



Newsletter  
Summer 2011  
Editorial

It's been a strange season so far – we have had to cancel trips due to lack of water, which we have never done before so early in the season and then had to cancel trips due to very strong winds in the summer! Let's keep our paddles crossed and hope for some settled conditions for the rest of the summer.

We have seen lots of new faces down at Eagle this year so for many of you this will be your first newsletter. We try to make the newsletter as informative and varied as possible and you will normally find a tale about a disaster or two – you may even get an unexpected mention!

This month I have articles from my normal contributors – Chris, Simon, Jez and Stuart (thanks yet again guys) as well as first time contributors Jenny and Lizzie.

Remember, anyone can submit an article so hopefully after reading this edition you will put fingers to keyboard and send me an article or two to [mquadling@btinternet.com](mailto:mquadling@btinternet.com)

See you on the water soon  
Mark Quadling

## Waveney Adventure

I went on my first trip a couple of weeks ago - Sandy and Lee's Waveney trip, and I had a fab time. I wasn't sure what to expect from the trip, didn't know if I'd be able to keep up with everyone or even if my arms would keep going.

I was pleasantly surprised and everyone really helped me keep going when I was shattered. There were 13 of us on the first day at varying levels of experience from Tim who's been Canoeing longer than I've been alive (sorry if that makes you feel old Tim) and then myself and Damon who only joined the club a couple of months ago.

Together we canoed and kayaked about 8 miles through the beautiful Suffolk countryside through varying widths of river with cows as our audience... lots of cows (who also joined us for lunch waking up Joel from his midday snooze).



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At the end of the first day I must admit I was fairly please to get to camp where we were met by some of those joining us on the 2nd day.

After we'd set up our tents and cleaned up we headed into the pub for a fab meal and a couple of drinks which was much needed after the days paddling.

Later we headed out to the campsite where Mark and Stuart sorted out a camp fire (which I'm told was quite restrained for Mark) and we sat listening to Colin's stories of Australia.

On our 2nd day we were joined by a couple more paddlers and headed out in good time; another great day, although not so much for poor Joe who fell straight out of the boat as Jez changed direction (I think most managed not to laugh).

We covered about 7 miles that day, so 15 in all which I was pleased about as that's pretty good for a first trip. We also had sunshine for most of the weekend with it only raining in the last hour.

Overall I had a great time and I am really looking forward to the next trip. It was relaxed, hard on the arms and a great way to get to know people I wouldn't necessarily meet at the club. Cheers to everyone involved for making it a fab weekend.

Lizzie Speakman

## Sport England Grant

As many of you will be aware from previous Newsletter articles, Eagle Canoe Club was very fortunate to be awarded nearly £10,000 towards new equipment in 2010.

The container which was recently installed at Eagle Canoe Centre was the last of the items covered by the grant. After a lot of searching we



managed to find a container which had become surplus and Tim arranged for this to be moved from Sprowston to the Club. RG Carters very generously offered to move the container to the club at no cost.

Colin & Tim helped in moving the container and were very impressed with the skill of the lorry driver and his mate to get the container through the narrow gates and installed on the sleepers which had been laid.

We are very grateful to Tim for his work in arranging for the relocation and R G Carters for their help in moving the container. This has resulted in nearly £1000 of the grant remaining unspent which Sport England have

agreed we can use to upgrade the buoyancy on all the remaining canoes, buy more kneeling mats and install racks in the container to store the boats currently stacked up in the kayak shed (and stored in Colin's garage !).

The other equipment bought with the grant is the canoe trailer (which has been used on many trips including the Canoe trip to the Usk in January, the Deben trip in May, and local trips to Bawburgh, Waveney Valley etc as well as been used almost weekly by the 3\* Canoe group over the winter), three solo canoes, a tandem canoe, 2 Karnali kayaks, with associated BA's etc.

Stuart

## Freestyle!

I first thought about Freestyle Canoeing some years ago when I found a book on the subject by Lou Glaros and Charlie Wilson (not the one who had the war!). Having read in their introduction that it was 'sport paddling for quiet water' (get that American terminology) I thought it might be something different to try because, like it or not, most of our water around here is flat, or quiet!

