

# TALES FROM THE RIVERBANK



*July/August 2015*

## ***RCC Fun Day***

***Pat Green***



There were 50+ attended this event. It was a super day with all levels of abilities and of age mixing together and generally having fun, in a variety of boats, including a coracle and an inflatable kayak. This has recently been donated to the club. The day was rounded off with a BBQ. Below are a selection of photos taken by David Sutton, it gives an essence of what a fabulous day it was.





It took a boy to show a man how to paddle a coracle without falling in!



*BBQ on the shore a perfect end to a prefect RCC Fun Day*

# ***Fun Day Part 2***

## ***Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2015***

***Graham Kingaby***

This is an early notice for the beginners trip in September I have arranged for Go Canoeing to join us at Coniston on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September they are going to bring their fleet of demo boats down for us all to try.

They have River running, creeking, playboats, crossovers, recreational touring, sea kayaks, canoes, SUP boards, Sit on tops. If there is a boat you would like to try then put a post on the forum on the "Beginners Trip 19<sup>th</sup> September" and I will see if they can get it there for the day.

If you are new to canoeing/kayaking or just thinking of getting a new boat this will be a superb opportunity for you to try a number of boats if you are thinking of coming please post below. As the fun day on the 4<sup>th</sup> July was such a success I am going to say we make this a BBQ / new boat day along the lines of the fun day.

Keep your eye on the post on the forum as I will put more information up as we get it.

***Graham Kingaby***



# ***Loch Awe Challenge***

I had booked a couple of days B and B at the very obliging Ford House at the foot of Loch Awe en-route to Skye.

Day 1 Sat 16th May. Launched at Torran Bay (who logged me on and off the water) and along the West shore to the small village of Dalavich in winds which reached F4-F5 and provided interesting waves and surf. The return by the Eastern shore was no less interesting, at times being difficult to see through hailstones and heavy rain or make progress. A group from Cheshire, some in open canoes had earlier found it difficult to proceed due to swamped craft and abandoned after an hour on the water. They are due to re-visit in September! Distance for the day. 29km.

Day 2 Sun 17th May. I Started at Loch Awe Boat Hire Centre. Their strong tea and Bacon "butties" helped the day to a good start. In winds at F3-F4, I was able to follow the Eastern shore and make a lively crossing to Davalich and a welcome stop before a return to the Centre, sheltering and surfing en-route. Distance. 30 km.

Day 3 Mon 18th May. From the Hire Centre, Northwards in milder conditions with blue patches in the sky, winds at F2 and fresh snow on Cruachan. Short lived hope for better day did not last long, the views soon obscured by hailstones and heavy rain. Slowly Kilchurn came into view and a plod against the flow of River Lochy to the railway bridge and a short play in the waves before returning to the hire centre via the Islands and North Port. Distance 25 km. A circuit for the loch of some 85 km.

A single end to end journey of Loch Awe, Lake Windermere and Lake Bala is one of the Go Canoeing challenges by Canoe England and best undertaken in groups or with a support party. Conditions were poor for this journey and certainly worthy of a Challenge status.

***Peter Roscoe***

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

It only seems like days ago I was writing my last rambling for the newsletter and from looking in the diary and on the Forum, the pace of action within the club has been frantic.

Tuesday evenings have been busy with 1 and 2 star courses running. These courses have been well attended and have continued throughout the summer with more to be held later on in the year. Potential members have visited us on most Tuesdays culminating in 'Come Try It' sessions. These are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month and must be pre-booked to ensure that there are enough coaches and helpers to run the session successfully. To book, email [chairman@ribblecanoecub.co.uk](mailto:chairman@ribblecanoecub.co.uk).

Many of the Come and Paddle Triers have joined the club over the summer and are doing one star courses or are waiting to go on the next available courses.

As well as the 1 and 2 star courses, the 3 star canoe course finished last Saturday with Amanda Spavin, Naomi Wicks, Will Body and Paul Binks all passing with flying colours.

A big thank you must go to all the coaches who give up many hours of their precious time to run the courses for no personal gain apart from the satisfaction of passing on their skills to others.

As usual, we will be having our presentation evening which will take place on the 13<sup>th</sup> October at the Hand and Dagger with a guest speaker and followed by a Shepherd's Pie Supper.

Once again the club members have been busy entering competitions and more are advertised on the Forum for July and August. Alan Blackburn, as Competition Secretary, has led the charge in the Competitions Department taking part in the Hilbre Island race and also the Conway Ascent and The York River Race.

Club members have taken part in the York River Race with good results from Alan Blackburn, Stuart Williams, Peter Roscoe, Mags Brayfield and Paula Sharples.

The Windermere Solstice Race was also attended by club members, Amanda Spavin took First place in the Ladies Kayak short course, and Sarah Whelan was second. Albert and Kath also got First place in the short course canoe.

The Fun Day was held at Coniston and was well attended with over 40 members and family, friends and past members attending. The weather was kind and the BBQ was great fun. All sorts of craft were available to paddle which included inflatable kayaks, double kayaks, canoes, kayaks and even a coracle. I counted over 40 boats and with members and guest the head count was over 50.

Trips have been held throughout the North West and reports on these are available on the Forum and in the Newsletter.

Still to come this summer are the Rhosneigr and Bala camps - all the details are available on the Forum.

I watch with interest the new fad which appears to culminate after months of endeavours in the garages, with the launching of wooden sea kayaks by Graham Eccles, Kevin and Steven Singleton. These boats are absolutely beautifully built and are a credit to the owner builders of these craft. I don't have the patience to build one of these and if I did any passing wolf would blow it to pieces with one light huff and puff.

