fortunate that the damage was actually very slight, thanks to the prompt action of a passers-by and the fire brigade. However the vandalism is continuing - please can everybody be extra vigilant.

On a brighter note, Summer is here... time to enjoy the sun, paddle up and down... and time to get wet! See you on the water! *Graham*

Odds and Ends

The Weir and the Sluice - a reminder to all paddlers, if you are playing by the weir and the sluice it is club policy that you wear a buoyancy aid and helmet.

Seal Launching - if seal launching over the concrete side by the club house in a club boat, please use a mat to protect the bottom of the boats! Thanks!

Any Good Ideas

The club side of the boat storage is looking rather full, and the buoyancy aids and spray decks are getting overly crammed together... if you have any ideas or suggestions on how we can improve the storage, please talk to a committee member!

Back to being a novice...

So kayaking is easy now... get in a kayak, blast down a Grade 3 rapid, make all the eddies. No fear... just enjoy the ride... muscles do exactly what they have been taught to do, and I stay warm and dry. Transfer that to canoeing down a grade 2 rapid - should be easy shouldn't it?

Maybe not... this Canoe's two times longer than it should be,

it's only got half the paddle blades, and there's this concept of doing the rapids the wrong way with a pole. Back to novice mode.

Eddies! Easy? Just paddle the boat in and spin round? Wobble - the first gunwale dips below the water line and I take in water. Hmm - maybe I'm missing something here... Shouldn't this be easy? And why can't I make eddies I normally make in a kayak? Frustration sets in... Maybe I am aiming too high. Maybe the eddy is too small? A 4 metre eddy in my kayak - no problems - but somebody has stuck an extra metre on either end of me, and I just can't swing it in, and when I do I find I don't fit! Back to basics - I need to re-learn where to point my boat and how to break out.

Looking at the rapids - I can see my kayak line very clearly - I can see exactly which strokes I will need to side-slip through the gap. But I have to remember - this is a different boat - I'm less in control - and I now feel nervous - nervousness that I haven't felt in quite a while. In my kayak I am unlikely to swim - but in this Canoe... a more real prospect. Will I make it through? I line up, make it down the rapids, fill with water, but stay upright! Phew... that was close.

Muscles... Shouldn't be a problem? I'm used to paddling all weekend - right? Wrong! This is a different set of muscles - my knees are crucified from kneeling on them, cutting off the blood to my poor feet. I'm balancing this boat with my legs, and the thighs are burning from the effort. I am leaning backward and forward more than I ever do in a kayak. My torso is rotating more - I need to do strokes on both sides of the boat, and I don't have time to change paddle grip. What a workout! I sit here writing this, my legs sore and not responding to commands from my brain.

Cold... I know how to dress for the cold don't I? A seasoned kayaker, I can judge what I need? No! It's different... in the luxury of my kayak my legs are sealed inside a compartment which is sheltered. In the Canoe, the wind whips between my legs chilling them to the bone. I am more exposed... and as soon as I sit still I feel cold again. And my hands are numb. This poling business and playing with ropes adds to the chill. Next time I want gloves!

But the upside is that the canoe is a much more mellow style of paddling, it's a great way of being able to carry the kitchen sink. It is possible to get down rivers just like a kayak does, but you just have to think differently. I enjoyed the paddle, and the long bits were certainly much less of a slog than in my little play kayak.

So being a novice in a canoe on moving water - a great experience - and I learnt once again what it feels like to be a novice. Being a kayaker, I am slowly growing a beard.. the wide-brimmed hat will follow shortly. *Graham Rhodes*

Membership Chat

Hello everyone and thank you for renewing your membership with Cambridge Canoe Club - well almost all of you! We have noticed that there are a few "regulars" who have not yet got round to renewing their membership. As you all know, the monies collected from membership go towards such things as your Cam Conservators Licence, rental for the clubhouse, new kit and maintenance of the existing kit to name but a few. So

hurry up and sort out your membership renewals. This will be the LAST newsletter sent out to anyone who has not renewed their membership before the next publication of the newly improved and now very excellent CCC Newsletter.

Please bring your laminated card along with you (once you have renewed your membership of course) as the club membership is now quite large and there are new keyholders, who may not know whether you are a member. We may need to resort to requesting membership proof if we get any untoward behaviour arising as in previous years during the summer vacation.

