

# TALES FROM THE RIVERBANK



JULY/AUGUST 2007

## *Lleyn Peninsula*



**9 & 10 June 2007**

**Paddlers** – Andy & Debbie Dowe, Pat & Norman Green, Allan, Leslie & Stephanie Hacking, Nick Lay, Eileen Ball, Andy Biggs, Martin Atherton, John Kington.

The trip was organised by Andy Dowe and advertised in the Club Calendar as “Sea Paddle Weekend, Lleyn Peninsula” with a note that it was for experienced paddlers only. This note may have put off some paddlers, who in actual fact may well have been able to cope with the very benign conditions and enjoy the weekend’s experience. However Andy’s past experiences of organising sea paddling trips has shown him that the sea is a very unpredictable place and the weather has

not been very kind to him in the past. He therefore very wisely restricted the weekend to experienced paddlers who would be able to cope if things did not go strictly according to plan.

Pat and I decided to travel down to the camp site at Towyn Farm Tudweiliog on the Friday morning as we were towing our folding caravan and it would take us a little longer than everyone else. We found the site without much trouble and set up our caravan so that we could have a welcome brew on ready for when the others arrived. The site was flat and about 100 yards away from the sea, perched on cliffs overlooking Porth Towyn with its nice sandy beach.

One by one the others arrived except for the Hacking family who were not expected until very late evening. After setting up camp and preparing and eating a meal we all met up and wandered down to the beach so that we could watch the sunset. (Although it was still very visible from the campsite).

Nick, being a very educated chap, had been explaining about a phenomenon called the "Green Flash" which occurred momentarily as the sun finally went down below the horizon. To which I replied, "Yes, I used to have a pair of Dunlop pumps called Green Flash which I wore to play squash when I was a young man." He informed me that he was talking about a different Green Flash. So after watching the sunset without a single flash I decided that I should look for my old pumps.

As compensation for his failed Green Flash, Nick decided it would be a good idea to entertain us all with the sight of him stripping down to his shorts and going for a swim. Now it was after 10 pm, starting to go dark and despite having been a nice day, by now it was decidedly cool, and some of us were wearing fleeces to keep warm. (I wondered if he wanted to test out Doctor Martin Atherton's ability to treat hypothermia patients).

After coming out of the water he realized he did not have a towel so he ran up and down the beach to warm up again. Still in just his shorts. Eventually we got bored of waiting for him to become hypothermic so we could have a good laugh, walked back to the campsite and went to bed.

Saturday dawned sunny and warm with virtually no wind. This must be a first for one of Andy's trips. We decided to paddle from Porth Oer (Called Porthor on my old map) to Porth Dinllaen, a distance of about 15 miles. After completing the obligatory car shuttle and carrying sea kayaks from the car park to the beach, we eventually set off from Porth Oer at around 10.30 am.

The sea was almost flat calm and we had no problems with wind or tides, the main problem was keeping cool and hydrated. It was one of the very rare occasions when it was OK to paddle without wearing a windproof cag.



Because the sea was so calm we were able to see a lot of underwater life as well as the more usual birds, seals etc. In fact, when we were close up to the shore, it felt like we were paddling over the top of an aquarium. But having several "Women Drivers" amongst us we had to be careful to avoid collisions whilst staring down instead of forward. We definitely gave John Kington a wide berth in his kayak, which goes like stink in a straight line but has the manoeuvrability of a fully laden super tanker.



After about an hour's paddling Andy Dowe suddenly headed off to a beach, where he disembarked and started doing a stretching routine to alleviate a problem with his back. He had forewarned us about this, which is just

as well, since anyone seeing his antics would have wondered about his mental state as he stood on a rocky outcrop doing all sorts of contortions. Personally I think that he had made a secret pact with the sea gods so that the good weather would continue over the rest of the weekend, and this was his penance. Or he could simply have joined the Freemasons and was practicing his secret greetings. But I never asked which.

At lunchtime we found a suitable beach and landed for our pre-packed repast. The topics of conversation varied enormously but always seemed to return to sex or sandwiches. The men compared the sizes of their respective sausage rolls and Nick entertained us with some of his jokes. Then once again he stripped down to his shorts and went for a swim. This time Debbie accompanied him, but at least she had the good sense to wait until the weather was warm, and to be fair the water did look very inviting. After a suitable interval we all got back in to our kayaks so that we could proceed on to our destination.



The rest of the trip was relatively uneventful, apart from Andy sprinting off to pray to the sea gods every hour or so, until we rounded the headland at Porth Dinllaen.

We could see the point on the beach where we were going to land, but it was taking a long time to reach because the tide had now started to run out of the bay. It felt like paddling through treacle. We eventually landed and surveyed the crowded beach. We had paddled all day and seen very few people, and now there were hundreds of them.

Nick (yes him again) decided that he would practice his rolling whilst everyone was sorting themselves out for the return car shuttle. Needless to say he had yet another swim, although this time he didn't subject us to his strip down to the shorts routine. (Guess it's a bit difficult when you're upside down in your kayak.)