### **Now the boring but important bit.**

1. When anyone is running a trip whether Coaching, Assumed Risk, or Club Paddle please can you check on the participants' medical fitness and paddling abilities to ensure a safe and happy trip. This should be a standard part of the briefing.
2. At the pool helmets should be worn. The club will be providing extra helmets at the pool for trainees and new members without their own.
3. Anyone taking part in club trips and training should also be wearing helmets unless otherwise directed by the trip leader.

Numbers at the pool have been very variable and at committee it was discussed whether at all sessions the participants should have to book on these sessions (on a similar system to the Paddle Skills Sessions). It was thought this may focus attendance and ensure the pool sessions are well attended.

Any views on the above matters would be welcome. Please come and let me have your views at the Hand and Dagger or via the email.

The autumn pool sessions will start in September and the sessions are on the forum under the “Pool Sessions” Category. If you are a pool Supervisor or Committee member who does pool duty then please read the article that follows my chat.

**Any members who have done the Foundation Rescue Safety Training are able to be included on the pool supervisors roll and to that end we are looking for more volunteers. Please.**

My usual thanks must go to all the members, committee and coaches who have helped with all the activities in the club. Without their efforts the club would not be the busy, instructive, friendly and fun club I am proud to be a member of.

**Club Contact list** - This is a new Category on the forum in the members’ area. It is a PDF file that you can download and view/print. It will be amended as and when necessary.

I will let you now get back to the rest of the newsletter for the interesting bits.

See you on/in the water.

***Matt***

## ***Pool Rota - Supervisors and Committee***

There have been times in the past when the nominated supervisor and/or committee member has not advised John until a couple of days before that they will not be available to attend on the Friday or worse still not turned up for their duty.

As part of our use of Fulwood Leisure Centre we must provide a supervisor and committee member for each RCC Pool Session. If we do not do this we are in breach of contract and could have the facility withdrawn – none of us want it to get to this. To minimise the chance of similar incidents we would appreciate Supervisors and Committee checking that you are available on the date(s) you have been allocated. If you know you will not be available please contact other members who are listed and try to arrange to swap your dates. Once you have done this please post the amendments on the forum under “Pool Sessions” the pool rota will then be amended to reflect the changes. If you can’t arrange a swap then contact John Hooper on 07823550907, (a text will do), who will try to help. To minimise the chance of you forgetting to turn up I suggest you put the date(s) you are on duty in your diary/calendar. John will normally text or email you a day or two in advance to remind you.

There will of course be emergencies when someone will be unable to turn up at the pool for reasons beyond their control and possibly quite late in the day for a replacement to be found. In this case ring John Hooper, he will deal with the emergency by trying to find a late replacement or at least advising the other person attending on the club’s behalf that someone will not be coming as planned and asking if they can find a replacement from one of those members attending the session as a participant.

# ***Adventures on water in 2014***

***Gillian Woodhouse***

I am a member of the Ribble Canoe Club, therefore I canoe but I am the first to admit my canoeing is very low key, Fulwood Leisure centre, lakes and canals.

It is though good exercise however low key it may be as I canoe about 18 times a year. In the leisure centre in winter it is a very pleasant way to canoe when it is cold and wet out there. There is also the opportunity to practise strokes, capsizes etc. and in my case because my sit on is rather flirty and tends to float off when approached, practise in catching it and swimming with it or trying to get back on. This is only possible with nights with few people there but they do happen.

The canals are lovely to paddle on in beautiful weather, to watch the wildlife, the swans and ducks going about their affairs. It was on the Lancaster Canal near Preston when a swan came flying towards me, wings out, feet down, and what big wings and feet they are before it settled on the canal and I paddled quietly past, not an experience I want to repeat. In November I paddled with the Ribble from Tarleton to Rufford. There we met the swing bridges which meant limboing or getting out. Some did the limbo, I got out. Brian the first time said he would shepherd my sit on through, but it did not cooperate, kept going in the wrong direction. He managed it and carried it round after that. We stopped for lunch at Rufford near where our camper van was parked, fortunately as I fell in trying to get back on the sit on after lunch and discovered I had put too much in my waterproof bag and everything got wet. Fortunately my camera and mobile were undamaged not drowned but my daughter got a shock when I rang her to check it was working and told her why.

Brian and I went on the Club trips to Bala and loch Ken where we were lucky to have beautiful weather. It was very pleasant to paddle, just looking at the glorious scenery and bimbly around. We drove to Threave Castle at the bottom of Loch Ken and there used the ferry to get to the castle. As many Ribblers who have been to Mull and Skye know, ferries vary from the little one to Threave Castle upwards



Lake Bala



Me on Loch Ken

It was while touring Scotland in June that we went on the ferry from Ardrossan to Brodick on the Isle of Arran. This was what you think of as a ferry with space in the hold for vehicles, lounges and a cafe upstairs. However on leaving Arran we went from Lochranza to Kintyre on a smaller one where we climbed up steep steps from the hold and could look down on the vehicles and discovered our camper has some green on top when it should be white



Threave Castle Ferry



Ardrossan to Brodrick ferry

It was in April that we went to Scotland to see the Falkirk wheel. This magnificent piece of engineering links the Union Canal with the Forth and Clyde canal 35 metres below replacing a flight of 11 locks stretching 1.5km which was dismantled in 1933, at that time severing the canals. It is the world's first and only rotating boat lift. It serves the same purpose as the Anderton lift but works on different principles. Of course we went on the trip boat from the bottom level, our boat lifted high in the air and then along the canal for a short trip through a tunnel before it turned round and took us back. The views were magnificent, the commentary excellent. There is also a visitor's centre with food, facilities, souvenirs and a large car park.