Usually, when Freestyle is mentioned in the context of watersports, it refers to Kayak Freestyle. Open Canoe Freestyle is nothing like Kayak Freestyle. Kayak Freestyle needs moving water, preferably with a wave or run-off in the water levels, to enable the kayaker to sink his bow or stern so he can spin or cartwheel his boat, or whatever.

Open Canoe Freestyle can take place on any piece of flat water you can find, from your local river to the 'park pond', as long as there's an access agreement for it! But even though we are blessed in this part of the country with all the flat water of the Norfolk broads I wouldn't suggest trying out a Reverse Wedge in the middle of Barton, some of these Freestyle moves require much more of an edge applied to the boat than one would normally use in every day paddling and an inexperienced 'freestyler' may end up with the fish! Just make sure you have help nearby when practising Freestyler and be sure that you can self-rescue from where you're paddling.

Freestyle canoeing is like normal canoeing, with J-strokes, stern rudders and bow cuts, but the strokes are 'enhanced' somewhat by using certain techniques. We initiate each turn with a J-stroke or sweep which starts the boat turning before our main move, we edge the boat more than usual to lift the stems from the water and apply more rocker to the hull which enables the craft to turn easier and further, we might extend our paddle shafts further by sliding our hands up towards the grip so we can reach out further for



better support, and we use a Palm Roll to maintain continuity of the face of the paddle blade, and give us a smoother transition when linking strokes.

There are only four or five main strokes in canoe freestyle, but each of these is made up of two or three simple strokes linked together. Then we have to learn these as cross-strokes, then reverse strokes and then cross reverse strokes, so we can perform them from each quadrant of the canoe. All this takes a lot of learning, the American Canoe Association advertised a Freestyle Course in their magazine which was to be held over six sessions of five hours each.

All we can do in ninety minutes on a Wednesday evening is show you the basics and try to develop your paddling techniques which we hope will help you not only with practising your freestyle strokes but also with your normal canoe paddling. If your palm roll improves through freestyle paddling it's got to help with your Indian Stroke. If we can get you to edge your boat well when performing an Axle, you're going to turn quicker by edging when you put in a Bow Cut.

So if you have good basic canoeing abilities, can paddle in a straight line and turn your boat as required, then you should come and try out this Freestyle Canoeing one Wednesday evening, you may find it helps with your normal paddling or you may enjoy it as something completely different.

What's the worst that can happen? But you know the answer to that!

Chris Wright

## Suggestions for New BCU Awards

The BCU seems to be introducing an ever expanding range of courses and qualifications. This got me thinking about some courses they may like to put on that would benefit eagle club members.

### **Car Maintenance for Paddlers**

See the article called 3\* Tyre Change for the reason why this course is needed – 40 minutes for a team of top quality paddlers to change a car tyre – need I say more.

### **When to replace your paddling kit**

On a recent pool session we spent hours cleaning boats to ensure that we did not contaminate the pool. This worked perfectly well until a certain instructor capsized a boat. Bits of his falling to bits waterproof shoes were found all over the bottom of the pool resulting in a major cleaning up exercise.

### **Advanced Knitting**

This could be useful for club members that like to carry more than one boat around on top of their cars. With countless straps in use a certain club chairman's car looks like a birds nest when loaded with two canoes.

### **Detail overload**

This course is designed to teach you how to over indulge fellow campers and paddlers with details of a little adventure that you might have been on. It teaches you to make sure that you do not forget the slightest bit of detail and no one else will get a chance to get a word in. We offer the services of Colin to help with the setting up of this course.

### **Artistic Creativity**

This course is designed to help paddlers make highly desirable paddling accessories out of low cost items. A fine example of this is the safety 'squids' that can often be seen dangling from Mark and Stuarts canoes on club journeys. Please contact Verity if you would like a copy of the design specifications.

### **Advanced Parcel Wrapping**

For those that made the effort to build cardboard canoes for this year's race – this course teaches you how to get the most out of one reel of gaffer tape.

