

the trasher



July / August 2006

slovenia april 2006 - Lisa Parke

Sometime before Christmas, I was asked by Claire-Chon-Leen and Heather Rainsley, if I would like to join them for a weeks kayaking in Slovenia. I said yes,then thought about it!!!!

It was to be a week on a bespoke Fundamental Course run by Simon Westgarth of Gene17Kayaking.

I was wondering, by saying yes.....was I biting off more than I could chew?

April came around sooner than expected and before I knew it, I was checking myself and the boat onto a plane and heading to Trieste.

We arrived to a welcoming

smile from Debs Pinnager, a remarkable woman in her own right, comes with a great sense of humour and is extremely good company, as we found out.



The journey from Trieste to Trnovo is approximately 1 ½ hours. The roads are very windy and the scenery magical. Trnovo is a very small village situated in the Soca valley. The village experienced an earthquake a few

years back, this would explain why some of the buildings looked newly built and some looked like they had seen better days!

The village itself, is home to a small farming community, (unfortunately it was muck spreading season.....mmm!), and many friendly dogs with short legs !

There is a bar (very cheap wine.....always a good thing!) , a convenient store, and a very well stocked kayak shop, from which I purchased a lovely pair of pink bladed paddles. Have I showed you them?



I could try and give you a day by day account of what we paddles but my memory isn't as good as it was back in April, so here is an over all account of what happens

The days would start about 8.00 (that's if you slept through the 5.45 church bells!). Debs, Dave Carroll, and Simon would join us about 9.00 for or after breakfast.

Then the coaching began.

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The first part of the day involves gear review and boat outfitting. They take a look at what you carry/wear and what state it appears to be in. One of the group had a rather noticeable PINK throw line.....no, it wasn't me, which after many taunts got hidden away only to appear later through the week for a throw line practice and more taunts. Then the boats. Some of us had taken our own boats, but others were borrowing boats from



There were 9 students altogether, shared between the 3 coaches. From the minute you get onto the river to the time you get off, it is non-stop thinking, learning, excitement and fun.



Simon. These all had to be fitted out to our needs and

likes. I now have a lovely pair of hip pads, carved out of the finest foam by non-other than Dave Carroll himself, and if I happen to want a new boat one day.....bidding starts on the hip pads for £450 only, the boat comes free !

After sorting us all out, we head to the river. The Soca river runs through the valley, and has a number of sections on it which caters for the beginner paddler through to the experienced. It runs through

all the grades 1-6, we were going to experience the first 4 !!!

The first day is a warm up on the lower Soca, this allows the instructors to observe your skills, and target specific aspects of your paddling to work on. The river is beautiful, the colour icy blue, and although the air is warm, the water is as cold as the colour describing it.....as I found out.....just a few times. From other people of course !.



They would make each person take it in turn to lead and question us on how we thought we would get to our next eddy, thinking of our own position and that of others, easy on the wide open flat river, but a lot more thought

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involved on the harder bouldery runs.



I kind of thought, if I stayed at the back, they would forget I was there and I could follow, but alas I had forgotten to take the boat that was completely camouflaged on the river !! I had to take my turn ! But all went well and there were no casualties from following me.....lucky the "face of fear" was on the front of my head !

Each day brought a different section with different experiences, new skill to learn and improve on.

The quality of coaching is exceptional. They give you the

confidence to push yourself just that little bit harder.

After each day on the river, it's back to the house, quick change then dinner. They took us to some fantastic restaurants, but on a few occasions they even came back and cooked for us all.

The evening would end about 10.30 and we would all head off for bed, with a goodnight and new memory for keeps somewhere in the little memory box of kayaking.

This is one trip that I would recommend to all. The initial cost seems quite steep, but when you see what it covers, it really is well worth the money.

And here is what you can expect.

- Transport to and from the airport.
- Accommodation which held all 9 of us comfortably.

