



Newsletter  
Autumn 2010  
Editorial

Well I don't know about you but these warm summer evenings seem to be a distant memory now. However, the club doesn't let the dark evenings or the weather spoil things and has a great range of activities going on throughout the winter months.

Paddling in the winter can be very rewarding with the winter light levels ensuring some wonderful colours so do try and make an effort to get afloat at least a couple of times during the winter months. Just remember to wrap up warm (a hat is essential) and take a flask of warm drink. If the cold really isn't for you then try a club pool session for a chance to practice all the wet stuff in a warm environment.

This edition's contributors include Stuart Pontin, Simon Allen, Mike Smith, Jez and Christine Wright so a big thank you to them. Don't forget next time you are on a trip to write up an article afterwards so you can share your stories with the rest of the club.

Whatever you are up to have fun and hopefully we will see you on the water soon.

Mark Quadling

## Eagle Does Top Gear

It's always a challenge trying to come up with something new to do on the Wednesday club nights. Myself, Kate and Jane put our heads together and decided that we could theme a Wednesday night to be run like one of the challenge nights they run on Top Gear. Only problem was where could we get a Clarkson, Hammond and May from – yet alone the Stig's paddling cousin.

It took us two minutes to decide that Tom would make a good Clarkson, a bit longer to work out that Colin would make a good May, and a few minutes more to work out Olly would make a good Hammond. As for the Stig's paddling cousin, well the BBC has said that we are not allowed to tell you his identity so that one will have to remain a secret.

Each of the top gear members was given a team of 8 paddlers to help them with the challenges.

Challenge one was to make a raft using the kit that the team had already got out of the canoe garage. Clarkson's team cleverly made an Eagle shaped raft – great but how well would it work later. Hammond's team made a raft that would have easily supported a car and Mays team – well they tried!

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Having made the raft it was time for Challenge two! A canoe style drag race against each other all at the same time. This worked well but having made the rafts on the grass it was a bit of a challenge getting them in the river! With slow acceleration that would not have impressed the Top Gear viewers it was Hammond's team that eventually built up speed and won the race!



For challenge three, we needed the Stig. Halfway through my introduction 'some say he is often found in Wales in a playboat, whilst others say he's far happier in a canoe' the stig appeared from the club house, silently got into a canoe and raced around our eagle race track.

Without a word and as quickly as he arrived, he finished his lap and vanished!

For this challenge our three teams needed to beat the Stig's time. All of the teams made a great effort – some of the rafts proving better



at handling than the others.

For challenge four the teams needed to do 5 donut turns in their rafts, with the added complication of a bucket of water to prove stability. Again this was fiercely contended by all the teams and as organisers, we had made our first tactical mistake – given captain slow a bucket!

Challenge five involved racing back round the race course but this time with a bucket of water to look after. The teams not racing thought it was great fun to soak the other competitors and the organisers.

The final challenge of the evening was a masterpiece – the first team to put all of their kit away in the canoe garage would win the points. You've never seen kit vanish off the grass so quickly!! What a result!

With the kit away and the scores added up the Clarkson team were the clear winners. A bottle of bubbly was presented by our Top Gear model to the winning team. Chaos then erupted as Clarkson decided to try and soak the

organisers further with bubbly!

Overall the night proved to be a fantastic evening – a huge thank you to all those that took part and made it so much fun to run. What would we do differently next time??

Well for a start we should have had a canoe kit cool wall so we could finally find out what people think of Toms fluorescent yellow rimmed shades and the clubs fleet of dancers. A waterproof score board would have been a big help and another time we won't give May a bucket! Finally when we went to lock up the kit we found out challenge five was not as clever as we thought – in the teams efforts to win most of the kit was put away in the wrong place and it took ages to take it all out and put it away properly ☺

We have a few plans in the pipeline for next year – eagle Olympics and paddle geo-caching but if anyone has any other ideas please let myself, Kate or Jane know.

Mark Quadling

## Coaches Corner.....

The club is after volunteers....we need coaches.....we need bank support on club nights....we need your help.....speak to a coach they should be able to tell you what is involved...

**Want to become a coach? Don't know what's involved... What do you need to do..** To become a coach all you need is to be willing to pass on your knowledge and experience in a boat. Ideally you will have or be working towards your BCU 2\*, be willing to attend a Foundation Safety

and Rescue training course and then attend a BCU UKCC Level 1 course. We are always on the look out for more coaches. Please have a chat to any coach or Jez for more information.