***Falkirk Wheel***

Brian and I went on a cruise in May to Spain and France. This was on Fred Olsen's Bouddicca, not one of the huge cruise ships but it looks big when you see her on her own. There is something very pleasant about sitting in a Jacuzzi with the bubbles swishing round on the back of a boat somewhere in the ocean. I also spent time in the swimming pool, until the boat lurched a little and the pool swished about. That does not happen at Fulwood. One of the highlights of the cruise was a trip organised by the cruise company to the Green Venice area of France, an hour's drive from La Rochelle. This area was criss crossed by canals and waterways and we went on a punt with a boatman. Some of the boatmen sat and paddled and some stood and poled. We were told there was lots of wildlife, but being used to the many on the Lancaster canal, I was disappointed to not see any. We were told there was a problem with escaped coypus, I think though it may have been some other fur bearing mammal, which are breeding. It was a beautiful area and a lovely trip. We stopped at one point as did the punt in front of us and then the boatmen started to stir up the water with their poles. After a few minutes one of them got out a lighter and set fire to the marsh gas he had released and we had flames licking round the bottom of the punt.



I had been told there is a transporter bridge at Bilboa so when the Bouddicca moored that was what I wanted to see. We soon found the Vizcaya Bridge at Getxo at the mouth of the Nervian River. It was built in 1893 and is the world's oldest transporter bridge. It carries people and vehicles in a cradle suspended from the bridge from one side of the river to the other.



**Transporter Bridge**



**Cradle**

September saw us going on a trip on a Mersey ferry from Wallasey to Manchester, being brought back to Wallasey by coach. The weather was glorious and watching the bridges swing open in front of us was fascinating, then looking behind and seeing them close again. We also had the bridge pointed out to us that carries the Bridgewater canal. We went through quite a few locks, looking at the sides of the lock as the ferry rose to the next level and then the gates opened. I have driven over Thelwell viaduct very many times. It was a new experience to glide under it, looking at the motorway traffic crossing above us.



**Mersey ferry**

We were lucky with the weather on all our trips and very much enjoyed them. There is more for 2015 but that is another article.

**Gill Woodhouse**

# Summer Solstice

**Pat Green**



*Another enjoyable RCC outing with the added bonus of prizes.*

The event was spread over a weekend with camping at Fell Foot for those who wanted to stay for both days.



*1<sup>st</sup> Lady Kayak Amanda Spavin. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lady Kayak Sara Whelan.*

Their time (excluding river racers) would have put them in 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> place What a result, especially given Sarah only started paddling a few months ago.





***2nd Open boat Kath & Albert Risely.***

Peter Roscoe competed in the Short Course, Graham Eccles, Brian Hull Amanda Spavin, Paul Binks & David Cardwell competed in the Long Course on Saturday, they all did well but did not win any prizes

It was a good event with trade stand and demo boats to have a go in. Norman & myself had better sense (we have done enough competing in our younger days) we just soaked up the sunshine and atmosphere. Had a paddle in our sea boats with Roy & Sue Garriock and tried out one of the new designs of river racer. All I can say is they would go amazingly fast in a straight line but as soon as you slowed down they became unstable.



Couldn't resist including the photo below of Albert taken by Dave Sutton"



Someone commented "has someone pulled the plug on him"



## ***Teeside or, "it only counts if yer chin gets wet!"***

***Adam Fielder***



"Eard yer doing Teeside on Saturday, it's nowt, I've seen it on YouTube, I'm coming with you" said Stan. "Don't call me Chewbacca in any articles either! People were laughing at me!" And as tick follows tock, once again the story continues...

The sun was shining, the water was warm, the Captain was late, he blamed it on Paula, he was babysitting. Anyway our intrepid group was 5 paddlers and 1 photographer in total. We changed in the car park even though there was changing rooms, I think this was because Stan wanted to show off his new cag, it was a Goodyear, I wanted to show off my sunbed tan and the Captain just likes getting undressed in public areas.

We warmed up on the lake whilst Stan told us about the safest lines to follow from his recall of YouTube White-water. We then stalled a bit, followed by some faffing, a couple of jokes, a moan about whether the Captain will arrive at all - but never mind, in true 'Band of Brothers' style we said "stuff him" and we were off!

Fish first, Stan, me and Stuart a nice bimble down the course, sunlight reflecting off the water, birds whistling in the trees, the scent of freshly cut grass, the cascading, swirling waters and the boom of Stan's expletives echoing through the rapids.

Stan's master plan of straight down the middle staying square on to any waves, lean forward and it can't go wrong. Well you know what they say about the best laid plans, mice n men an all that - we'll return to that one later.

The first run was a clear one for all our paddlers, there was a few empty boats bobbing in the final rapid, Acid Drop, with a few bewildered boaters jogging around the perimeter pathway - as true gentlemen we returned them their boats in-between flirting with the all-female rafting party, Fish was on form.



Stan having completed 1 clear run must have been bitten by a radioactive spider or been bathed in gamma radiation from all the sunlight or something as he was now slowly transforming into his alter ego, Superstan. "When will the Captain be here? I'd better guide him down the course, show him the ropes n all that".

Everyone was confident so we did it all again, it was a bit of Groundhog Day, another clear run followed by rescuing other paddlers boats. Stan was showing us his 'Backbarrow Bruiser' sticker on his boat, telling us about his paddling exploits and war stories, he was even considering having a large S embroidered on his chest at this point. At the top of the conveyor belt we bumped into the Captain who was attempting to chat up a raft full of women, once again, old men behaving badly!