- All breakfast, lunch and dinner organized for you. Even a picnic beside the river one day. Any thing we requested (food) if they could find it they would get it.
- All humour and fun was free.....and there was a lot of that about.
- Transport for shuttles.
- 3 top coaches..... they were fantastic people to be with on and off the river.
- 7 of the very best days.

It really does do what it says on the can "Fine wine, with fine people" and kayaking.

Information:

Contact: Simon Westgarth – Gene17Kayaking.

Course Cost: £725

Flights: Stanstead – Trieste £168.00 return + pre-booked boat.

Essential Items:

Ear plugs: For church bells (5.45 they start!!)

Pickled Garlic Cloves: For my next trip, couldn't find them anywhere.

A sense of humour: They are the most funniest people.

English tea bags: Just because.

Big Lungs: Unless you are the "Man From Atlantis"

Pink paddles: Can be purchased over there if needs must. I had must need.

Leave at home;

Pink throw line, Ego, Aled Jones all time hits.

Short Story of the trip:

We arrived at the Koritnica gorge. Dave said we'll all get

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out and take a look. We climbed out of our boats and scurried across some rather jaggy rocks, onto the bridge, to take a look. The bridge over looks a circular pool, which is in the middle, between the first and second sections. This bit looked lovely and calm. It was a different case either side of the bridge! I said that I was quite happy to walk round this one, but Dave assured me that I would be okay if an out of boat experience were to happen. Ok, I though, I believe him, I will **give it a go**. So off I went to get back in the boat. Simon was to lead me down. He set off and I started to follow.....the gorge is 150mtrs in length, within about 1 mtr of that, a wave caught the boat and I was over, great I thought, only another 149mtrs to go. I was under water a little too long for my liking and it felt like a roller coaster ride....I clung onto my paddles with dear life (they weren't even my pink new ones either!) When I eventually surfaced I heard

Simon shout for me to hold onto his boat....i didn't need to be asked twice. We were in the pool. The flow though wanted to keep me going and unfortunately I was still in it.....off I go again. I could hear Simon shouting the words "feet first" but the words were getting quieter as I headed off down the next 75mtrs. I finally emerged at the end, still with my paddles, and a little short of breath, but I was fine. Then I saw it...a large piece of foam was floating past me, I realized that it was the middle section from my boat, I grabbed it quickly and was trying to swim for the side. Then disaster, there floating towards me was one of my shoes which I had felt leave my foot at the time of exit from the boat. Now, there is a great bond between a woman and her shoes, I may not have had my matching handbag, but they did match my outfit rather well!! I looked in my hands, what do I get rid of first, could I bite it, sadly I had to watch my shoe float past....just out

of bites reach....Gutted !! But wait, this story has a happy ending, there behind me, rushing through the rapids was Simon in his trusty red steed, I shouted "My shoe Simon" in a stealth like move he scooped it up, placed it on the spray deck, and shouted "SWIM" I threw my foam piece onto his deck and swam towards a rock between two small rapids, and perched myself upon it. As I was trying to squeeze my foot back into my shoe, I saw another boat floating out of the gorge, it was upside down and unoccupied, it was a while before the occupant came out, it turn out that they had been stuck in an eddy further up and was not wanting to be thrown back into the turmoil to quickly. Then, shooting out in her tiny "Jackson Fun" was Heather, with the biggest grin ever on her face, she had made it, and with no upside down story to tell. Well done. Then Simon told her to come and rescue me.....I was beginning to feel like the little mermaid in Copenhagen, except I was

clothed and not half fish. I managed to get the boat perched on the rock beside me, re-place my foam bit and squeeze myself back in. I was to seal launch off the rock into another rapid.....oh, how it could go so wrong.....I told Dave to be on guard!! I was fine.

You will be glad to know that the rest of the day went past without any more fashion faux pas. And the paddling was good too.

Lisa. P.



