

# Newsletter

## Autumn 2011



### Editorial

Following feedback on the newsletter and the fact that most people read it online I have tried a new layout for this edition which will hopefully make it easier for you to read. Let me know what you think. Summer seems like a distant memory now and the club is gearing up for the winter season. For those of you new to the club have a look at the article on winter paddling for some hints and tips on what to wear. We have a good mix of articles this month with some new contributors so hopefully you will enjoy a good read

As always I am looking for more articles for the newsletter so why not spend a hour or two one evening writing up a tale on your favourite paddling adventure, kit or anything else paddle related. I accept articles in any format – please email them to me at [mquadling@btinternet.com](mailto:mquadling@btinternet.com)

See you on the water or at a pool session soon.

Mark Quadling

Editor

### KAYAK SURFING

“The ultimate in extreme expression... combining skill with the power of the ocean to perform dynamic, high performance moves”. That’s how the [BCU surf](#) website describes kayak surfing and you can do it at the Norfolk coast!

I’ve been surf kayaking for about fifteen years now and always find it **exciting and challenging**. Riding a wave at speed, carving and turning is exhilarating and often being at the edge of a great ride or a trashing can be testing.



There are **two approaches** to surfing in a kayak. Firstly, and usually the way to get started, is to ride straight in towards the beach on a wave. You can do this in any type of kayak or sit-on-top and it is possible to do playboating moves in the whitewater of a broken wave... spins, turns and cartwheels in

shorter kayaks. Secondly, there are a range of surf kayaks (see [Mega](#)) which enable you to ride along an unbroken wave and perform various moves including aerials. There are plenty of videos on the internet illustrating the moves, the best being [surf kayak skills](#).

**Norfolk** doesn't have the best surfing conditions but about ten times a year we get a decent swell coming down the North Sea, giving good rideable waves at places like East Runton, Cromer, Walcott, Sea Palling. The rest of the time, we tend to get wind-driven slop! There



are a couple of good surf forecast websites; Magic Seaweed and A1 Surf... we need at least 1.5m of swell to get a rideable wave at the coast. The figures are based on wave meters on buoys or radar instruments on offshore platforms. Also,

the waves form better with a light off-shore wind

**Competitive surfing.** Although it is great to do for fun, surf kayaking is also a competitive sport. Five British paddlers have recently taken first places in events at the World Championships held in the USA. We have various competitions in this country each year which usually run during the spring and summer, the main venues being Devon, Cornwall and the west coast of Ireland.

**Would you like to try kayak surfing?** You will need some moving water experience, 2 star skills and be able to roll. However, it is difficult to organize club surfing sessions for Eagle members because we do not have a qualified surf coach and it is almost impossible to plan a date not knowing if there will be any surf. It is best to start in summer when the sea is warmer and I would like to try and organize a trip to the Devon coast (more reliable surf there) and get help from a qualified coach. If you might like to do this next year, we'll send out an email in the spring to check who's interested and see what we can do.

Tony Carter

## Olympics 2011



It seemed a long time ago when we were planning the program for 2011 when I rather confidently said – I'll organise an Olympic Games themed evening! As June approached I started wondering just what I had promised to do. Gradually it came to me. A paddlethon, just like a decathlon but with events in rafted up canoes.

Over the next few weeks preparations were made, this organising the Olympics was not so bad after all. A few flags printed, I purchased an Olympic flame, decided on some events, found some helpers – sorted!!!

I arrived at Eagle early as this needed at least 15 minutes set up time! I taped Olympic flags and the Olympic flame to the slide, we rafted up some canoes for the teams and then the wind started to get up. A quick text to the wife confirmed it was now raining in Hethersett..

As people arrived the rain started and thunder rumbled around – my flags went soggy, the Olympic flame was soaked, my carefully scribbled notes on the forthcoming events turned to paper mache. Still the games had to go on

With 4 teams of 6 people we waited for the rain to abate but with no luck. Event one was throw bag javelin – a simple event – each team member got to throw a throw bag at a target with 1 point scored for each direct hit. Better still everyone apart from the organiser could shelter under the nice new roofing we put up in the spring.

With it still raining hard we had to move to the outside events. The next event was an Olympic classic – the 100 metre sprint. This was followed by long jump, a paddle up to a rope across the water and you then had to glide as far as possible. This proved a little tricky to judge! Triple jump came next, a tactical event where each team started from a stationary position and had three paddle strokes per person to see how far upstream they could get within a certain time limit.

