

the TRASHER

Sept/Oct 2005

Special points of interest:

- Norway
- Austria
- Scarborough

We paddle the best places...

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Todd Morris Memorial KCC Triathlon

Date: Sunday 18th September

Location: KCC club hut

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

provide support and encouragement to those taking part. The race will consist of:

Kayaking

Cycling

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.

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 start the BBQ.

That's about it. If you have any questions, give me a call. Let's hope for good weather.

Dave Hodgkinson



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 last year. For those new to the club, this is a short 'fun' event open to all abilities so please join in. Last year there was 15 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

Running

The course for each event is highlighted 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,

Trasher Interview with Dave Hodgkinson

Journalist Ted Maul interviews regular Trasher contributor and club secretary Dave Hodgkinson on his recent international adventures.

putting them into practice whilst Chris's trip was focused on running as many rivers as possible during the daylight and not so daylight hours. The

longer so I took a few 'rest' days to try to let my body recover and to miss the more gnarly rivers. Having said that Austria was also quite tiring with the 24 hour drive there and back, late nights drinking far too much beer and having to sleep in a tent. To recover from my adventures, I've just had a very lazy week, including my first lie in after 2 months of weekends away!

So what did you do on Simon's Trip and tell us more about your swim!

The focus of the trip was to learn river skills. We often ran rapids repeatedly to practice set moves, typically spending 5 hours on the water each day. Having said that, we were running classic class 4+ rivers around Sjoa in the process. Over the 6 days of paddling, we did the following:

Sjoa Normal

Stor Ulla

Sjoa Aamot

Laangen Rosti

Skjelva Lower

Ulla Slides

Towards the end of the week, my body was getting very tired. It was virtually the last rapid on the Skjelva where I met my match. Having been on the river for 5 hours, I accidentally eddied out just above a 3ft drop that had a reasonably sized hole. I ended up plopping into the hole backwards and then side-surfing it. After a long struggle I managed to free myself but ended up dropping sideways into the next hole. Again, after a long struggle I managed to get out, only to drop into a 3rd hole sideways. I capsized in the 3rd hole but didn't have the strength to roll up. I actually struggled to get my deck off! After a bony swim I got out just before the takeout. Unfortunately the boat I had borrowed from Simon went downstream quite a way re-



Many of our readers will have noticed a lack of emails from you over the past weeks. So what have you been up to?

Well, over the last 8 weeks, I've had a week in Norway on Simon Westgarth's 'steeper creaking' course, a week in Austria on Dave Surman's trip and finally 2 weeks in Norway with Chris Wheeler and Andy McDoom. In between that I did spend some time in work, although I spent most of the time going "la la la I'm going on holiday next week, I'm not interested" much to everyone's frustration. They have the last laugh now as I'm stuck in work through to Christmas as I have no annual leave left!

So how did the trips compare?

The trips were very different but all enjoyable and rewarding in different ways. Simon's trip was very much focused on learning river skills and

Austria trip was more of a social event whilst I hadn't previously met anyone on Simon's course. I really enjoyed leading groups in Austria whereas I was the one being led down the rivers on both trips in Norway. Finally the Austria trip was pretty much incident free for me whereas I was involved in many 'incidents' in Norway on Chris's trip.

You must be exhausted after all of those trips!

The Norway trips were by far the most tiring. On Simon's trip we were averaging 5 hours a day non-stop on the river. Having paid so much to be on the course I was determined to make the most of the time there, although my body was getting very tired towards the end. After my only swim on the last rapid of the river on the Friday, we took it very easy on the Saturday. Although the pace of Chris's trip was faster, it was

"late nights drinking far too much beer and having to sleep in a tent. To recover from my adventures, I've just had a very lazy week, including my first lie in after 2 months"

sulting in terminal damage to it and a £300 bill for me in the process. At least I didn't lose my paddles!

So what are Simon's courses like?

I would recommend them, although they are quite expensive compared to the cost of a normal trip. When you consider that you are getting almost one to one training by pro-paddlers, good food, complementary wine and good accommodation, they don't seem as expensive - as long as you don't write off a boat in the process!

Dave Carroll was leading the course, with Simon helping him out. The course was focused on the skills required to handle your boat on grade 4+ rivers. At the start of the course we discussed what I wanted to get out of the week. After a week of coaching on the river, an appraisal was held with recommendations on what to focus on next. The course was great fun and informative. Dave, Simon and the other 2 people on the course were great company too. On the final evening, we went out with the pro-paddlers to the local bar that was quite bizarre. At 4am when a Norwegian was lying naked on the bar with others pouring beer (at £6 a pint) over him, we realised it was time to leave!



So what did you get up to in Austria?

Well, I'm sure there will be others writing up this great

trip, so I won't go into great detail. Suffice to say I had a great time in great company. We ran a great selection of class 3+/4 rivers. It was strange paddling in groups where I was the 'experienced' paddler - it must have been a first. It was only 2 years previous that I was out there with Andy McDoom, Dicko, Boothy and Rob Yates and I was the beginner. It was also good to do the more technical sections that I had skipped the previous time. I really enjoyed leading groups down the rivers, although for some strange reason I never paddled with Lisa. I hope everyone enjoyed paddling with me too. The social side was good, although I will always have the disturbing image of Simon Knox and



Kevin Frances was out there too. I don't have a list of the rivers we did - hopefully Chris will have published the list and all the other statistics he was gathering. As the trip was for 2 weeks, I took a few rest days to allow my body to recover, especially after the epic days. The rest days also allowed me to skip some of the more challenging rivers. Having said that, I'm pretty sure that I did more than half



Dave S dancing on the podium together to 'it's raining men'!