Stan interrupted, the ladies paddled off into the sunset and the Captain blamed us all for cramping his style. "I'm gonna guide you down Captain, don't worry, just follow me. Right Adam, you just paddle down in front of me, its easy peasy this."





We hammered down, yet again it looked like another clear run. We entered the large eddy at the bottom, "where's Stuart?" I said as I was emptying another paddler's boat. "He swimming" said the Captain. "Stuart never swims" I said, "well he must be walking on water then, cos that boat yer emptying is his!" At that exact moment, Stuart appeared, standing on the wall, scratching his head, bearing an uncanny resemblance to Stan Laurel.

Ah well, first swim of the day, the tide was turning. Stuart said, "you know that little, tiny eddy above Cruncher Rapid, it was a bit too tiny, well one thing led to another and sort of... Y'know, splash n yer in!"

We were rapidly entering Pete Tong territory, all the walls had the writing on and Stuart decided that we all wanted to surf in the Happy Eater wave. I went in, Stan watched, Stuart went in, Stan watched, Fish went in, Stan watched - at this point Stan decided to manoeuvre his Ark Royal side on into the play wave...

It always gets me, why are they all called play waves? Trust me, Stan didn't look like he was playing, he wasn't even smiling and the sound emanating from the hole in Happy Eater was very reminiscent of the breathing exercises my ex Mrs. had to complete when in labour with my daughter. Anyway I'm drifting off from the story, it had a happy ending in true Zannusi style for Stan, following his rinse, repeat cycle he emerged from the wave, followed by the Ark Royal a few seconds later. In true Stan style he got flushed 5m back before finding his feet, to stand and utter his very immortal witty comeback (if Carlsberg made immortal witty comebacks, it wasn't to be this one)...

"Don't stand there Stan! Swim behind the island!"

Too late, he stood up, bang centre above the rapid after Happy Eater...

And thereofff!



Yeeeeheeee! I'm Baaaddd!  
Stan squeezing his crotch  
and doing the moonwalk  
down the Tees Barrage.

Stan's feet were ripped from beneath him and like a 7ft rag doll Michael Jackson impersonator he moonwalked backwards down the course towards Cruncher Rapid. I followed him closely, he made several attempts to grab the loop of my boat, not a good idea, I believe in Save the Whale but not the Stan. I directed him to the eddy behind the island, a good, self-rescue swim. Stan was smug now and even considering the purchase of a cape to match his new persona.

Well Stan was being impressive, performing well and booming with confidence, remember earlier, the best laid plans of mice, men n all that? Well just as you thought it's safe to get back in the water, along comes the Fish...

Another great run, we were stonking down, all macho like, imagine the Magnificent Seven theme tune playing in the background, it was all SAS and Dambusters like.



No problems, I nailed through the corner of Acid Drop, eddy right, looked back, Stuart shot through like an Exocet, followed by the Capt who shot off the drop like Evel Knievel jumping the Grand Canyon - but then things suddenly took a change for the worse...

Directly behind us Fish does an emergency dead stop in the hole of Acid Drop rapid, the nose of his boat rose to sixty degrees just like the titanic and he slowly reversed even deeper back into the hole (at this point I'd change the theme tune to the Laurel and Hardy one if I was you). Anyway I digress, Fish and his Pawlata roll have been very solid of late and whilst he was being thrashed in the turbulent washing machine like hole he calmly set up his paddle wrestling against the current to begin the execution of a planned perfect roll... Meanwhile somewhere else on the course...

Unbeknownst to the Fish, 20m behind him, was a 6ft 6' 18 stone snorting paddler with a big S on his chest and a cape flowing in the wind, hammering through the white-water with the Ride of the Valkyries music booming through his head.



Stan saw Fish's upturned boat 2 seconds before he landed directly on top of it, sitting inverse cheek to cheek. Stan not one to panic, calmly executed a perfect 180 degree roll. Wouldn't it have been great if Fish had come up just as Stan went over, unfortunately that only ever happens in cartoons. Cue 2 synchronised swims and more boat emptying...

Remember how I mentioned Groundhog Day before, well ten minutes later... There was a young, tanned, blonde, muscular (you get the picture) play boater, most probably a Team GB paddler, strutting his stuff and showing off to the young lady rafters as he played in Acid Drop hole - cue Superstan hammering down the course. This time Stan had at least 8 seconds to hurl abuse at the play boater before smashing his Ark Royal into and wiping out the poor guys foot spa.



The expletives were quickly broken by the sound of a gargling wookiee tumbling down the course on a rinse cycle. The play boater rescued Stan's boat, then told him he was "very, very, very, very sorry sir and I'll never do anything like that ever again" Stan accepted his apology, well I think he did - he sort of growled a bit less than before. The play boater ran home. Next time Stan, make sure you take his dinner money for brews before he runs off.



## The Captain does the Tees

Anyway enough of Stan, this article is turning into the Stan Show, I better tell you about Captain Fantastic's swim.

I ran Valentines Rapid with Stuart and we both caught eddy left. The Capt followed but caught an edge and flipped over into the hole and stuck there. He then began to dig off with his paddle and sat on his side static with his mouth just clear of the raging water, he winked at me and Stuart, then inch by inch he slowly began climbing up his paddle. The higher he climbed the broader his smile grew, until...

Have you seen the face of Wiley Coyote as he runs off a cliff and floats in mid-air for a second before falling at great speed. Well, the captains grip stopped climbing up and slowly began sliding down his paddle shaft, his smile transformed into a grimace, a bit similar to an expression he'd most probably have if passing a basketball in a bowel movement. Anyway just as the suspense and tension was building to a crescendo of excitement... Splat!!! A raft containing the 8 young ladies he'd been flirting with previously, landed directly on top of him and off they paddled leaving flotsam and a broken man to flush himself down the course.