I hope to see many of you in or on the water over the coming warm summer months and even paddling during autumn and winter ! Thanks *Terry Elsey (Membership)*

River Wye Trip

The Campsite

“Did you like Rod Stewart’s early stuff with the Faces”? I could see Mike Price’s eyes glaze over. We had started a conversation about rock music to pass the time whilst queuing to check in to the campsite. But that was more than an hour ago. At last we were called forward to the Office; 30 seconds later we emerged clutching our permits. Now we only had to find the others. After 5 minutes we spotted Sam and Joe unloading their car. Where to pitch our tents? The CCC terrain comprised a flat bit which sloped away to become a steepish hillside. Just then, fate took a hand as Graham Rhodes arrived and announced his intention to pitch on the flat bit of ground. Simultaneously Mike and I carried our tents over to the hillside. Other people were arriving so we all chatted about past and future trips and consumed the occasional glass of ale. Thence a relatively early bedtime in preparation for a days paddling on the Wye. Some hours later as dawn was breaking, I was awoken by a loud rhythmic rasping sound. Cursing, I sleepily unzipped the tent door. To my surprise the culprit was a raven which circled persistently overhead.

The Paddling

By 9am, everyone (roughly 25 of us) was up, fed, watered and kitted out. Graham organised us into groups and briefed us on the days paddle. Then it was a short journey to Lower Lydbrook. Unloaded the boats at the riverside, thence a longish gap till the cars were shuttled down to Symons Yat. Eventually it was launch time; we split into three independent groups with Graham shuttling in between. Boats sizes ranged from extremely short playboats to rather long Carolina tourers and included Tim and Emma in a Canadian. Down stream we went, occasionally playing games, occasionally staring at the scenery. Our reveries were interrupted when we reached the seal launch rock. A surprisingly large number of people clambered up and descended rapidly. No one swam. Finally Gabriel and Joe tried to slide down in the Topo Duo, only a partial success as the bow hit the riverbed. Next stop the steps just above the Yat where we hopped out and ate lunch in sweltering sunshine. Now back in to the boats and off downstream ready for some action. Graham rearranged the groups; set catchers down at the bottom and off we went. After the long flat paddle this was fun, I reached the bottom and did a bit of throwline duty. Now the path back up, tricky even when it’s dry. Two more runs and it was time to head back to camp. At the takeout, the proposal to adjourn to the Saracen’s Head was heavily defeated by the counterproposal

to go back to the Campsite and have a shower. Sometimes I wonder about the priorities of the Club.

Next day was an opportunity to practice Welsh, as we drove to Glasbury via the Brecons. Still the Wye, but a long way upstream. We put in and ambled downriver. Just as weariness was setting in, we reached the day’s highlight, the Broken Weir. This year, there was a nice forceful flow, giving rise to several different play waves. After an hour only the true diehards remained on the waves, whilst the remainder lounged on the beach. Then we all paddled the thankfully short distance to the takeout at Hay on Wye.

On the final morning we went back to the Yat, the majority paddled, a minority hiked up the gorge. This time people were becoming more adventurous, so swims were rather frequent. As the water was going at a reasonable belt, this led to an exciting few minutes if a rescue was not immediately forthcoming. This year at least, your correspondent was not a recipient of the Symonds Yat experience. Eventually it started to rain heavily. Mike and I were the only ones left, so we did one last run down, squelched back up the path, then re-launched and paddled back up to the steps. We got the boats on the car, changed our kit and discovered that the others were in the Saracen’s Head. We all had a pleasant hour reminiscing about the past three days.

The Cuisine

Breakfast was terrible; lunch was the usual crushed and damp sandwiches appearing out of dry bags. Evening meals were different. The carnivores in the party enjoyed barbeques of blackened chicken legs and lamb chops served with a warm pasta salad accompanied by freshly tossed greens. This was washed down with a Cabernet Sauvignon (2004, Tesco special offer) with notes of blackcurrant, plum and citrus fused with overtones of coffee and plastic (drunk from un-washed coffee mug).

The Acknowledgements

Massive thanks to: Terry for organising the trip and booking the campsite; Graham for taking responsibility on the water; Andy, Angela, Jakob, Olga who tended the flames; everyone else for providing such camaraderie. *Ross Miller*

Krishna River Paddling, India 2005

Part 3

Looking over the dam at Sri Salem we could see that any hope of continuing progress was dependent on portaging the boat and all our gear about 3km downstream. We also had to surmount the dam wall which at the time didn’t seem straightforward plus we had to evade the barrage police. We managed to secure transportation in the nearby town and arrived back at the dam wall in our jeep. Things looked promising all we had to do now was lift all the gear up to the transport. Then officialdom stepped in, ‘Where are your papers, let me see your permission.’ Time for a swift exit me thinks in order to re-access the situation. Fear not this was only a delaying tactic, as the production of a Rs 50 note worked wonders. We were through the gate before you could say bye bye Sri Salem and with the help of an army of fisherman hauled everything up from the waters edge. We were off again and within an hour back on our river negotiating a series of narrow defiles and rapids that lead after a further 10km to our next reservoir complex. This time the massive Nagar Juna Sagar Reservoir, one of the largest in India. The arid banks reared up from the waters edge. Again, we were accompanied by goatherds and the occasional fisherman but whether through circumstance or intent the

fishing floats and lines that had hampered our progress on Sri Salem were generally absent. This body of water was massive and open water crossings of 2 and 3 km were the order of the day. The banks of this reservoir are the home to one of the only tiger sanctuaries in southern India. Needless to say we saw none, in fact save for a few monkeys we saw very little wildlife, not even birds. Whatever, anyone says about reservoirs in this area these man made seas had turned virgin rivers teeming with wildlife into deserts bereft of living creatures. Lack of wild life aside we were in land of sawing hills and wide water expanses which in their way were haunting and unique and we had this landscape to ourselves.

