

# TALES FROM THE RIVERBANK



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*JULY/AUGUST 2005*

## *Jura*



### *Summer 2004*

For the past hour our attention had been directed at the Skervuile light. Our party of 9 paddlers had been steering a course calculated to allow for the tidal offset which was apparently not being experienced. Starting off at about 075 degrees magnetic and decreasing in 10 degree increments we were just about to change yet again to travel due North before we passed the light too far to the east. We had departed Craighouse on Jura and were headed for the McCormaig Islands situated about two miles from the western shore of the Knapdale peninsula. Skervuile was approximately halfway with a further 6 miles to go.

I reflected upon this, our first sea paddling trip of 2004, and the previous four days of our holiday, which had started at the yacht marina at Croabh Haven about 10 miles north of Crinan on the west coast of Scotland.

#### **Friday/Saturday**

Friday night had seen us assembling at the Lord of the Isles pub and restaurant where the landlord had very kindly allowed us to camp on his lawn. This was very conveniently situated a hop and a skip away from the water. Saturday morning arrived amid frantic activity and the usual creation of mountains of kit alongside each kayak as their respective owners tried not to be last to get packed.

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The group included, in no particular order, the following people:-

Steve Swarbrick  
 Phil Haworth  
 Steve Wilkinson  
 Bob Smith  
 Sue Garriock  
 John Fyles  
 Alan Clowes  
 Kevin Singleton  
 Stephen Singleton

The rain and midges didn't help and as this was Sue's first ever real sea paddling trip, about half of her gear found itself relegated to the car once it was discovered that it wouldn't fit. At last we were off.

The tidal predictions showed that in the Gulf of Corryvreckan, the westward flow would begin at 6:30pm and as our departure time was 12:30pm, it was decided in a fairly democratic manner that we needed to take 6 hours to arrive at this point. This would allow us to get a glimpse of the sea state at the

western end and retreat if conditions were a bit dicky. As the crow flies this was about 50 minutes away!!

We headed off into the northwest. Skirting the northern end of Shuna with excellent weather we headed for the narrow slot that separates Torsa from Luing and prayed that we would find sufficient water, otherwise it would be an extra couple of miles to reach Cuan Sound. The water at the slot was flowing against us and a spirited paddle ensued with a mixture of eddy hopping and brute force being demonstrated. Very pleasant!

Cuan Sound was fairly flat although the ebbing tide was against us. We have paddled this water previously and have been horrified at the frequency of small whirlpools that open up in front of you threatening all manner of unpleasantness.

Rounding the north end of Luing put the tidal flow at our backs and we cruised a mile or so to Cullipool village. Views to the west were

magnificent with the Garvellachs and nearby islands being crisply in focus on this, by now, sunny and almost windless day. We turned to the west and headed for Belnahua in order to explore the island and partake of late lunch. The tidal flow between Luing and Belnahua can be fierce, although as we got nearer to Fladda it became apparent that we had negligible cross current and continued to make good speed.



***The quarry workings on Belnahua overlooking Fladda light***

With a party of 9 it is inevitable that small sub groups form and stimulating conversations can be had with occasional changes of companions that occur when someone either slows down or changes course slightly. Within the group of 9 were 3 individuals who do not normally join 'the rest of us' and this fresh blood made for a very interesting holiday. There were new ideas and styles being aired as well as new equipment for the rest of us to discuss and occasionally play with. Alan has an electric bilge pump system which he assembled himself and several of us decided to emulate this method just in case we get caught short one day. One of us who shall remain nameless boldly stated that he didn't intend to get caught short.

We arrived at our lunch stop.

The slate island of Belnahua has an interesting history. With its neighbouring island of Easdale, slate production was a booming industry until the island was overwhelmed by a huge storm in the late

1800's. This effectively killed the industry and within a year or two the island became unoccupied. Walking around the island today reveals the rotting remains of cranes and boilers and a stroll down Main St allows the imagination to dwell on the isolation and toil that must have been experienced by the families who lived here. Today, during our walk, there are masses of wild flowers and their colour lit up the slopes of the low hill in the middle of the island.

During lunch three paddlers arrived whose destination was the Garvellachs, and having spotted us having lunch, decided to join us. They were from Glasgow and often paddle these waters as a trio.

A little bit of sun worshipping later, with the clock remorselessly on the move, it was time to leave. Heading almost south we passed to the west of Lunga on a flat sea and no wind. Bliss! Through the Grey Dogs with a following current we paddled in shadow until we arrived at the Gulf. By this time we were stretched out into a line which effectively marked out the fit from the unfit. I have to confess that having not been in a sea kayak for about 7 months, (unless you count the day of the helicopter) and not having done any river paddling either, the author of this article began dreaming of our arrival at the evening campsite.

Kevin and I undertook the function of back markers by default while the remainder of the party gamely began a long ferry glide across the Sound to creep up the northern shore of Jura. This is our regular route and a lot of eddy hopping can be done to escape the current. By this time, Kevin and I had observed the slow progress of the group and decided to try our own route. Paddling up the middle of the Sound, in what was effectively a huge area of counter current caused by the mass of Scarba, we made extremely good progress and rapidly drew level and very shortly got ahead of the group. When we eventually had to commit to a ferry glide we ended up alongside the back marker of the main group. The water was swirling



unpredictably with a current running at about 2 knots and the sea state flat. Our evening camping spot was just round the next bend in the bay inshore of Eilean Beag which terminated day one paddling. Thank goodness.

## Sunday

We awoke on Sunday morning to a bright sunny day with light winds. Following the previous day's 20 miles we estimated today's travels would carry us about 13 miles south to our next camp site at Shian Bay. Passing Glengarrisdale brought back memories of our previous visit during which we had been stormbound and much debate had ensued about our means of escaping from this extremely remote location should the weather set in for a long period. I still feel weak when I think of the suggestion put forward by one of our more strenuously inclined members that we should paddle south to Loch Tarbert and portage over the hill like the Vikings probably did, to bring us out on the east coast of Jura. The more sensible amongst us outvoted this idea and stayed put for one more night before returning to base via 'The Gulf'.



*The evening sun casts a warm glow on the boats at Shian*

## Monday

Another day of decisions. Steve Swarbrick wanted to stay and fish. As his fishing reputation went before him some members decided we would be better advised going to

the fish shop at the next village. The weather being superb again, we headed off.