Mark Quadling

## **0 – 3 Stars in One Year at Eagle.**

I joined Eagle Canoe Club on a rainy Wednesday April evening last year. I had recently moved to Norwich, saw that the club was literally on my doorstep and thought 'well I might as well join; if I don't enjoy it I can always skulk off home without anyone noticing!'

I didn't stay long that first evening; I found it quite overwhelming with everyone bustling around in their proper kit and boats of all shapes and sizes being carried around. The following week though I joined the small gathering that was to become the one star group. I found myself paddling tandem with Chris Wright – I had mentioned that I had been in a canoe before so I think he thought my skills were better than they actually were – we narrowly avoided a collision with the bank a few times! Over the following weeks with help from Chris and also Helena, my skills improved.

We always paddled tandem and it took me quite a while to remember which strokes turned the boat the way I wanted it to go, when in the stern. Shouts of 'sorry I meant to do a sweep stroke there' warned my fellow paddler of imminent collisions! (Poor Kevin, I haven't seen him this year so hope I didn't put him off!).

Then came the capsize practice... I was dreading this as I'm not a particularly strong swimmer and I much prefer the idea of being in a boat on the water than being in the water. We all did it though – with the highlight for us being when poor Chris got tipped into the river too! That news soon spread – he doesn't like getting wet either.

I can't remember how many of us took the test but we all passed!

So, on to the two star. Spencer and Ollie were taking on a fast-track two star course, which myself, Ken and Lesley joined from the one star with a few others. I had been very nervous the first time I sat in a kayak so I had sneaked off to do a one star Kayak day elsewhere, which gave me a lot more confidence. It was tricky learning to paddle the small kayaks the club has, but I did eventually manage a few straight lines without too much spinning in circles. Again the capsize practice wasn't much fun but I survived and sailed through the assessment - much to my surprise! Thanks Chris (I don't think it was anything to do with cake bribery)!

Due to other commitments I hadn't been able to join in any of the weekend or day trips last year, but that all changed at the beginning of this year and I decided to make the most of it and join Chris's three star group.

A big undertaking, especially as it was due to start in early January. Hmm nice cold water for the dreaded capsizing practise...

The eight of us gathered at the club on a chilly Saturday morning to discuss the course and what was likely to be required of us. I think most of us had the opinion that we would try our best, but that we probably wouldn't pass first time! (Chris didn't like that idea much though and encouraged us all to work very hard).

Many weeks of hard paddling followed, with Chris taking perverse delight in any windy weather that came our way – especially our first trip out on Barton Broad. 'Now paddle to that post, do a sharp turn and paddle back to me' I remember hearing as the wind swept me sideways across the water! I think I just laughed when he later suggested that we paddle backwards around the same posts...



My skills must have improved however, as future trips didn't seem quite as bad. Horstead Mill tested my confidence too, but I gradually worked my way higher up the flow and was soon ferry-gliding successfully!

Lots of practice, encouragement from Chris and my fellow paddlers and a few river trips further afield under my

belt, I was feeling quietly confident when Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May loomed.

Tim was our assessor, with Chris and Stuart joining us to keep an eye on the proceedings and also grabbing a chance for a good sail across the broad...with Stuart getting wetter than he bargained for! We had to accelerate, paddle on the 'wrong' side (there's no such thing as your wrong side, you should be able to paddle on both!), do tight turns, wide turns and yes, the ubiquitous backwards paddling around the posts in a figure of eight! In the wind just for a change. Oh and lets not forget the theory questions – and how do you tie a bowline again?

Then on to Horstead Mill for the moving water and the not-quite-so-dreaded-by-now capsizing. With the sun still shining, the water flowing and a few spectators, we donned our helmets and grabbed our poles – I

haven't mentioned the poling skills yet!!

Back to the club, totally exhausted, with all the kit and boats put away, and the kettle on we were ready for the results. Tim called us in one by one to discuss our day. He

was very thorough and as I was almost last on the list I was starting to get quite nervous. I felt that the assessment had gone well - I trimmed for the wind, had remembered my knots and answered my questions. So what was the result of all this hard work?