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TRAVELS WITH A HOSS – AUSTRIA 29th July to 5th August 2006

The Team: Louise, Lee R., Lee G., Dave H., Dave P, James, Lucille, Neil, Fred, Chris, Iain, Ben W., Ben C., Andy, Martin Re., Martin Ro. (the dry one), Vicky, Dougie, Simon, Liz and Liz's Swiss-based friends Tamlyn and Richard.

Hopefully members of the group will recognise at least some of these recollections of our recent trip to Austria. For me, this was my first paddling holiday in that country and the first major trip using the Liquid Logic Hoss, after years of Microbat-ing in various watery settings.

For those who came to Austria last year but not could not join us this year, be advised that there were some differences this year, including the weather which was apparently significantly cooler and wetter. Also, there were no reports of dancing on tables in strange night clubs. Much of the initial discussion amongst the veterans of previous trip



considered how the rivers, and the area in general, had been affected by last year's floods. Many of the rivers, including the Sanna which runs past the campsite, are now apparently very different, with many key features such as large rocks, having been swept away. Various repairs to the transport infrastructure in the wake of floods and landslips were much in evidence.

For those who have never been to the area, it has beautiful scenery, characterised by high mountains topped off with snow, contrasting with lush green pastures in the valleys. These fields are extensively festooned with small wooden structures with a function relating to hay or tobacco, depending on whose knowledge within the group you trusted.

The journeys to and from Austria were thankfully straightforward. The only feature that remains in my memory was the ferry to Calais, which was like a troop ship for the Baden-Powell army.

Once in Landeck, our contingent created a sizeably enclave within the campsite. The other British elements on site could be fairly reliably identified by the prominence of Pyranha boats. Other nationalities seemed to have more eclectic tastes in boat purchase, both in terms of manufacturer and

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vintage (it was the first time I'd seen a T Canyon in many years).



This is the last year of the campsite as the land is being given over to building, although the belief is that the non-camping elements of the business (rafting, kayaking, canyoning) are going to continue.

The first evening was notable for Fred's indulgence in 'hot love' and my introduction to

the 'Moor in a Shirt' (both being desserts served at the local bar).

Sunday

The week's paddling began with a rather shaky start (at least for me) on the Sanna. This was billed as the 'warm up' river, but still entailed two rolls (and getting blamed for another roll – performed by someone who was apparently distracted by my upturned boat). Clearly this was not the same Neil who

had so relished paddling the Coe last October. Consequently there was some nervousness prior to commencing the second river that day – the Imst – which people kept referring to as 'very big'. As it transpired, the moment we joined the river from the feed-in stream this feeling completely lifted. This was a wide, bouncy high volume river, which in the context of a baking hot afternoon equalled much fun. Apart from getting ensnared by a ferociously possessive eddy near the end of the trip, this was a far more proficient paddle, memorable for its high waves, excellent scenery and a spectacular back loop experienced by Lucille.

These initial trips sparked animated discussions amongst the group regarding river grading – a theme (along with topics such as how you should pronounce "H") that continued for much of the week.

On returning to Landeck,

some were tempted by a repeat run of the Sanna before calling it a day.

That evening, some of us were introduced to/re-acquainted with the delights of 'Mr John's' (a.k.a. the 'train spotters' restaurant').

Monday

The day started with a certain chaos (no, really) in locating the first river of choice – the Wolf's Gorge section of the Rosanna (some had opted for another run of the Imst). The river could have benefited from a bit more water (remedied by the end of the week) as the trip involved much rock-dodging – and in my case, one failure to dodge a rock, on which I remained securing perched until Chris assisted my exit. As the first river of the day, it is a good wake up experience, as the first 500 metres in particular require a fair bit of concentration.

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Following this, I joined Simon, Dave P and Ian for another (and far more successful) stab at the Sanna.