Jura is, geologically, a very interesting place to be. It is famous for its raised beaches and there is no better place to observe them than Loch Tarbert. That is where we are bound today. The Loch cuts Jura almost in half and makes a very constricted waistline with only one mile of "waist" separating the water of Loch Tarbert from the Sound of Jura. Our plan was to penetrate the Loch as far as we were able and then head south to a prime campsite with en-suite shower facilities and a view to die for. The loch is about 5 miles in to the narrow constriction beyond which it is very influenced by the state of the tide and dries out. Paddling in against the developed ebb tide is very difficult due to the constriction and absence of available adequate breakouts. We had almost reached this point with a rather extended line of people, when blisters got the better of me and I decided to stop for a solitary lunch at a raised beach and dig out the medi kit. I shouted to the person nearest me that this was my intention and pulled in to the shore. I tried talking to Steve Singi on the VHF but got no response. My vantage point on the 30m high beach was superb and the 360 degree panorama made the stop worthwhile.

The group had to pass me on the way out of the loch and I kept a keen watch. A flash of a paddle way out in the loch caught my eye and I could see Steve Singi going hell for leather and it was obvious that he thought I was in front of him. Again I used the VHF on the pre arranged channel and again got no response. The rest of the group approached and we joined up and discussed Steve's hurried departure. Just at this moment the radio crackled and Steve was heard to ask my position. I didn't have a map on the deck for this inner Loch but Phil Haworth chirped up with a grid ref. that placed us about 1km behind him. We soon caught him although with the naked eye he was invisible even at this short distance.

Another 2 hours paddling brought us to our favourite Jura campsite just adjacent a small

island called Sgeir Traighe. In front of us when looking out to sea is the Rhuvaal Light marking the northern end of Islay and to our left, about 3.5 miles away, we could see the painted sign marking the Bunnahabhain Distillery on Islay. (This is a BIG sign!) I joined the queue for the shower before the sun went down and we saw our first otter of the trip. Our mileage today is estimated at 18 miles.



***The camp at waterfall beach***

## **Tuesday**

Weather good again. Unbelievable!! To replenish our flagging fluid supplies and stave off dehydration, it was felt necessary by certain people that we should 'pop across' to the distillery. An hour later we were crunching gravel on the beach next to Bunnahabhain jetty.

The tide was calculated to be running with us in about two hours time so a tour of the premises was called for as well as filling up with water. The water requirement is very arbitrary and was really used as an excuse because we carry very efficient water filters which enable us to pick up water from virtually anywhere to produce pure potable water. We were horrified to discover that the next official tour was in about two hours time although when the guide heard that we were 8 in number we had a special tour laid on. Steve Singi couldn't bear the thought of the smell of whisky after the previous evening and decided to forsake the pleasure.

Following a very generous tot of free produce and a most interesting tour we assembled on the beach for lunch.

The Sound of Islay produces a very fast tidal flow at springs and when you add our paddling speed, the result is phenomenal. Guess what. We are at springs. Off we went!

Just adjacent to our lunch spot was a wrecked fishing boat and as we approached it we could clearly observe the power and speed of the water. The slalomists amongst us couldn't resist the urge to practice their sea kayak bow rudders and fancy flips, which the rest of us acknowledge, don't work with sea boats.

The age of the GPS has arrived and we clocked 14mph on our way to Port Askaig. The little harbour at Port Askaig receives the CalMac big ferry from the mainland as well as the smaller ferry which connects Islay to Jura. It is set back behind a little promontory and a careless moment when you are travelling at 14mph in the stream means that you have to paddle like hell not to get carried past. This happened to me on two occasions and I hope I may have now learnt the bitter lesson. The amused smiles of shore based observers is becoming a regular event.

The south end of the Sound of Islay has several islands and we now search for a camp site. Frustratingly none can be found. You would be amazed how a good campsite, or even a pretty ropey campsite, is incredibly rare in some parts of Scotland's remotest and rugged coastline. It is not surprising that on the really good places there is often a ruined remnant of past days.

We decided to head back up the Sound along the Jura shore to a spot we passed about half a mile back. The drawback was that a stiff breeze was now blowing and a paddle into a headwind is best avoided if possible. About 13 miles covered today and the evening fire, good food, good company (well sort of!) and a dram saw the end of another brilliant day.

## Wednesday

10.00 a.m. Already on the water and rounding the southern tip of Jura and heading north with our first stop being Craighouse on Jura.

Steve Singi was very pleased not to have a hangover in spite of the copious amounts of local produce he had been fed by Sue the night before. Several fishing lines were trailed behind the boats during our leisurely paddle to Craighouse. Alas, no results. This meant that John and Alan repaired to the pub for a lunch on the lawn while the rest of us spread out on the beach by the jetty and watched the world go by. Craighouse is a bustling little village with a shop, pub, post office, public toilets and a distillery. What more does a fellow need?



***The boats make a colourful spectacle outside the Jura Distillery***

The next leg of the journey entailed the longest crossing of open water experienced on this trip. In a straight line, passing Skervuile Light, it was just over 10 miles to the next camp site on the MacCormaig Islands. The light was about half way and as the tide was

on the flood, at about 4mph, we discussed the best heading.

We shuffled down the beach and regained the water. The water was flat, the wind was very slight and in our favour, everything seemed perfect. My big anxiety-provoking thought with these larger crossings is the sheer unpredictability of the weather and sea state. A 10 mile crossing equates to about two and a half hours and we all know that the next 15 minutes might produce a shift in the conditions. I hate it!

Phil Haworth dawdled at the back while the front markers moderated their pace so as not to spread the line too long. Our destination was but a haze on the horizon beyond the Skervuile Light and neither appeared to be getting any nearer.

There was a shout ... "head directly for the Light!!" I awoke from my dreams and returned to the here and now.....



***Skervuile Light***

We were within spitting distance now and as we approached, the seabirds perched all over the small island screamed into the air. Pull your hat firmly on to avoid the danger of bird launched manure.



