



Editorial

Well here we are again, welcome to the December edition of the Eagle Canoe Club newsletter. Where did this season go?!? Despite the dark and the cold, I'm still feeling very enthused for my paddling. I've had an ace season on the water, coaching at the club, and the day and weekend trips too, and just recently I've had a couple of brilliant whitewater trips with Stu, Jaz and Pete. You know you've had a good winters day on whitewater when you find yourself literally steaming in the eddies.

I don't know about you but one of the things I love about Eagle is the off-the-water programme over winter. I really enjoyed the talk a couple of weeks ago, by James from Silver Birch Canoes on canoe and kayak design. It got properly nerdy, and now I just want to get on the water in a whole bunch of different boats and try to feel what I think I understood of the session. Enthusiasm is infectious eh?!? If you missed it, don't worry, there's still the Silver Birch / Tootega factory visit in February. Check out the Eagle calendar online and get yourself along, it'll be a fascinating night for sure.

Speaking of nerdy, have you used the PaddlePoints website yet? It's put together by British Canoeing, is based on Google maps, and has loads of info on rivers to paddle, and all the get in and get out points, with grid references, what three words tags, river features like tidal influence, rapids, locks etc. Alongside this there is info on other facilities like toilets and car parking, info on river levels, and more besides, and create an account and you can even start to record those stretches of river you've paddled. So you can use it as a paddling log too! Check it out here <https://gopaddling.info/paddlepoints/>

Massive thanks as always, to all the contributors to this edition, it's a fantastic read, down to your efforts. We have a piece on the recent rolling clinics by Hannah, info on how Katie galvanises herself when it's getting a bit fruity on the water, something on the recent Naxos Sea Kayak Symposium from Mark, two articles from Ann, including a look forward to something awesome next year, info on becoming a Paddlesport Leader from Sam K, a write-up of a whitewater trip up north from Pete S, info on our stand-up paddlingboarding prospects from Em, and something on Fundraising from Hazel. Plus, something of a mini-bombshell from Mr Chairman, and more besides.

By the way, check out our new Eagle Canoe Club soft shell jackets, as modelled here by, er... some eejit! They're available in titanium grey or azure blue, in keeping with our other merch, with pro-looking embroidered logo! Check them out <http://stores.clothes2order.com/eagle-canoe-club/>

Have a great Christmas everyone, and see you on the water in 2020.

Si





Time for a Change?

Some of you will know that Eagle Canoe Club is run as a not for profit Limited Company, and has three Directors – Stuart, Simon and Hazel. The Directors also currently have the roles of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer on the club's management committee. The Directors are elected at the AGM for a three-year term, and the current term finishes in October 2020.

Si & I have been Chair / Vice Chair for about nine years now, and Hazel has been Treasurer since.... well for a long time! From discussions, we are happy to stay on as Directors of the company if that is the choice of the members at the next AGM, but feel that it is time to start to hand over some of the other roles.

I have enjoyed being Chair of the club and have worked closely with the committee and coaching team to develop the club and the facilities to what they are today. However, I don't think it is healthy for a club to have the same Chairman for a long time and we feel that the time has come to look at separating the Directors roles from the committee and that this is an appropriate point to start to look at handing over some of what Si, Hazel & I do.

If you'd like to find out more about what we do and how you could help, then please have a chat with any of us.

Stu, Si and Hazel

Eagle's Rolling Clinics



Rolling – the holy grail of kayaking. Whether you're hitting the surfy seas, running rapids or just want to show off, it's a difficult and impressive skill to master. Practice makes perfect - so the opportunity for a series of dedicated rolling sessions was a must for me.

Turning up to the pool at Taverham Hall School in the soggy, dark evening of our first session was a bit nerve-racking. I'd had a few goes at pre-rolling exercises at previous club pool sessions but I really, really wanted to crack it over the three evenings. If ever there was a time to master it, it would be today - there were so many coaches! We paired up with appropriate boats and had a coach for each pair. Jaz introduced the first exercises to do, easing in with a capsize and escape first of all, and a bit of practice of swimmer's rescue - a swimmer flipping the boat with you still in it. Pia and Ann were on hand to guide me and Michael through the

stages. The point was to break it down into smaller movements before putting it all together. No amount of YouTube videos will help you figure out how it feels to be upside down trying to keep the paddle on the surface at the correct angle.