There was a minor traffic jam at the end of the road leading on to the beach. There were more 4 x 4 vehicles with boat trailers than you could shake a stick at. To avoid blocking the access road to the beach and expedite a quick getaway, the Ladies were requested to gather all the kayaks and gear together near to the end of the road whilst the drivers went back to Porth Oer to bring back the remaining cars.

Upon our return we discovered them sunbathing and all the boats and gear exactly as it had been left when we first landed on the beach. They had worked out a really good excuse apparently, but it was lost on me.

Because the weather had been so sunny and people had been sunbathing etc. we had not really noticed the time, and it was after 6.30 pm when we returned to the campsite. So by the time everyone had made evening meals and Pat had been round with various home cooked desserts it was time to wash the pots and then go watch the sunset again. (Perhaps this is another one of Andy's penances to ensure good weather.) Guess what, still No Green Flash.

Well whatever Andy does it seems to work, because Sunday was even hotter and sunnier than Saturday. The plan for today was to drive to Aberdaron where we would park the cars and launch from the beach, do a round trip out

and back to Hells Mouth. This would take in the 2 small islands of “Ynys Gwylan-fawr” and “Ynys Gwylan-bach” (Try spell checking them if you dare) situated about a quarter of a mile offshore. Total distance about 13 miles.



We launched from Aberdaron onto the calmest sea I had ever seen, the wind must have been sucking instead of blowing. We paddled out to the aforementioned islands (I'm not typing them again) to watch the Puffins and other sea birds.



We were also eyeballed by a large seal that seemed to be ready to warn us off if we came too close to his (or her) territory.



We then did a ferry glide back across the tidal flow between the islands and the mainland heading roughly North West. As it was on the previous day, the sea was clear and the coastline interesting until we reached Trwyn Talfarach. This is the headland just before we turned to paddle towards the beach at Hells Mouth our intended lunch destination. By now we were getting ready for a break but unfortunately there were no landing places for about 5 kilometres so we just had to paddle on to Hells Mouth.



The lunch spot was not ideal; it was a massive open beach, with no shelter from the sun or wind, (even if there was none) and no discreet hidden little places for calls of nature. We had lunch whilst constantly moving kayaks further and further up the beach away from the advancing tide.



The trip back to Aberdaron started out with us all together in a group, but when we rounded the headland at Trwyn Talfarach, Andy paddled off to the nearby beach at Porth Ysgo to stretch his back again, and everyone decided to follow different plans. Pat and I

had to be in Criccieth by 7.00 pm where we were due to join some friends to celebrate their 40th Wedding Anniversary. We therefore joined up with John Kington, who also needed to be back without too much delay, and decided to take the direct route back so that we would not be late. Choosing John as a team member meant that we were very hard pushed, because as previously mentioned his straight line speed is very good and we had to occasionally shout "John, cut your engine a minute while we catch up." The others formed into small groups for safety and headed back at their own pace.



We had a little detour through a gap between a rocky outcrop and the mainland where there was a small tide race running. It felt like being on a river but without the manoeuvrability of a short kayak.

We arrived back at Aberdaron at around 5.00 pm and after carrying the unwieldy sea kayaks through the narrow and busy streets from the beach to the car park, we changed and set off back to the camp site to break camp and make our way to the next caravan site near Criccieth ready for our 40th Anniversary Meal at 7.00pm.

All in all it was an excellent weekend with good weather, good company and good paddling. Thanks again to Andy & Debbie Dowe for their organisation.

If you would like further information about the trip from Porth Oer to Porth Dinllaen, it can be found in the book written by Jim Krawieki and Andy Biggs entitled "Welsh Sea Kayaking, Fifty Great Sea Kayak Voyages." (In the book it is paddled in the opposite direction.) It is published by Pesda Press ([www.pesdapress.com](http://www.pesdapress.com)) ISBN 0-9547061-8-8.

We were fortunate of course to have Andy Biggs, one of the authors and a club member, with us over the weekend, so if things had gone wrong Andy Dowe could always say that he planned the Saturday trip based on information from the book. But everything went well and both "Andy's" came out with much credit.

This is not a commercial, and I am not on commission (yet) but I can highly recommend the book to anyone interested in sea kayaking. It is full of interesting stuff whether you are a sea kayaker or not and there are lots of colour pictures in it. Best of all there is a copy in the club library for you to borrow so you can try before you buy.

#### Grid References:

Camp/Caravan Site – Towyn Farm  
Tudweiliog Grid Ref SH 232(39) 374(32)  
Porth Oer – SH 165(59) 298(42)  
Porth Dinllaen – SH 281(89) 408(42)  
Aberdaron – SH 172(49) 263(82)  
Hells Mouth – SH 243(19) 282(92)

***Norman Green***

# ***Xmas Dinner/Disco***

Advance warning for those of you who like to get your diaries organised. This year's Xmas dinner will be held on Saturday December 15, at the New Drop Inn on Longridge Fell. More details and menu in a future newsletter.