Coaches - How do you want to push yourself? What's your next challenge? It could be as simple as assisting a higher/better coach or the next qualification, or it could be a big fancy trip, what do you want? Let me know, who knows there may be other thinking the same as you. Speak to Jez ASAP

The BCU have arranged some Female only UKCC Coaching courses. If you are female and fancy attending one of these contact [Rachel.derry@canoe-england.org.uk](mailto:Rachel.derry@canoe-england.org.uk)

There are several club coaches that need to attend a coach update. There is going to be one on 19<sup>th</sup> March, probably in West Norfolk. I have provisionally booked 4 places for club coaches. If you do wish to attend let Jez know, more spaces can be booked, and we can share transport. Jez and Spencer attended it last year, it was quite fun and informative and a good chance to meet other coaches from the area.

Dates for the Diary

9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2011 Coaches Meeting  
19<sup>th</sup> March 2011 BCU Coach Update,  
West Norfolk tbc.

## We could all learn from this!

A photographer for a national magazine was assigned to get photos of a great forest fire. Smoke at the scene was too thick to get any good

shots, so he frantically called his home office to hire a plane.

"It will be waiting for you at the airport!" he was assured by his editor. As soon as he got to the small, rural airport, sure enough, a plane was warming up near the runway. He jumped in with his equipment and yelled, "Let's go! Let's go!" The pilot swung the plane into the wind and soon they were in the air.

"Fly over the north side of the fire," said the photographer, "and make three or four low level passes."

"Why?" asked the pilot.

"Because I'm going to take pictures! I'm a photographer, and photographers take pictures!" said the photographer with great exasperation.

After a long pause the pilot said, "You mean you're not the instructor?"

## Lakenham Paddle

At the end of October I ran a trip on the River Yare, from UEA round to Lakenham. Having been a club member for five or six years now and never having done this stretch on our doorstep, I thought it was about time to get it done. So in the watery sunlight of a beautiful autumnal day, a dozen club members got afloat and enjoyed the brisk flow and scenery on this surprisingly peaceful trip.

The Yare is a great river to paddle, with several aspects to keep you entertained. There are three portages, where you can stretch your legs at convenient intervals, and the river changes in nature quite markedly. At the access point it is very shallow, creating a fast flow, but soon enough it deepens out and becomes wider, where the pace slows, allowing you to relax a little, breathe deep and take in the solitude of the river valley, which,

despite being close to the edge of the city, is refreshingly quiet and free from the intrusions of our modern stressful lives.



Although it had been chilly in the lead up to the trip, we were still able to watch the last of the season's dragonflies making the most of the unseasonable warmth, darting across the river, their metallic colours flashing in the sun. The water was clear enough to afford views into the aquatic underworld, with the plants waving hypnotically in the flow, and fish and insects making brief, coy, appearances before escaping back to their own setting.

At one point I spotted a marsh harrier flapping lazily in the distance, although asking Colin if he saw it became a slightly surreal conversation as we'd got our wires crossed; he thought I was referring to the pub close to Harford Bridge! It's great to see so many different animals, birds and plants on these trips. Other memorable sights included the drapes of wild hops, all but submerging swathes of shrubs and small trees and all of a sudden bringing on a thirst for a nice refreshing pint, the swans intent on dive-bombing us into paddling for cover, making it quite clear whose river it actually was, and the inquisitive cows at the Keswick Mill portage, where I was reminded how good

cowpats are for warming chilly feet through thin water shoes!

New member Ivan deserves particular recognition for his efforts on this trip, and for maintaining a smile despite two episodes where he and his kayak became separated, this water being chilly but not too cold. Hats off to him for getting straight back in and not batting an eyelid, and also for having the forethought to bring along a full change of clothes to get into at the get-out.



It was a great trip all round – great stretch of river, good company and gorgeous surroundings. I'm looking forward to the next one!

Simon Allen

## Web Site Updates

The Club's current web site was developed a number of years ago and has been very successful in promoting the club and providing information for potential members as well as current members.

However, much of the information, particularly relating to star awards, is

now out of date. In addition, the way that web sites are now used has evolved considerably over a short period of time and information that people would now expect to find on our site may well not be there.

We have also considerably increased our membership over recent years and this has brought additional pressures for information to potential members and to keep current members up to date with the clubs activities.