In the afternoon, one group opted to do yet another run of the Sanna, whilst the rest (including myself) headed for the Tösens section of the Inn, in the belief that the Landeck gorge was not running. In the event, there was a swift change of plan once it was evident that this was not the case. Landeck Gorge proved to be one of my favourite paddles of the week. Initially intimidating, once you got going, the river was very enjoyable. The trip was notable for an excellent initial lead by Simon and for a spectacularly swift roll from Iain. The high pace of the river through the town to its confluence with the

Sanna is not to be missed (although you need to look out for the various iron stakes, which are a somewhat unfriendly adornment).

Monday was the night of the barbeque. It was also a very wet night, and so it involved the participating members of the group being huddled under the gazebo (fortified with added sheeting) with varying degrees of success in staying dry. Don't be too surprised if the club suddenly invests in a mobile gazebo.

Tuesday

The rain of the previous evening was a feature for much of the following day. We headed south to Switzerland and the delights of the Garsun gorge section of the Inn (pronounced by most as 'gear-sun', but apparently in local dialect/language it is 'jar soon').

Our group comprised James, Lee R, Liz, Richard, Tamlyn and me. Richard is well ac-

quainted with the gorge (members of his local club were milling around at the get in), and he led our group down the river extremely well. This was an excellent paddle. There was a good grade 2/3 'warm up' section down to the beginning of the gorge, following which Tam left us to get on with it. At this point we witnessed the aftermath of an incident which had entailed Lucille getting intimate with a stopper, going for a swim and losing a boot.

Someone later described the rest of the paddle as 'full on grade four' – it was certainly fairly challenging. There are three main features – the Kaiser spinner, Staircase and the Pin Ball – and in between there are rapids with plentiful large waves and holes that need to be firmly punched through. It was great fun, very exciting, but ultimately very tiring. Others – probably appreciating the likely duration of the trip and the effort it would require – had had an early lunch just before getting

on the river. My own failure to follow their example probably contributed to my knackered state at the end.



I made two rolls during the trip – both hearteningly swift. Liz was less fortunate when she went over tackling the Pin Ball – she ultimately managed to roll, but sustained a bash on the helmet in the process. The Pin Ball required you to have faith in the supportive powers of a cushion wave, and a few of us (me included) proved to be non-

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believers.

Tamlyn and Richard bade us farewell at the end of this trip, and headed home.



The trip back featured a detour to the duty free shop perched up a mountain, and reached via a spectacular winding road that passed through a succession of narrow and roughly mined tunnels that were vague reminiscent of a ghost train ride. The shop itself was stocked with a curiously vast supply of sugar, which presumably is a highly prized commodity in Switzerland.

Wednesday

Dave H., Lee R., Martin, Andy, Fred, Chris, Doug and Simon ventured off in the morning to paddle the Oetz. There were rumours of a swim on the upper Oetz, but the second/third hand information regarding this incident was sketchy and anyway, someone else can tell that story (or feel free to make your own enquiries). Fred, Dave and Simon confined themselves to an enjoyable paddle of the lower Oetz, once the others had completed the upper section.

For others, Wednesday was either a day off or intended to be an easier day's paddle. In the event, the chosen river - Tösens gorge on the Inn - proved to have a somewhat high attrition rate.

In fairness, the river looked fine from the road. Liz, Louise, Vicky, Ben C. Ben W, Lee G, Iain and I set off and quickly encountered the first rapid (which I privately called 'hole city'), which was suc-

cessfully negotiated, but not without some effort. Soon after breaking back in, the Hoss was over and following abortive attempts to get upright, I was out. I have since been trying to avoid dwelling too much on the next few moments (memo to self: the sea kayak approach of 'never let go of the boat' really doesn't apply on this type of water!). My deepest thanks to all, but particularly to Liz and Lee for their efforts in getting me off the river and to Louise for sitting with my exhausted frame and providing drink and energy foods until I was finally in a state to move elsewhere.

