



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@yahoo.com

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

July 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 summer is here at last and it is good to see so many of you out on the river, both at the clubhouse and at many of the trips organised over the past few months. I have been pleasantly surprised by the number of local one-day paddles we have been able to organise within a short driving distance of Cambridge and the number of people who are keen to take part in these paddles. There will be a re-run of many of these next year for those of you who want to repeat these or missed them first time around. I would particularly like to thank Richard for his work organising these paddles. There will of course be the regular Wednesday night paddles continuing over the summer period supported by both our coaches and several able experienced paddlers.

It's good to be able to send out congratulations and best wishes to club members and this month there are many notable mentions.

Firstly I would like to congratulate Mike Norman on completing his two-man row across the Atlantic, and yes he is still on talking terms with his paddling partner. Additionally congratulations go out to Dr Tim Mitchell and Emma on their recent marriage and also to Richard Smith who told me he has just become engaged.

Lastly congratulations to all of you who have taken part in structured paddling courses and gained BCU qualifications, particularly those who recently gained their Canoe Safety Test awards. It's good to have plenty of experienced people around the clubhouse, particularly as our membership grows.

Enjoy your summer paddling; see you in or on the water

Terry Elsey

Cam Marathon

Cambridge Canoe Club once again hosted the annual Cam Marathon from our clubhouse on the 2nd April. Even though it was a cold day we had an excellent turnout of 121 paddlers.

Many club members came along and helped; this was much appreciated by the organiser, club committee and all the paddlers who came and raced in our event. Thank you.

The race started 200 m upstream of the clubhouse, racing downstream past the clubhouse. With 121 paddlers setting off in 12 starts over 10 minutes it was quite choppy outside the clubhouse especially as the lower divisions turned at a buoy just below Fen causeway and raced back up to Granchester. The higher divisions went further down the river before returning to the upper river. Next year come along and watch if you are not racing or helping. Fewer Cambridge paddlers raced than in previous years but they all gave respectable performances.

Congratulations to:

- Neil Farnell who won Div 7 and was promoted to Div 6
- Nicole Zahn who was promoted to Div 8

Well done!

The Club points trophy was won by Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club, Cambridge came 6th. We should try and win this next year but we will need at least 20 club members racing.

Many thanks to all the club members who came along and helped.

Richard Stagg

Club Diary

The ever-popular Wednesday series continues throughout the summer, with fun events planned for every Wednesday evening. Most activities take place from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, but some may end later. All begin and end at the clubhouse and are suitable for paddlers of all abilities.

19 th July	Paddle and Ice Cream
26 th July	Games Night
9 th August	River Clean
16 th August	Paddle to Jesus Lock
23 rd August	Slalom and races
30 th August	River Picnic to Grantchester
6 th September	River Clean

Further details are available online and on the bulletin boards at the clubhouse.

Membership renewal

If you have not done so yet, please remember to renew your membership! Membership forms are available from the clubhouse and can be downloaded from the website.

Freestyle

Congratulations to Joe Kingston on his 2nd place finish at the freestyle event at the Peak UK Tryweryn Whitewater Challenge, and his 2nd place overall on the Washburn Challenge. Well done!

River Nene Tour June 3rd

It was an ideal day for a river tour with a clear blue sky and a gentle breeze. The upper Nene at Islip (south west of Oundle) is a gently flowing winding river with scattered trees along the banks. Nineteen paddlers launched just below the Mill at Islip following a quick and easy shuttle. The group was a mixture of open boats, tourers, general purpose kayaks and playboats, with a wide age range from a non-paddling youngster to a Senior paddler from all round the County. We made easy progress to the first portage. We had not intended to portage but alas the ever safety-conscious Environment Agency has closed off the entrance to this backwater and nearly all the others where there is a drop in water level, with huge red bollards across the width of the waterway to prevent motor cruisers going over. No alternative was left but to paddle to the lock and portage round. We had a lunch stop near the lock at Wadenhoe. The playboaters were able to approach this via a backwater but the tourers and open boats kept to the main river here. The latter definitely had the easy option. The rest of us had to cope with narrow steps and railings designed to keep pedestrians away from the waters edge, which proved quite a challenge for boats longer than playboats.