For all these reasons, the club is looking to update its web site and I would welcome members input into the content you would like to see, its format etc, after all, you are the people who used the site to find us in the first place and now use it as current members.

Simon, Tom, Pete and I will be working on this over the next few months, so if you have any suggestions please talk to one of us. As well as updating the star award information we are thinking of things such as : a meet the coaches page including photos, paddling history / experience, qualifications etc; links to club documentation; down loadable application forms; frequently asked question (any suggestions ?); a live calendar with details of trips including meeting times, travel arrangements etc; a link to Eagle Canoe Clubs facebook group ....

This review of the web site will hopefully serve the club as well as the current site has, so get thinking into the future – what should we include ?

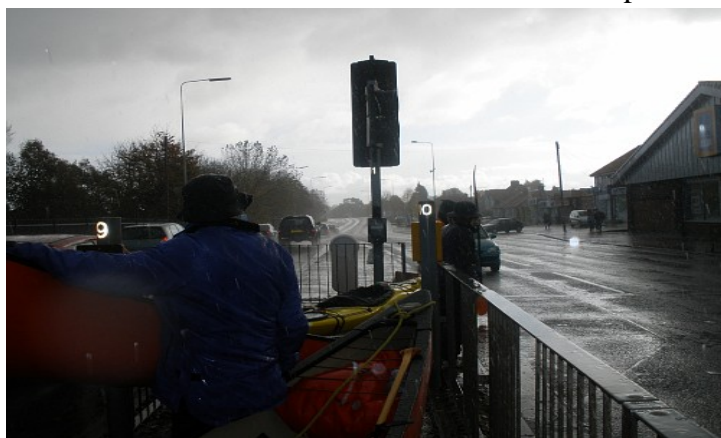
Stuart Pontin

## Round Norwich Trip - Sunday 7th November 2010

Only six members ( Kate, Stuart, Colin, Simon, Chris and Christine) were hardy enough to turn up for the 15 mile paddle round Norwich. I suspect the rest of you were sleeping in after firework celebrations on Friday & Saturday.

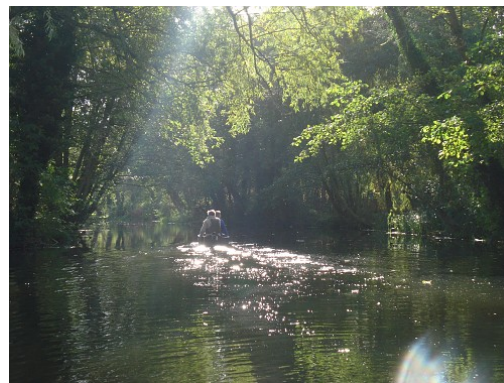
We left the club at 9.10 a.m. after a few light showers the sun got out and it looked as if we were in for a pleasant days paddle.

The first portage was a mile and a half from just before the railway bridge at Hellesdon to re-launch up-river from Earlham Park. All was going well for a while, we'd all removed buoyancy aids e.t.c. so we weren't too hot walking. Suddenly the heavens opened and we got pelted with heavy rain and hailstones - this wasn't forecast!! When we got to the lane leading to the launch



point, already soaked to the skin even through our buffalo gear e.t.c. we had to walk through ankle deep water. Just before we launched Stuart handed round carrot cake type buns with lemon icing on top which Kate had baked yum! yum! these went down a treat and spurred us all on for the next

leg of the paddle. The rain had stopped and the sun came out as we launched and made our way to Earlham Park, where the water was deep enough to paddle great.



The next portage was at Cringleford where we stopped for coffee and a change of clothes. Now we were starting to feel warmer again we made our way to Keswick Mill, at the portage we needed to cut branches from some trees that had fallen over the river, which we were aware of so had brought saws with us. Chris appeared to be doing a limbo under a branch as he was trying to get out of his canoe but all was well and he got up the bank safely.

Our next portage was at Lakenham Mill, but we decided to stop for lunch at Coopers Wood. Just after Lakenham Mill we needed to cut branches off some more fallen trees. For some strange reason Colin decided to have a swim! Between us we retrieved his paddles, wheels and hat and

I held onto a sturdy branch while Chris emptied his boat and he got afloat and off he went.

Trowse Mill was our next portage a bit tricky but without incident. We then had a pleasant paddle through Norwich to Cow Tower where we stopped for

another cuppa, before our last portage at New Mills and back to the club.

All of us were feeling tired but had enjoyed the trip immensely although we all agreed we could have done without the downpour on our mile and a half portage.