Whilst I was pre-occupied with finding an exit out of the white water chaos, Iain was performing what I think was undeniably the Feat of the Week. He had also gone over. Realising that end of the paddle he was using to get upright no longer had a blade, he had the awareness and in-

spiration to reverse it and successfully roll up.



We have both capsized before reaching THE WALL – a rock face on the bend of the river with a large cushion wave. This feature apparently resulted in all but Ben C. and Louise needing to roll.

We had not been alone in having difficulties - a group that followed us had two swimmers, the whereabouts of one still causing concern for some time afterwards.

My swim unfortunately led to the trip being abandoned. Louise and Lee set off to hitch a ride to the cars and

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endured a five mile walk - not great in wetsuit boots – and a telling off by the police for walking on the road, before they were met by Dave P and others from the campsite (who had been alerted via a text).

In the afternoon, a number of us went on an abortive search for a cable car trip up a mountain, whilst another group including Lee R, Simon and Vicky had a wonderful time on another paddle down Landeck Gorge.



The day ended with a splendid bonfire created for us by Lucille.

Thursday

For some of us (self + James, Ben C. Liz and Iain) Thursday was a quiet day, characterised by heavy rain, extensive games of Uno (and briefly whist) in the bar and driving around to look at rivers that were far too high for comfort.

For all but two of the rest of the group, the day entailed another successful trip down the Garsun gorge in Switzerland. The other two – Fred and Lee G. – decided to do their own thing and they ventured into Italy. Whilst lunching beside a lake they became intrigued by a tower that poked out of the water. It transpired that **this** was the church tower of a village flooded by the creation of the lake, so they got the boats out and explored. Later they were gripped by the desire to achieve a 'first descent' in Italy, and finally found a small stream on which to paddle and take the necessary photographic evidence. The name

of the stream is as yet not known, but having seen the photos, I would suggest the "Wondre-Gill Irrigation Ditch" is a suitable temporary label.

Friday

The rain had finally ceased and the levels of the rivers had receded slightly. We had an excellent re-paddle of the Wolf's Gorge, which was brief and 'full on' and noticeably different to the level at which we had paddled it on Monday. Some of us decided to draw a line under the paddling, whilst others went for another paddle of the Sanna and a few rounded the day (and the holiday) off with another trip on Landeck Gorge.

Those who finished their paddling early – Dave P, Ben C., Fred, Iain, Lee G. and myself - eventually found themselves in the village of See (we think its pronounced 'Say') located on the Rosanna, where we took the cable car up the mountain for lunch and a brief

walk. The arrival back in the town would have been the conclusion of a pleasant but unremarkable excursion. In the event, Fred spotted a lady on the opposite side of the river who was splitting logs with a mechanical cutter. He crossed the bridged and enquired if he could take her picture. "No" came the reply "but I'll take yours" The lady proceeded to give him quick instruction on the device, following which Fred gleefully set about chopping up a succession of logs whilst building up a good rapport with his new friend (who confirmed that his Viennese accent is still very much intact after 50 years). Once the rest of the group had wandered over, the lady – who later introduced herself as Marlene - suddenly invited us all in to her house for a drink. We soon found ourselves in her apartment being plied with water, coffee and beer, whilst being watched with understandable curiosity by four young children – Michael, Nicole, Theresa and Rene. It tran-

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spired that Marlene rents out self catering apartments and Fred dutifully took details. It may be a viable option once the campsite at Landeck has passed into history. After a very pleasant drink and chat (during which she described the impact of last years floods on the village) we went outside to chop up more logs and took photos of the children sitting in the kayaks as a thank you for the hospitality.

The evening saw the whole group enjoying an excellent meal at Mr John's before either wandering back to camp or seeking out drinking holes into the early hours. During the meal I was witness to Lee G. successfully negotiating with Fred a change in their planned departure time from 6 am to 8 am. Predictably, at 8 am next morning, Fred was looking a somewhat lonesome figure, standing by his car.