On the way back, it was nice when Seth commented that he really enjoyed the trip, especially as he thought that we were going to be 'old and boring'. I'm sure Sport Camp Tirol breathed a sigh of relief when we left as we had turned the place into a Glastonbury lookalike, without the hippies. Having said that, I suspect it now looks even more like Glastonbury after the recent floods.

Thanks to Dave S for arranging the trip!

So what did you get up to in Norway with Chris & Andy?

In addition to Chris and Andy,

of the rivers. Needless to say they were mostly class 4+/5, although we did a couple of 'play' runs on class 4 rivers. As you might have predicted, we were on the first river within 2 hours of arriving in Norway and getting off the last river 2 hours before getting the ferry back!

What was your favourite river?

The best river for me was the Sogndalsaelva (Class 4/5). We did the upper and lower sections back to back. This river was pretty continuous class 4 drops from start to finish with only a few portages on the lower section. Having got on the water at 3pm, we were paddling into the fjord in Sogndal at 11pm, having pad-

"...although for some strange reason I never paddled with Lisa."

“

Trasher Interview with Dave Hodgkinson

dled virtually non-stop for 7 hours, apart from inspecting the triple drop (24m drop in total) which everyone apart from McDoom portaged.

The portage of the triple drop was the scene of Kevin randomly throwing his boat down a cliff as he couldn't be bothered to rope it down. He thought it would gently slide

end of the first section. Half-way through the section, we ended up with a long portage around a long section of gorge due to a huge river-wide hole. After this portage, we got back on the river as it was the only way we could expect to get back to civilisation in daylight. Further downstream we were confronted with a rapid that contained a MASSIVE

thrown about with my boat for a while, it went very dark before I felt myself scraping along rocks, presumably at the bottom of the river. After a few more seconds things got brighter before I finally surfaced downstream of the hole. I looked back to see Kevin still in there. I swam for the bank whilst Chris went after my boat and paddles. It wasn't much longer before Kevin finally came out of the hole. McDoom helped him out of the water and back into his boat before going after Chris and my boat. This left me (sans boat) and Kevin. I then had the pleasure of walking down the banks where I could and swimming where the sides of the gorge meant I couldn't walk further. After swimming 3 long sections, we finally caught up with Chris, Andy and my boat. This left the remainder of the river, including an evil portage in what daylight remained. We finally got to the take-out for the first section just as the light finally disappeared at what must have been 11pm. We didn't know what time it was as no-one had a watch, or a torch or any survival gear whatsoever! Unfortunately, as we had been too eager and had left our car at the bottom of the next section, we had an hour long wait for Chris to get his car. When he picked us up, his car was showing the temperature as 5°C! After changing, packing and shuttling, we eventually had our 'lunch' in a petrol station at 1.30am!

The second epic day for me was on the Driva (class 4/5), otherwise known as my swimathon! I managed to notch up 4 swims on one section. The first swim was quite long and left me separated from my paddles and boat. As it was a steep sided gorge, the only way forward was to swim to my boat - which was a very long way! I managed to break up the swim by 'breaking out' a couple of times and sitting on a rock in an attempt to warm up as I was frozen. In the process the front of my



down the slope, but instead as everyone else predicted, it gathered momentum at an alarming rate. As his boat hurtled towards Chris, he quickly sidestepped out of it's way before it finally dropped into the river. It played with us for about 10 seconds bobbing around the eddy before washing away downstream. McDoom sprang to the rescue, hopped onto the river and recovered it pretty quickly for red faced Kevin.

So tell us about the epics?

Well, for me there were 2 main epic days. The first was the Raundelsaelva, on the Reime Station to Skiple section (class 5). We did this river on the second full day after some passing Germans had recommended it on the previous day with the comprehensive comment that 'it's OK'. In retrospect the warning signs were there: getting on a river at 6pm, the gauge being at the higher end of the scale, having the great idea of running two sections in one and leaving the cars a further 2 hours downstream of the

rock obscuring the view downstream and no ability to inspect what was beyond it from the banks as it was a steep sided gorge. Chris ran the rapid first and vanished round the rock. McDoom ran it next leaving me and Kevin. Kevin decided to run it next and vanished round the rock leaving me alone. After a quick assessment of my situation, I waited 30 seconds then went from it. On getting past the rock I was confronted by a river-wide ledge and hole, easily the size of a double-decker bus! The best line seemed to the left but the river was pushing hard right. I paddled as hard left as I could, but didn't quite make it and ended up going towards the hole. I put aside the sight of Kevin's nomad repeatedly doing reverse enders to my right and paddled as hard as I could through the hole. I was going too slow and ended up being pulled back and forced into a sidesurf. I tried a few tricks for getting out of the hole, but having learnt 2 days earlier that there is little point putting up a fight in those situations, I pulled the deck and bailed out. After being

"I was confronted by a river-wide ledge and hole, easily the size of a double-decker bus! The best line seemed to the left but the river was pushing hard right...."