The Light, perched on what seemed to be a smooth rounded boulder, was very impressive. Not large but had a tough weatherworn appearance with a rusty ladder leading up to the access door about 15m high on the northerly side. A quick rest break with Mars bars and Snickers quietened the conversation. The anticipated tidal flow was impossible to see and our frequent course changing had been a good lesson in how you can come a cropper if visibility is not good. Our next stopping point, 5 miles away, was still hard to see against the backdrop of the mainland shore. We set off on a compass course and the chatting continued.

The island was, by now, becoming identifiable, and our pace quickened slightly. The tide was due to start flowing in a southerly direction any time now although we were not sure how, in reality, it would affect us. We soon found out. Unlike our earlier experience, the change to the ebb produced a very visible flow and a determined ferry glide was needed to get to the large eddy behind our destination island. The tide, by this time, was rushing along like a river, and had we not managed to gain the breakout, we would have been forced into a long ferry glide to reach the mainland shore, about 2 miles distant. Paddling up the counter current in the lee of the island was pleasant and before long we were almost there. A bit of eddy hopping and then a frantic rush got us all around the northernmost point through the current and we floated into a sheltered little cut that served as a yacht anchorage. Some of our party explored the nearby chapel dedicated to St. Cormac (604AD) which was used in earlier days as an illicit still. Markings on the walls date from the 8th century and nearby are the ruins of another building from the same period.

Tonight we had rain and it became very grey. The wind got up to a lively breeze and two yachts came into sight evidently intent on anchoring in 'our bay.' There was much flapping of sail and shouted instruction and eventually anchors were dropped. Some of us have done a bit of sailing, and with a dram or

two, we discussed the placing of the anchors and various supplementary ropes. It seemed odd to me! The yachties invited us over for a brew on board but as they didn't include their inflatable taxi we declined. The wind continued to blow and we had a fairly early night.

Scraping and crunching and shouting. "What on earth is happening?" we all thought. Poking our heads out of our warm, dry tents, we discovered that something had happened to the yachts, which by now, with the outgoing tide, had become hung up on the shore by the odd assembly of ropes we had discussed earlier.

Lights and noises persisted for a very long time until sleep overcame us all again.

## Thursday

Morning dawned. Looking out to sea showed white horses everywhere. The wind was steady at about force 4/5 and blowing sufficiently to make you brace against it. Our proposed route was north with the wind coming from just north of west. Do we go or not? We discovered that only one of our party, Alan, had the relevant map for this particular part of the coast so after the decision was made, Alan was elected to be honorary leader. A rare honour indeed amongst this most anarchist group of people. We identified from the map what appeared to be a sheltered bay about 2 miles away to our north. We could just about make out the shore line. As usual when the water looks too bumpy, boisterous, call it what you like, when you actually get going, you settle into a steady rhythm and concentrate on the job in hand. We all found ourselves enjoying the experience and followed our worthy 'honorary' leader as he set a brilliant course to avoid the areas of larger breaking waves and overfalls. Several of us had waves breaking onto our decks and I for one, had more than one large support stroke as balance was desperately sought in moments of instability.

The bay was reached and we all agreed that we were happy and that we should proceed. This we did. Our trip today would account for about 15 miles and we had about 12 to go before reaching Tayvallich. We would camp somewhere near there ready to pass through the Dorus Mor tomorrow.

## Friday

Friday, and our last day on the water. Today we pass through the Great Door. The Dorus Mor is a formidable area of funnelled water as it is forced around the end of the Craignish Peninsula and the off lying islands. The flow on the flood heads remorselessly for the Gulf of Corryvreckan and anything caught up in the flow, without the means of escaping, has only one destination.

On the ebb the reverse is true, although the consequences are not as catastrophic. We have stood on the end of this peninsula on previous visits and have seen stoutly built large yachts bouncing around in obvious stages of disorder while traversing the Dorus Mor. Definitely not a place to get the timing wrong while in a kayak.

We got the timing spot on and in weak sunshine and an easy breeze, we rounded the rock finger. Paddling often within 10 feet of the rock face we could see, even now, the residual movement of water, and observed that the rock face was absolutely clean of sea plants and shells.

Heading north towards the Isle of Shuna we soon neared our final destination and entered

the sheltered waters of Croabh Haven. This man made yacht haven has causeways linking three small islands and the owners are snotty towards kayakers. We haven't really discovered why although we suspect it is largely on account of our frugal spending tendencies. Having arrived back at our camp site on the hotel lawn we dispatched an emissary to negotiate showering facilities at the marina office. He came back with a long face which confirmed our impression of the yacht haven management. Ah well!!

Our last half day and, as is customary with some of our regular members, we headed to Crinan for tea and sticky buns and a chance to watch the boats negotiating the loch gates on the Crinan Canal. Luckily there is an excellent tea room overlooking the water and in the little anchorage are two or three boats of the old puffer variety. Vic 32 is often here as well as Vital Spark, the boat that was featured in the TV series with Gregor Fisher as Parahandy.

All in all a most enjoyable week and already there are talks of 'where next?'

**Bob Smith**

*[I always feel that an article like this deserves a map, but I was unable to work out a map of the area with enough detail but which would still fit on the page. I got the satellite picture from NASA ([worldwind.arc.nasa.gov](http://worldwind.arc.nasa.gov)), and added the route myself. Any discrepancies between the map and the actual trip are entirely my fault – Martin.]*

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The idea for this trip came around from a combination of events. One of them was to get me out of the house and have a break from revision for the GCSE exams, which were looming. The release was also scheduled for the half term holidays – so I could have a lift from my mum, but I think the deciding factor was hearing tales from previous releases, which other club members had attended.

So the wheels were put in motion on Thursday morning during a break from revision. What followed were numerous emails sent back and forth to any club member whose address I could find. By Friday I had managed to rope in Paul Wicks and Helen James for the drive over to Blubberhouses and by Tuesday arranged to pick Tom Kington up.

It was Wednesday; we had picked Tom up and were making good progress for the half-one meeting with Paul and Helen. We arrived

twenty minutes early, even after getting stuck behind a tractor for part of the journey, whereas Paul and Helen managed to arrive twenty minutes late as they got stuck behind a mobile home! While we waited for them to arrive Tom and I had enough time to walk the whole upper stretch of the Washburn to the big drop and check it out.