**I PASSED!!!**

If anyone new to the club is reading this I hope it encourages you to keep

enjoying paddling and persevere with those J-strokes. It's worth all the hard work. I know tests and awards aren't everyone's cup of tea, but you do feel a real sense of achievement when the certificate comes through the post. If only they still sent cloth badges to sew on your kit like in the good old days!

Also if I can do it, with my dread of capsizing, then so can you! (It also helps to make a nice cake for the coaches too!)

Finally, thanks must go to all the coaches who were involved in either teaching or assessing me and my fellow paddlers, and also to Stuart for towing the trailer so we could all have a boat to paddle. Cheers!!

Jenny Birtchnell

## Coaches Corner

### Cadet Leader Award

We now have 4 people going for their Cadet Leaders award in the club. They will be working with coaches to gain the skills required to become a coach. They are: Jade Kirkham, Paul Grimbly, Callum Emmerson and Harry Long, Good luck and work hard.

To get their Cadet Leader Award they will be completing a Foundation Safety and Rescue course, If you are also interested in taking part in this please speak to Jez.

Photo board of coaches and club officials is coming soon, just completing last few pictures.

### Dates for the Diary

3rd & 4<sup>th</sup> December 2011 - Canoe England Coaching Conference

For a list of local coaching course dates ask Jez (or see coaches corner in the club house, when it's up!)

### Coaching tips

- Find out your students' hobbies, do they ski, surf, ride a bike, etc? Can they use these experiences to relate to paddling?
- "There is no try. Only do or do not. If you try you will fail" – Yoda, Star Wars
- Anyone who is scared of kayaking had a bad teacher.

Jez Middleton

## Key to a Paddle?

I was recently invited to look at a new Access Point on the River Yare which has been provided for the District Scouts by Norwich City Council and the Norwich Fringe Project. The launch point is by the Chinese Takeaway at the bottom of Sandy Lane, with access to river left just above Lakenham Mill, and will allow paddlers access to the river for a trip up to Keswick Mill or further, or downriver towards Trowse Mill and the River Wensum through Norwich.

The scouts are keen for others to make use of this access but are unable to leave it open because of the risk of vandalism, etc. so have kindly given me a key to the gate to pass on to any Eagle Canoe Club members who would like to use it.

Let me know if you want to borrow the key and you can collect it on a Wednesday clubnight or at another time from my home address. I will also pass it to any BCU members who contact me through the Rivers Access programme. A key is also available from Alun Housago at Southern

Norwich Scout District, phone no. 07803 297019 or email [alun.housago@gmail.com](mailto:alun.housago@gmail.com).

Chris Wright

### 3\* Tyre Changing

The club has recently acquired a trailer which should make life easier when it comes to transporting boats to club events. Picture the scene, a hot April day, Chris's 3 star group has just been worked hard on Barton Broad. We load up the trailer ready to set off home and a hissing noise can be heard from the rear wheel on Spencer's paddle wagon which is going to tow the trailer.

The quick win is to pump the tyre up hard and head home but in this case it was obvious that we were going to have to change the tyre – dead easy for a group of 10 people.

We quickly split into two groups. The females in the group made for a nice comfortable seat and talked about the



important things in life like shopping, handbags etc.

The males obviously being experts in

this sort of thing set to work. Spencer quickly tried to work out where to find his spare wheel. Another team started to think about loosening the dodgy wheel and we had a couple of supervisors too.

10 minutes in and all was not well. The ladies were not looking over impressed but were enjoying the natter. Spencer was battling with a nut that just kept turning and wouldn't come out. Another group were busy trying to work out how the locking wheel nut works and another group were



debating jacking points.

20 minutes later and we were still not doing well. The spare wheel was still stuck, the wheel nuts were locked tight, and we were uncertain over where to place the jack. Eventually we had a brainwave – the van manual might explain all!!!

30 Minutes in and we were feeling pleased with ourselves – a bigger spanner had freed the wheel and a bit of wriggling had managed to free the spare wheel.

40 Minutes in and the men proudly stood back and admired their work with the replacement wheel firmly in place, the ladies were somewhat pleased at their unexpected



sit in the sunshine and chance to catch up on the gossip.

If any club members work for team lotus we would be pleased to offer our services.