P.S. While we were cutting branches down at Keswick Mill, the guy who owned the Mill spoke to Stuart and told him we could always press his bell



to let him know and he would be happy for us to carry the canoes/kayaks through his garden. Pity he didn't spot us before.

Wildlife on the trip included a kingfisher, a fox, herons, possibly an otter, cows, horses, swans, cormorants and a squirrel.

Christine Wright

## Eagle Canoe Club on Facebook

Did you know that Eagle Canoe Club has its own group on Facebook? It's open for all club members to join, to keep in touch with paddling buddies, share photos, arrange informal (non-club) paddling sessions and all sorts.

There are currently more than 40 members signed up already, with loads of photos and banter being posted all the time... So log on, join up and get involved!

## River Dart Trip November 2010

Less than an hour in and we came to a stop caused by, you guessed it, an accident on the A14. Should we have risked the M25 at rush hour on Friday afternoon after all? Should we just turn back! Half hour later and we were on our way and then we were enveloped in fog!

It is over 300 miles to the River Dart Country Park and I had a slight extension to our journey via Plymouth. After our 7.5 hour journey, and heavy rain, we were just relieved to get there. We quickly dumped our bags and headed for the bar and awaited the arrival of everyone else..

Last orders were called at the bar (not your sort of trip Tom!) and we headed off for bed. Now I thought bunk houses came in pretty standard designs, ie the two tier design, but ours was a tower block. Three bunks high and only to be tackled by mountain goats or the recklessly brave with reinforced rubber bladders....

But there were no crashes in the night and we all drifted off to sleep and dreamed of the kayaking to come! Now Jack was on a top bunk and unwittingly was sleeping three inches from a light bulb. Ordinarily not a problem unless Eveliina is on your trip!

Just as the cock crowed at 7, on went the lights! (not your sort of trip Tom!). After recovering from temporary blindness and the odd skin burn and a hearty fry up we were ready for the days action and we headed off for the entry point to the Dart Loop.

Now I was on this trip last year and I can remember the damp feeling I had when I saw the speed of the river and wondered just how the hell I was going to launch without an immediate ducking. I think the river was as fast and as high but it didn't seem quite as daunting. Perhaps 12 months on I had improved a bit. Anyway there were no Strauss style first innings casualties. We ran the loop twice on the Saturday and led by Spencer and Jez there was a good mixture of river running, play and with a bit of tuition thrown in.

A good hot meal and a few beers later and we retired before midnight (not you sort of trip Tom) to our bunks. Sunday dawned with a lie in until 7.45 and after another hearty fry up (although there were fewer takers for the anaemic sausages (or dead mans thumbs)) we headed back to the loop.

Now on Saturday we had been joined by Geoff and Brian, two good old east Anglian boys, who were down at the Dart as part of another group but liked



the look of ours better! Last minute we decided to drive up to the top of Dartmoor to take in the view but (or more likely for Stuart to try out his new yellow kayak boots (yellow?)) and we failed to communicate this to Geoff and Brian. Just what they thought of us as we drove straight past them at the rendezvous they were too polite to say.

Back to the kayaking and with the water level lower again, Sunday was a very different experience with the "no step" feature becoming the more tricky "three steps". Nearing the end of the morning one member decided to product test his dry trousers at the top of three steps. Marks given were 8 out of 10 for dryness, 0 out of 10 for rock protection and 10 out of 10 for the limp! .

Would I go again? Of course I would! This is a great river to paddle and the facilities are excellent -bunk, breakfast and evening meal, dry room, on site bar and a wake up service. No chocky under the pillow though!

Hi de hi  
Mike Smith

## Choosing a Kayak

For those of you that have joined the club recently, and enjoy kayaking enough that you are thinking about buying a kayak yourself, you'll no doubt have wondered what sort of kayak you should buy. So I've come up with a few hints and tips to help you choose the boat for you.

Although stumping out a few hundred quid seems like a massive outlay at first, if you make the right decision you'll own a kayak that you will enjoy paddling for years. So why buy



your own? You'll never have to enter the bun-fight in the boat sheds again, which should be reason alone to reach for the credit card. As it's yours, you will be able to fit it out to your own preferences and get a really nice, comfortable, snug fit. In most kayaks you can alter the size, shape and position of the seat, hip and thigh braces and the footplate to suit your own body shape, meaning your fit (and therefore your control) of your kayak will improve enormously over the generic club boats.