It was my first time on the Washburn and it looked a lot faster than any other rivers I had paddled before. I have to admit that I was slightly apprehensive as I got changed into my paddling kit. I got on the river and practiced ferry gliding and breaking in and out by the get in while Tom cartwheeled and squirted. Helen and Paul soon joined us on the river and off we headed downstream at an alarmingly fast pace.

The first run was a bit of a blur as we chased down the river catching eddies and waves as we went. There was a really good river wide

stopper – which Tom, Paul and I played in for a good ten minutes.



Tom managed to pull off some good 360 spins and cartwheels while Paul and I were bounced around in the foam pile. I survived to complete a 360 spin, but I think it was more accidental than on purpose! All three of us had to roll at some point while playing here so it must have been a good feature!



After this stopper we moved on down the river catching waves here and there as well as breaking in and out to let everyone catch up. Then, there it was, the big drop, which signified the end of the upper section. The four of us gathered up a bit of speed above the drop before flying down the glassy face and punching through the foam pile at the bottom. The break out for the get out was a bit tight because of all the forward momentum I had gathered going over the drop. Tom stayed on the water a bit longer and played in the bottom of the drop managing to complete a couple of spins.

After the high adrenaline rush of paddling the upper section it seemed a bit of a disappointing way to finish the run by carrying the boats back along the river bank to the cars for another run.



The four of us stood around at the get in taking on liquids and food while waiting for the rafts, which were running the river today, to set off downstream. None of us wanted to have to dodge a raft while playing on a wave so we waited patiently for them to set off at a very fast speed.



The second run was pretty much the same as the first run. However I felt a lot more comfortable on the river now that I had completed one run without any major incident. The four of us stopped at the same places as on the previous run to play on the wave trains and stoppers before carrying on down to the big drop and the get out.

This time, after running the big drop with out much of a problem, I overshot the eddy,



where I got out the time before, and ran the little drop below it. My break out was poorly executed and this resulted in me hitting a tree and going over. I rolled back up and broke out, below the tree this time, and rejoined Tom, Helen and Paul on the bank soon after.

From the bank we watched a couple of slalomists paddle over the drop, it looked like the foam pile hit them in the chest quite hard, but I didn't notice this when I punched through it. Tom decided to run the drop again so got back in his boat, seal launched into the river, paddled off the lip and wave wheeled into the trough before breaking out. He rejoined us soon after on the walk back up for our final run.



Again, the four of us waited for the rafts to set off down the river. Three of them set off and disappeared quickly, but one was still left on the bank with its crew dilly-dallying around. So we risked it and got on ahead of it. We managed to get to the wave by the first bridge before it caught us up and went past at a great speed. I'm glad I was sat safely, tucked up at the side out of its way; I wouldn't have wanted to have had a full on collision with the raft - the guy wheeling his paddle in the front of the raft looked a bit out of control and dangerous!

We carried on down the course to the river wide stopper, safe in the knowledge that there were no rafts on a kamikaze mission to knock any of us into the fast moving water while playing.

After I had rolled while playing in this stopper we all carried on down to the next wave, then, after surfing here for a while, carried on down the river to the big drop and the get out. We might have stopped to surf a couple of other waves, but I can't remember.



After watching some more boats come over the lip and punch through the stopper and three playboaters spinning on the wave, which seemed to result in them being upside down, we headed back to the cars to get changed and head back along the A59 to Preston for tea and then later a quick drink in the Hand and Dagger.

### ***Iain Robinson***

P.S. I went back to the Washburn eleven days later with Tony Morgan, Helen James and Joanne Hacking and the day ran pretty much the same as on the Wednesday. However, this time we managed to fit in a full run down to the car park off the A59, by Fewston Reservoir. I quite enjoyed paddling the lower section, despite what people have told me about it. It was just a shame that we had to get changed in the pouring rain!



# Thank You



I guess by now that many of you are aware that 'The James Family' are moving. We shall be relocating to Teesside over the next couple of months. This made me realise that, as a parent I owe Ribble Canoe Club a very large thank you. Just over three years ago our timid, shy daughter asked to go on a canoe course with Scouts; little did I know then what an impact this would have on her and our lives.

So my first thanks goes to Brian Woodhouse, who, as Helen's scout leader, took her along to the beginners' course. Helen, who was not known for being adventurous or overly keen on sport, decided there and then that canoeing was for her.

Next my thanks go to Tom Byrne and his flat-water gang. They kindly took Helen out with them when she could only just manage to keep the club Rotobat in a straight line. Not only did they help her to gain her confidence, many helped out by donating equipment to her. We were quite happy to take her on the monthly outings; after all, what's one Sunday a month?

Then of course 'Uncle Terry' took her on his beginner's trips and encouraged her to try more challenging outings. So thanks Terry, that is still only two trips a month. Oh and by now she'd discovered Wednesday evenings at the Hand and Dagger, so that's the occasional

Wednesday evening and a couple of Sundays a month.

Next, along came Dave Ellison and his summer course. By this time Fiona had decided to give canoeing a go. So for numerous Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays we took them along to complete the training for their one star awards. Sadly Fiona's career end there, failing her one star was all too much. (She did finally pass it, in May this year). Helen, having passed both one and two star was ready for a new challenge. Thanks Dave for telling us about the moving water course at Halton Rapids. Having completed this, Dave kindly took her on her first proper river trip, and that was the end of normal weekends. So, many thanks to Tony Morgan, Martin Russell, John Kington and Grahame Coles who stole away even more of our Sundays.

However, having got through the following year's summer course and her three star award, things seemed to settle down. Two or three Sundays a month paddling, most Wednesday evenings during the summer on the canal, the occasional Friday night at the pool for rolling courses, messing about etc.

Next my thanks go to Peter Jones; he and Alex kindly took Helen down to Stafford for a mini-slalom event. I was quiet relaxed about this new discipline, I knew Helen wouldn't enjoy it! She's never been competitive, much too laid back, so I just knew it would not appeal to her! Well, OK it must have been the mug she won that day! So thanks to Sean Kearney who very kindly donated his slalom boat to her, Peter again who helped find a suitable replacement, and negotiated a good deal for her. To Mick Huddleston, who has tried desperately hard to foster a competitive edge in her at his Thursday evening training sessions. And to the Draper family for all their chauffeuring and encouragement.