The rest of the river slipped away easily behind us after lunch as we passed through truly rural England. The next lock near Pilton was an even greater challenge thanks to the safety officers at the Environment Agency and made portaging of double open boats really hard work, though a couple of the playboaters found a chink between the bollards and circumnavigated all the safety fencing. It was not long after this that we arrived at our destination at Barnwell Mill where many of our cars were parked. Alas, the pub was closed for refurbishment so we were unable to slake our thirst, but there was a nice lawn to sit on and sort ourselves out for our return home. Our thanks go to David Savage for organising and leading this tour on behalf of Cambridgeshire Canoeing Association.

May Block

CCC on television

Recently a BBC camera team joined the club for a river clean. The report was shown on BBC Look East on Thursday, July 6th, and includes interviews with Terry Elsey and Boz Kempski. Thank you to everyone who participated, and of course to all our regular litter pickers!

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.

A new system has been set up to send automated e-mail reminders out to keyholders before their duty. Hopefully this will reduce the absence rates, which have been unacceptably high this spring.

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

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:
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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 in these pages.

A man and his boat

It is a long time since the Canoe Club has had an invited speaker. Robert Perkins is an American with great experience of paddling solo open boats in the Canadian Arctic but also elsewhere. In 1992 (to celebrate 500 years of the discovery of America) he made a trip in Britain paddling between Greenwich and Aberdeenshire. The talk started as a film that he made of the trip at that time which has been previously shown on Channel 4.

He began at Greenwich and paddled up the R. Thames to Oxford where he transferred to canals, going to and around Birmingham then north to Preston, camping along the way usually on waterside properties with permission. At Preston he left the canals moving up the R. Lune and into the Eden valley. Later he hitched lifts to cross the border into Scotland and eventually reached Strathdon via the R. Spey.

It was interesting to appreciate the great advances made since 1992 to the state of many of our canals so that now they are less municipal dumps of rubbish but attractive stretches of water. Robert liked to engage with people along the way and we saw how he viewed the English countryside and ourselves. On the whole he met with great kindness from these encounters until he reached the R. Eden where he was told in no uncertain terms that there was no access for canoeists. Amazingly he and his canoe then managed to hitch truck rides up to Oban where he transferred to a fishing boat followed by a smart pleasure boat to enable him to access the R. Spey.

He accomplished his mission by delivering a letter from a relative of his in the USA to Lord Forbes, head of Clan

Forbes. He was impressed that rather than being shown the castle he was taken to look at the local osprey's nest.

After a break for coffee and cake he then recounted a tale about his encounter with caribou and wolves. He held us spellbound as in his slow deliberate way he set the scene by the river and recounted the meeting between caribou and wolf, and wolf and himself. We were spellbound.

A delightful evening from an interesting individual.

May Block

Canoe club and other members of the public enjoyed an evening of film with questions and stories by the author and Channel Four documentary filmmaker Robert Perkins, on April 27th. The focus of the evening was Robert's open canoe trip between Greenwich and Aberdeen. And during his week in Cambridge he also presented a variety of talks, film and readings to the British Antarctic Survey, U3A (University of the Third Age), the Scott Polar Research Institute and the Netherhall Upper School.

Rob, who is based in Utah, made many new contact and friends throughout his five days in Cambridge. He hopes to return to Cambridge again in the not too distant future. And in the meantime, we wish him every success with negotiations connected with his proposed BBC TV documentary, a journey along the entire length of the Colorado River!

On behalf of the club I would like to thank Bill and May Block along with Povl Abrahamsen, for their superb hospitality and technical skills.

Ian Newman



Robert Perkins paddling
on the River Cam.
Photo: Ian Newman

Elder Paddlers in Heidelberg

Cambridge City has been twinned with Heidelberg for about 26 years and this has promoted exchanges between Clubs and Societies usually around Easter each year.

Cambridge Canoe Club has had a vigorous and vibrant exchange with Heidelberg's Wassersport Club for most of this time. Brian and Carole Taylor were instrumental in initiating the exchange between the two Clubs in the early 1980s. Over the years this exchange has involved paddling on a large variety of waters over much of Britain and Germany with social interaction and fun between paddlers and non-paddlers alike and as a result many close family friendships have evolved.

Our longstanding German friends have coined the term 'Elder Paddlers' to describe those interested in canoeing who have been involved with the exchange from an early stage. All of us are still interested in canoeing though may no longer be members of either Club.

Thus it was that nine Cambridge CC associated people went to Heidelberg in May to help them celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of their Club. They were Bill and May Block, Peter and Pauline Bramworth, Francis Clifford and Bill Aylen, Brian and Carole Taylor and Sylvia Williams. Also present were CCC members Henrietta and Jochen Hartl who are currently living in Germany.