Funny how he didn't flirt with them at the end this time, he just scowled and muttered at them like Muttley from Whacky Races. Meanwhile Stuart and I followed commenting on how we bet that you couldn't have got a Hollywood stuntman to attempt the Captain's splat like that.

So ended another perfect Summers day with grumpy old men behaving badly. I also had a swim of the whole course but to avoid getting in trouble and not upsetting anyone I'll leave that one out. Oh! The article title that is Stan's official definition of what constitutes a swim.

FIN. All characters appearing to have the skills or abilities to paddle white-water in this article are purely fictitious and any resemblance to persons living or dead or furry and appearing in big budget sci-fi or Bigfoot movies is purely coincidental.

Ps. Swimming's not funny, you shouldn't strip off in car parks, you shouldn't swear at or threaten other paddlers, you shouldn't flirt with young ladies, you shouldn't use YouTube to read white-water, you shouldn't compare other boaters to fictional furry Sci-fi characters, you shouldn't paddle aircraft carrier size boats on white-water courses, you shouldn't ever attempt to dig off and climb up your paddle as it will inevitably turn you into either Wiley Coyote or another familiar figure of fun, you shouldn't use ping pong balls or Spider-man swimming armbands as additional boat buoyancy and finally, a glass half full comment, to finish on...

If you ever find yourself stuck in a hole, up to your neck in it, on your last breath, attempting to climb up a slippery pole and Splat!! From a great height a raft full of women drop on you. Look on the bright side, they didn't take your car, your DVD collection, your trainers (all size 12 by the way), your bed, your house, yadda, yadda etcetera, etcetera.

**Adam Fielder**

Pps. I'll get me coat.

Ppps. Glamour photos by Paula



***'The Longest Day' - Tuesday 12th May 2015******Stuart Williams***

The 'D Day' landings which inspired Cornelius Ryan's famous book and John Wayne's starring role in the subsequent film, were arguably without equal in courage and determination. So they should not, in any practical way, be synonymous to a recently undertaken Kayak jaunt. But borrowing the title seems to work for a recently undertaken mammoth boat trip. Certainly sitting in your boat for hours and hours creates a feeling no doubt similar to the saddle soreness of other John Wayne characters I could think of!

Since moving to the northern division of the Club and living near Tewitfield Locks, Carnforth, the navigable extent of the Lancaster Canal, I have had this stupid notion of paddling to the Hand and Dagger on a Tuesday evening. The usual 6pm potter along the canal each Tuesday, with Adam, Mags and Captain in our white-water boats is a more than pleasant soiree, but never being one to shirk a challenge I held a yearning for something grander.

The idea developed a bit when out paddling with the good folk of the club some weeks ago, in our sea boats on the northern reaches of the canal. The reluctant salty sea paddler Adam was even with us and shared exploits of when he, Albert and Anthony had, as far as any one was aware, been the only club members to have paddled the 82 miles of the navigable Canal in one go.

A plan started to hatch. I had a significant birthday approaching and as the day wore on I rashly suggested I could have a go at the whole Canal too, as an anniversary challenge.

Challenge on then, well if a stubby boat paddler could do it....



I have some experience of long distance challenges, but more around running the hills of Northern Britain, not sitting for ages in a cramped boat with a yearning to stretch your legs. With 3 weeks to go to my Birthday I did also wonder what I'd done making such a rather rash decision.

I know there's lots of beautiful countryside and we are blessed by hills and dales, but it's a long way I thought and how would I stave off the boredom? I know - count bridges. According to t'interweb the start is now at Bridge 139 - the Burton in Kendal road. The Canal originally went to Kendal and actually ended after bridge 187, below the town's castle. Similarly truncated the Southern terminus is just after bridge number 11 in Ashton, Preston. The Canal again used to finish in the town centre, hence the missing 10 bridges. Overall this is the longest stretch of canal without a lock in Britain, but there is a manually operated swing bridge at Hest Bank, good fun (not!) for the solo paddler. Having told you all that, Adam's final word of advice was DON'T count the bridges as they're in no way equally spaced and it drives you mad. Some said I already fulfilled the last criteria, so as the trip wore on I found it an irresistible temptation.

How long would it take? Well looking at sea kayak average speed, sorry for more numbers, somewhere 5 or 6 miles an hour has been suggested as reasonable estimates for sea journeys. So that's basically a very long day! Its flat water I supposed but that didn't account for wind speed - more of that later. I'd thought my Northshore Atlantic would be the weapon of choice but when Captain offered his Rockpool Taran, a veritable speed machine, I couldn't turn it down and hoped to cut down the overall time. The scene was set.

I had a few training paddles in the Lakes - Ullswater, Coniston, Windermere and the less well paddled Thirlmere, and the day arrived.

A drop off by wife Jackie and away at 0846. Wind speeds were forecast for over 40mph at times, I tried to convince myself all was fine - sea paddling bravado I think. It was only a canal for Pete's sake - and think of the scenery (and bridges!)

I caught up a slow moving barge near Borwick and they let me through - 'Going far?' 'Just Preston', I replied. 'Oh right then' and that was that they went back to their coffee. Thought they might have been a bit impressed! Instead it sougth of reminded me of that 'Full Monty' canal scene - typical Northern understatement.

No events until Carnforth basin when an angry swan decided I was too near his mate's nest. It was however some way off, but a chase across the water helped with the adrenalin! The wind was getting tough and a short break at the Hest Bank swing bridge was welcome. Apparently this is the nearest point to the Morecambe Bay and ships unloaded there cargo for transfer to waiting barges around here in days gone by. A good view over the bay too.