Navigation needed careful attention, particularly when fingers of water spread like the tentacles of some massive octopus. An error here could be expensive in time and effort. A small island with an impressive conical hill and temple provided a diversion from paddling and a vantage point to view our route to the dam wall. As we climbed to the summit the extent of our sea was revealed stretching out as far as the eye could see in all directions yet at the time letting us plan our final approaches. A campsite was needed for the night and our vantage point allowed us to identify an islet which would offer us a comfortable spot for the night and a place to cook our fish bought from a fisherman earlier that day.

Our desert island was home to us for one of the wildest storms we had experienced. We seriously wondered whether we would be able to leave in the morning, but, as the sun rose, the wind as if on cue, fell away just leaving us to contend with an ocean swell as we paddled across open water toward the barrage wall.

By comparison to our other experiences portaging from the barrage to the lower river was a piece of cake. A long track led down to the water's edge and allowed our portage vehicle easy access. Our vehicle was a three wheel motor rickshaw. I had only once used one to portage a canoe some years earlier when I had a nightmare journey transporting this same canoe through the streets of Chennai at 4 am in the morning. Anyway learning the lesson of how and how not to secure a canoe to a three wheeler made all the difference. We certainly turned some heads but we succeeded in effecting the portage to the lower river in style and we were soon underway but not before stuffing ourselves with breakfast goodies at a local restaurant.

Our next objective was the town of Vijayawada about three days paddling away, this was the portal to the tidal section of the river and would be the biggest town we were to pass through. Again the river had returned to its natural state and we were treated to wildlife and to moving water. Most of the rapids we could run one we made a mess of lining and lost the boat all together necessitating Richard to swim after it in an attempt to stop it.

The banks are still arid, not much agriculture. We are concerned from time to time to see dead fish floating on the surface of the water. The local fisherman eyed us up suspiciously from their coracles. Then the penny drops we reckoned that they were using dynamite to stun the fish. Signs of civilisation now are begin to encroach, brick works, sand getters load their boats almost to the point of sinking with sand from the river bed and wave and call out cheekily as we pass by.

The river has widened out now to over a kilometre in width. We swing to follow an easterly track that lets us know that we are on the final stretch to Vijayawada. One morning a heavy mist hangs over the river, at time we cannot see any features at all and paddle using the flow lines to provide a clue as to which way to paddle. Fishermen in their canoes and sailing boats emerge and disappear in and out of the gloom until eventually the sun burns off the murk to enable us to view our surroundings. The river has now ceased to flow and we sense that we are in the backed up river behind the barrage at Vijayawada. Within a few hours we are paddling past the public steps in this major town and up to the face of the massive barrage. We peer over the barrage edge and realise again that there is no flow however there sufficient standing water for us to imagine that we can make progress downstream. We paddle across the face of the barrage and more up before heading off into town to explore and do shopping. The Lonely Planet Rough Guide describes Vijayawada as lying '*at the head of the delta of the mighty Krishna river. It has established itself as a major port and important junction on the east coast train line. Surrounded by hills and intersected by canals, it's an appealing place. Claims that it's like Venice are a bit stretched.*' We agreed whole heartedly with the latter statement also the reference to it being a port was misplaced. This place had never seen any ships. Vijayawada has a population of about one million and was by far the biggest town we had passed.

We portaged the barrage with little help from the locals and set off downstream. The scenery was attractive with reedy banks and an abundance of coconut and date palms. The locals brought their buffalo to the water and wash them lovingly in the shallows just like a proud owner would wash and wax a his prized new car. Invariably the buffs would take one look at us before deciding to make a swift exit from the water dragging their unfortunate owner behind them. The river was shallow now, flow had re-established and lead us from one bank to other bank. At times we were lost in forests of reed, the only clue as to which way to go were flow lines. Progress was extremely slow with many groundings which necessitated walking the boat.