So where are we now, that is almost every Sunday, Wednesday evening, Thursday evening and Friday night. There can't possibly be time for any more canoeing, can there?

Thanks then to Nikki Marsh, who entered our lives and introduced Helen to 'canoe polo'. A sport which, I have to say, terrifies me, I thought lacrosse was brutal! Nikki and Tony also organised Helen's four-star assessment, introduced her to more paddlers from Garstang and Clitheroe Canoe Clubs, and generally stole away whatever spare time we thought we had.

So now, as we get ready to move, we have replaced our reserved twelve year old and instead have a confident, outgoing, almost sixteen year old. And for that I owe every

member of Ribble Canoe Club an enormous thank you.

We shall of course continue our membership of the club, and I'm sure that Helen will still be joining you on many of your trips. However Wednesday evenings at The Hand and Dagger or Friday pool sessions will sadly be no more. You are all more than welcome to come and stay with us once we've found a home in the northeast. We hope to be based near Yarm, very close to the Tees Barrage.

And I know Helen is searching for volunteers to take her sea kayaking around the Farne Islands, next year.

***Barbara James***

## ***Chairman's Chat***

I'm still having problems e-mailing out, so if you're awaiting an e-reply from me you could get older before it arrives. I can receive OK, so include your telephone number if you need a reply.

The West Tanfield Camp went well apart from the lack of water. About fifteen members attended and plenty of sun, barbecue fuel and liquid feed kept things ticking over. Several members went over to Teesside and found water on Saturday but the Sunday Ure trip was cancelled. Much of the day was filled with measuring the distance between our tents to ensure separation of 7 metres – no more, no less - and thus the need was avoided to up sticks or hide in the undergrowth whenever the cycling superintendent popped by.

This week's competition is to identify a large leathery caterpillar which crawled across my groundsheet on Sunday afternoon. It had a forked tail and a large square (false) head with a yellow front and a red spot in the top two corners. A bright white narrow line ran up and down along each side. No, really.

There were several witnesses. The prize is a hanging helmet carried over from last edition's competition.

The River Courses went very well despite difficulties with the venue. Many thanks to Dave Ellison for organisation, and, of course, to all the instructors and assistants. There were about 50 boats on the river/canal/lake throughout the course – this must be a record.

By the time you're reading this (if you are) we have probably come back from Rhosneigr and will know how fantastic it was. The write-up won't be out until September, so if you want to know before then just how fantastic it was, you'd better come along – whoops, I think there's a Time And Relative Dimension In Space problem here.

See you around.

***Terry Maddock***

# ***Elwha River***

## ***Washington***

Do you ever do something then at that very instant think, 'NO!'... One of mine was turning the fan on in the car, which in turn released several pounds of dust, deposited in the ventilation ducting from the previous day's rally escapades to the campground. Coughing and choking, with the internal visibility dropping down to zero, I pulled over and got out.

Four weeks ago this had been an almost new white Escort, it looked like a 4 wheeled compost heap now. Close inspection of the inside as the dust cloud settled revealed a leaking bottle of sun tan lotion in the passenger foot well, mixing with several grades of soil and foliage. The driver's seat had stains of an unknown origin that looked similar to those found on the soft coverings of a retirement home. The rear carpet was stained red from a combination of a leaking Pepsi can and a cardboard box. Banana skins in various stages of fermentation complemented escaped popcorn, nachos and a lonely French fry seeking refuge in the concertina of the hand brake cover.

It could have been worse, the previous day a truly pathetic attempt at securing two boats to the roof nearly wrecked the bonnet. Rather than correct the obvious engineering flaws in attachment method we simply blessed it with the words, 'we are not going far', usually this sacred mantra works and has defied the laws of gravity on many occasions. To cut a long story short, both boats were travelling forward at the speed of the car independent of being attached to the roof. If the car deviated from this speed, i.e. slowed down they would simply keep moving, heading for the bonnet. What followed was a synchronised event that the Red Arrows would be proud of. Both front windows were opened whilst maintaining speed, then the brakes were

gently applied until the car came to a stop. The boats continued their forward trajectory, came free of the useless straps, and were just about to put a large dent in the damage collision waiver insurance, when we both reached out of the open windows with one hand to slow them and quickly slipped out of the door to halt further progress. It was the only time the two of us had managed to do anything in unison. As an aside to this I remembered a previous conversation regarding the use, and abuse, of rentals, related to paddling. Apparently in North America the companies get extremely upset if you do any damage to the roof. In Alaska though they don't care what damage you do to the roof as long as you don't crash into a moose. I guess size matters.

Remember the Elwah. This was another dam realise river that wasn't releasing, but it did conveniently run next to the camp site, coming extremely close to the road 2 miles further down stream.

An evening paddle was the objective, but before that erect the tent and read all these yellow warning signs. The signs all referred to animals that most civilised countries keep secured in a zoo. Apparently these beasties not only like to run wild around the local neighbourhood, but they view us outdoors types as a legitimate part of the food chain; worse than that they are looking down the chain when they do it. Luckily the forest service advises members of the menu on various ways of protecting themselves, this appears to involve various forms of running away, pretending to be asleep or, if that fails, unarmed combat. Strangely no mention is made of the high calibre weaponry most of us admire the Americans for. I read the information intently hoping that I would never need it, and wondered if, during an



attack, people confused their defensive actions and thus offended wild animals. Bored mountain lions, prodding hapless campers with a single claw, trying to chivvy them from a 'pretend to be asleep position' to a 'fight back aggressively'. With a laughing bear in the adjacent bush mouthing the word 'eejit'.

No sooner do I turn away from the noticeboard than I am confronted by a hairy four legged beastie, fortunately this is a deer and is not on the list. So I can confidently use the 'shoo, shoo' method to assert my mental and physical dominance over this dumb woodland creature, which I later find out has been helping itself to the contents of my unattended food store. Now who's the dummy?