As I approached the famous Rennie Aqueduct, some Ghurka cadets had even come up from Halton Camp on the Lune below and were playing Kayak Polo of sorts with a football. Until one took a swim. Grim canal soup for swimming in I thought, although the water did seem better the further North from the Hand and Dagger you are.

Some respite from the wind in Lancaster where two happy locals were enjoying a morning Carlsberg on the tow path. Leaving Lancaster was a different story. I couldn't at first believe it, but sure enough there were white topping waves to meet me as I tried to pass the Water Witch Pub. The skipper of the nearby Water Bus smiled as he watched me attempt to tack across the canal, being really grateful for the Taran's rudder. The pub seemed a better bet than another million miles or so to go, perhaps the Carlsberg duo had the right idea. Discretion got the better of me and boringly just a short break then off across the flat Fylde where the dreaded wind didn't let up.

I was surprised to see a Twitcher in a Pyranha Burn taking snaps of the ducks, as I passed through Cabus, don't know who was more surprised in reality as I potted past on an average Tuesday afternoon.

I was looking forward to the next milestone at Garstang and a planned meeting with Pete Roscoe further on at Owd Nells. Some company was going to be good. However, I was slowing down and didn't make the prearranged time to meet Pete, who had indeed paddled up from the Hand and Dagger and made his way back ahead of me when I was delayed.

I duly rested at Bilsborrow and was sorely tempted to have a longer break when a call to Jackie, who was meeting me at Preston, revealed she was having a coffee at Barton Grange. It was so tempting to join her, but got to keep going I kept telling myself! Left Nells at 4.50pm. Started feeling it now with weariness definitely creeping in.

The bends in the canal are an idiosyncrasy which has probably caught many a user out. The largest being the turn to the West at Moons Bridge Marina which meant head on to those Westerlies. Preston doesn't seem far away at all at this point - but don't be fooled the cunning canal builders had other thoughts. I think the breeze was lessening - or I kept telling myself so and I knew it would be behind me at some point after the bend and sure enough as the M55 Motorway bridge came into sight I sensed I was breaking the back of those near 100 miles.

It was great to see Pete at the H and D and I arrived at 6.25pm to energy bars and sustenance. The evening weather was improving and the home straight beckoned. 5 minutes rest and away again to find Captain, who had promised, if only to get his boat back, to see me at the end.

The Millennium Link passed by with its access to the full canal network. I had read earlier that the canal was originally meant to join the Leeds Liverpool at West Houghton so it was good that there is now an option for intrepid bargees to cross the Ribble and connect in to the Leeds Liverpool at Tarleton. None of that for me though with the thought of a pint back at the H and D now firmly in my mind. As promised Alan was soon heading towards me along the tow path and took some snaps too. Passed one house with an improvised beach bar at the back which looked rather inviting and suddenly that was that. Preston and the end!

A pretty grimey, dirty finish sadly for all who venture to Ashton. Shame I thought that more isn't made of the grand finale for our great waterway. A long day and a long way but a good challenge to have completed. The views are special, hills and dales to the seaside and history, with the wildlife and flora etc. all adding to the spectacle.

I must say a big thank you for the welcome back at the H and D with a fantastic surprise Birthday bash and gifts, plenty of balloons, great company, friends and fun. We even managed to share some of the fantastic cake - Stan had the biggest piece - as you'd expect!

So the gauntlet is well and truly down. At least four of us have now done 'The Longest Day' and as the Canal is our home paddling destination it seems a challenge worth trying for anyone in the Club.

Who's next to pick up the gauntlet and add to the roll of honour for the whole 82 (ish!) miles.

For the record I finished in a total time of 10hrs 40mins, with a paddling time of 9hrs 25mins taking off the rests and breaks. Very many thanks, of course, to Alan and Peter for their help on the trip and again to all at the Club who were so kind in putting together my Birthday celebration.

**Stuart Williams**

## ***Skye Beginners Sea Kayaking Trip May 2015-A Beginner's Perspective***

***Chris Samples***

Other than visits to Scottish cities I have never journeyed to see the beauty of Scotland or the Isles. Appreciated a memorably scenic journey with Bruce and Debbie to Skye, driving near to Glencoe and Loch Lomond and the awesome mammoth mountains of Scotland towering above. Crossing the bridge from the Kyle of Locaish to Kyleakin to the view of the Skye Cuillins with their distinctive pointed peaks.

Initially we pitched Bruce's luxury spacious tent with sleeping compartments, and a panoramic window view of Loch Dunvegan, and afterwards helped Stan pitch a striped tent with a tall pointy roof reminiscent of Agincourt and Henry V, adjacent to Graham's one man low profile tent with sufficient cover for a sleeping bag. Afterwards, thankfully, found our centrally heated cottage, which meant dry kayaking gear whatever the weather, and a 5 star self-catering dining room looking onto the Loch Dunvegan.

From the cottage base Roy Booth and John Kington carefully planned loch paddling trips on Loch Bracadale and Loch Dunvegan, assuring cover from the 25mph- 30 mph winds.

Loch Bracadale was memorable for the rainy days with grey windy skies, seals, and sea birds, and the sunny day paddle when the Loch actually looked blue, and we paddled past fish farms, Laird's houses, and high cliffs to find a silvery cascading waterfall.

On a long drive to Staffin, looking for safe paddling without white caps, John Kington, explained some of the glaciated geology of the island. Why the two mountains visible from the cottage Healabahlbheag and Healabhalmoragh (the larger and the smaller!) were flat topped, and the Black Cuillins hills with their different, distinctive hard volcanic points, were different from the Red Cuillins, and were not eroded by the ice.