And so on Saturday morning the group broke camp – Vicky and Martin headed for Italy,

Louise and Lee departed for Switzerland and a rendezvous with Nikki whilst the rest of us were Calais-bound. It had been a great week. There had been lots of water, interesting rivers and everyone paddled really well. It had also brought a whole new freshness to the phase 'a bit full-on'. Thanks to all those who contributed to organising the trip and to everyone for making it another successful and enjoyable camper.

- Neil Murton

The Paddlers...



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Diary

Canoe Camping Club

22-22 October—River Wye

16-17 September—Poole harbour and Dorset coast. (Sea Kayaking)

Contact Tony Wilkins for more details.

Kingfisher Canoe Club

17 Sept—KCC Triathlon

See next Page

28 September—AGM

See agenda in this Trasher

8 Oct -A DAY AT THE YAT

Leaving at 8.30 a.m.

Please come and join us on a day at Symonds Yat. See this beautiful valley and its Autumn Glory.

Launch off the Big Rock and play on the Rapids. Hopefully a visit to the Yat rock after paddling.

Please contact me the weekend before –15/16th October -

to arrange transport and equipment.

This trip is ideal for all newcomers and all club members are welcome.

13—15 October- River Dart.

Contact Tony Wilkins for more details.

19th Nov—MIDDLE WYE TRIP

The middle Wye is the stretch of water running from Builth Wells to Boughrood and is Graded II to III. There are 4 main rapids providing good surfing waves and some drops, notably 'Hell Hole'.

Any Club Member or friend will be welcome.

This section of river is a good introduction for canoeists wishing to get experience of white water.

Contact Ellie Collins

Non-KCC

Nov 3-5th—Tyne Tour 2006

Held at Tyne Green, Hexham. Organised by Hexham Canoe Club

£17.50 for the whole weekend including shuttle bus, camping and ceilidh.

Trade Stands with demo boats

50 miles of river to explore, from touring to white water. Safety cover on Warden Gorge (grade 3-4) Sat & Sun. Down River Race

For more information, visit: www.tynetour.co.uk

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Diary

Triathlon

Date: Sunday 17th September

Location: KCC club hut

Time: Registration from 10.30, Race at 11.30 (prompt), BBQ at 12.30 (Approx)

Well, doesn't time fly by. I'm sure that unlike me, your training schedules are well on target. The format will essentially be the same as the last few years. For those new to the club, this is a short fun event open to all abilities so please join in. Last year there was 13 taking part and I hope there will be even more this year. For those not taking part, please come along to help organise the race and provide support and encouragement to those taking part. The race will consist of:

Kayaking - Cycling - Running

The course for each event is high-

lighted on the map. Again the only restriction is that you use a 'dancer' or similar kayak (no wavehoppers!). KCC and PYCC have quite a few of these, but if you have your own, bring it along. Don't forget to bring your own BA, paddles, bike and spare legs.

For competitors, marshals and spectators, there will be a bring your own BBQ after the race. Charcoal will be provided by the club, just bring along your food, drink and plate. Friends and family are also welcome to come along.

As this is a memorial event, entrants and spectators will be asked to pay a voluntary entry fee which will be given to a cancer charity (Cancer Bacup).

Please can you let me know if you plan to enter so I can get an idea of how many there are likely to be. Also let me know if you are available to help run the event and light the BBQ.

That's about it. If you have any ques-

tions, give me a call. Let's hope for good weather.

Dave Hodgkinson

SWIMMING POOL DATES FOR 2006/2007

See Below.

Each session must have a BCU Level 3 Coach to act as lifeguard. This coach must not take part in the pool activities and must be there purely as a lifesaver.

ALL boats coming in to the pool MUST be thoroughly washed outside the pool entrance paying particular attention to debris, which will be trapped between boat and airbags. Last year the boat cleanliness was pretty good - thank you. The pool pumping system and filtration plant need to have a fighting chance so please don't screw this up. **NO LEAVES PLEASE.**

The total number of boats on the pool is limited to a **MAXIMUM of FIFTEEN** although for some activities a lower number would be more desirable.