Session two built up from session one, clearly carefully planned to be a gradual progression. By the end of the second session I managed a roll! The surprise of doing it all by yourself takes a while to wear off. Jaz offered some pointers to make my good side a bit more refined. I'd had a go at rolling my own boat which is a roomy touring boat and hadn't managed - to be able to transfer the technique to my own boat was the ultimate aim.

The third session was less structured in order to give us all a chance to practice what we needed to. Michael and I helped each other work on paddle position on the surface. By the end, Michael was so close to getting all the way up. Once all the elements are in place, the timing of leg movement and paddle sweep is the last remaining hurdle. I was incredibly pleased to roll on both sides, even if one side is definitely stronger than the other. Now just to try in my big boat...

Thank you so much to all the coaches who gave up some much time. The level of attention we each got meant we were constantly challenged and moving forward. What a club to offer such a super opportunity!

Hannah

Why I Paddle... (Some Days I'm Terrified!)

Having worked too hard this year and not played or paddled anywhere near enough, I thought I'd end my guilt by finally writing one of the newsletter articles I've been promising for so long. Somehow writing about paddling might go a little way to making up for the real thing. Seriously, who am I kidding?! However, it most definitely is guaranteed to get me a little excited for that next big trip!

I'm very lucky as to have been paddling since I was just 5 years old. I think I remember my first paddling session in the muddy banks of Fairlop Water down in Essex and I still give my mum grief for making me capsize on that cold and truly miserable day. Oh how I hated to capsize.

Later, aged 9, I had another 'bad' capsize experience. Now graduated to wearing a spraydeck upon casually reaching for the side of the pool, I missed and Plop! I was in. I reached for my grab loop and all colour and air drained from my face and lungs. Somehow, I'd royally messed up and the loop was nowhere to be felt. I panicked. I was trapped. No amount of pushing or grabbing or pulling was working. I think it was the first gulp of water that saved me. Believe me, when you're drowning in a boat, you'll find some way to survive. Coughing and spluttering I made it out and it certainly taught me in the future to always check that loop.

I'm not really sure what made me continue kayaking at my next school but somehow I ended up back in a boat; there must have been something I liked and I took to the pool like a dolphin to water.

Nowadays, I'm a very experienced whitewater paddler. I have been lucky enough to have a bombproof roll since I was 14, a solid offside roll, two (not so solid anymore but functional) handrolls and I 'hardly' ever swim (no swim stories today!). What I'm trying to explain is, although there is absolutely no reason for it, some days I'm absolutely terrified of going upside down. I can't explain what it is I'm afraid of but that absolute mouth-drying, gut-wrenching, stomach-churning, feet-rooting terror is so so real.

So what do I do? It's not easy but I force myself through it. No ifs, no buts. One step at a time. I put on my paddling clothes and I tell myself I AM paddling that day. I don't want





to waste the trip or that new river, that awesome story or the glory of that cool photo on that daredevil rapid. I don't want to miss out on all the fun...yet again. I don't want to feel left out when all my friends come back laughing and smiling at the end of the day full of tales of all their awesome adventures. Instead I focus on all the fun I will be missing and the huge regret of not paddling. And on those really bad days, I tell someone, just one person, just how terrified I am. That's Step One.

As a coach it is very easy never to practice the skills you teach and confidence can be lost that way ever so quickly. Every day that I get on the water I make myself roll and I encourage everyone else to do the same. Practice gives paddlers confidence in any skill they do and the more often you paddle the more confident you can be. Flatwater, whitewater, sea and surf alike, no matter your skill-level practice up-turning yourself in the way you do best, whether that's a T-Rescue, a Roll or just simply falling out your boat; a capsize a day most definitely keeps the fears at bay! I find that if I get wet at the start of each session or trip, I am so much more ready for the days boating and am much more likely to push myself and enjoy paddling more. Carefree boating is by far the best!

Step Two – Get on the Water! No ifs, no buts. You can always get off again but what chance do you have if you don't even get started?