The most memorable paddle was Loch Dunvegan on the Friday before returning when only 5 of us paddled in good but changeable weather from near Colbost to the isle of Isay. Where, eating our sandwiches, we looked out beyond our kayaks at the water's edge, to the big sky and view of the mountains; reminiscent of the photographs in sea-kayaking books. Beyond Isay were Macleod's Maidens, and, were it not for the squall coming from behind the isle we might have paddled to the Maidens.

Roy and Graham set out with Debbie her cousin Tony and myself through the squall, fortunately, into the waves until we reached again the sheltered water of Loch Dunvegan. In contrast, paddling a leisurely, sunny, calm coastline with plenty of rock hopping opportunities.

Return crossing the Loch, the squall returned also, and strong paddling was required. Remembered calling to Roy for guidance when being blown into rocks near the quay, until a large wave picked my kayak up and landed me safely across the short jetty. We were all on terra firma again!

I am grateful to coaches Roy and John, for planning the trips, shielding us from the winds and the worst of the weather, supporting me by carrying my boat and equipment when I hurt my hip, and most of all for being such good company, and to Mary, Debbie and Tony as well for being such brilliant 5 star chefs.



Throughout the week, whenever we were beset by difficult weather and changeable water conditions, I thought on the sea nymphs and the wind god (all Greek not Scottish) to bring calm wind and waves, and even bring some sunshine, but, when we crossed from Isay in the squall, I could only grit my teeth, and curse the coach!

Thank you, for encouraging me beyond my comfort, well, when on the Loch's. Especially, for the times when paddling to stretch my abilities.

**Chris Samples**


## **Club Boat List**


**Graham Kingaby**

Recently you may have noticed there is a new item in the main menu "member area" this area is for RCC members'. When you click on it you will be asked to enter a user name and password.

See the email you received advising July 2015 Newsletter was available to view it contains the user name and password

User name: xxxxx password: xxxxx



Click  on this will take you to the boat list page you can then search by make or model or by putting a % in either box it will give you the full list of boats.

## **Loch Ken 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> September**

This year's trip to Loch Ken will be Friday 4th to Sunday 6th September at the Loch Ken Holiday Park (see link below). I have emailed them to let them know about our return visit. However, if you are coming along please contact the camp site to book your own pitch. I would advise as well to let them know, when booking your pitch that you are with the RCC, so they can put us all together. Otherwise you may miss out on the evenings' revelry. [office@lochkenholidaypark.co.uk](mailto:office@lochkenholidaypark.co.uk)

For those who haven't been before, anyone can come along - best done in a long pointy thing because the round trip is about 10 miles. In the evening BBQ and beer (wine for the ladies)

I would just like to point out the trip is not coach lead. So, and I know this sounds a bit off putting but is not intended as such, you paddle at your own risk and are responsible for your own safety as well as any consequences that may arise from your own behaviour and conduct. Also Dave's Rules apply.

See you there

**Dave Sutton**

# ***Anglesey Camp Rhosneigr***

## ***24, 25, 26 July 2015***

This year's Rhosneigr camp will take place over the weekend 24, 25, 26 July. If you've been before you'll know the script. If not, read on.

Since time immemorial Ribble members have congregated on Anglesey in July to pay homage to the surf deities. Given that such deities are not entirely reliable we compromise on a weekend of jollity by the seaside. Many tales have been told of antics real, imagined, and possibly hallucinated. The original premise, which remains at the heart of the weekend, is surf – on the sea, in kayaks. Most kayaks will surf after a fashion – modern river boats with planing hulls are ideal.

As surf cannot be guaranteed sea kayaking is increasingly popular – and Anglesey is one of the premier sea paddling destinations – anywhere. Those members who have the use of sea kayaks tend to take on more ambitious day trips, but shorter excursions are possible in river boats – perhaps over to Rhoscolyn Beacon to see the seals or along the coast. The less confident can explore the sheltered waters of the Inland Sea, or simply play on the beach – whatever suits.

It's not compulsory, but Saturday night is invariably barbecue night – bring something to incinerate and maybe something to wash it down with. Alternatively there is a chip shop and a couple of pubs in the village.

Most people arrive Friday evening and leave Sunday. If you want to arrive earlier or stay longer please arrange that with the campsite. We will be camping at our usual site – Bodfan Farm ([www.bodfanfarm.co.uk](http://www.bodfanfarm.co.uk)). Their website has details of how to get there and site fees. It's very much a traditional farm campsite – no shop or bar, but it's clean, friendly and welcoming, just remember some 20p coins for the showers.

I've made a reservation for "around 40" – so no need to book direct, just let me know you're coming via the forum. If you're intending to bring a caravan and/or want electric hook up please arrange that directly with the campsite.

***John Kington***

# ***BALA SUMMER CAMP***

## ***21/23 August 2015***

We are indeed heading back to Glanllyn campsite, lakeside at Llyn Tegid (Lake Bala) - <http://www.glanllyn.com/> Contact details for the campsite can be found on their website - an email address and phone numbers.

As with previous camps, please can you contact the campsite direct to confirm your pitch - details are on their website and below. Please mention that you are with Ribble as I believe they will try to keep the caravans together. Camping pitches aren't allocated.

There are good facilities at this campsite with a big clean shower and wash block. Campers are kept

slightly separated from caravans & campervan but this didn't prove an issue last year! As far as I am aware (and based on last year) they have no problems with BBQ's.