The Wassersport Club was founded in 1931 and have a Club House adjacent to the R. Neckar in Heidelberg and also a camp site a few miles upstream. It is not as large as CCC at the moment (under 100) but offers a wide variety of skills and events to members.



Even the CCC Hon President paddled on the Neckar!

Saturday 13 May 2006 was the formal occasion by which the anniversary was celebrated. A large gathering of past and present members of WSC and the CCC contingent were regaled by speeches from their President Volker Werle, the Oberbürgermeister of Heidelberg and the Hon President of CCC Bill Block (see below). These were followed by a presentation of a Cambridge water colour by Brian Taylor and finished with an address by the Area Sports Manager (responsible for over 450 Clubs in the Heidelberg area!) on the theme of volunteers in sport.

The speeches were followed by presentations of paddling awards (and also a box of two bottles of wine) to long-time members of Heidelberg WSC. Some of these had

been members for over 40 years, one had designed a new folding-type boat and another held a record for the greatest number of kilometres paddled.

The formal meeting over, the room was rearranged and we sat down to a lavish dinner followed by dancing, singing and a lot of talk with old friends.

The cultural tradition of the exchange was continued over the next few days by group visits to Speyer, the local wine villages and Alsace.



Some of the Elder Paddlers on safari.

We would like to express our thanks to the Eichermuller, Haag and Kraft families (including Lutz) as well as to Gotlint Posner and Sabine Eulentrop (née Nollenburger) for making us all so welcome in Heidelberg and giving us such an enjoyable visit.

Hopes were expressed that the exchange between the two canoe Clubs would continue, perhaps in a slightly different format and in the summer months.

May & Bill Block

Speech given at the 75th anniversary celebration of the Heidelberg WSC by the Hon President of the Cambridge CC

Mein Damen, mein Herren, liebe Freunde. As Honorary President of the Cambridge Canoe Club it is both an honour and a privilege to participate in the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Heidelberg Wassersport Club. On behalf of all the Elder Paddlers here from Cambridge, I thank you most sincerely for inviting and hosting our visit. It is a great time to renew friendships, acquaintances and paddling experiences. I bring you congratulations from our Club in Cambridge on the happy occasion of your 75th anniversary. Our Club is only 27 years old and we have a long way to go to catch up with you!

My Headmaster at school used to give us the axiom: "Study the past, live in the present and plan for the future" – and that is the theme for my brief address to day.

The Past

The association and exchange of visits between our Clubs began about 25 years ago in the early 1980s. The

exchange was open to both young and old paddlers, but also to friends 'who wanted to see what it was like' in Heidelberg and Cambridge. My family participated in the exchanges and all three of our children benefited greatly from these shared experiences. Yes, there was always canoeing, but the important parts of the exchange were the social interaction, learning about each others culture and way of life, the thoughts and ideas of ordinary people. Together, during the exchanges, we also made many visits away from Cambridge and Heidelberg – to paddle of course! In Britain expeditions were made to North Wales (1984, 1996), Scotland (1986, 1994) South Wales (1992, 1998), Cornwall (1990) and other places to paddle. We paddled on rivers, estuaries and the sea. From Heidelberg excursions were made to Trier, Schwarzwald, Garmisch, Friedrichshafen, Bodensee, Lech, the Czech Republic, and many other locations. Above all, these expeditions were fun!



The Haag's house in Heidelberg where some of the Cambridge visitors stayed.

The Present

The Cambridge Club has some 300 members currently; it is a family sports Club and has several members paddling in competitions: sprint racing, marathon and white water. We have a growing number of freestyle paddlers or 'playboaters'. At its heart, it remains a friendly Club which welcomes visitors and several different nationalities are found amongst its membership. During summer, its main focus is the training of beginners in the sport of canoeing, white water paddling and touring. We also provide paddling experiences for disabled folk who want to participate.

In many ways the Heidelberg WSC is similar to our Club, and it was heart warming to experience the friendly welcome at your Club today, when I ventured onto the Neckar for a paddle. Your headquarters are excellent and we in Cambridge are finding our building somewhat cramped that we are planning to develop and hopefully expand in the future.

The Future

So what of the future? I believe it would be good to keep alive the association between our Clubs and to plan to have joint activities in the future. Times change, people change, ideas come and go we need to involve the

next generation in our plans and to enthuse young paddlers about our activities. We need to rekindle our association based on the past experiences with the present in mind.