Trasher Interview with Dave Hodgkinson

boat was bashed in and my paddles were lost, but luckily McDoom had a set of splits. Afterwards, I was bashed, knackered and frozen which is my excuse for the other 3 swims! Luckily, McDoom found my paddles in an eddy towards the end. It was a shame the river was marred by the swims as it was a good challenging river that I had run some good lines on.

I hear on ukroversguidebook



that Simon Westgarth had recommended that you shouldn't go on Chris's trip. Is that true?

The last thing I expected was for Chris to post that on Uroversguidebook! At the end of the steeper creeking course, I told Simon that I may be coming out again with Chris and Andy a few weeks later. Simon recommended that I should give it a miss and instead paddle with people of my ability so that I could paddle at my pace and get more out of it. Whilst I could understand where he was coming from, I decided that opportunities to paddle 4+/5 don't come often and as it was a 2 week trip, I could take rest days to miss the harder rivers and to allow my body to recover. Although I had a few epics in Norway, I feel that overall it was good experience and I don't regret going out there with Chris and Andy one bit.

So what about your other swims?

Chris was kind enough to keep a swim tally for the trip, which I'm sure he'll be publishing. My only other 'memorable' swim was on the first rapid on the first river. This was my wakeup call that these rivers were a notch up from the rivers in Austria. Basically, I bumbled into the first hole on the first river and it spanked me good and proper! I put up a good fight, but after a few minutes I realised that it was going to win

and I bailed out. The other swims by me were nothing to write home about.

Chris's first two swims were quite amusing, especially as he was rescued by passing Germans on both occasions. It was funny to see the terror on his face when we were both on equal swim count, especially as I had run the same drop with no problems. The tie lasted for a couple of days. It was suspected that Chris was portaging some drops to ensure he didn't take the lead! After my performance on the Driva though, he seemed to relax as he was given plenty of headroom on the swim count!

So how did your kit hold up?

Over 2 weeks of paddling, everyone's kit took a bashing. The final kit count for us four was 1 split boat, 1 dented boat, 2 ripped cags and 1 broken set of paddles. In addition to this, Neil Farmer also split his boat when we were paddling with him. At least there

were no serious injuries on the trip!

Did you take in any culture on your travels in Norway?

Apart from our time spent in service stations eating hot dogs and chocolate, the only 'culture' was stopping in the tourist centre on the troll pass. McDoom went crazy in the shop and started buying trolls for everyone in his family! The rest of our time in Norway was spent on the river, travelling or sleeping.

The nearest we got to mixing with the locals was on the ferry between Newcastle and Bergen. The highlight was the 'all you can eat' buffet. Needless to say we made the most of it on the return journey having not eaten properly since we were last on the ferry. We also played the bilingual bingo, had a go in the casino and had quite a few £4.50 beers.

So what are your plans for the winter season?

I am definitely going to do Simon's 5* training course. I am also keen to do some swift water rescue training. Other than that I intend to paddle as much as I can! I intend to make maximum use of Hurley when it's running, I also hope to paddle some new Dartmoor rivers and have more North Wales adventures. I would be up for Dave S's Scotland trip apart from the fact I have no more annual leave left! Let's hope for lots and lots of rain this winter!

Thanks for your time and all the best for the winter!

Thanks Ted.

In memory of Richard Whiteley.

"The final kit count for us four was 1 split boat, 1 dented boat, 2 ripped cags and 1 broken set of paddles"

the TRASHER

Sea Kayaking

This time last year I was thinking about sea kayaking but didn't have a boat and wasn't sure if I would like it or if it was worth the investment....all that has changed now ! Since last September I have spent 5 weeks sea kayaking and wild camping round Scotland, I'm seeing Angelsey from a whole new angle (one that is undoubtedly much more beautiful than the view from the eddy at Stanley embankment and just as exhilarating - Pen-

rhn Mawr on springs!) and have found lots of tidal races and surfing in peaceful places with no eddy queue and when there is no water on the weirs. The down side? Well Oxford isn't exactly near the sea and my annual mileage has increased somewhat!

What was very helpful indeed was that I went to the Cwm Pennant Sea Kayak Festival in September last year and tried out

loads of different boats, picked up a few top tips and handy hints.and met quite a few very good boating buddies.

If you are interested then here is the link: www.cwmpennant.com or if you email me, I have the festival programme and booking form in word and can send it to you by return email.

Claire
(clairecl70@yahoo.co.uk)

"I'm seeing

Angelsey from a

whole new angle "

KCC 'Southern Region' correspondent

I know Dave S is planning for Scotland at the end of OCT which due to work I can't make. I am however planning on going there the preceding weeks from Thur Oct 13th - Fri Oct 21st. No fixed regime, just whatever you feel like doing. Anyone interested, contact me on 01962-885761 or stu-art.brighton@btopenworld.com. but don't leave it too late.

Noted in the 'Economist' of July 23rd, an article regarding the problems of trespass by 'floaters & kayakers' on Colorado's rivers. It seems this state has problems akin to England due to the vagaries of it's law, namely, you can own the banks and river bed but ownership of the water is disputed. (Other states it seems give 'floaters' the right to float by.) Apparently this has been ongoing for at least 20 years with several law suits having taken place, finding both ways. At

least one rafting company was forced out of business as a result. So if you're planning a trip to the 'Taylor', 'Gunnison', 'Arkansas' et al make sure your insurance covers death at the hands of fishermen. Who says, 'Where America leads, England follows?'