We then did wet sponge shot put which in the heavy rain wasn't as much fun as planned – a scoring process of 1 point for each sponge you landed in an opponents boat sort of worked! The next event was a brainwave..synchronised paddling and one that really ought to become a new olympic sport. Two minutes to prepare for a 1 minute synchronised paddle. This event proved to be the most interesting of the night. With carefully choreographed moves teams tried desperately to impress the judges and to get those all important points. Perfect synchronised dives into the river to finish the routines were my favourite part – fantastic!!

By now the judges needed to dry off a bit as the rain was still chucking it down so another Olympic favourite. We sent the paddlers off on a marathon paddle! With a good Olympic

spirit and no cheating (or at least that we could see from under the shelter) teams raced up to the bridge and back to secure more points.

Without a chance to rest the next event was relay where teams had to compete against each other over the 100 metre course we had set up.

We finally came to a genuine Olympic event – the canoe slalom, although you won't see it done in rafted up canoes in the real games. This event proved to be the most skilful of the night with a tight course for the teams to navigate. Penalty points were awarded for any missed or hit gates.

The final event was another new event for the Olympics – the all in. On the whistle all teams had to jump in with points awarded to the first teams to all be standing back up in their boats. With everyone already soaked competitors needed little encouragement to try and win the last of the points.

A huge thank you to the team captains and to all those that took part in the evening for making it such a memorable evening. The final, somewhat dubious scores are below:

Gold – Brazil - 28 points

Silver – France - 28 points

Bronze – United Kingdom – 26 points

Runners Up – Japan 20 points

Now what can we do in 2012.. I'm thinking the Eagle version of the tour de france – how the heck will we do that...

Mark Quadling

### **Why we wear helmets and what ones to buy.**

As any good white-water kayaker will tell you, a helmet is very important. This is because when you are upside down it is the only piece of protection that you have against rocks. I can say firsthand how important spending money on them is. All helmets sold in the UK have to meet certain standards. However as always not all helmets are the same and as usual more money means better protection.

For example a predator lee costs around £80 and a sweet rocker costs £180. However the differences between them are amazing. The predator lee can be bent without much force upon it and has about 1 cm of padding in it. The rocker has about an inch of padding and thanks to it's outer structure cannot be bent under any amount of force that I have put it under.

Even if you buy the cheaper helmets make sure it's a tight fit. There is nothing worse than a loose helmet because it is uncomfortable and makes rolling even harder and more importantly it isn't safe. Also never buy second-hand. You have no idea what it could have been through. For example, my old helmet looks in good condition but it has taken an impact large enough to render me with concussion and a reason for Pete Sykes to mock me because of my lack of memory about the driver of the golf cart.

Helmets are not necessary for flat-water paddling but I can recommend using them for capsizing and rolling. As there are many hazards like shopping trolleys and push bikes, to name but a few, it's better to go safety first.

But most importantly enjoy whatever type of paddling you like safely.

Alex Maine

### **Warning – High Fire Risk**

In September we set out for the annual club trip to the two mile bottom camp site. For anyone who has not been to two mile bottom it has a number of attractions. Its local, it has an interesting slide (see caption competition), the river we paddle flows along side the site and best of all each pitch comes with its own fire pit. Oh, I also forgot it's cheap!

We arrived first on the site and quickly selected the flattest pitch in our designated area. A relaxed afternoon was spent walking around, gathering fire wood and chatting to people as they turned up. Before long we had a nice camp fire going, a take away curry (highly recommended camp food) and spent a nice evening catching up on news.

In the morning we were going to be joined by a number of other paddlers and with about 25 people paddling it was proven to be a popular trip. Myself and Verity were unable to do the full paddle but gently made our way up to the weir on the 1<sup>st</sup> days paddle. The weir is an interesting one and changes every time you see it depending on the water levels. This time with water levels low it was an easy ride down and most people enjoyed having at least a couple of runs down. Always be careful with weirs and if you are not with people who are experienced paddlers they are best avoided.