On our second day out of Vijayawada we were still struggling along with minimal flow and depth swinging from one side of the river to the other along our reedy channels. All of a sudden we realised that we were paddling against the flow, it had changed direction. We had a last reached the tidal section of the river. However, any thoughts that we only had a few miles further to paddle were dispelled by a glance at our map. We pressed on until eventually we reached the town of Avinagadda. A cycle rickshaw ride into the town revealed that buses left frequently from here to Vijayawada. This was to be our exit strategy. We were befriended by the locals at beach front restaurant and reckoned we could rely on their assistance in getting the boat to the town on our return from the sea. We caught the tide and pressed on with the 30/40 kilometres we needed to travel to reach the coastline, eventually camping within about three hours paddling time of our final objective. We rose early the next day and set off. The tide wasn't in our favour and so we had to inch our way toward our objective. Eventually, after many false dawns we saw what looked like boats floating out at sea. They would appear and disappear mysteriously until we realised that these were not boats at all but surf. At last we had made it. We paddled out from the

shelter of the channel and around the headland and into the ocean swell. We could see enormous breakers dissipating their full force on a reef or sand bar way out at sea giving us the protection we needed to survive in our present location. The banks were covered in mangrove except for a small beach which provided us with the landfall we required. We surfed in on a wave and hit the beach jumping out quickly and pulling the boat up as another wave threatened to swamp us. Richard and I looked at each other and realised that this was it, the end of the line, we shook hands and as you do in these circumstance made breakfast. A very very large billy full of porridge.

Our beach was deserted, in fact we hadn't seen a soul for some hours. There was no habitation as far as we could see anywhere except for a lighthouse which lay about a kilometre inland of where we stood. Mangrove encroached onto our little beach. It was strangely flattened for about 100m inland and debris had been forced into its branches at a level which appeared to be above the high water mark. We realised that we were looking at the effects of the recent tsunami which had devastated the region. The effect here was clearly minimal compared to what we saw subsequently on TV and we doubted whether there had been any loss of live or damage to property in the area.

Our trip was over, we had a further one days paddle back up the estuary to reach the road head but to all intents and purposes we had achieved our objective. In the course of 26 days we had travelled over 1400km along the Krishna River, a 1000km of which we had paddled. Here's looking forward to a cold beer and a soft bed! Mike Norman

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 which 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:

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Coaching

There is now an up to date and comprehensive schedule of paddling and associated courses that will be held during the course of the year on the CCC website

www.cambridgecanoeclub.org.uk

Quartermaster's Bit

It's been a busy time recently on the quartermaster front. With the coaching season now underway the club house is getting heavy use and each time I visit there seems to be something to

do, either for maintenance or improvement.

Hopefully you have noticed the hose by the shutter door. This is so we can try to keep equipment clean. If you have got your boat muddy, or especially when the grass has been just cut, could you hose down your boat so we don't get unnecessary dirt in the club? – But don't forget to sponge out your boat so the next person to use it doesn't have to get wet.

The next issue to deal with was the fire. I can't claim any responsibility for this but thanks must go out to Terry and others who were woken up and dragged down to the club at some unheard of hour in the morning. The council will be organising repairs – sooner rather than later we hope.

Key holders may notice a new bottom lock on the door following a failure of the previous one. Making good on the inside is yet to be done.

Finally, if you are a keyholder, could you please carefully check the duty rota for your next appearance, and mark it on your calendar, forehead, or anywhere else where you can't forget it, as we seem to be suffering a spate of no shows at present.

Oh – one other thing, could you all start carrying membership cards when you visit the club. With new members and new keyholders it's impossible to know whether the person turning up to paddle is a member or not and I'm sure you'll agree that unless the duty person is happy that someone is a member then they shouldn't let them take stuff out. *Sam*

Eastern Region Weekend 24/26 June 2005

The promotional material said it all. Courses, skills training, fun events, demo boats, canoe supplies to purchase, a BBQ, not to mention the additional attractions of the climbing wall, high ropes and archery. This was all locally at Mepal Outdoor Centre (west of Ely) as part of the Eastern Region Weekend. This was a superb event with something for everyone. The torrential rain on Friday afternoon and evening held off for the rest of the weekend and the Lake and its surrounds were alive with activity for both of these days with small groups of paddlers trying out new skills and honing old ones. The teaching rooms were also full of people updating their qualifications and skills.

A most successful event. Congratulations to David Savage for organising it so well for us. *May Block*

The Wednesday Series

All these offered on a first come, first served basis. Open to anyone, particularly those starting out, and juniors that need reassurance that somebody is on the water with them. At least one qualified, CRB checked coach will be on hand. No booking required - but an indication of numbers would be useful.

The clubhouse opens at 6pm. We aim to be on the water by 6:15pm, and off by 7:45pm. If this 5 week trial works out, we'll do more.

Wednesday 14th July - Mini Slalom and Races

After the success of the first Slalom, we will be getting the dates out again, erecting another simple 5 gate course, and racing around. We will also run a few sprint races!

An evening to find out how different boats perform, to try a K1 or a slalom boat if you have never been in one, and to race them. Suitable for all - you can fun at any level.

Wednesday 20th July - Grantchester Mill

It's been a month since we headed up in this direction, so we will be heading upstream to Grantchester, and stopping at the Mill. Suitable for all. We may not be back until 8:30pm. Can be counted as a trip towards the 2* award.