- Stuart Brighton

KCC Goes To The Dogs

Tuesday 1st November
7pm - KCC go to the dogs

It didn't happen last time due to work sending me abroad, but come the 1st November KCC IS going to the dogs at Oxford Stadium. The grand plan is to go for the 'six pack party deal' which costs £11. For this you get:

- * Admission
- * Racecard
- * Fast food voucher
- * 2 Drinks vouchers

* 2 £1 tote vouchers

* Reserved Seating

More details are available at

www.oxfordstadium.co.uk/Offers/SixPack.htm including directions and a guide to the tote system. The first race is at 7-30 and the last around 10-30. The fast food is far from 'a la carte' (e.g. chicken nuggets and chips), but for the money you can't complain. Don't forget you are also getting 2 pints for your money!

If you want to come, email kcc.secretary@gmail.com with the subject 'dogs' and let me know how many tickets you want and I'll book all of the tickets together. If you don't have email or have any questions, give me a call or speak to me in the pub or on the water. Can you let me know by Tuesday 4th October

- Dave Hodgkinson

A DAY AT THE YAT & MIDDLE WYE TRIP

Sunday 23rd October. leaving at 8.30 a.m.

Please come and join me 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 week-end before -15/16th October

to arrange transport and equipment.

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

Sunday, 6th November. Meet at Builth Wells Car Park at 10.30 a.m.

It is about a 3hour drive from Abingdon.

We paddle from Builth Wells to Boughrood - about 12 miles.

This is a grade II river with one fall off grade III and highly suitable

for introducing paddlers to White Water Trips.

Open to anyone. Please contact me a week before if you are interested.

We need to sort transport and equipment if you wish to borrow from the club.

Ellie Collins Tel: 01865 820907

“The grand plan is to go for the 'six pack party deal' “

The Pool Rules

See the diary pages for pool dates, but please follow these rules when paddling at the Convent School pool.

THE RULES

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.

FINISHING

It helps to keep the School Pool staff (Opener/closer and care-

taker) 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.

River Usk White Water Trips & BCU 4 Star

On the following Sundays: 11 Dec. 2005, 08 January 2006 and 19 February 2006

Three white water trips, available to KCC members and friends. Under 18's will need to show parental consent by completing and returning the form below. No form No Go

4 Star Assessments can normally be carried out on these trips provided you book two weeks in advance!

Itinerary

Leave Oxfordshire ~07:00 and travel by car to Tallybont [between Abergaveny and Brecon] a distance of ~90 miles. Meet at the Oasis café in Abergaveny bus park, at ~09.15. This is an excellent place for a bacon sandwich & cup of tea.

Arrive at Tallybont by 10.15am at the very latest! After the car shuttle, paddle River Usk from Tallybont (GR123234) to Crickhowell, (GR215182) a distance of 19km. We must be on water by ~11.30 or we shall run out of daylight.

Water is normally max grade 3, but can reach 4+ when in spate – levels can rise 2m in 1 hour in very heavy rain. Tricky bits can be portaged with some difficulty. To determine water levels, phone the Environmental Agency river level message service Tel 0906 6197755 - listen carefully for the reported river level at Brecon:

- Lower than 0.4 we may not bother to start unless it is raining in Wales
- Between 0.4 and 1.8 metres; we shall have a good trip.
- Above 1.8 metres; it's an exciting trip only for the experienced.

Egress at Crickhowell, down stream of the road bridge, on river left at the Bridge End pub – don't forget to buy a beer to say thanks to the landlord. Use the town centre car park or the lay-by on other side of the bridge.

Canoeing Ability & Equipment

At least BCU 2 Star with some experience of moving water. The weather and the water will certainly be cold and may be very cold. Each paddler must be equipped with the following kit: wet suit, water/wind proof cag, buoyancy aid helmet, packed lunch & hot drink. Spare clothes & poggies are recommended.

Please arrange boat and paddle well in advance - borrowed equipment used on the understanding that any loss or damage must be paid for. Not all the KCC club boats are suitable for the Usk

Remember, on the way home the best fish and chips in Europe are sold in Crickhowell.

Costs

Access fee £1.00 a head, to Roger Wiltshire. Petrol to your driver - assume a minimum of £10.00
Assessment for BCU 4 Star, payable to the OCP £30.

Organiser

Please call me to let me know if you are coming. Roger Wiltshire, Downside, Springfield Road, Wantage OX12 8EX Tel 01235 768429 or e-mail: roger.wiltshire3@btopenworld.com. If under 18, bring completed permission slip.

Sunday Usk Trip(s) 11 December 05, 08 January 2006, & 19 February 2006

Kayaking is a risk sport. Parental consent is required to attend this activity. Parents or guardian should sign below to show they have read and fully understood the above notes. Please detail any health issues on the reverse of this slip.

Parent Signature Young Person Name Contact Tel. No(s).....