Step Three – Splash your face. Remind yourself what water feels like, for me the water is cool and refreshing and makes me focus. Warm-up, stretch and move your body around in your boat. Paddle forwards and backwards and maybe use some other familiar strokes too. Practicing basic moves often makes the paddler much more confident. I mean, how on top of the world are you when you've just nailed that rapid, explored that



new sunset, discovered that new river or chucked yourself off that drop? Lastly take a Roll or T-rescue if you can. Give yourself confidence in something you know you can do. Now you're physically ready.

Step Four – Get mentally prepared. Compare whatever you're trying to do to something you know you have done well before. Visualise you getting down the rapid, completing the trip or remembering that amazing feeling at the end of the day when you know you've paddled well.

For me, my biggest challenge was Italy this year, I have never been the biggest fan of heights, mainly falling in fact, but the Fear of Missing Out and the fact Adam really wanted to go, meant I joined the most crazy, dangerous, and altogether my first proper Steep Creeking Trip. I can honestly say Day 4 was the most Terrified (not Scared, scared doesn't even come close) I have ever been in my whole entire life. I almost didn't get on the water that day, but as I'd spent the previous day off the water (good choice, I wasn't feeling great) I didn't want to miss out yet again, so I donned my clothes and followed each step one by one. I don't think any member of my group thought I would get on the river that day after standing for 30 minutes on the bridge overlooking the rapid rooted to the spot. But I did and I can honestly say it was absolutely my best boating day ever. Never have I nailed a move so well to come flying over a drop and shooting through the air. 'Weeeeeeeee' plop! Scary but fun. 'Weeeeeeeeeeeee' plop! Must go again.... 'Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee' plop! Wow, how amazing, I will never ever ever forget that drop!

Oh and Step Five – Just do it! No thinking, just go! Now!

Don't get me wrong, there 100% will be the odd time you do get back off the water or portage round that drop or decide that it is not your day. That is ok. None of us can paddle at our best all the time and sometimes you need to be at your best to paddle that section, those conditions, that time. Just whatever you do, don't let it become your default, don't miss out on those opportunities and don't have regrets at the end of the day. With experience you'll find a method which works for you. Just please remember, it's ok to be terrified so long as that smile is worth it.

'Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee' plop! How amazing is it to be flying in a kayak? Oh soooooooo amazing.

Katie



Fundraising

Whilst you will all be aware that we apply for grants for kit and equipment and hopefully are successful, we cannot get grants for maintenance and hence we try to raise funds other than putting membership fees up. Recent fundraising has contributed to replacing the river frontage this year and now we are raising money towards the replacement the Canoe/kayak slide, that succumbed several years ago.

So far this year we have raised:

- £115.10 from **Easy Fundraising** – donations (at no cost to yourself) made on purchases through many online shops e.g. Sainsburys, Amazon and RSPB, various holiday, insurance and utility services, to find out more and register go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/eaglecanoecub/>
- £805 from **Club Draw** – run by Sterling lotteries on behalf of us and many other non-profit making groups. You pay £2 week - £1 going to fund the lottery the other £1 coming to us as a donation. Weekly wins range from £5 to £25,000 (if a member gets the big one the club also gets £25,000. We have had 11 winners this year winning between £5 and £25. To find out more talk to Trevor Goodburn or go to the website to find out more and register, at <https://www.clubdraw.co.uk/club/display/norwich-eagle-canoe-club-ltd>
- £209.50 from **Just Giving** for Lewis Grimes' sponsored parachute jump. Go to <https://www.justgiving.com/norwich-eaglecanoe>
- £210 from the fun day/evening held in the summer.

Also, don't forget our online Club Merchandise Shop, <http://stores.clothes2order.com/eagle-canoe-club/> If you buy Club clothing through this we also get a donation, but only once a year. (Last year was £97). Check it out for T Shirts, Hoodies and now soft shell jackets.

If you have an idea for fundraising, please talk to Stuart, Si, one of the coaches or myself and we will see how we can help an idea come to fruition. Thanks to everyone for their support in whatever way.