I have two suggestions for our Clubs to consider for the future. Firstly, as there is an increased desire for British canoeists to paddle European waters and most Clubs organise expeditions for white water and/or touring paddlers, it would be excellent for groups from the Cambridge Club to include a visit to Heidelberg as part of these trips. The WSC camping place on Neckar would be an ideal spot to meet; perhaps with some of your members joining with ours to explore waters elsewhere in Europe. Secondly, I think we should consider a more flexible arrangement for our exchanges – perhaps not necessarily on an annual basis but to meet in alternate years – also to move the timing from Easter to the summer months – and to consider paddling camps elsewhere than in Heidelberg or Cambridge.

That is all I wish to say, except to reiterate the Cambridge greetings to your Club on this happy occasion. Now I would ask Brian Taylor, who headed the first visit of the exchange and, together with his wife Carole, contributed so much to our mutually enjoyable exchanges over many years.

[Brian presented the Heidelberg WSC with a framed watercolour of Kings College, Cambridge inscribed "Presented to Heidelberg Wassersport Club by Friends of Cambridge Canoe Club to commemorate their 75th Anniversary"]

Bill Block

Your Committee – and how to contact us

You can leave letters to any committee member on the "mailbox" bulletin board at the clubhouse, or by e-mail by appending "cambridgecanoeclub.org.uk" to the addresses below:

Honorary President	Bill Block	president@...
Chairman	Terry Elsey	chairman@...
Secretary	Boz Kempfski	secretary@...
Treasurer	Russell McDonald	treasurer@...
Membership	Andrew Cleland	membership@...
Quartermaster	Sam Browning	quartermaster@...
Social Secretary	Tara Downton	social@...
Competition	Richard Stagg	competition@...
Coaching	Richard Smith	coaching@...
Touring	Tim Mitchell	touring@...
Members without portfolio	Arthur Davis	arthur@...
	Mike Price	mike@...
Webmaster/		
Newsletter Editor	Povl Abrahamsen	newsletter@...

River Wye May Bank Holiday

Over the May bank holiday weekend, thirty paddlers from Cambridge Canoe Club converged on the Welsh border near Symonds Yat, to paddle the River Wye.

After negotiating the narrow, winding road from Symonds Yat towards Coleford, we pitched our tents at luxurious Bracelands campsite, run by the Forestry Commission. Very soon a forest of tents had sprung up around us, with all sorts of kayaks and canoes being prepared for the next days' trips.



On Saturday morning, we got on the water at Lower Lydbrook. From here, the River Wye meanders down to Symonds Yat, with a few gentle rapids and lots of beautiful scenery along the way. As we approached Symonds Yat, a few crazy kayakers seal launched off a rock, while the tourists on the other bank watched in awe.



Then the kayakers and some intrepid canoeists moved on to Symonds Yat rapids. The water was relatively low, but there were still a few good, surfable waves, and it wasn't overly crowded. It wasn't long before everyone was practicing surfing, and carrying or towing their kayaks back to the top to paddle down again.

After a long day of paddling, we retired to the campsite where the barbecues were lit, and soon everyone was sitting around the grill, both for food and for warmth. As the night moved on, we saw several techniques for

roasting marshmallows, from lightly warming them, to charring them beyond recognition.



On Sunday the groups split up, with the Canadian canoes paddling to Monmouth, while the kayakers paddled from Glasbury to Hay-on-Wye. There was very little flow on the upper river; the kayakers really scraped against the bottom on the wider sections. After a lunch break on a sand bank in the middle of the river, we arrived at the broken weir near Hay-on-Wye, and found a long wave stretching across most of the river, with a nice eddy just below. There was truly something for every level, and everyone played around on the wave.

That evening, just as the grill was ready, the weather, which otherwise had been excellent, took a turn for the worse, and we had to eat our burgers in the rain. Braving the drizzle, some of us made our way to the local pub, where we warmed up over a couple of pints before getting cold and wet on the walk back.



Luckily the last day started out more pleasant: grey but dry. We returned to Symonds Yat for a final play on the rapids. Although it had rained, the river levels were still rather low, but we had a few more hours on the rapid before we made our way back to Cambridge.

Thank you very much to Mike Price for arranging the trip, and to everyone who came for making it such a fun weekend!

Povl Abrahamsen