KCC Events

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Organiser</u>
Free Kayako Jacko training	Web 7 th Sep	Be at the hut by 1815
Coach Level II Training	10th - 11th September	Roger Hiley
Todd Morris Memorial KCC Triathlon	Saturday Sept 18th	Dave Hodgkinson
Poole Harbour	September 10th - 11th	Tony Wilkins
AGM- Wantage Cricket club	Monday Sept 19th	
4 Star Sea Kayak training	7th-9th October	Roger Hiley
Scotland	Thur Oct 13th - Fri Oct 21st	Stuart Brighton
River Dart (Loop)	October 14th - 16th	Tony Wilkins
Scotland	October 22 nd – 30th	Dave Surman
Symonds Yat trip	Sunday 23rd October	Ellie Collins
River Wye	October 29th - 30th	Tony Wilkins
KCC goes to the dogs	Tues 1 st Nov	Dave Hodgkinson
Middle Wye trip	Sunday 6th November	Ellie Collins
St. Patricks Stream	November 20th	Tony Wilkins
4 Star Training & Assessment Kayak, South Wales	10th - 11th December	Roger Wiltshire
River Cherwell	December 18th	Tony Wilkins
River Usk White Water Trips & BCU 4 Star	8rd Jan 2006	Roger Wiltshire
River Usk White Water Trips & BCU 4 Star	19 th Feb 2006	Roger Wiltshire

Oxford Coaching Panel Events

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Organiser</u>
2006 Planning Meeting	Tues 18th October	Alistair Wilson
	Mon 5th December	Pete Collins

Other Events

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Other Details</u>
Southampton Boat Show	Sept. 16-25	
Lakes Open Boat Symposium	Nov. 11-14	

SWIMMING POOL HIRE 2005/2006

We have again been able to book the swimming pool at Our Lady's Convent Senior School, Radley Rd. Abingdon. We have a provisional arrangement for both the Autumn and the Spring Term excluding half term and Christmas Holidays.

OCTOBER	06 KCC	13 PF	20 KCC	27 1/2 TERM	
NOVEMBER	03 PF	10 SCOUTS	17 SCOUTS	24 SCOUTS	
DECEMBER	01 KCC	08 PF	15 XMAS	22 XMAS	31 XMAS
JANUARY	05 XMAS	12 PF	19 KCC	26 SCOUTS	
FEBRUARY	02 SCOUTS	09 SCOUTS	16 1/2 TERM	23 PF	
MARCH	02 KCC	09 PF	16 KCC	23 PF	30 EASTER

PADDLES SEA KAYAKING GUIDE:

Words and pictures by
Chris Wheeler

Fog on the Tyne, Jimmy Nail, Sid the Sexist, Get Carter, When the Boat Comes in.....can any English region be burdened with quite so many stereotypes? (some positive and some not so positive). It's certainly a part of the World that many sea kayakers will not have considered. It doesn't help when you often see weather forecasts offering the prospect of sunny spells and temperatures between 16 and 21 degs c throughout the UK, with the exception of the Geordie Nation, where on shore winds off the North Sea and the infamous fog on the Tyne leave temperatures stuck at a desperately grim 9 to 10 degs c. However, don't dismiss the North East, this is, after all, where sea kayaking legend Derek Hutchinson hails from. Sometimes the sun does shine down on the Geordies, and when it does, some of the best sea kayaking and birdlife that the British Isles has to offer awaits you.

We've picked out classic day paddles at three sea kayaking destinations. They will suit most ability levels when the conditions are calm, but they all involve paddling committing open coast, so do your research into the tides and weather and take sea kayaks.

The Farne Islands, Northumberland

Located 50 miles north of Newcastle, within a few miles of Berwick upon Tweed and the Scottish border, the Farne Islands archipelago is an English northerly outpost that looks and feels Scottish. It consists of low lying outcrops of black volcanic dolerite rock that stretch 3 miles out to sea and are reminiscent of the Hebrides in all their wind-swept natural beauty. The wildlife from May to July is

outstanding and you can expect to encounter a large resident seal colony, hundreds of puffins, and also numerous gannets, cormorants, guillemots, kittiwakes and razor-bills. Don't go too near the seal colony when they are breeding- seals may be seen by some as the benign 'cows of the sea', but bulls can get angry!

The easiest launch spot is the harbour at the quaintly named 'Seahouses' village, 2 miles south of the Islands. From here you head due north to reach Inner Farne, upon which sits the innermost lighthouse, and in doing so you paddle a course that is diagonal to the mainland coast and tidal stream. As a result, it is worth checking the tide charts to get the best out the tides. You will want to head out/northwards on the ebb tide and back/ southwards on the flood tide. The catch is that the Harbourmaster (a dead ringer for Captain Birdseye) will seek to charge you £7 per boat for launching. The alternative is to launch a couple of miles further north at the beach at Bamburgh Castle, which is the closest point on the mainland to the Islands, carrying the boats down the beach and ferry gliding against the tide. Cheaper but harder work!

In addition to the lighthouse, Inner Farne also has an old chapel and tower and the tourist boats from Seahouses offload their customers here, to watch the birdlife. Around the other side of the inner islands lies the seal colony. Islands stretch for a further 2.5 miles out to sea and at the furthest point lies another lighthouse. En route, you will encounter vast numbers of birds amongst the southerly cliffs, and vast numbers of puffins in the water. The joy of sea kayaking is that, as you quietly glide along, you become part of the landscape and can get very close to the

wildlife, unlike the tourist boats with their noisy engines and even noisier tour guides. Looking back to the mainland, you will see Bamburgh Castle and Lindisfarne Castle in the foreground, with the Cheviots behind forming the backdrop- quite a sight indeed!