Hazel



Features and Fails

It's that time of the year when we can't help but pause, draw breath and look back. To misquote Maya Angelou, Terry Pratchett and Beyonce all at the same time, you can't know where you're going, if you don't know where you've been. And with that in mind, some of your talented, dedicated coaches have taken the time to draw together their features – and their fails – from the last twelve months. So read on to learn more about what ticks our boxes, what we draw the most enjoyment from, and what unscheduled learning experiences (thanks to Boyan Slat for that beautiful phrase) we've benefitted from.

Highlights:



Pete – After driving for 2 days in 40 degree heat to get to the Pyrenees we got on the Noguera Pallaresa at Llavorsi to paddle down to Sort. For about 1km the river was flat and I was beginning to think I had made a huge error dragging 4 mates across Europe to paddle this. Then we turn a bend and drop into a beautiful pushy powerful rapid that had us all grinning. What followed was 20km of fantastic steep fast wave train rapids with almost no flat sections. So good we ran this section 3 times over the course of the week.

Stu – My lasting memories from 2019 are doing lots of personal paddling with friends. It's great doing the club trips but it's mates' trips where I've been able to push my personal paddling and gain confidence in my roll (and see Jaz swim!!)

Kate – The Wye trip in September. A perfect autumn day got to meet lots of new members and a beautiful campsite with an open fire and roasted marshmallows.

Rosie – My best moment would be my first trip away with my Uni to Wales in October. We were all really excited, but when we got there it snowed like anything and we didn't paddle the first day at all, just drove around Wales from Llangollen to the Tryweryn to a few other rivers and then back to Llangollen. (I then hurt my shoulder that night and couldn't paddle the following day either! It was an amazing weekend though!)

Em – My favourite memory of 2019 is SUPing at Horstead Mill! Jumping from the concrete edge on to the board and in to the flow! With grace and style!

Katie – Mine relates to our epic steep creeking trip in Italy. My highlight also started my worst day. I was terrified to get on the river, not a fan of heights or big drops but forcing myself to get on the river was worth it. Shooting off the biggest and most technical waterfall and nailing it was the most awesome feeling in the world, needless to say, I went back for more...

Mike S – Successfully paddling S bend on the Upper Guisane in the French Alps in the morning of Friday 14th June (See below) Some might remember this being a lowlight in 2016 i.e. swim, rock, ankle, hospital!!

Ann – I think my best paddling memory this year was when working with a group of kids from a SEN school. One boy went from being really nervous about getting into the canoe to having 'the best day ever!' Not bad for a day at work.





And a handful of disasters...

Pete – In Scotland on the Spean gorge at a great level. We got to first grade 4/5 that we have always portaged because it has a nasty siphon but today it was all good to go. I peeled out the eddy and got the line I wanted and was really chuffed, then I looked at my paddle and realised I was it holding upside down. Was obviously more nervous than I thought in the eddy above the rapid and was so focused on not messing the line up I forgot all the basics. Ha ha.

Ann – My epic fail would be diving into the sea to swim after our boats that were floating away on the tide (fail 1), remembering 30 minutes later that my phone was still in the pocket of my dry suit (fail 2), and then realising that I was the only one who had downloaded the tide and weather information for the next few days (fail 3). So many lessons learned!

Em – Taking a group of about 20 SUPs out on the river Bure and spending 95% of the session towing boards as they all kept floating downstream and couldn't paddle back up! Blah!

Katie – My epic fail was another day in Italy, again on a rather big waterfall. It was a rather precarious run into the drop and I messed up my line ping off course and upside down, I recovered enough but ended running through the narrow entry unable to turn round thus going down the falls backwards. Whilst it looked great on theb carnage reel it rather takes the wind out of you... preferably not one to repeat. (But at least I didn't swim the falls like Andy!)

Mike S – A lowlight was the afternoon of Friday 14th June (See above) having a group encounter with fallen trees on the Claree and having to let my boat go as I hung onto the tree, with my boat never to be seen again!

Si – Erm, just about every daytrip I organised this year. The first was way too windy and I couldn't keep up with he group I was supposed to be leading. The second ended in torrential rain. I'd bought the family, but absolutely no waterproofs. And the third, on just about the biggest bit of open water in the county, was hampered by terrible wind (the weather, not myself, on this occasion). I nearly didn't finish. Toys were on the cusp of being lobbed from the pram – not my usual style at all – I'd completely run out of juice, but Ann and her superhero sea kayak towed me the last half mile... Thanks Ann!