We made our way down and got back to the campsite for a lunch break. Imagine my disappointment when I was told that signs had been placed in the firepits advising no fires due to high fire risk. I had saved wood from the night before, it was September, the weather was not so bad. The site manager came over to see what the fuss was about – he explained the forestry commission had called him with the alert.. What a disaster, my favourite camp of the year ruined. I was then told that we

might be able to have a fire, but we would need to do an independent risk assessment of at least 2 pages of A4.. Hmm.. this seems a bit suspicious. Turns out it was payback time for stitching Colin up in the last newsletter with his new BCU award for story telling!!!! Everyone else in the group was fully aware I was being wound up. Nice one Colin!!! As it turned out no one had booked the huge firepit for that night, and as it was near end of season they had a lot of wood to burn up – result!!!!

A group BBQ and a cracking fire made for a really good evening. We had cabaret with a



selection of jokes, magic(ish) tricks, singing (lads you need to practice for next time) and even a horse impressionist!!!

The fire was burning nicely with a side of a shed at a time and piles of old fence posts. No one was cold!!!

On the Sunday the group paddled off to Brandon whilst we reflected on a fab weekend.

A big thank you to Colin and Wayne for all their efforts in organising this weekend

Mark Quadling

## **Eagle at the Dee**

In late August a group of Eagle paddlers set off for a weekend white-water kayaking. On the first day we paddled the River Dee. The Dee is mainly a flat river with several small rapids on the way down. This day was decided to be used for doing our flat water part of our 3\* assessment. We were assessed by Jez and Martyn and they assessed us on our flat water skills such as backwards figure of eight and rolling, we also had to practice rescues with throw lines and deep water rescues. As we made our way down stream a football that we carried all the way from the get in point was taken back to our bunkhouse. We got out of the river at Trevor, to load up and get back to our bunkhouse at RYG, where Harry cooked us up a lovely pot of 'spagbol' and he was greatly rewarded. A late finish to good days paddling!

The second day we paddled the River Tryweryn, a much more challenging and consistent grade 3 river. We started just at the lower part of the river and worked our way through technical, fast flowing water. We kayaked to the edge of a field of sheep and had our lunch of chocolate bars and SPAR baguettes and had a rest talking about how we thought we were doing in our weekend of assessment. After a hard earned rest we got back in our boats and headed down towards a tricky section of the river that required us to use our cunning hand signals (not the bird) to negotiate our way through. Finally we came to the hardest and for me personally, the best part of paddling the Tryweryn. Bala Mill falls. I and the four others that paddled it for the first time were understandably nervous. A grade 4 piece of water and quite an eventful one too.

First we scouted it. Then we conquered it! Two at a time we raced down the fast flowing rapids that would finally bring us to a 2 meter drop and one hell a stopper. We waited for the bright yellow of Stuarts paddle to tell us to come down, over a big wave and then finally into 'Bus stop eddy'. Then, when it eventually came to moment we had all been bricking it for, we mimicked as best as we could our coach's line and followed, down the drop, over the stopper, and it was over. Just like that. Harry wasn't so lucky as he endured all of our fears only to find himself in a bit of pickle, as he went to break in, he capsized and proceeded to do the whole of the falls on his head, fortunately apart from a few bumps and bruises he wasn't badly injured. Mike to the rescue!

When we got back to our bunkhouse we enjoyed a BBQ and we then had our theory test and we finally were told whether or not we had become 3\* paddlers. I am pleased to say all but one passed their assessment.

A sad Sunday as we all knew this brilliant adrenalin fuelled weekend of laughing, eating and for the 18+ drinking was coming to an end. So we decided that since all assessments were over and we had half the day to kill, an agreement was made to paddle JJ's. A section of the river with a nice drop, a sticky stopper and fun wave. This day was awesome and so chilled out it was like being at Horstead but better! Everyone was messing around trying different boats and capsizing. Jez liked the look of Daniels dynamo that he just had to go in it, so he decided to do a little squirt boating!

I would like to thank Jez and Martyn for such a fantastic weekend and all the other great people who came too. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and can't wait for the next trip.

Callum Emmerson

## **Snow Tubing**

The Eagle trip to the ski club in Norwich is now fully subscribed (subject to deposits being paid). I am still taking names to put on the waiting list. Dont forget even if you haven't secured a place or want to take part you can come down and spectate

Mark Quadling

## **English Canoe Symposium – Part 1**

Over the week end of 12/13 November I went to this year's Canoe Symposium with Kate, Colin, Jane, Emma and Kitty. This is an annual event which rotates between the Lake District, Wales and Scotland and attracts up to 280 canoeists from all over the UK and Europe. All the coaches who run the sessions give their time for free and the whole week end cost about £100 which includes accommodation, all your food and coaching.