Upon returning to the mainland, we'd strongly recommend escaping gaudy Seahouses and driving to Bamburgh Castle for afternoon tea in the village, to round off a great day.

More energetic paddlers may want to do a triangular circuit, taking in Holy Island and Lindisfarne Castle, which is 6 miles north west of the Farne Islands, or alternatively launch from there with the tide.

Do take time out to visit Newcastle- if you haven't been before, you'll be pleasantly surprised. The Quayside area is quite a sight, with the old Sydney Harbour Bridge look-a-like providing a backdrop to a brave new World consisting of the graceful arches of the modernistic Millenium Bridge, the uncompromising industrial façade of the Baltic art gallery and the glass reflections and organic curves of Norman Foster's new 'SAGE' arts complex.

The North Yorks Moors coast:

Welcome to Northern England's own 'dinosaur coast', that runs for 35 miles southwards from the fishing village of Staithes to the Filey Brigg promontory, via Whitby, Robin Hood's Bay and Scarborough. This is where the Moors and sea confront each other head on, resulting in dramatic cliffs and sweeping bays, complete with picture postcard fishing villages.

“To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here.”

THE NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND

Scarborough to Robin Hood's Bay

This is a 12 mile paddle from the traditional Victorian resort of Scarborough northwards to the picture postcard fishing village of Robin Hood's Bay. You'll be pleasantly surprised by Scarborough. Yes, South Beach has the inevitable 'kiss me quick' tat and amusement arcades, but the town is an impressive sight with its working harbour, and two sandy beaches sweeping away from the dramatic headland atop of which sits the ruins of a twelfth century castle. If you can find somewhere to park, launch from the harbour, south of the headland and castle. If you can't find somewhere to park, drive around the headland and launch from North Beach, where there is plenty of parking.

The paddle takes you into the North Yorks National Park, and along a remarkably unspoilt and unpopulated section of coast. Don't be surprised if you don't encounter another human being for 2-3 hours- there are no dreaded jet skiers here! The cliffs are interspersed with wooded gullies and are very beautiful. Eventually, the beautiful sweep of Robin's Hoods Bay comes into view. The village itself is quite a sight, with cottages tumbling steeply down to the sea. There is no harbour, just a steep concrete ramp up to the Ship Inn- it must be a harsh place to be in Winter storms. There's a car park at the top of the hill and even a bus service to Scarborough and Whitby- useful if you've only the one car and need to shuttle. You're not supposed to drive down through the village but no one is going to mind if you're picking up boats, and there is also a possible alternative slipway.

Robin Hood's Bay to Staithes

This is a 16 mile paddle, including a 6 mile paddle to Whitby and 10 mile paddle on from there to Staithes. Whitby is a sizeable place, but the harbour and waterfront, where the Esk River meets the sea, is very atmospheric. North of the river is The Shambles, a cluster of narrow old streets, at the foot of the infamous 199 steps that lead up to the Abbey and church, made famous by Bram Stoker's Dracula. Do try the local fish and chips- we'd recommend the Magpie Café. You can also paddle to and from Whitby, if you want to paddle shorter distances. Try launching from the local rowing club by the Shambles- you can park the car at the car park in front of the railway station on the south side of the river.

Paddling northwards from Whitby takes you past a long sandy beach to Sandsend, then away from civilisation before getting to the very pretty Runswick Bay, Port Mulgrave and finally Staithes. Staithes, like Robin Hood's Bay, consists of an old fishing village, with old cottages, tumbling down to the sea and the mouth of a small beck. The sight of the harbour at the foot of dramatic red cliffs with the cottages behind is quite stunning. Launching from the harbour is easy enough- Staithes is cramped but not as busy as Robin Hood's Bay. Park at the top of the hill in the car park and just drive down to load and unload the boats.

Flamborough Head

Dramatic chalk cliffs are a rarity on the east coast of England but they do exist, here at Flamborough Head, a dramatic promontory that juts out into the North Sea, between Filey, to the north, and

the traditional 'kiss me quick' resort of Bridlington to the south.

You have two choices. Either paddle the 16 miles between Filey and Bridlington harbour or, just paddle the chalk cliffs around the headland itself. You can do the latter by launching from North Landing or South Landing, which are about 4 miles apart by sea and situated either side of Flamborough Head itself. Don't be deterred by the 'private beach' signs, but bear in mind that you will have to carry the boats down to the beach from the cliff top car parks. North Landing is the better bet because 3 miles west of North Landing are Bempton Cliffs, where 100 metre high chalk cliffs accommodate a bird colony that is England's largest.

Don't be surprised if you find yourselves sitting amongst puffins with hundreds of big wing spanned gannets circling overhead- truly awesome! The cliffs are dramatically indented in places, with plenty of arches and caves for the rockhoppers amongst you. The result is one of the most breath taking sea paddles you will find- and it's not on the western Atlantic coast- now, there's a surprise!

For further information, we'd recommend:

Reeds Almanac for UK tide charts and tide times.
www.stanfords.co.uk for detailed tide charts.

www.bbc.co.uk (weather-coast and sea) for local tide times and the latest weather.

1:25,000 Ordnance Survey maps for the precise location of launching spots and camp sites.

"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."