Trips – A Code of Conduct

Some of you will remember an email I did recently regarding how you can help the organiser of trips and make their life easier.

We have discussed these principles further at the committee and have agreed to add a section to the “Code of Conduct” that we all sign up to as members, which will cover what you agree to when you sign up to an activity / day trip / weekend trip. This will also help new members to understand what is expected from them when they sign up. Further information will also be given during the induction group sessions.

The suggested additions are :

- I will sign up promptly to activities once these are promoted.
- I will provide the information requested by the organiser and respond to emails etc promptly.
- I will pay for the activity when requested.
- I will help to reduce transport costs by sharing transport where ever possible.
- I will be on time and ensure I have the equipment needed for the activity.
- I will help out during the activity.

Please let me know if you have any comments or suggestions so that we can update these in time for next year’s enrolment.

Thanks,

Stu



Becoming a Paddlesport Leader

What is Paddlesport Leader?

Paddlesport Leader is a fairly new award introduced by British Canoeing, in April 2017. It is aimed at experienced paddlers who wish to provide an experience for others, based on a trip or journey. It demonstrates that you have the capabilities to lead and facilitate safe, quality and enjoyable trips based on the group's needs and aspirations, together with the knowledge of how to act on the off-chance something goes wrong! This appealed to me as I really enjoy social paddling but do not wish to become a coach.

I remember completing my 2* Award and then thinking – well, what can I do now that the season has ended? (I wasn't a member of Eagle then who offer all year round paddling opportunities). Luckily I had partners in crime in the guise of Maxine (Eagle member) and Andy (soon to be Eagle member as he keeps missing out on all the paddles!). We all went out and bought our touring kayaks, paddles and basic equipment and off we went, sun, rain, ice or snow. We started gently, paddling the waters we knew and soon discovered a great book 'Norfolk Broads Canoe and Kayak Guide' which gave us a heap of information on launch points etc. These were good times and we discovered some really lovely places and have become firm friends.

Now we are a few years further on and I have completed the 3* Touring Award (kayak), Foundation Safety & Rescue Training, Aquatic First Aid and Paddlesport Leader and I would really love to help others gain confidence out and about so they can enjoy paddling as much as I do.

So, what can I do as a Paddlesport Leader?

I can lead paddles on ungraded slow moving water ie rivers, canals or estuaries and in open water ie lakes & lochs. The conditions must be suitable for the group and should not exceed force 3 (12mph). When I took the assessment I elected to





paddle a canoe (you can choose) and this would usually limit the craft which I could use whilst leading, but as I have 3* touring kayak (equivalent to the current Personal Performance Award) I am also deemed competent to lead from this type of craft. The group can be a mix of craft and up to 12 people in 8 craft.

Finally, when I say that I can..... I have not done..... As I have only just passed the assessment 2 weeks ago. So, if you do end up coming on a paddle with me please be kind 😊 I would like to say a thank you to all the trip leaders at Eagle as they have helped to show me the way (even if they didn't know it at the time).

Top tip – if you think you may be interested in doing the Paddlesport Leader Assessment at some point start keeping a trip log and write down your own pre-paddle day observations such as route, weather & tides.

Sam K

Sometimes the Guidebook Doesn't Lie

Weirdly, having planned a paddling trip miles in the future (standard issue when paddling with the Club Chairman as his weekend diary has virtually no vacancies until 2035) we were blessed with rain.

Si was on river venue decisions this weekend and he had picked out one from his wish list that none of us had paddled before. The Greta, which flows into Tees at Rokeby Park, was on the menu for the first day. This river is apparently 12km of continuous grade 3 with the hardest section right at the end, 100m of grade 4 that the guidebook says is "difficult to inspect and hard to portage (as it is amongst houses). Don't paddle if you aren't prepared to follow someone down this one blind (and you have a 'probe')". Line is centre heading right (or at least it was)."