We arrived on Friday afternoon and pitched our tents (with the exception of Kitty, we hadn't booked in time to get accommodation in the dorms) and then explored the facilities at YMCA Lakeside and checked the sessions we had booked. Through out the week end there are morning or afternoon sessions, or all day sessions which cover a wide range of activities and skills from deep water paddling, to white water rescue, poling, bushcraft and trip planning. We all did different things and below are brief articles from the others about the activities they attended and their thoughts on the week end.

In addition, in the evenings there are talks and demonstrations which cover a similar variety of topics – and there's a bar !!!!

I chose to attend "outfitting a canoe" and "white water poling" on Saturday and "intermediate white water skills – with a go for it attitude" on Sunday. In the outfitting session I learnt how to fit different forms of buoyancy, how to repair damaged hulls, the fitting of skid plates, different styles of sailing rigs and different forms of seats. This was all very useful as now Kate has her own boat I was plucking up courage to start drilling holes in my boat – I now know where to drill!!!

The afternoon session was away from the centre and we travelled up to the River Brathay which runs into the River Rothay. These are grade 2 rivers and the plan was to pole down the Brathay and then up the Rothay to Rothay weir where we going to surf the wave standing up !!! We ran through some basic skills with a lot of reference to the sessions run by Harry Rock (see Colin's article) and then practiced ferry gliding, breaking in and out, recovering when the bow was being washed around too quickly and different strokes including windmills and snubbing (for going down stream). We then set off and made good progress practicing the various elements along the way. We got to Rothay weir only to





discover another group was already there learning how to surf. Our coach was keen to have a play on the wave so we did lots of other skills and hung around until the other group eventually left at dusk. We spent 30 minutes playing on the wave and did end up surfing standing up! We then set off on our journey back to the Brathay – to go back upstream, now in the dark !!!!

The Sunday session was equally informative and had us looking at lots of river features and how you can use them to help manoeuvre your boat on moving water. I had a great week end and would thoroughly recommend anyone interested in canoeing to attend. The sessions are designed for all

ability levels and there is such a variety of topics that there is bound to be something which you find interesting.

Stuart Pontin

## **English Canoe Symposium – Part 2**

Mid day Friday and car packed. Double checked that I have all my kit, especially my buoyancy aid as it has been known for me to arrive without one. Kitty & I arrive after a seven hour journey to meet the rest of the Eagle group at the very warm and friendly Swan pub/hotel at Newby Bridge where we enjoy a very welcome pint of falling down water, pleased with the knowledge that Jane, Kate & Stuart had put my tent up that afternoon prior to the steady rain which lasted well into the late hours of the night.

Breakfast was an interesting introduction to what we were about to embark on. The full onslaught of two hundred and fifty likewise paddlers all very excited, apprehensive and for me, very nervous of having to show my canoeing skills to the gathered crowd who all appeared to be much more competent than me. I was trying to think of how I could excuse myself from this mammoth onslaught without losing faith with my fellow club members.

Before I could have another thought we were all assembled in the Chapel for the week end briefing. I am not sure if it was the silent prayer I made while standing in that Chapel but for some reason all my fears dispelled and I found myself networking with the folk around me.

Sailing was my first group for the morning followed by poling in the afternoon with Sunday morning deep water paddling. Without going over board, which I was very pleased to say I

did not, I can only say that those of you who thought about going, but didn't, you missed a lifetime experience, that certainly will be the case for me.

Coaches were very informal, very technical and talented in passing on their skills to empower you to achieve levels of skills you did not realise was possible. The highlight for me was being in Harry Rock's poling group for 3 hours. I have never finished a coaching period feeling so good about my achievements but so exhausted. If I retain one of the new skills I learnt, it was to push your comfort zone and believe in yourself.



I would like to finish by saying thank you to Eagle Canoe Club for giving me the skills to enjoy the symposium and I look forward to passing on my new found skill - Thank you

Ps – Book early for next year as this year was a complete sell out.