Austria - A KCC Experience



**'It's raining men
Hallelulah
It's raining men
Amen'**

**And with those words
pounding out of the
sound system the awful
truth sank in... it
was past one in the
morning, we had no
intention of leaving the
club for a few hours
yet, tomorrow help the
promise of a twenty-
four hour drive across
Europe, and I was
dancing on a podium
with Dave Surman as a
dancing partner...**

Fortunately the rest of the week leading up to this had been occupied with activities more becoming of what Dave would refer to as 'Nice People'. Well for the most part anyway.

Liz, James Crask, Dave Hodgekinson, Seth, Ian Domville, Fred, Andy Newell, Chris, Lee, Louise, Ian and Lee Royle, Vicki and Martin Rolls, Richard and Michael, Dave Surman, Seb and Tracy, Anna, Lisa, Dave Porter, Lucille, Ben, and myself.

Twenty five of us, I'm not sure if that's a record for a KCC Trip or not but it's a large number and the fear was the organisational 'faffing' might mean we never saw a river but perhaps surprisingly we managed at least two a day with people running those they fancied and skipping those they didn't.

To be fair the beginning of the week started with a bit of a disaster with a six hours drive to Dover, missing the ferry and having to catch a later one. Followed by another fifteen hours of driving led to a lot of very tired people by the time we arrived in Landeck. Discovering that we'd only booked three pitches for twenty five people led to a few worrying moments as well. Still it was soon sorted and after restful night we rose to a beautifully sunny Sunday.

What follows is a slightly incomplete recollection of the weeks paddling:

Sunday – Welcome to Austria

We started with the intention of paddling the grade 2 Pfunds Section of the Inn but the levels appeared to be a little on the low side so we paddled the grade 4 Tossens section instead. It seemed quite low and genteel. Liz's friends Tam and Richard had come over from Switzerland to paddle with us and we managed to hook up with some of Leeds Canoe Club as well... crowded part of river!

Everyone survived it without incident and in the afternoon we made our first of many runs of the Sanna. Seb, Anna and Lisa sat this one out but the rest of us ran this

grade four river that had the added advantage of its get out being in the campsite! Despite Tam loosing her paddles and having to retrieve them from the other side of the river we all had a great time. So much so we ran it another three times over the next few days.

Monday – A gentle warm-up

Oh dear! The first swims of the week, Anna and Lisa both took a swim on one of the big and bouncy rapids in the grade 3 Imst Gorge. Anna had the unfortunate experience of getting bit too close to Ian's boat and despite a valiant attempt to roll resulted in another swim and a black eye, quite impressive for a rock free river!

The afternoon saw another run of the Sanna before rolling into the bar.

Tuesday – A day of rest

The Rossana was Tuesday morning's paddle, a grade 3+ river starting in St Anton that judging from the photos following the recent storms now seems quite miniscule. Whilst Anna had another out of boat experience, Louise and Ian went for bike ride with through Austrian meadows, apparently nearly falling off their bikes laughing when 2 nuns cycled past them.

Austria - A KCC Experience

Whilst the rest of the group had a restful afternoon, Ian, Louise, Younger Lee, Richard, Liz and myself returned to the Tossens. Finding the water levels to be much higher than Sunday's excursion, though apparently still low it was a lot more fun being bigger and bouncier with steam rising from the water making seeing further than twenty meters beyond our noses a little tricky.

The Giarson was paddled by Dave P, Louise, Little Lee, Fred, Andy, Liz, Dave H, DaveS, Dave P, Mike. It cause no out of boat experiences but some paddlers portaged one drop giving them a prime view of Mike's interesting line that left the borrowed Pathfinders boat a little less water tight around the nose! Still with the help of some repair epoxy he managed to fix the damage next day.

As the rest of us caught up with the aftermath of the preceding carnage we stopped to inspect and watched Fred take the best line he could see from the water. Five minutes later his struggle with the hole was over and he paddled out of the bottom intact.

Fred's experience led some to portaging whilst the rest of us took a line that looked more promising from the bank. Now I admit I was nervous, the first of the rapids was by far the worst looking. The second part was an easier looking pour over. Anyway I nailed the first part and in my joy I forgot about the second. It would have been alright if I'd gone over it forwards, but sideways.... Simon's swim count: 1.

How everyone laughed.

Then Lucille had a go, sneaked down the left, and survived with out being phased one bit!

Thursday – The Swimming Dutchman

A return to the Rossana was made on Thursday. Once again the river got the better of Anna this time leaving her without paddles. Despite an ex-

*“Like ducklings they
went down in a line
one by one, got back-
looped one by one
and rolled up at the
bottom one by one...
except Lee Gill”*



Wednesday - Switzerland

The Swiss gorges, Giarson and Schuls. Whilst the first was apparently the more difficult of the two being a grade 4 compared to the latter 3 (4) it was the Schuls that provided the most fun...

The Schuls managed to claim a swim for Vicky early on but it was the group led by Dave Surman that discover the rather easy looking double drop was a little trickier than it looked. Like ducklings they went down in a line one by one, got back-looped one by one and rolled up at the bottom one by one... except Lee Gill.



Austria - A KCC Experience



“Despite an extensive search they weren’t to be found “

tensive search they weren’t to be found and seeing that we were half-way down the river we decided to raft Anna down the second half, Ian started her off with me taking over when they got separated.

anything I’d paddled before.

I enjoyed it; the hole that made me swim was huge (honestly!) as Richard assured me after I bought him several beers.