The good news for anyone on the trip is Spencer got the tyre fixed under guarantee!

Mark

## **Mysterious Goings-On (and some Scarily Good Paddling) at PYB**

Early this spring, Tom, Olly, Pete and I headed to Plas-y-Brenin in Snowdonia for a weekend of top-flight coaching at what is arguably the best place in the country to receive some kayak coaching (apart from Eagle Canoe Club of course!) In a re-run of last year's successful trip, we headed over one March Friday evening, arriving in time for burger, chips and beer in the bar on site. If you've never been to PYB you'd do well to Google the place; it's an old coaching inn just off the A5 beyond Betws y Coed, as is geared up for some fantastic coaching in mountain sports. As well as kayaking and canoeing, it offers mountain biking, mountain walking, climbing, all sorts of adrenalin -sports, it's brilliant. It's a great reincarnation of a very old place, and as you'd expect from such an old set of buildings, some aspects of its history continue on into modern days, more of which later...

Friday evening saw Olly and I head to the fantastic indoor climbing wall for some climbing and bouldering, while we left Pete and Tom in the bar (yep, it was one of those weekends) discussing

the psychology of the moving water roll, before we joined them again to allow Olly a stab at playing catch-up. Not sure Tia Maria was a wise choice, Olly, but it suited your pink jumper I guess. Being the wild-child that I am, I knocked back at least a dozen orange juice and lemonades...

Saturday saw us paddling the upper Tryweryn, a stomach-churning prospect for the non orange juice-drinking members of the group. Apparently the thought of paddling the Graveyard at 16 cumecs nearly provided Tom with some first-hand experience as to why easily hosed-down minibus floors are the best invention since, well, beer. He fell out of the bus on the banks of the river a queasy shade of green. Actually seeing the river for the first time that morning didn't help, as it was just as fruity as we'd imagined!

On the water we received some brilliant coaching by Pete Catterall, a legendary paddler and coach, and a merciless mickey-taker when the situation was appropriate. We learnt loads during the course of the day, and ended up really pushing ourselves, paddling lines down this familiar white-water that we'd think twice about when the flow was at half what it was that day. The day ended with a classroom session, where Pete C got all evangelical about using gym-balls for improving paddling fitness. We all tried some increasingly taxing, and ever more hilarious, moves and stretches on the balls, and despite the lunacy it really did begin to sink in how useful his lesson could be.

Saturday night was obligingly wet and river levels rose, so on Sunday morning we were able to paddle the Llugwy from PYB to Forestry Falls, a day-long undertaking with loads more

quality coaching on the way down. We were really getting into the finer nuances of body positioning; weight distribution and feeling our kayaks interact with the moving water, as well as some fairly technical river-reading and scouting. We arrived at Cobdens Falls, a well known Grade 4 section of whitewater, and got bankside to check it out from all angles, with a view to plotting our favoured lines from top to bottom. A pre-knee operation Olly and a post-beer Tom decided to walk round, leaving Pete and I to go for it.

We started with a narrow squeeze through a bottleneck where the water gets faster and fruitier until it spits you out the other side, and followed this with a bit of technical drop-and-eddy type paddling before shooting down the (admittedly easier part of) the much bigger main drops. We managed it no worries, with just the occasional brace here and there, and a roll right in the meaty bit from myself, to demonstrate to those watching from the bridge that it was pretty tricky, although Pete Catterall and his sidekick Chris Evans (no, not that one) did their best to completely undermine this by paddling the hardest route and making it look like a walk in the park. Overall, it was a fantastic weekend, we all loved the paddling, and three quarters of us loved the PYB bar too!

Returning briefly to PYB itself, if you ever head there be sure to familiarise yourself with the stories of spectral goings-on, as it plays host to a well-known paranormal phenomenon that many folk have been witness to through the years. Back in its former life as a coaching inn in centuries of old, the Welsh weather often did it's best to scupper the journeys of coachmen using this route by veiling the mountains in a thick blanket of swirling fog, making navigation nigh-

on impossible. The inn-keeper was so concerned that travellers would get lost and fall victim to the freezing cold and the precipitous drops that lined the routes locally, that on particularly dark, foggy nights he used to step out of the inn and blow his hunting horn to give the coachmen something to canter towards. But one night, after an argument with a local who wouldn't settle his debts, he went out into the inky darkness of midnight with his horn and never returned, a mystery that remains unsolved. Some folks say that to this day, on nights as black as pitch, when the weather looks particularly imposing and impenetrable, a faint, ghostly horn can be heard, sounding plaintively through the valley.