Colin Butcher

### **English Canoe Symposium – Part 3**

The first thought over breakfast (not just from me, I hasten to add); I wonder what this will be like? A feeling of apprehension– where and what were we going to paddle and who was our instructor? We soon found out. After piling into The Chapel with 200 other paddlers for a briefing we all split off into our respective groups. There were four in our group who would be in the capable hands of Chris, our towering giant of an instructor. The boats and kit were collected from the quagmire where the trailer was parked and the shuttle sorted with the help of Kate and her trailer towing skills.

The river Leven was our challenge for the day. To reach the river we had a pleasant 3km warm up towards the south end of Lake Windermere, practicing some moving water strokes on the way. So far, so good. The nerves had subsided, the sun was shining and it was all coming back to me. On reaching the start of the river we practiced hitting eddies behind the pillars of a bridge, paddling through and back again against the flow. Then we started to move down the river and the fun started. This is when the thought came to me, white water – Am I really enjoying this? On signing up for the session I thought – white water – great! Sounds like a bit of fun and excitement – then reality hits and I remember that it is actually hard work, I can't get away with passive paddling, must stay alert and I do not have nerves of steel.

Having conquered the Brick Shoot, we approach a slightly rocky, fast flowing section, which we were given the option to walk. But no, we decided to do it – with an audience. Yes, the Intermediate group was sitting at the bottom having a snack. Chris (the towering giant) stood half way down – maybe to push us away from a huge bolder, or for moral support. Whatever his plan, it worked – Kate and I made it. We were told that would be the most difficult thing we would do all day (and we believed this – how gullible).

On down the river, practicing ferry gliding, eddy hopping and more interesting drops. Then towards the end of the day came the big one – a grade 2/3 called The Graveyard – didn't know this beforehand, probably best. Didn't look too bad – was a bit of a drop, had to steer between two features and just go with the flow, avoiding the boulders at the end. By this point I was pretty tired and the light was fading. So off I go, lined the boat up, avoided the rocks at the beginning, then managed to steer myself between two boulders and parked sideways in an eddy. So, I just sat there, being a girl, waiting for Chris and a nice man on the bank to remove me from my boat. Was slightly annoyed that I had parked myself, but Chris was just relieved I hadn't gone down backwards! Boat rescued with me back in and down to the end I went. Kate, convinced that she would swim at some point in her new boat, made it down fine.

By this time it really was getting dark and we just had the final stretch to do – 'Chris, is there anything else coming up we need to know about?' Of course the reply was 'no' – good job the light was bad – bumpy, bubbly water and mini drops, not really visible now, but you knew when you had hit them. By this point we were so tired we just laughed and paddled on.

As we got out, there was a great sense of achievement– Kate and I had survived and neither of us swam. Chris then admitted that what we had done was not really 'beginner' and we had all done really well. So, dazed and confused about whether I really do like white water paddling, we loaded the trailer and made our way back to the unisex, scorching, dribbling showers on the campsite to spend the evening with Colin talking about his new idol, Mr Harry Rock. As for the white water paddling, the pain and fear will most probably fade and my newly purchased helmet will no doubt have another outing.

Jane English

## **Winter Paddling**

For many members this will be your first winter paddling and the first thing you will notice is that the river is now really cold. So what should you wear to help ensure your safety and make your day or evening afloat more comfortable.



Firstly wear a hat – a lot of warmth is lost through your head so a nice woolly hat will make a big difference. For your top part of your body you need to wear several thin fleecy layers which will trap the air and keep you much warmer than a single thick layer. You can spend a lot of money on hi-tech fleece layers, but you can get far cheaper fleeces from the high street shops and supermarkets. On top of these some form of wind proof layer will make a big difference. For your hands, for kayakers you can get pogies which are gloves that protect

your hands from the wind or neoprene gloves. With neoprene gloves remember that you need to get water inside the gloves for them to work effectively.

For most people what to wear on your feet is a real challenge and one I am not really aware of a solution for. Some people recommend oversized shoes and two pairs of socks, others recommend more expensive thermal lined boots. One piece of advice I can recommend is if canoeing rest your feet on a piece of thick foam as this helps insulate you from the water.

When you come off the water and stop paddling, make sure you have some further layers to quickly put on. Once you stop paddling you will quickly cool down. Most importantly, if you are getting cold, make sure you tell the group leader so they can take some appropriate action. If you get the clothing right then you can enjoy all but the most extreme conditions.

Mark Quadling

This months caption competition from the Thetford Trip