BALL GAMES—The use of balls to play games of any sort is **NOT PERMITTED**.

FINISHING—It helps to keep the School Pool staff (Opener/closer and caretaker) happy if everyone finishes on time so that we can be **CLEAR** of the car park **BEFORE** 10 p.m.

BOAT HANDLING - PLEASE be careful and ensure that boats are handled in with care, by people who are big enough, especially in the area next to the window, where the KCC boats are hung.

POOL SIDE—Outdoor shoes are **NOT ALLOWED** on the pool side.

Peter Collins

OCTOBER	05 KCC	12 PF	19 KCC	26 ½ TERM	
NOVEMBER	02 PF	09 SCOUTS	16 SCOUTS	23 SCOUTS	30 KCC
DECEMBER	07 PF	14 KCC	21 XMAS	28 XMAS	
JANUARY	04 XMAS	11 PF	18 KCC	25 SCOUTS	
FEBRUARY	01 SCOUTS	08 SCOUTS	15 1/2 TERM	22 PF	
MARCH	01 KCC	08 PF	15 KCC	22 PF	29 EASTER

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Miscellaneous

Congratulations

Ben Colman—not only for securing planning permission for our new hut but for his upcoming wedding to Jo.

Vicki Rolls—for passing her Level 3 coach assessment.



Access Petition

The WCA are getting a petition together asking that Wales introduce a land reform act similar to that which exists in Scotland (and which gives an automatic right to paddle on rivers). They are looking for 20,000 signatures. This can be filled in online and takes about 30 seconds to do. Please take follow the link below and voice your support.

<http://petitionthem.com/default.asp?sect=detail&pet=2856>

Kit Sale

I've had a bit of a sort out and I have the following kit I don't need as I have not used it for a long time. It is all used, but not abused:

Yak Skull Cap. £5 (£10 new)

Typhoon River Knife. £6 (£12 new)

Reed Chill Cheater Aquatherm socks Large (Size 8-10) £5 (£15 new)

Circle One 'long john style' wetsuit Medium £15 (£40 new)

- Contact Dave Hodgkinson

KCC Shed Key Amnesty

If you hold a shed key, could you please let Dave Hodgkinson know via email or in person. This will allow us to check that our records are correct.

Thanks in advance



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The Joys of Open Boating



With Roger, Jed Yarnold and others on the Cherwell near Thrup

Before I took to paddling a Canadian Canoe or Open Boating as it is usually called, I could be dismissive of the craft and the people that paddled them. Now that I am one of them I can understand the many attractions both technical and personal and I find more and more reasons to enjoy it as I do kayaking. There is a very extensive range of strokes to be learnt and applied on flat and moving water (perhaps more than for kayaks) with the added mental challenge to think far enough ahead to stay out of trouble. Open boating is also inclusive to non-paddling partners, friends and dogs who can en-

joy gentle trips such as up the Cherwell to the Vicky Arms. I particularly relish the challenge to take my handicapped friend Chris out and broaden his experiences in a safe environment.



With Chris and Pete on the Wye at Symons Yat

The choice of boat is extensive but, as for kayaks, the first purchase should be left until one knows enough to be able to recognise the relative merits of length, rocker, tumble home etc. This will help avoid the realisation soon after purchase that you have got the wrong boat. On flat water the long water-line length and shallow rocker of this blue Old Town Penobscot helps keep

the boat running in a straight line but for manoeuvrability the deeper rocker of my new Old Town Appalachian allows it to be turned in its own length. Tandem boats are equipped with 2 seats but can also have a kneeling thwart in the centre for solo paddling. Knee pads from a builder's merchant or a mat make this a surprisingly comfortable position with the added benefit of better control of the boat compared to sitting on a seat. For the prospective white-water paddler the boat needs to be fitted out with additional kit and I shall come back to in a future article. I usually wear a wide brim hat to keep the sun off as even when capsizing the risk of head hitting the bottom is slight. I even sport wellies sometimes to keep my feet dry in winter.