But it's just a ghost story right? A work of fiction? That's what I thought, until the dark hours of Saturday morning when I snapped suddenly from my slumber. Something had woken me up, something that felt strange and unexplained. Just as I was beginning to dismiss it as a dream, I heard it again – the unmistakable, scarily real sound of a horn, echoing plaintively up toward the distant peaks of Snowdon...

Simon Allen

## Online Photo Album

Here's the usual promotion from Eagle Canoe Club's online photo album, a great place to check out the latest trips and events that the club has laid on. Recent updates include the Three Start Canoe assessment, the weekend on the River Deben, Jez's First Aid course for coaches and club members, a jaunt to the whitewater of Wales for some of the coaches, and tonnes more besides... If you've not yet got on the water beyond the Wednesday night sessions

on the Wensum, it's a great way to see what you're missing out on!  
<http://public.fotki.com/eaglecc/>

## BCU Slalom Module

I have been uming and ahing whether or not to attend this course. £15 for the day would it be worth it? I had already done a BCU Coach update a month before at Waveney Valley Canoe club so I did not need to attend to keep valid as a coach. About 2 weeks before I knew that there was still a few spaces left. I decided to go for it.

I filled in and sent off my CR form less than 2 weeks before the course. Now I have not been in my slalom boats for years, will I still fit. Better check I thought so I got them out dusted them off and sat in them on the grass. That's OK I can still squeeze into them, I don't know if they will take my weight though it was 10 years ago I was a slalom ranked paddler!!

The week before I had thought how about using the C2 boat from the Club. I asked Stuart and to quote his reply "if you can get it out" I knew it was squeezed into the kayak shed alongside the racks, apparently it was quite hard to get it in there.. I arrived nice and early expecting to have difficulty getting it out. It only took me 4 minutes and it was out.

Dusting it off and checking the paddling and straps – looks good I thought. Now to find someone to paddle it with me..... No one seemed willing to begin with. So I got out a slalom kayak and shoe horned myself into that and paddled about, felt good I thought.

Now back to the C2, better check it floats. I got into it on the water.

Eventually I found a couple of the younger paddlers who would ride up front. Great, now let's see how they paddle.

Got them in spray deck on and off we went. Short rides got them paddling forward keeping the boat flat pulling using the trunk muscles, turning using sweeps and cross deck strokes. We got the boat moving well. After three had had a short paddle and my legs were no longer there I took it off the water and onto my roof rack.

The next day I decided to have a quick look at the rules and regulations for Slalom events, Having scanned through, great I thought not much has changed - 2 second penalty for touching a gate and 50 seconds for missing a gate. Not so quick I thought as I scanned boat measurements, they are now down to 3.5meter boats not 4meters as it used to be....

Oh well you can use a longer boat it just can't be shorter. I packed up the car and put the C2, K1 and C1 on my roof rack (only just fitted them all on) the day before. Put my CR form and all other paperwork in the car ready to go the next day.

I arrived early and started chatting to the others on the course, eleven of us in total from all over the region. Had a look about the facilities at Dereham Canoe group and their little patch of water. They already had put up some slalom gates the day before. Several of the people were new to slalom as well as some old hats. Russ who was delivering the course is the guy who designed it. He was also an international slalom paddler and now coach, so he knew something about slalom!! After a bit of why we are here, we looked at the purpose of the modules.

Slalom is the only one at the moment but they will be coming out in Freestyle and the other disciplines. Then a bit of theory and the rules and regulations etc etc. We did finally get on the water at about lunch time, we did one longer session rather than two shorter ones. Between all of us there were several slalom boats as well as modern plastic ones. We paddled about the gates to warm up and then we did a few drills using the gates talking about different options to achieve different outcomes. As well as options on how to make the paddler achieve the task at hand. There were only 5 slalom gates up and yet it kept us busy and occupied for nearly 3 hours.