Wednesday 27th July - Strokes Workshop 2

In between the 2* and 3* courses, a chance for the course people to practice under the gaze of a coach, plus the chance for everybody else to practice 1*, 2*, 3* skills. If we are lucky, some of the play boating people may be able to show people how they do their impressive tricks!

COACHES and EXPERIENCED paddlers - if you fancy coming down and giving a hand, getting stuck in playing games, or even running a session of your choice, you will be more than welcome. The more the merrier. Add your ideas and input to the list. There's plenty more we can do.
Graham Rhodes

Special offer

David, from Reeds of Cambridge will give 5% discount to Cambridge Canoe Club members purchasing equipment from him, not applicable to boats, best have your membership card handy. The shop is virtually next door to the Pike and Eel pub, give him a call (Cambridge 425348). David occasionally has second hand boats for sale and may also help in selling your boat as well. *Ed*

PHAB sponsored paddle

Eight paddlers from a local PHAB (Physically Handicapped Able-Bodied) group paddled at the Clubhouse on Sunday 22 May, helped by Boz Kempiski and Arthur Davis. They were sponsored and as well as enjoying themselves on the water in a variety of boats, they raised over £500 for the group's funds. The group much appreciated all the help they received from the Club. *Bill Block*

Arthur's Year of the Dragon, Part 2

China at last, the weather was warm, no passport or visa problems and into the too small bus, luggage jammed everywhere inside and our first glimpse into the rules of driving in China, there are none ! The bus pulled straight out into the main road and took the mirror off a lorry that was already there, never mind, money changed hands and we were off. Our destination was Longyou in Zhejiang province to take part in the Longyou International Dragonboat Invitational Tournament, which the info pack declared to be an area of great mystery and giving you a deep impression. On arrival we found we were staying at the best hotel in town, the Longyou Grand, a meal was ready, we were jetlagged, and racing started the next day ,check out the food then.

The buffet looked fine, there was rice, noodles, vegetables,

various meat dishes, some bread, tofu and a few odd things so stick to rice and noodles and off to bed. At breakfast next morning there was rice, noodles, vegetables and everything that seemed to be there last night but there were different breads, some cakes and two varieties of boiled eggs as well. This set the pattern for all the meals that followed, three a day but similar. In the bus to go to the race site next morning and we had a police escort, I was never sure if it was to keep them away from us or us away from them, but everyone seemed very friendly with lots of waving and pointing at the funny looking people in the bus. Competitors were corralled in a metal fenced enclosure, patrolled by a type of policeman, whose job was to stop the locals trying to peer over the fence at us, something they seemed very keen on doing .We also had a scooter escort when we did our usual warm up jog, on a brand new piece of road which we could only go so far along before we were turned back.

Before racing started, there was an opening ceremony, the scope of which we couldn't see until we got on the water, the whole course was lined by spectators on both sides several deep, we paddled around a few times and then all the boats lined up facing the bank at one point where all the intros were made, the eyes dotted on the heads, various speeches were made and then the command "will you all stand for the national anthem", never done this before ,but occupants of all ten boats stood up with a few wobbles on our part and managed the whole anthem without incident .Back to the corral to await racing and a terrible first heat in the 500m left us a bit miffed but we recovered to come 3rd in the 500m and 2nd in the 2500m,giving us second overall and a cash prize. Am I a professional now?, does £12 count as an income?

Several of us were still adjusting to local time and were ready for breakfast about an hour before the allotted time and decided to go for a quick stroll, although it was still early ,the town was pretty active, some of the shops were open and the roads were busy. Crossing the road was a test of agility and alertness, the road being one lane each way but driving on the right and bordered by a cycleway on both sides which seemed to be two way. We turned into a side road and once off the main road, it seemed we had gone into a different town, narrow passages, open drains, a complete contrast to the affluence that was running parallel to us ,only a few metres away. China was definitely a country of contrasts, people were affluent and modern or poor and traditional.

After the usual breakfast, we were scheduled to meet the sponsor of the racing on the previous day, so back into the bus with the police escort, drive past a KFC ,wonder if they are the same as here? ,and arrive at the sponsors firm. It was a photo opportunity to publicise his new shopping centre which was to be very modern in design but when viewed from above, the buildings and green areas etc were arranged to represent a dragon .The centre was very modern but it did seem that most of the city would not be able to afford to shop there. Next stop was the area of great mystery which turned out to be a walk through a series of bamboo gardens with small pools of water against the hillside. The area was very peaceful and on reading the literature, it said that the pools were investigated years ago and found to be very, very deep but when one was subsequently drained, the small pool was found to be an enormous cavern and also square in shape and having a regular design carved into the walls. It didn't seem to be decided what the caves had been used for but storage of

live fish was one idea. A traditional temple was also situated close by, with lots of incense burning outside and drifting over the whole site.