Paddles are single bladed and range from the traditional wooden through to ultra-light carbon and glass fibre. Specialist shops like Riverside will advise on the length and type to choose but there is no sub-

stitute for signing up to training courses to get tuition on the best paddle for each situation. Many Open Boaters have 3 or 4 paddles depending on where and how they are paddling. All equipment must be secured to the boat when not being used to avoid a long search after being capsized.



Me at Sutton Courtenay

Once in the boat and armed with a paddle its time to learn a whole vocabulary which is new to kayakers; such as on-side and off-side, cross deck strokes and cuts. With C, J and goon strokes, I soon learnt that it is not necessary to change sides frequently and that all necessary boat move-

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The Joys of Open Boating

ments can be carried out on whichever side you happen to

ingdon weir pools the challenge is to secure enough con-



be paddling at the time. This avoids the critical moment while you swap hands especially when paddling solo.

Paddling on flat water becomes a relaxed and steady affair and as a solo paddler I can readily keep up with a group of kayaks. When it comes to moving water such as Sutton Courtenay and Ab-

ingdon weir pools the challenge is to secure enough control on the boat through bum and knee contacts to enable turns and edging to be carried out without shipping too much water. Unlike kayakers who are largely wedged into their boat, open boaters have much more freedom to move their weight about. They can move around from side to side, fore and aft, can stand up to use a pole, and even step out in

shallow water or when pinned against a rock. During an "out of boat experience" on Mill House Falls on the Usk I was pinned between 2 boulders but was able to step out, haul the boat clear and then step back in without getting a foot wet. Beat that kayakers!

Open boats can be shared but paddling tandem brings the need for cooperation and communication not usually required in the KCC. Disaster can be swift if the plan to surf a wave in the weir is executed differently by the bow paddler from the stern.

Coaching can be done sitting in the same boat in various positions with ample opportunity to observe and demonstrate.

As a recent convert to Canadians I look forward to more white-water trips where I will try to avoid wiping out kayakers as I break into the same eddy or jostle for the same wave and hope that they will not have to rescue me more often than I them.



Ronnie Scruff & Roger on Cherwell in Oxford

I am fully qualified for picnic cruises from Riverside with coolbox, rug and chilled bubbly. We thread our way through the punts from Magdalene Bridge doing their military poling ("left bank right bank") up to Parson's Pleasure for a picnic. Open Boating is a great way to share my love for canoeing and another way to get on the water and see the sights.

Why not give it a go!
Alastair Wilson

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KCC Annual General Meeting

28 Sept 2006—7:30 PM @ Wantage Cricket Club

Agenda

- Apologies
- Minute of last AGM
- Reports –
- Chairman (inc hut report)
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Editor
- Equipment Officer
- Twinning Report – Dave Surman
- Review of membership and hire fees
- Election of club committee members, the following are standing down:
 - Simon Knox - Editor
 - Club Trophies, nominations are required for:
 - *The Waterline Cup - awarded the the years best beginner.*
- last year awarded to Iain Shield
 - *The Julian Howes Trophy - awarded the*

most improved paddler

- last year awarded to Lisa Parke

- *KCC Trash of the Year Award - awarded to the most spectacular swim*
- last year awarded to Dave Hodgkinson
- *The Outstanding Achievement Award - obvious*
- last year awarded to Martyn Green
- AOB

COULD LAST YEARS WINNERS PLEASE RETURN THE TROPHIES!

The meeting will be followed by a presentation (to be confirmed)

LAST YEARS MINUTES WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE MEETING OF FOR DOWLOAD AT THE CLUB WEBSITE. Sorry they are too long to include here.