Also, getting your own boat will mean that you can take it wherever you want, whenever you want. As well as club trips, groups of Eagle paddlers are often found honing their skills at Horstead Mill and places further a field. Paddling on different types of water will see your rate of learning increase dramatically.

There are a few initial guidelines that can be applied to choosing a kayak, outlined below:

The first rule of thumb is that you definitely get what you pay for. From experience, it's a false economy to buy a budget kayak if you're serious about paddling, because you'll soon be asking more from a budget kayak than it can offer; they're just not designed to take you far, in terms of ability. I learnt this lesson the hard way, trying to save a few quid, but ending up spending much more than I originally intended. If cash-flow is a concern, it's almost always better to buy a good second-

hand kayak than a budget boat brand new. See what you can find on Ebay or on the private sales page of the UK Rivers Guidebook at <http://www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk/forum/index.php>

A second rough guideline is that, the bigger the kayak, the more it will look after you on moving water. When considering different sized kayaks on white water, a big one will get tossed around a lot less than a small one. This is the main difference between the different categories of kayak, starting at the small end of the scale with playboats, then river play boats and the all-rounders, through to river runners and finally creek boats. (Kayak size is measured both in overall length and in volume too).



The best course of action is to decide what you want to do in your kayak, which ties in to the type of kayak you choose, and then make sure you get the appropriate size. All manufacturers offer guides in this respect, so making the right decision shouldn't be too hard. Just wanna spin around on the spot at Horstead? Get a playboat. Do some massive drops off waterfalls? Then you'll want a creeker. One boat to do a bit of everything; playing surfing, river running? Then an all-rounder should fit the bill for you...

A third thing to think about, which relates to the controllability of the kayak like the above point, is its shape. Basically, the more slicey (or knife-like) the bow and stern are, or the more sharp its edges, the more 'playful' it is going to be. It's up to you whether this is a good or bad thing, as getting flipped might be a real hoot if you're up for it and can roll with no problems, or it might dent your confidence and slow your rate of learning by forcing swim after swim.

Finally, consider the level of outfitting in the boat. The more snugly you fit, the better you will be able to control the boat, and so the safer you will be and the easier you will find paddling in testing conditions. What may feel claustrophobic at first, if you're not used to it, will soon become one of the biggest assets of your new kayak. As described above, it's the degree of contact with your kayak that relates to the amount of control you can exert on it. A good close fit will allow every movement of your body to be transferred to the kayak, improving responsiveness and therefore your paddling ability.

The best overall piece of advice, that encompasses all of the above points, is to try out as many different boats as

you can on the water. Don't buy the first boat you paddle, try different brands and different types, and see what is best for you... For some top advice have a chat with the guys at Sues Canoes in Watton. They have a great range of boats and gear in stock and are always competitively priced. Make sure they know you're an Eagle member.

But whatever you do, just get out there and buy a kayak, and we'll see you on the water!

Simon Allen

## Weil's Disease

I am not sure if any paddlers noticed on the news the shocking information that Olympic gold rowing medallist Andy Holmes has died of Weil's disease age 51. It is suspected that he caught the disease through an open cut on his hand.

Whilst fatalities like this are rare, this is a sharp reminder that as users of the water we all need to be very careful around hygiene and cuts and sores

Weil's disease is generally caught from contact with slow or still water, however as in the case of Andy it can also be picked up from moving water.

The disease is caused by infected rats or cattle urine. The bacterium responsible can enter the body via cuts and abrasions of the skin, or through the thin lining of the throat, nose, mouth or eyes.

To minimise the risk of contracting this illness you should take the following steps

- Cover cuts and abrasions (including blisters) with waterproof dressings
- Avoid swallowing water
- Wash and shower after you have been by the river

Symptoms are generally the development of a flu like illness so if you suffer from this sort of symptom within a few weeks of being on the water be sure to advise your doctor so they can make sure any relevant tests are done.

In the vast majority of cases a full recovery is made.

If anyone would like more information the following website has lots of detail about the disease

[www.leptospirosis.org](http://www.leptospirosis.org)

## Two Mile Bottom Camping Weekend

September saw us return for our annual visit to the Two Mile Bottom campsite at Thetford for a weekend of paddling, camping and the all important campfires.

The weekend started with a bang when 2 miles from my house a stone hit my windscreen and put a big crack in it – so much for my cheap weekend away!