This sounded perfect – 12km of continuous grade 3 was going to mean a full day with no flat sections and the guidebooks usually overstate how hard it is to spot the line down rapids so it probably won't be that bad. I had done my usual YouTube scouting of the river in the morning but the problem was this section is rarely run as it is very rain dependant so there wasn't many videos of people running the final falls at the level we were going to have.

As we got on the river everything was all good – the rapids kept on delivering, the weather wasn't that cold, I wasn't suffering the after affects too badly of the terrible case of Danish flu that Klinger gave everyone in Scotland the weekend before.

About halfway down another group caught up with us and pleasantries were exchanged. The leader of their gang asked if had done the river before.

Us – "no never – it is pretty cool though, how about you?"

Them – "no me neither, I was wondering if you knew the way down the final grade 4?"

Us – "no – we were going to work it out when we got there"

Them – "yeah us too, have fun"

We let them pass and continued on at our cruisy sedate pace.

About 20 minutes later we saw them up sitting in an eddy above a fairly lumpy grade 3 section where the line down the rapid was pretty blind. We watched them run it and they had a few rolls and 1 swim. We quickly dispatched that rapid and then passed them as they sorted out the swimmer.

Another half hour of really fun grade 3 and we get to what we think is the last eddy before the river enters a gorge and what must be the grade 4 section – we dispatch Simon up the bank to see if he can see anything. He reports that he can't but he can see 2 or 3 more eddies downstream from where we are that are completely shielded from our view at water level.

At this time we are caught up by the group behind and we have a chat that this must be the section the guidebook talks about, that there are a couple of eddies downstream and whether they want to run it first.

We kindly let them go first being the gentlemen (and woman) we are – plus it gives us a nice view of the lines they take. We give them a bit of time so that we don't come round the corner committed to getting the last eddy only to find that it full of boats with no room at the Inn.

As we come around the corner most of their group is already at the bottom (dammit – wanted to see their lines down). However two are left still to go. We hop out onto the rock forming the last eddy and watch the route they take. The first one paddles up to a horizon line on river left and drops out of sight, appearing far river right further downstream upside down and takes what looks like a very lumpy swim until they are collected in a big pool at the bottom. The second one down styles it (probably having seen everyone else's mistakes).

We stood on the rock and had a chat about plans – I'm not really keen on paddling into things that I haven't seen as I get my paddling kicks from picking a line and trying to perfect it but the guidebook didn't lie – once you are in this eddy you are committed to running the rapid as there is no way of getting back upstream without a whole pile of hassle.

I decided to go first (I didn't give Stu, Si or Jaz the option really, as the more I stood looking at it the more nervous I was getting). Paddling out into the flow you couldn't really see what the river was going to do to you after the horizon line until you were right at the lip. After the dropping over the ledge the river kicks you hard right towards the gorge wall with a nasty cushion wave to catch the unwary. Then it is a few wave trains and into the safety of a nice flat pool where the other group is waiting and sorting out their swimmer.



I can't remember who was next out of the remaining 3 although I do know that Jaz managed to find a sneaky slot route hard left (I think this was unintended) and Si now needs a new helmet after getting nibbled by the cheeky cushion wave and subsequently using his head as a battering ram on the river bed.

Once safe and at the bottom some gentle mocking of Si for going upside down was had, before we trundled down to the Tees and our shuttle vehicle. Barring a small pinning (story for another day about keeping your brain turned on even when at the end of a paddle) everything was good.

Lesson learnt - sometimes the guidebook doesn't lie and when it makes a point of saying you are committed to running a section you probably will be.

Pete S



Naxos Sea Kayak Symposium

Earlier in the year we saw this advertised, it was being organised by Manolis, an Instructor based on Naxos that Ann had met on an earlier training course. We decided to go – sea kayaking, warm weather, warm water, what's not to like?

It's a fair way to travel for a three-day weekend, & not the cheapest, so when we saw there was an opportunity to stay on for an expedition around the Lesser Cyclades it seemed the only sensible option & we are glad we did.

So what was it like?

Naxos - the Symposium was based in a hotel complex on St George's bay at the quiet end of Naxos -pop 6,000! (capital of Naxos island), right on the beach. Travel is either fly to Athens then a ferry or connecting flight to Naxos (a real one-man band airport). We opted to fly all the way, people who ferried mostly opted for an overnight in Athens. Accommodation was good, as was the included breakfast. We hired boats & equipment which was of good quality, some people took some of their personal stuff.