This was our last day in Longyou, we were to travel to the World Championships on the outskirts of Shanghai tomorrow but one last evening meal. The food looked as normal but at the end of the table was one dish which I looked at a few times and suddenly thought, they look like heads in the stew and with teeth like that could only belong to a rodent of some sort. I decided to pass on that one and stick to the spicy noodles. I don't think many of the team actually knew what the dish was but everyone else passed as well.

We were based at the Dianshan Lake Forest Holiday resort for the duration of the Championships, a hotel with a few fitness facilities, a small shop and Table Tennis and Pool tables to keep people occupied ,and racing at the 2000m Regatta course on Dianshan Lake ,about 6 km away. Interestingly, the racing seemed to be advertised as the Cambridge Water Town Cup but not sure as to why. It was a shock going to bed that night, the beds were incredibly hard, no give at all and I was told that some people were sleeping on the floor because it was softer! Breakfast was slightly different here, there was actually toast and you could have eggs cooked to order, coffee was available and even porridge but it was a little bit runny. Older readers may recall the Cheese shop sketch from Monty Python, that's how runny it was.

There is always an opening ceremony at a Championships, Philadelphia was a memorable one, all the competitors walked along part of the road where the audience were at the live8 concert and then sat on the steps of the Library where Sylvester Stallone ran up in Rocky 1-15. This time it was held in a large arena in Qingpu, our nearest large town, and had a motto "Striving Together, Developing Harmoniously " The speeches were many and the entertainment excellent, Chinese Drumming to awaken the Earth, Boxing, Folk Dancing, a Dragon dance and Singing and Fireworks to end the show that nearly left you deaf.

Oh yes, the World Championships, practice day first and a quick bash up the course and back to check the boats out, plenty of room for the paddlers, a little tight for the rear pairs but not too bad, look forward to the racing tomorrow. This left the afternoon spare so a few of us had several taxis and went to the ancient town of Zhujiajiao, a mixture of shops, tea houses, various museums, an ancient post office and a temple, all crammed in together with narrow streets and straddling a river and canal. A craze seemed to be starting for buying mandarin style jackets or hats and also how cheap you could buy a Rolex watch from a Street seller. The bridge over the river here was of particular interest, being the oldest, longest bridge in the Shanghai area with carved Dragons and Lions and also home to the ceremony of "setting the fish free". All afternoon I had seen people carrying small bags with small fish in ,just like you win at the fair, and thought there was not much of a meal there but you actually bought the bags of fish and then walked onto the bridge and tipped the fish into the murky, slightly smelly water. which either bought you good luck or made you feel better about yourself but it certainly didn't bring the fish luck or made them better because they were netted as they lay stunned ,put in a bag and sold again.

First race day, the 1000m races, all our teams are housed in

one tent which is a bit too crowded but luckily there is an empty one next door which is put into service. Race days are usually just sitting around resting ,keeping hydrated and snacking till you are ready to warm up for the race, into the boat, final warm up to the start and just over 4 minutes later, back at the finish and getting out. Repeat the process and then go and collect medals. Unfortunately we didn't seem to get that bit right and sadly no medals.

Next race day was a rest for the Seniors but for me a bit of a problem meant I could not go too far from the loo, so a day in the room, watching Chinese TV which was different and another trip to the physio as my back was playing up again.

200m races next day and I was rested, coach John had decided to go for increasing the paddle rate a fair bit which is not my forte so I photographed the races and helped where I could. We still didn't get the Medal winning procedure right unfortunately.

Final day of racing,500m distance and back in the boat again. Everyone was fired up to do well and paddled hard but no major placings for us yet again although we did manage to win our closely contested Minor Final which put us in about 6th place, just above half way.

Although the Senior Open and Premier Open teams were unsuccessful, the Ladies team took 3 medals home, beating the previously all conquering Chinese ladies to the Gold.

With the racing over, we had one more day to spend in China , the natural choice was Shanghai and we were booked into a hotel in the centre. Shanghai was only an hour away but could be seen from a distance away by the huge pall of pollution or smoke above the city. Again, it was a city of great contrast, incredible skyscrapers dwarfing crumbling ancient buildings around their bases and large areas being demolished ready for the next skyscraper. Some relatively tall buildings had scaffolding round them and incredibly, the scaffolding was large diameter bamboo poles. My room mate Steven and I decided on a trip across the river to say we had been on the Yangtse and shared the ferry with a large group of pedestrians and an even larger pack of small motorbikes which all had very smoky two stroke engines and exited the vessel in a large cloud of smoke and noise, ready for the returning pack to do the same on the opposite side. Once out of the smoke, we visited the China Pearl tower,100 plus floors high and with viewing galleries, confirming there were buildings as far as the eye could see on all sides, I can't begin to guess the size of the population in Shanghai, it must be enormous. The hotel we stayed at had a revolving restaurant on its top floor, so we had a Chinese meal in China, a novel experience because it seemed to be similar to an English Chinese meal but with some of the species changed. I guess croaker is a type of frog but was not certain, perhaps it was lost in the translation.