### **Activities:**

We are right on the banks of Llyn Tegid which can be paddled by all (after the purchase of a permit). There is also Canolfan Tryweryn for the white water paddler, but the release details are not up on their website yet - [www.ukrafting.co.uk](http://www.ukrafting.co.uk).

Also nearby is Coed y Brenin which is the largest Welsh Mountain Bike centre is about 20 minutes away and has a fantastic variety of mountain bike trails of various grades and walks. More details will be posted on the forum nearer the time

**Roy Booth**

## ***Editors Bit***

Here we are again with another bumper edition of the Newsletter and once again thank you to all our contributors. I sometimes get the feeling of Déjà vu because we have the same adverts for the same club trips, run by the same people, but then I remember that our membership is constantly changing as new paddlers join us and they look forward to participating for the first time. Some things definitely don't seem to change of course, Stan seems to get himself into deep water and become the subject of an article by Adam Fielder every two months.

Talking of change it seems that we are starting to realise that prospective new paddlers are likely to appear in the warmer months of the year when traditionally we couldn't paddle at Halton, there was no water in most rivers and we didn't use the Fulwood Pool. In response Roy Booth has taken up the mantle and started running sessions at the pool to get newbies over their fear of capsizing ready for right way up training on the canal. Well done to Roy and his Friday helpers.

To all the new paddlers i.e. the ones who only started this year well done for what you have achieved so far. Without naming names (and risk missing someone out) you have impressed us with your commitment and determination which has shown up in your improved paddling skill.

Thanks must also go to the coaches who have had a hand in it.

I have been warned to keep the Editors Bit "Ramblings" to a minimum this time because it is already late and we want to get the Newsletter out. So that's it from me.

**Dates and Deadlines:** The next committee meeting will be on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September at 7:00pm. The next newsletter will be published on 15<sup>th</sup> September. We would appreciate all submissions by Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>. Please send submissions to [newsletter@ribblecanoecclub.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@ribblecanoecclub.co.uk)

**Norman Green**  
[newsletter@ribblecanoecclub.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@ribblecanoecclub.co.uk)



# ***Ribble CC Library***

If you want to borrow something contact Amanda Spavin by either sending her a text (you can find her number on the contact page at the back of your newsletter) or by sending her a message via the club forum. Her name on the forum is Spav. These books/DVDs will then be brought to the H&D for you to collect at a mutually agreed club night.

## **General**

BCU Handbook (2 copies)  
The Practical Guide to Kayaking  
Canoeing & Kayaking  
BCU Coaching Handbook  
The Rough Guide to Weather  
Canoe & Kayak Games  
Working out of Doors with Young People  
More Than Activities  
The Knot Book - NEW

## **DVD - BCU 'Go Paddling' 2012**

### **Touring & Sea Kayaking**

An Atlas of the English Lakes  
Canal Companion: Cheshire Ring  
Touring 100 Paddles in England  
Welsh Sea Kayaking Guidebook  
Northern England & IOM Sea Kayaking  
Scottish Sea Kayak Trail  
Scottish Canoe Touring  
Great Glen Canoe Trail  
Anglesey Info Pack  
Scottish Sea Kayaking Guidebook  
The Outer Hebrides Sea Kayaking Guidebook

### **Sea Kayak Navigation**

Complete Book of Sea Kayaking  
Sea Kayaker Deep Trouble

DVD - Sea Kayak Rescues  
DVD - Sea Kayak with Gordon Brown -  
Instructional Journey along Skye Coast  
DVD - This is the Sea 1  
DVD - This is the Sea 2  
DVD - This is the sea 3  
DVD - This is the Sea 4  
DVD - Performance Sea Kayaking-Skills, rolling & rescue techniques  
DVD - BCU 3 & 4 Star Leaders Sea Kayaking  
DVD Sea Kayaking in Wales (conservation) - **NEW**

DVD Sea Kayak Essentials Volumes 1 & 2  
Intermediate & Adv. Boat Handling Skills  
Safety & Rescue Skills

### **Canoeing/Open Boating**

Open Canoe Technique  
Path of the Paddle  
Canoeing Safety & Rescue  
Canoeing

DVD - This is Canoeing (ww & wilderness)  
DVD - Open Canoeing -  
Reg Blomfield (amazing moves!) (2 copies)

### **White-water**

Canoe & Kayak Guide to North West England  
English White Water  
Scottish White Water  
White Water Lake District (2 COPIES)  
White Water Kayaking  
White Water Safety & Rescue (2 copies)  
Weir Wisdom  
Many Rivers to Run  
The Playboater's Handbook 2  
White-water Paddling (Strokes & Concepts) – NEW  
L'Eau Vive - NEW

DVD -Moving on to Moving Water  
DVD - EJ's Advanced River Running  
DVD - The Call of the River -  
100 years of WW Adventure  
DVD - White-water Kayaking

### **Rolling**

Bombproof Roll and Beyond!  
Eskimo Rolling for Survival

DVD - This is the Roll  
DVD - EJ's Rolling and Bracing

### **Club or Club Members Trips**

DVD - Mags Brayfield in Nepal

DVD - It's Different Every Time -  
Halton Rapids  
DVD - Fort William 2005/06 Easter Trip  
DVD - RCC Scotland trip 2007 & 2008  
DVD - Tay Descent 2011  
DVD – Ladies Day at Washburn August 2013

### **Expeditions/Adventure/Action**

On Celtic Tides  
Dancing with Waves  
The Canoe Boys  
Three Men in a Boat  
DVD - Revenge of the Fat Cats (Greenland)  
DVD - The Cockleshell Heroes (wartime adventure)  
DVD - Tatshenshini/Alsek 2007  
DVD - Mountain River Movie (Canada)  
DVD - Liffey Descent 1992