While the town was starting to close for the winter there were still plenty of places to eat out at very reasonable prices. All the people we met were friendly, & believe me, the meals are huge. As part of the Symposium we had a very informative guided walk around the Citadel & talks on various aspects of kayaking & Turtle Rescue.

Each evening we were asked to sign up for a workshop for the following day & then coaches were allocated to the groups. This allowed for a degree of flexibility if some sessions were more popular. There was a range of activities from the more formal Leadership, Navigation & Incident Management to the lighter Greenland Rolling, Wet Stuff, Touring & Forward Paddling.



Classes all set out from the beach, either staying in the bay, crossing to next island or coastal tripping. Coaches / Leaders were all accomplished paddlers, most of them from the wider Greek area with good local knowledge, plus a few from UK. The weather was clement, we coped with shorts & t-shirts mostly, a warm top in the evenings, water was warmer than UK summer. The paddling was not overly strenuous & beginners were well catered for. I enjoyed practising with people I had not met before, the level of competence was high, sharing of information, techniques, & tips was highly encouraged... I know I learnt stuff. Off the water, a local company had supplied electric bikes for anyone to use in the local area which was great fun.

Expedition - this was four days, three nights around some of the Lesser Cyclades. We were coached to the south west part of the island of Naxos where we packed & departed for the islands. Two of the leaders were local & gave us what seemed like running commentary on the area, the islands, the locals & the Greek myths associated with the area. The crossings were not hard, the most was a couple of hours. We wild camped on beaches in harbours & secluded bays. At this time of year the tourists are all but gone & we enjoyed lazy days cruising along on crystal clear water, under fantastic cliffs, landing on isolated beaches, visiting quiet ports- all in fantastic scenery.

On the last night we experienced a thunderstorm that lit the night as bright as day & tried to take the tent away. By morning everything had settled & it seemed a dream! We finished the trip on the east coast, where a couch picked us up for the return trip to Naxos, even this was delightful- up narrow switchback roads, over the mountains, down through local villages & towns with a stop for coffee & cake at a traditional cafe.

We arrived early & stayed an extra couple of days due to flight demands & have said we would consider using the days for a mini break in Athens another time. Currently it is planned to happen again next year 2020, we are intending to go especially as Ann is likely to be involved in delivering some of the sessions. All in all, a very enjoyable way to try to extend the summer as long as possible...

Mark W...



If You're Not Getting Better, You're Getting Worse.

The summer season is over and it's time for most of us to have a bit of a rest from a busy summer of paddling. (Except maybe, for the hardened whitewater paddlers hoping for a wet winter.) While it's important to have a well-earned rest, it's a shame to see all our hard-won skills disappear while we're sitting on the sofa scoffing winter goodies. Here are some ideas to improve your skills over the winter.

1. Option 1 is to keep on paddling! There are so many activities in the winter program, you can still paddle most weeks over the winter season. Local trips on the broads really come in to their own in winter when they are so much more peaceful than in the summer. Be sure to wear a few more layers than usual and take a hot drink and plenty of snacks.
2. Fitness. Do any aspects of your fitness limit your paddling? How is your flexibility? Many paddlers have short hamstrings, but it's surprisingly easy to stretch them while watching the telly! Swimming (especially front crawl) sits well with paddlesports as it uses similar movements, but anything to keep moving is great.
3. Brush up your theory. There is so much to learn about weather, tides, first aid and a million other things, why not spend a few dark evenings studying. If you are looking to complete a personal performance award next year, why not have a look at what topics are covered in that?

4. Watch YouTube videos. Whether it's for techniques, paddling destinations, adrenalin rushes or epic fails, you can learn a lot from watching videos.

5. What is your kit like? Does anything need fixing or some routine maintenance? Karabiners usually need a bit of oil every now and then. Straps need to be checked to see if they are still in good condition. (you wouldn't want to lose a kayak because of a strap failure, would you!!! ;-0) Do you need new kit? Can you find a bargain in the sales, or is it too late to ask Santa?