Well, I guess that's really the trip over now, at least the beds were softer for our last night in China. Although we didn't take any medals from the Worlds, the experience had been fantastic, especially winning cash and the Silver medal at the traditional Longyou Invitational event. Once back in England, it was back into kayaking and the first H&H in October and my best ever time but two broken fingers on successive weeks at circuit training soon put paid to that and a flaring up of my back problem had soon necessitated the rounds of the Doctor,

Physiotherapist and Osteopath with a Physical therapist thrown in as well so I was relegated to running the races instead of paddling.

The Worlds 2005 are in Berlin, I had hoped there was a slight chance but after paddling a few times and having little back trouble I have now damaged a knee ligament or cartilage and am unable to run but was still optimistic as long as I could paddle to fitness. In one of those twists of fate you sometimes get, these hopes were dashed when I badly strained my right forearm/elbow when attempting to start the lawnmower, I keep telling Helen that gardening is bad for you, now I have proof positive but I don't think she is convinced. If I keep dropping plates because of grip problems, I may be excused washing up as well, may try that!

So that's my Year everyone, a pretty busy one and eventful and in reality it has been nice not having to get up really early at week-ends to go training around the country in 2005 but the next European event in 2006 is in Prague, a city I would like to revisit and there is a World Outrigger Championships in New Zealand in early 2006, have to get fit again first though.

Many congratulations for making it to the end of the article without a quick snooze, see you on, in or around the water.
Arthur

Trinity May Ball Social 20/6/05

Monday 20th June at the clubhouse saw a gathering of 24 people all ready for a good time. Meeting at 8.30pm at the clubhouse it was not long before Terry opened the first of many bottles of Cava! Mike and Annette then joined in with the dips and Doritos. We eventually got on the water at around 9.30pm with only 2 bottles of Cava unopened! Terry's fault!

The paddle down to the Mill Pond (our virtual Grade 6 feature so appropriately named by Boo!) was calm, and then the fun began with punters that could not punt! After a few laughs we made it to Trinity College where all the punts were lining up waiting for the fireworks.

However this was where the fun really began. We opened the rest of the Cava and served it in posh plastic wine glasses – oh we do things in style here at the CCC!

There were people playing guitars, with the crowds singing, foreign students attempting to Flamenco on their punts, then a boy stalker joined in the action.

As the day started to draw in, Paul lit the candles on his Canadian and Morag lit her sparklers, and hey presto the fireworks display commenced, to the sound of Classical music - the fireworks danced in the sky – what a masterpiece. We all clapped and it was over.

What a great night. Thank you Trinity for supplying the entertainment. *Tara Downton - Another regular for the annual calendar I think. Ed*

Washburn 11/12 June 2005

After a peaceful night camping, we stocked up on calories and had a good hearty fry up! Full of energy we headed off to the River. The Washburn is a Dam released river which provides drinking water to the area. It is owned by the Water Board so there are no access issues.

So after a little walk along the river to check out the fast flow, we all got kitted up and got on the water. With Stuart leading, Boz followed, then Gabriel then me in a blow up orca (for fun). The first feature was taken ...all fine, still got my hat on! The second closely follows, then a pleasant flatish paddle makes you forget about the Big One! And wey hey we are all down with smiley faces and a sigh of relief, then try and find an eddyeasier said than done on this river! All relaxed and chilled we set off to do the easy part of the river and what should happen? Was it loss of concentration or a hint of "who's the Daddy"?! But Boz broke in and went over! Dooh as Bart would say.... A swimmer! All rescued and safe we finish.

After a well deserved BBQ back at the campsite (with the world's tallest BBQ I have ever seen built by Nick) we head off to the pub for some well deserved drinkies. Across the fields and far far away, and there goes little Joe on his skate board – oops he's fallen over, oh no in the cow pat! After a good laugh we decide to leave him outside the pub because he smells! Not really, we made him take the offending items of clothing off!

Another great weekend of boating and laughter, thanks Tim for organising, and well done Boz for keeping the boats on the roof this time! *Tara Downton*

The Cromer Weekend

Day 1 – Saturday May 28th

Saturday dawned bright and early. An easy journey up to the coast introduced us to the delights of Goldie Looking Chain; the fact that Tara's posh Jag could play such "over 18" music still entertains. Graham's hand signal out of the car window to indicate "eddie out left" (or, as it now means "toilets here if you need them") provided relief in more than the lightest of senses.