Back to the boating, the camp lies within a park and an admission fee is paid at a roadside booth, this is where I will take out. I drive the car to the booth, scouting the only rapid I can see from the road on the way there. This mighty rapid must be all of grade II (graded chesty cough) and turns out to be the only real rapid of the trip. Leaving the boat at the campground I drive the car to the take out and I prepare to enlist my secret weapon to transport me the 2 miles back to the start, the magic thumb. However I notice that the current car at the pay booth is equipped with a canoe, he pays, moves on, I chase after him. He eventually stops and I breathlessly ask if we can be friends, does he want to paddle the Elwah and can he run shuttle. Please, please mister, go on mister, please. In a polite but firm way he says 'not a chance' to any of this tom foolery and any way he's only a beginner and surely I wasn't planning on paddling such big rapids alone, had I actually checked them from the road. At this point an involuntary puffing of the chest occurred and before I could stop myself I'd mumbled something about no worries, my ego was not only stroked it had been tickled under the chin.

As I strutted off, the thumb started itching to be released, and I thought I heard him say, 'be

careful'. No sooner was the transport mechanism released from the palm than a pick up truck was compelled to stop. A big finger on an equally big hand pointed into the open bed of the truck and on my second ungainly attempt I managed to climb aboard, banged on the roof and mouthed 'c-a-m-p-s-i-t-e' through the rear window. I looked, or so I thought, like Ben Hur in his chariot, wind in my hair, bugs in my eyes. Getting down from the truck at the campsite was as clumsy as my attempt to get in but I banged the truckside confidently as if I was giving some international symbol to move on, chocks away.

On with the paddling paraphernalia, in the boat, and bump, bump, scrape, bump. This was like paddling in England; I abraded my way down the riverbed until the water became a little more channelled. I eddied out at a small surf wave on a bend and was happily playing when I noticed a movement in the corner of my eye on the opposite bank. There it was, 'large as bloody life,' a cougar, taking a drink, now what did that yellow sign say? The cougar looked up and walked back into the trees, just as well for me it had because I wasn't really in the mood for wrestling. Now was it just me or would you then spend the rest of the trip wondering...

- A. Are there any more,
- B. Can they swim,
- C. Do they like plastic wrapped pre packaged food?

Coming from a nation that considers a wasp a dangerous animal this really impressed me, I'd actually seen the star of the warning sign.

The roadside rapid I'd seen earlier turned out to be great fun, breaking in, out and ferrying, but there was little else like it before the take out. I loaded the car and I was about to leave when I saw the canoe man, gathering wood, and gave him the thumbs, he shouted back 'you made it then, that was quick'. This time I suppressed the puffing chest thing, got in the car and headed home. Back at camp I was relaying the cougar thing to a fellow camper

who was asking about my day, he confessed that in the twenty years he'd been in the area he hadn't been lucky enough to see one. That chest-puffing thing started again but was soon deflated by his next gem of information. After telling him I'd just paddled the river alone, he too started the 'including the roadside rapid' song. I was just about to answer when he asked how far up the road past the campsite had I got in.

'What?'

'The big rapid, upstream from here.'

Later that night I walked up the valley and found a rapid that you could puff your chest out over. A fifty-yard stretch of boulder choked, quickly descending gorge. Hmmm.

Next day I drove past the canoe guy on my way out of the park and he gave me the sort of wave that Spitfire pilots would get as they headed off to battle with Jerry, one lesser mortal acknowledging someone made of the sterner stuff, the real thing, true grit. I felt my foot press the accelerator a little harder as a sheepishly half waved back. What a spanner I had been.

**Tony Morgan**

# ***Ullswater Camp***

***19th - 21st August***

The camp takes place at Waterside House camp site, on the shores of Ullswater, about a mile and a half south of Pooley Bridge, on the Eastern shore of the lake. The club will congregate in the 2nd field (the big one over the hill.)

Some will arrive on Friday night and probably walk along the lakeside path to Pooley Bridge for refreshments as it becomes dusk. The late arrivals appear on Saturday morning, when your choice of fun is only

limited by what you bring with you, or can borrow - cycle, walk, sail, canoe, BBQ, wind surf or what ever.

On Sunday there is a canoe trip down the nearby River Eden, an easy grade river down a picturesque valley, one of the "must do" local rivers. Come along and join us.

**Steve Wilkinson**

## ***For Sale***

### **Dagger Blast**

Excellent general purpose boat for smaller paddlers

Good condition with drainage plug

**£200**

### **Double Dutch Boomerang slalom boat**

Cut down to suit light/middle weight paddler

With new gel coat on bottom.

Light, fast and dry

**£150**

### **Set of Ainsworth Paddles**

Good for all round use inc. polo  
Length 197.5cm, great condition

**£40**

### **River Buoyancy Aid**

Adjustable

Gives shoulder and side protection

**£20**

**Alex Jones**

# ***Washburn***

## ***Sunday 12/06/05***

This was listed as a 'full release' which seemed to make the course easier, less rocks just below the surface to trip you up and the drop in the middle had more of a wave than a stopper. Not much interest in the trip from Ribble paddlers but when we arrived the car park was almost full, and the river was, as usual, busy.

Rafts added to the traffic and you had to question the ability of some of the guides, many collided with the trees, we saw one guide and several clients fall out and multiple collisions with the riverbank. If you are only used to being around Welsh rafters then give these guys a wide berth, they are not quite in the same league.

Our paddling group was made up of Iain Robinson, Jo Hacking and Helen James, I hung around downstream trying to keep an eye on things. The parents/drivers walked the river bank with cameras and throwlines and Dave Hull also showed up to take pictures.

As it turned out I had a quiet day, the 'Bash Street Kids' got on with it, in between surfing, eddy hopping and hole playing they helped rescue other paddlers and stray gear while keeping an eye on each other. They all looked comfortable on this level of water and seemed to be having fun, keep it up.

***Tony Morgan***

## ***Rescue/Rolling Clinic***

Got a dodgy roll?  
Want to learn or improve your rescues?  
Hopeless support strokes?  
Need some Help?

As a trial this autumn we will be putting on a rolling/rescue clinic. The session is aimed at those who can roll or do the basic rescues having completed either the summer course or the rolling course, but recognise that they need help to improve technique. If this is you then read on. If you can't roll and want to, then you need to sign up on Bob's rolling course (check the pool calendar), there really won't be enough time during this session.

The session is really about you developing a skill, so you need to identify what you want to work on at time of booking. Pre booking is

essential, and numbers will be restricted hence the very reasonable rate of £5 per person.