6. Practice tidal planning. You can get so much information for free on the internet now, you can plan an epic circumnavigation of a remote island, or a trip on a local estuary. You can probably find a coach who is happy to give you a few pointers if you don't know where to start.
7. Where do you want to paddle next year? If you start planning a trip you want to see in the summer program, it will be easy to get a coach interested. We are always looking for new trips to squeeze in to the program.
8. Practice navigation. While it's pretty tricky to lose your route on the river, it's a good plan to be able to follow your route on a map. If something went wrong, where is your nearest exit point, or the nearest road? Would you be able to give your location to the emergency services if needed? Get used to taking an OS map with you, and either following your route, or working out where you are at various points during the day.
9. Set yourself some goals for the summer. Paddle on all the broads, paddle on all the 7 rivers in the broads national park, achieve a personal performance award, learn how to SUP, nail your roll or self-rescue, practice standing up in your kayak, get involved with coaching or leadership, pledge to help introduce new members to the club.

Ann

What'SUP?

I am sure you have heard with the latest grant we purchased 8 stand up paddle boards! We have Red Paddle Co all round boards in various sizes- 9'6, 10'6 and 10'8. By far the most prevalent and popular type of board. Versatile and easy to use, these boards are perfect for beginners and more experienced paddlers alike.

If you want to read more about the construction of the SUP board feel free to have a look here...

<https://redpaddleco.com/en-gb/guide-to-inflatable-stand-up-paddle-boards/>

But in essence, in the early days of inflatable boards, a material was adopted that has since become known as "Drop Stitch". Essentially, this refers to the material which forms the top and bottom skin of the board which is connected by threads. This gives the board it's shape, structure and stiffness.

On the 20th/ 21st of November Emma, Jade and Lee took part in the SUP Sheltered Water Coach training. This training has helped enable us to support the club in teaching the awesomeness of SUP! Emma can already deliver the Stand Up Paddleboard Sheltered Water Award:

The SUP Sheltered Water Award will give you the ability to organise and carry out an enjoyable and safe trip on the water up to 200 metres from shore, up to force 3 in winds. You will be confident in considering how far you can safely travel from the shore, whilst identifying safe exit points, expanding your knowledge of rescue techniques and looking at the external and environmental factors which may affect our journey. You will create proficient skills to anticipate and adapt to problems we may encounter to enable us to have a safe and enjoyable day out stand up paddleboarding.

So, if anyone is interested in working towards this please let me know! More info can be found here:

<https://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/personal-performance-award-resources/>

If you're not sure about SUP you have to give a try! It is not as wet a sport as you may think! Most people won't enjoy it after 10 minutes or so... It is something you need to give at least an hour if not a couple of hours to really gain a sense of the board and how it all works. Happy SUPing!

Emma





Sea Kayaking in Sweden

This is an unusual article because it's about a trip that is going to happen rather than one that has happened already.

Imagine a coastal area shaped by glaciers, thousands of islands, marine nature reserves, wildlife galore and occasional small fishing villages with a handful of red houses. Now imagine 20 hours of daylight, no tides, warm, brackish water and sitting by a campfire on a small island with only your friends for company. Would you guess you were in Sweden? Ever since I first saw photos of the Saint Anna archipelago, 2 hours south of Stockholm I have been desperate to go. Sea kayaking through narrow, rocky channels to a different, uninhabited island every night really is my idea of kayaking heaven. The area is set up for explorers like us, some islands have a few resources like fresh water, composting loos and firepits, and some are complete wilderness. First time expeditioners and salty sea dogs will all enjoy this trip.

Now I just need some friends to go with! As most of you know, I gave up my proper job two years ago, and last year decided to follow my dream of being a sea kayak guide. I'm well on the way to make that happen, which alternates between being exciting and scary. I have run loads of trips for Eagle, so I have lots of experience which I can take to the commercial world. This will be the first commercial trip I have run abroad, so I have put lots of effort into making sure everything will go smoothly. I have found an outfitter who will provide everything from paddle kit to camping kit and food, so the logistics are nice and simple. Pretty much all you need is a flight to Stockholm a change of clothes and your swimmers.

If you want to come along please email me at annmerryweather@yahoo.co.uk for more information.

Ann