I managed to get him to one bank, whilst Louise, Ian and Dave got his boat to the other. Still a lucky piece of aiming left the other end of my throw line in Dave’s hand enabling him to tie it the boat and drag it back across the river to its grateful owner.

Fortunately Anna’s paddle was retrieved the day after we left by Leeds Canoe Club.

Simon’s swim count: 2.

Friday – The beginning of the end.

In an attempt to make up for the earlier misfortune



In the afternoon DaveH, DaveS, Richard, Simon, Fred, Andy, Lee, Mike, Little Lee, Liz, Dave P, along with Jaque a Dutch paddler we hooked up with, went to run the Landeck Gorge. A grade 4 big water experience that, at this point, was bigger than

I joined some of the others in a quick blast of the Sanna. I went down ‘the roofed corner’ first, eddied out to wait for the rest of my group only to see Jaque’s boat upside down with its owner separated from it!

The Lower Out. The serious look on everyone’s faces, and the fact that Lee decided to give it a miss should have told me I shouldn’t have got on the water.

Simon’s swim count: 3

Austria - A KCC Experience



I only saw the first five minutes of the river before swimming and walking off. The guidebook surmises this 4(4+) river as, 'Very fast, very heavy and very scary'. A statement I'd agree with. I can't tell you much about this river but if you would like a summary of the six kilometres of road I walked along in full kit with boat in 35 degree temperatures come and see me in the pub. I knew I should have turned right.

Thank you to Fred and Andy for chasing and rescuing my boat far further than I could of expected them to.

In the afternoon some of the group went to run the 1st gorge again whilst the rest of us said farewell to the Sanna, running it in thirty minutes flat.

Saturday

Whilst the rest of us got over hangovers Fred, Dave Surman, Ian, Vick, Andy, Chris and Louise went to run the Grade 4 Wolfs Gorge. Louise account follows:

'After the first couple of breakouts Fred discovered he had forgotten to put his buoyancy aid on,



so he got off. At the same time Vicky had gone for a swim and lost her paddle (just ahead and around the corner on the other side of the river). Vicky had an interesting walk out. Martin and Ian were at the barrage at the get out and rescued Vicky's paddle with a big stick and a roof strap.'

So there we were on the Saturday morning tired and hung over (well some of us). We had twenty four hours of travelling in front of us but fond memories of fine company, fine rivers, fine beer, river surfing, restaurants with fine views of the cement factory and train lines and OH MY GOD IT WAS A GAY CLUB... Still at least I was better behaved than Mr Hodgekinson.

Of course Vicki, Martin, Dave Surman (having to make his own coffee), Richard, Mike, Lucille, Seb and Tracy had another week to go...

Thanks to Martin and Ian Royle for all of the shuttle running.

- Simon Knox

"Thank you to Fred and Andy for chasing and rescuing my boat far further than I could of expected them to."



Magic Knees News

Final Score:

Swims: Kit loss:

Hodgkinson: 8 1 Dented boat

Francis: 3 1 Split boat

Wheeler: 3 1 Watch

McMahon: 0 1 set of paddles

GRAND TOTAL: 14

Paddling days: 15

Rivers: 16

Sections: 24

Land of Trolls

The pace was pretty relentless- get up, paddle until sun set (10 pm), drive to the next river, grab hot dogs in a petrol station shop and then search for camp site huts in the early hours.

So, another classic Norway trip, that only came about because we were afraid we might get kidnapped if we went through with our plans to go boating in Tajikistan, right next to the Afghan border.

Dave H only joined us because he ignored the wise advice of Simon Westgarth to NOT come with us! I suspect our group dynamics and coaching style were ever so slightly different to Gene17's. Still, I *think* Dave enjoyed it, and whilst he did notch up 8 swims in the high water conditions and a dented boat, with us, he clocked up far more time on the water on quality grade 4/5 than he would've done with Mr Westgarth! Besides, Dave wasn't exactly the only one swimming with fishes (ahem).

Andy 'no swims' McDoom has clearly learnt a lot over the last 3-4 years. Not only did he do plenty of probing and not swim, but he was also great at keeping an eye on Dave, talking him through rapids, and then picking up the pieces afterwards! Bear in mind that if you swim in a committing gorge in high water, it's necessary to boat chase for a mile or two and then necessary for the poor victim to scramble and swim downstream to get back to the boat, and inspect the damage.

On one section of the Raundalselva (Reimes Station to Skiple), we underestimated the high water conditions, putting on at 6pm and staggering off at 10.30pm in the twilight- all rather exciting.

Sea kayaking

Since the loW we've taken our sea kayaks off to the North East of England and Pembrokeshire. There should be an article on NE England elsewhere in this issue, and there's an article on our trip to Northern Ireland in the latest

issue of CKUK, which may be of interest. The weather forecast's looking good for the Bank Holiday weekend so I'm sure we'll be off again. To be perfectly honest, it'll make a refreshing change from all that frenetic testosterone fuelled creek boating.

Austria

Wow, it seems half the club were there, including club veterans like Fred, Dave S and Louise (who I met for lunch yesterday). If I wasn't addicted to scaring myself silly on steep creeks, I'd love to have been there.

Dart and Lyn

I've no plans to book places this Winter. I can't see the point any more- we'll simply go when it rains (which is what we do anyway!).

**Chris Magic Knees
25 Aug 2005**