Some ideas:

- Exit and re-entry with boat upright.
- Support Strokes
- Sculling
- Eskimo Rescues
- Rolling improvement
- Boat carries
- Swimmer canoe rescues
- X/H rescues

***Dave Ellison***



# ***Presentation Night***



**Wednesday 7th September, 7:30 for 8pm, Hand & Dagger, Salwick**

Did you pass a star award on the Alston River Course this summer?

Would you like to celebrate your award in style?

Would you like to know what all those people you paddled with really look like when they're dry and properly dressed?

If so, make a note in your diary NOW and don't miss the River Course Presentation Night.

Enjoy an evening out with good food and drink, good company, and be presented with your award by our...

Surprise Special Guest!

## ***What about more awards?***

I am trying find if there is enough interest to organise further BCU training courses for Open Canoe (1-3 star) and Kayaking (1-4 star). Course prices will vary dependant on the award but will be similar to those currently charged by Ribble Canoe Club. If you are interested in any of these courses, or others such as Canoe Safety Test, or would

like any further training please contact me with your requirements, any preferred dates, and contact details. I will gather names and numbers and try to supply a calendar of possible dates.

***Tony Morgan***

# ***Ribble CC Library***

To borrow a book or video, just ring Clive Robinson or see him at the Hand & Dagger. Donations of books or videos are always welcome.

## ***Technique:***

### ***General technique***

#### **BCU Handbook**

*Franco Ferrero*

#### **The Practical Guide to Kayaking and Canoeing**

*Bill Mattos, Andy Middleton*

#### **Canoeing & Kayaking**

*Marcus Bailie*

#### **Kayak**

*William (not Bill) Nealy*

#### **The Bombproof Roll and Beyond!**

*Paul Dutky*

#### **Eskimo Rolling for Survival**

*Derek Hutchinson.*

#### **White Water Safety & Rescue**

*Franco Ferrero*

#### **Weir Wisdom**

*Donated by Terry Maddock*

#### **Rapids**

*Tim Parkes*

*Donated by Graham Coles*

### ***Playboating***

#### **The Playboater's**

#### **Handbook**

*Ken Whiting*

### ***Sea Kayaking***

#### **The Complete Book of Sea**

#### **Kayaking**

*Derek C. Hutchinson*

#### **Sea Kayak Navigation**

*Franco Ferrero*

### ***Open Canoeing***

#### **Path of the Paddle**

*Bill Mason, Paul Mason*

#### **Canoeing**

*Laurie Gullion*

#### **Open Canoe Technique**

*Nigel Foster*

## ***Guidebooks:***

#### **English White Water**

*Franco Ferrero*

#### **Scottish White Water**

*Andy Jackson*

#### **White Water Lake**

#### **District**

*Stuart Miller*

#### **An Atlas of the English**

#### **Lakes**

*John Parker*

## ***Expeditions:***

#### **Travels with a Kayak**

*Whit Descher*

#### **On Celtic Tides**

*Chris Duff*

#### **Blazing Paddles: A Scottish Coastal Odyssey**

*Brian Wilson*

#### **Dancing with Waves: Around Ireland by Kayak**

*Brian Wilson*

#### **Paddling to Jerusalem**

*David Aaronovitch*

#### **The Last River**

*Todd Balf*

#### **Paddle to the Arctic**

*Don Starkey*

#### **Canoeing across Canada**

*Gary & Joanie McGuffin*

#### **The Canoe Boys**

*Sir Alastair Dunnnett*

#### **Odyssey among the Inuit**

*Jonathan Waterman*

## ***General:***

#### **The Rough Guide to Weather**

*Robert Henson*

#### **The Liquid Locomotive**

*John Long (ed)*

#### **Many Rivers to Run**

*Dave Manby*

#### **Norwegian rivers**

*Donated by Jane Bentham*

## ***Videos / DVDs***

#### **Tony Morgan in the Grand Canyon (DVD)**

#### **LVM Lunch Video Magazine (DVD)**

#### **Liffey Descent (V)**

#### **Deliverance (V)**

#### **Extreme Sports Canoeing (V)**

#### **A Taste of White Water (V)**

#### **Wicked Water 2(V)**

#### **Ribble Newsletters (CD)**

#### **Drill Time (V)**

*Donated by Terry Maddock*

Solo Canoe Playboating

# ***Pool sessions***

The following lists the pool sessions booked at Fulwood Leisure Centre, the contact for the courses and the lifeguard on duty for each session. All sessions are Friday 9:00pm – 10:00pm.

DATE	SESSION	CONTACT	SUPERVISOR
Sept 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Open	N/A	Terry Maddock
Sept 9 <sup>th</sup>	Rescue/Rolling clinic	Dave Ellison	Clive Robinson
Sept 16 <sup>th</sup>	Beginners	Tom Byrne	Allan Hacking
Sept 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Beginners	Tom Byrne	Mark Loftus
Sept 30 <sup>th</sup>	Beginners	Tom Byrne	Mark Green
Oct 7 <sup>th</sup>	Open	N/A	John Kington
Oct 14 <sup>th</sup>	Polo	Jacky Draper	Terry Maddock
Oct 21 <sup>st</sup>	Polo	Jacky Draper	Clive Robinson
Oct 28 <sup>th</sup>	Polo	Jacky Draper	Allan Hacking
Nov 4 <sup>th</sup>	Rescue/Rolling clinic	Dave Ellison	Mark Loftus
Nov 11 <sup>th</sup>	Open	N/A	Mark Green
Nov 18 <sup>th</sup>	Rolling course	Bob Smith	John Kington
Nov 25 <sup>th</sup>	Rolling course	Bob Smith	Terry Maddock
Dec 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Rolling course	Bob Smith	Clive Robinson
Dec 9 <sup>th</sup>	Flat water rescue session	Dave Ellison	Allan Hacking
Dec 16 <sup>th</sup>	Open	N/A	Mark Loftus
Dec 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Open	N/A	Mark Green

Prices: Beginners Course £20, Rolling Course £15 (both plus club membership).  
Rescue/Rolling clinic £5. All other sessions £3.

Please book in advance for the Beginners and Rolling Courses and the Rescue/Rolling clinic by phoning the named contact.