Not to be deterred we were soon putting up tents when a scream from Jane got us all running over. A large adder was sleeping in the grass right where she was about to put in a tent peg. Having watched Steve Austin on TV I quickly came to the rescue and skilfully moved the snake well away from our camping area.



Having saved up a load of firewood during the last year I quickly got a campfire going and we were able to try out my 'magic dust' to see what it would do. It passed the test nicely and would certainly make a good party trick the following night when more people would be joining us.

On the Saturday I had to head off to a wedding so was unable to paddle, but planned to return in time for the evenings BBQ, Campfire and the Sunday paddle.

When we returned everyone had enjoyed their paddle and as I was full of energy I enthusiastically set the tired paddlers off hunting for much more firewood.

BBQ done, campfire alight and lots of good paddling stories were being told.



The younger lads were sneakily trying to burn their gummy bears on the campfire without me noticing and then they asked me to put the container they came in on the fire so they could watch it burn. As I did this I slipped the last 3 sachets of my magic dust on the fire and to the lads amazement the flames turned blue!!! How did that happen was their big question – well the answers out now!

On day two we paddled down to Brandon. This is a lovely paddle through unspoilt river. At our lunch stop Chris had a slight mishap getting out of his boat for his second soaking of the season!

All too soon we arrived at Brandon where the weekend finished. A great river, a great campsite, great weather and great company. What more could you want only 30 miles from home. A big thank you to Colin for organising the weekend.

Mark Quadling

## AGM 2010

This years AGM was well attended by club members. In the reports on the previous season it was advised that membership was at an all time high, finances were healthy and the club has a good number of instructors. Combined with a fabulous program of events this demonstrated that the club

is proving to be a huge success.

Stuart Pontin was re-elected as chairman with Tom Ralph remaining as Secretary and Hazel Roe as treasurer. In particular these three people have put in a huge amount of time and effort during the last season and deserve a massive thank you from all the members.

Stuart advised that work is still continuing around securing the long term future of the Eagle site for the club with lots of effort and work going on in the background.

The following people were elected to the committee for the next year so if you want to raise any ideas on how the club should be run or do things differently please speak to one of them

Tim, Chris Wright, Jade (young persons rep), Ian, Mark, Colin, Simon, Mike, Helena and Sandy.

## Snow Tubing

Last year we took 36 club members snow tubing at the Norfolk Ski Club. A great night was had by all so we are rerunning the trip this year.

This time we are limiting the trip to 20 people and the earliest I could get a Friday night booking where I could get all 20 spaces was for the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2011

Snow Tubing basically involves sliding down the dry slope (if its raining then the name dry slope seems wrong!) in a large inflatable ring with handles on the side. As you progress you start higher and higher up the slope and you also get to go down in groups linked together. Great fun and absolutely no skill required!

I will issue a circular in early January giving more details and asking for payment from anyone that wants to go (we have to pay for places when we book and no refunds are given if we don't fill them)

Mark Quadling

## Pingo Trail

As part of an effort to try and offer alternatives to paddling in the colder months for members we put a walk round the Pingo trail on the program for November.

Unfortunately only 3 people took part (this may have been as a lot of people were away on the Dart trip) and we had a lovely walk round one of Norfolk's nicest trails. The start of the Pingo trail takes you through swamp like ground with lots of Pingo's to see. It then takes you through a railway cutting, pine forest, open land, around a large lake, through some thickets of woodland, along a small river and through some meadows. Not bad in just 7 miles!

We saw plenty of deer, kingfishers and a host of other wildlife. As a bonus we got back to the car 2 minutes before rain set in.

I will run another walk in January or February to see if we get a better response. If not please let me know what sorts of things you may be interested in that we can do as a club. A couple of other ideas I have is Paintballing and guided mountain biking at Thetford. Let me have your thoughts at  
MQUADLING@BTINTERNET.COM

## Club Photos

Don't forget that the club puts photos of all its trips onto <http://public.fotki.com/eaglecc/>

This site is a great record of the adventures of members of the canoe club. Be sure to take some time to have a browse through the pictures on a cold winter evening to give you some ideas of what you might want to do next season.

## Christmas Paddle

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December sees the annual club Christmas paddle. To help make this a festive evening please decorate your hats and boats with Christmas lights and decorations. Last year the Newall's set a new standard for people to try and beat – if you think the hats were good you should have seen their boats! – can you beat them this year?

Mark Quadling