We met up with most of the gang in East Runton car park; a nice sunny grass filled place to get changed; not at all like the usual gravel filled rainy car parks that kayakers are used to getting changed in. From the Hill top the surf looked a little puny, but down at wave level we soon realised that it was more than enough for beginners. Alan quickly grabbed a wave and stuck his dagger near vertically into it. The gathered crowd held their collective breath as we all expected some awesome move from this stupendous position. The look of panic on Alan's face, however, suggested that the vertical orientation of his boat was due to the fact that he had inadvertently buried the nose of his kayak in the soft sand rather than the beginning of some radical freestyle manoeuvre, and that his next move was going to be at the mercy of the impending breaker.

Whether we wanted to or not the longshore drift made sure that we ended up a kilometre or so down the coast at the tourist mecca of Cromer where, tired and a little frustrated at both the lack of waves and the lack of skill, I enjoyed a lovely (if pricey) ice cream; just what the Doctor ordered to face tide

for the journey back to our starting point. A short trip westwards in the afternoon rounded off a lovely introduction to kayaking on the sea.

As the sun descended, Simon (Brand) captained the barbecue as all enjoyed a relaxing evening and compared stories on how we had surfed (or swam!) various waves during the day. As some departed (rather than risk getting locked in the car park) others took their chance at booking in one of the already overcrowded campsites. We dropped on lucky and after pitching the tents the group enjoyed a few more refreshments at the local hostelry, which conveniently forgot what time closing was.

Day 2 – Sunday 29th May

The second day dawned neither particularly bright nor early, and after a somewhat eclectic breakfast we headed westwards down the coast to meet Sam, Boz and Gabriel at the car park near Cley marshes nature reserve. We launched onto a brackish Cley Channel and headed towards Blakeney Point; the gentle paddle gave plenty of time to chat and exchange stories with old friends. A 45 minute or so stop at landward side of Blakeney Point was fascinating (seeing the oyster catchers valiantly guarding their nests of large brown speckled eggs against a dozen or so nosey kayakers was curious at least). Later, this break would also prove rather pricey. After lunch we headed up the coast to Blakeney Point proper, avoiding the apparently inexhaustible supply of tourist boats, taking their sightseers obscenely close to the Point which colonies of grey and common seals make their home. However, our standoffishness paid off as several seals came out to see “what those pratts in the little plastic boats are splashing about at”. Even when we left the point and headed out to the North Sea, the curious seals followed us and played hide and seek amongst the boats. This was a nature that Wildlife on One viewers could only dream about. Out in the open water, the earlier lengthy lunch break worked against us, and a 3km fight eastwards against the receding tide ensued. To stop paddling meant to drift back towards Blakeney point. The odd curious seal punctuated a rather painful journey back to where we started from. Eventually the weary travellers dragged themselves up the protective coastal shingle bank, only to find that the coffee shop (the thought of which had kept so many going in the previous 3 km) was, in fact, shut.

We again bade farewell to some of the group (with Boz embarking on his quest for Lavender flavoured ice cream) and the intrepid venturing into Wells-next-the-Sea in search of a bank machine and a hearty meal. It seemed that most of the inhabitants of west Norfolk were doing the same, but we eventually installed ourselves in the pub garden of a popular watering hole, drinking more tea than would normally be healthy for 5 of us, and marvelling at the huuuge lamb shank that Graham had wisely ordered. Back at the overcrowded campsite, the sun quickly dipped into the North Sea, leaving me at least with a tired but thankful feeling from a day that won't quickly slip from my memory.

Day 3 – Monday 30th May The 3rd day of our trip brought a day of emotion swings. Firstly disbelief that the only breakfast we were going to get was from the barbecue, then disgust as the phone calls came through to Mr Rhodes explaining that some comedian had tried setting fire to the clubhouse during the night. Anticipation soon followed as we

realised that the local surf aficionados were making their way to East Runton where we had been on Saturday. Having confirmed that the waves were indeed massive, Simon Quick and Graham togged up and headed into the surf, the rest of us being happy to sit on the shore taking photos and watching the masterclass unfold. Extensive forward, backward and side surfing were demonstrated, as well as other tricks. Graham finally calling it a day as a damaged shoulder forced a spectacular dismount on the shoreline. Minutes later a tired but happy looking Simon came in, receiving many plaudits from the local surf boys.

The trip home allowed us all to reflect on a great weekend, and wonder, with such a great surf and touring spot so nearby, when we would next visit the North Norfolk Coast. *Thanks to Andrew Twigg for this article*

Success on Open Canoe 3* Tests

Congratulations to 6 Club members (Arthur Davis, Ruth Dunn, Mike Norman, Richard Smith, Bill & May Block) who have successfully completed a solo Open Boat course at 3* level at Mepal. There's a lot more to paddling open canoes (Canadian) than you think! Try it - it great fun. *Bill Block*

For Sale

FOR SALE – Lendal Mania asymmetric paddle



Right hand lightweight shaft with hand grip.

Overall length 180 cm.

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One new blade fitted by Lendal.

Excellent condition – would suit junior novice to experienced white water paddler.

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