## ***Free Kayak Rack***

Wall mounted kayak rack, hold 3 boats, 5ft wide, extends out 2ft, bit rusty but solid. Free to a good home!

***Tony Morgan***

## ***Editor's bit***

### **Dates and deadlines**

The next committee meeting will be on  
September 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 at the Hand & Dagger.  
The next newsletter will be published on

September 20<sup>th</sup>. All submissions to me by  
Saturday September 17<sup>th</sup> at the latest please.

***Martin Stockdale***  
[secretary@ribblecanooclub.co.uk](mailto:secretary@ribblecanooclub.co.uk)





Other	Junior Polo	Ladies Polo	Mens Polo	Advanced Slalom	Beginners Slalom	Canoe Surfing	Open Canoeing	Sea Trips	Advanced River Trips	Intermediate River Trips	Beginners River Trips	Lake Trips	Fiat Water & Lake Trips	Social Events	Hand & Dagger Keyholder	Lifeguard	Instructor or Coach	Canoe Courses	Agreements	General Information Access	Committee	Area of Interest		
																						Contact	Telephone	
Christmas Party (Debbie)								✓							✓		✓					Andy & Debbie Dowe		
Rolling Course																		✓					Bob Smith	
										✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	Memb. Secretary		Brian Woodhouse	
Website													✓										Chris & Janet Porter	
Library, Training Coordinator																					✓		Clive Robinson	
Summer Course									✓	✓							✓	✓		✓	✓		Dave Ellison	
																	✓	✓			✓		Grahame Coles	
			✓												✓								Ian McCreerie	
	✓				✓																✓		Jacky Draper	
													✓			✓				✓	Hon. Treasurer		John Kington	
																					✓		Mark Loftus	
											✓				✓					✓	Hon. Secretary, Newsletter		Martin Stockdale	
			✓	✓																			Mick Huddlestan	
						✓		✓		✓													Nick Pope & Sam Turner	
		✓															✓						Nicky Marsh	
				✓	✓										✓				✓	✓	✓		Peter Jones	
									✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	Quartermaster		Steve Swarbrick	
						✓		✓		✓						✓			✓	✓			Steve Wilkinson	
					✓						✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	Hon. Chairman, Calendar		Terry Maddock	
										✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓		Tim Langridge	
d'Ribbler's Award (swim reports)													✓		✓					✓	✓		Tom Byrne	

# CALENDAR

Last minute trips organised at Hand & Dagger (Weds, 6:30pm onwards) or Fulwood Leisure Centre (Fri, 9:00pm).  
If you have any dates for the calendar please contact **Terry Maddock**

Ribble CC development trips are in **bold**.

Ribble CC recreational events (assumed risk) are in ***bold italic***.

Other Ribble CC events are in *italic*.

Events in normal type are external events advertised for information only.

River information:

Burrs 0161 764 9649  
www.activity-centre.freeserve.co.uk  
Canolfan Tryweryn 01678 520826  
www.welsh-canoeing.org.uk  
Tees Barrage 01642 678000  
www.4seasons.co.uk  
Washburn 0845 833 8654  
http://www.bcu.org.uk/yorkshire  
Wharfe  
http://www.bcu.org.uk/yorkshire

## Trips / Events

### July

- 22-24 **Rhosneigr Surf Camp**  
**Rhosneigr, Anglesey**  
**Tim Langridge**
- 24 Tees Barrage  
Stockton on Tees 10.00 - 4.00
- 24 Washburn White Water  
8.00 -6.00pm, nr Blubberhouses
- 27 Washburn White Water  
4.30 -8.00pm, nr Blubberhouses
- 31 ***Greta White Water***  
***R Greta, Keswick, Cumbria***  
***Grahame Coles***

### August

- 7 **R. Rothay Beginners' Trip**  
**Grasmere to Waterhead**  
**or, if no water...**  
**Wyre Estuary Trip (HT13.36)**  
**Knott End, Over Wyre**  
**Terry Maddock**

7 Washburn White Water  
9.00 - 5.00pm, nr Blubberhouses

17 Washburn White Water  
4.30 -8.30pm, nr Blubberhouses

**19-21 Ullswater Camp**  
**Waterside House, S of Pooley Br.**  
**Steve Wilkinson**

21 ***Flat Water Trip***  
***Wastwater***  
***Tom Byrne***

28 ***Washburn White Water***  
***9.00 - 5.00pm, nr Blubberhouses***  
***Grahame Coles***

### September

- 3/4 **Beginners' Trip to Marple**  
**nr Stockport Div 3 & 4 Slalom**  
**Terry Maddock**
- 6 *Ribble CC Committee Meeting*  
*Hand & Dagger, 7:30pm*  
*Martin Stockdale*
- 7 Washburn White Water  
4.00 - 8.00pm, nr Blubberhouses
- 10/11 Anglesey Sea Kayak Trip**  
**(Depending on weather)**  
**Stuart Withnall**
- 15 *Summer course presentation*  
*Hand & Dagger, 8pm*
- 17 *Closing date for newsletter*
- 18 ***Flat Water Trip***  
***Leeds/L'pool Canal, west Lancs.***  
***Tom Byrne***
- 24/25 ***Anglesey Sea Kayak Trip***  
***(Alternate date if weather***  
***unsuitable on 10/11 September)***  
***Stuart Withnall***

25 Washburn White Water  
9.00 - 5.00pm, nr Blubberhouses

### October

- 2 **Lune Estuary Trip (HT12.09)**  
**Halton-Glasson Dock**  
**Terry Maddock**
- 9 Washburn White Water  
9.00 - 5.00pm, nr Blubberhouses
- 9 R. Wharfe Moving Water Trip  
Hebden to Barden (near Skipton)
- 16 R. Wharfe Moving Water Trip  
Hebden to Barden (near Skipton)
- 16 ***Flat Water Trip***  
***Ennerdale, N.Lakes***  
***Tom Byrne***

### Slalom

Please see [www.canoeslalom.co.uk](http://www.canoeslalom.co.uk) for event details and to confirm dates.

### September

- 3/4 Marple 3/4  
Marple, nr Stockport
- 17/18 Bala Mill 3/4  
Bala, N. Wales
- 24/25 West Tanfield 3/4  
Sleningford Mill, W Yorks

### October

- 16 Stone 3/4  
Stafford