I had to have several breaks as I was in my C1, the only person in a canoe the others had decided to paddle kayak. After we had got off the water and packed up we had a quick debrief and discussed further options and what's next.

This was a great day to meet other paddlers as well as develop my skills further. Since this I have decided to get re ranked as a slalom paddler. I have looked for events coming up that don't require travelling for a day just to get to the event. I will also organise and deliver a slalom session at the club on a night or two, keep your eyes open for these events.

There were also murmurs of trying to organise a Norfolk Slalom event again, keep your ears open....

Jez Middleton

## Paddle Olympics!



On Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> August club members are going to have the opportunity to take part in the Eagles version of the Olympic games in preparation for 2012.

We are going to focus on a new event for the Olympics called the Paddlerthon. Teams of 6 people will get to take part in a decathlon style event with a few twists to make sure that everyone has a lot of fun!!!!

Please come prepared to enjoy and also perhaps to get a little bit wet!!

If anyone would like to assist with the set up of this event please let me know.

Mark Quadling

## How NOT to sail a canoe !

Over the last couple of months I've been helping Chris with the 3 star Open Canoe group and this has involved learning how to make an improvised sail to power your canoe when the wind is behind you.

Now people have been quite inventive and have brought along umbrellas, bits of tent, cagoules on poles and even a shower curtain!

However, when it comes to sailing your canoe you can take it to a whole

different level and this is exactly what Chris has done. At a “kit night” over the winter, Chris brought down the sailing rig he has made for his canoe. He has made fittings to hold a rudder and tiller to steer his canoe, a mast step to support the sailing rig and two lee boards which fit to the side of the canoe to stop it from being blown sideways. Since then Spencer & I have been keen to try out this canoe sailing idea.



So while the 3 star group were being assessed in May, when they got out their shower curtains etc Chris and I took his sailing rig for a spin. Chris showed me the basics and did a quick lap of the buoys near us and then we swapped over. I haven't sailed for a while, but all the basics were still there (apart from the way Chris' rudder worked) and I managed to complete my lap without incident – it was quite fun really.

While the others were still sailing Chris set off again and was getting braver, leaning out a bit as it got windy etc. He returned for some butties and the 3 star group were now in a sheltered bay showing Tim their sideways strokes, so I took the opportunity to go for another play. “Get brave” said Chris as I departed – lean out a bit. “Right” I thought as I left.

As I did a couple of laps, the wind started to pick up and I started to lean out. I had a few tippy moments but let out a bit of sail and progressed onwards. I'll go up to the island and then come back I thought, however, as I headed north the sky darkened, it started to rain and the wind began to really gust. The canoe really started to lean, so I leant out over the side to try and keep it upright, it

was still leaning further, up to the gunwales – this isn't good I thought ! So I let out some sail to try and slow



down, but it got faster, then the boom hit the water so I couldn't spill any more wind – this is not going well !

Then it all went wrong, I slipped a little bit, but it was enough for water to start coming in over the side – bother ! Only one way from here – into the drink I went.

It was at this point that I noticed I was out of sight of the rest of the group. They were all engaged in their assessment and Chris was enjoying his butty. Now canoes are hard to swim with at the best of times, but they really don't like being towed when they have a sail fixed to them ! But set off to the island I did, righting the canoe a bit so that it caught the wind and pushed us. It was at this point that Chris decided to check where I was before tucking into the next butty – so the rescue party of Tim and Chris was scrambled and I was fished out of the drink.

Unfortunately during my adventure the mast step broke so Spencer didn't get the opportunity to have a go with the sail. Chris is now fixing it and I'm going to try and make my own rig – so we can go play out together.

Stuart Pontin

## Caption Competition

Wed 6<sup>th</sup> July saw the second ever cardboard canoe race at the Eagle Club. This year we had slightly fewer entries but the level of creativity had increased. A box of chocolates is up to grab to the person who emails me the best caption to the photo below @ [mquadling@btinternet.com](mailto:mquadling@btinternet.com)