## 7th June

By the time you read this I should have spent two weeks, three days, 18 hours and thirty-two minutes in the heart of the French Alps kicking my Gap Year off in the sun. *[The above calculations have been based on the presumption that you receive the club's bi-monthly newsletter by email on the 17th July (the day Martin said it would be published in the May edition) and check your emails that day at 6:32pm, to see it sat merrily in your inbox, and read it straight away!]*

Anyway I think you get the gist – I'm in France, or Italy, or I don't really know, because I wrote this article on the 7th June – after a day's revision, when I thought it would be a good idea – with no confirmed job offer and therefore no real idea where I would be spending the beginning weeks and months of my Gap Year. I'm now wondering whether it was actually a good idea to write the article as already I have written over 150 words and not really got to the point of the article.



*Sat sunning myself on Ullswater, March '05*

Now I'll get to the point; I've started a new paragraph especially! Everybody that I have got to know over the last couple of months

and years at the Hand and Dagger, at the pool on Friday nights and on the water at weekends has heard enough of my Gap Year plans; probably enough to bore them silly or make them a tad envious. Either way my year's plans have been and hopefully still will be when this goes to press (or they may change for the better; who knows? because I definitely don't):

- July to September – France working for PGL/Acorn Adventure
- October to April – New Zealand paddling and working on the river
- May to August – France working for PGL/Acorn Adventure

*[Is that the article over with? I suppose it could be, but I'll go on a bit longer.]*

Since September '06 I have been running a weblog (*"A weblog is a journal, or newsletter, that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption..."* *[By Town Internet]*) of my paddling adventures and hopefully will continue to run this weblog for a considerable period. I suppose I have to now, as I'm about to give you all the address for it. I've also got some graphics done for my boat advertising the weblog (blog for short) – some of you may have seen these graphics on 'Roger the Rocker', but they look something similar to that banner at the top of the page. In fact they are exactly the same as that as it's the image used by the chaps at Bala Graphics ([www.balagraphics.co.uk](http://www.balagraphics.co.uk)) when they made the graphics.

My aim is to keep this blog updated regularly throughout my Gap Year so that everyone back home can keep up with what I am doing, obviously the regularity in which I post will be dependent on internet access, but it should be pretty easy to come by with what I have planned. So I suppose all that is left to do is leave you the address and say good-bye. The address is pretty similar to that on the banner above – just shove “http://” in front of it so it’s “http://rockratrobinson.blogspot.com” and press “Go” and you should get there. You can also leave comments on any of the posts on the blog by clicking “Comments” at the bottom of the post, above the categories, and typing a message and pressing “Publish Your Comment”.



*Paddling along Loch Ken, October '05*

If any of you are wondering where the drop in the banner image is, it’s not any foreign river, it’s nowhere I’ve paddled on my Gap Year, it’s Bala Mill Falls on the Tryweryn. Allan Hacking took the picture on the 21st January '07 (birthday of our illustrious chairman and also my dad) and if you do a search through the blog you should find some scrawling about the day. In fact I’ve just flashed over to it and found what I wrote: it appears somebody took a swim in Chapel Falls (I’ll not name names, but they know who they are, hopefully!) and there was a tree across the lower river. Interesting stuff.

If any of you can’t really be bothered to check the blog on a regular basis to see if it has been updated I’m not that bothered as primarily it’s a place for me to vent my internet spleen so I

can read what I have done at a later date just in case I have forgotten. Secondly it is a place for people to see what I’ve been up to.



*Sat at the top of Halton, November '05*

Anyway, I’ll get to the point I’m trying to make – if you don’t want to keep checking it day-in-day-out (though it’ll bump my viewing stats up a bit!) to see if it has been updated you can be alerted to updates by subscribing to the blog’s RSS feed. Google should tell you how to do this, as it’s a bit too complicated to explain in a paper-based publication.



*Ski Jump on the Etive, April '06*

Finally I come to the end of the article. I think there has been some sort of a beginning, middle and an end, like Adam Fielder was telling Peter Nelson last night (6th June) at the Hand and Dagger when they were talking about writing an article for their Windermere trip last Sunday (3rd June). Is that in this publication somewhere?

It only seems like yesterday [*it's like it's beginning all over again. I will finish the article soon – honest*] that I was attending the first session of the September '03 beginners course, taking my first tentative paddle strokes where I was afraid of capsizing as I could hardly swim and was slightly apprehensive of water when I could not stand up in it. Now I am leaving your company for a short period after four enjoyable years, having just done my Five Star Training (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> June) not in the least bit bothered by capsizing or even apprehensive around fast flowing water.



*After competing in the Nene Youth Freestyle Event, June '06*

This development has been down to some amazing people who I am proud to say I have paddled with whilst at Ribble, who have gone above and beyond what has been asked of them to ensure that I have got the most out of my paddling. This has allowed me to develop both as a person and a paddler. On the courses I have run for the club and worked on I have tried to do exactly the same, so in some weird sort of way I have been putting back in what I have taken from the club. Hopefully one day some of the children, or adults for that matter, that have just done their Two Star this June will be able to take the opportunities I have had with Ribble, make use of the vast experience of the members, who are more than willing to help if you ask, and progress into some impressive paddlers.



*How often are buses to New Zealand? Posing for a bit of a joke, June '06*

I am just left with saying good-bye and farewell. It's quite depressing to think that I won't be able to see all you people at Ribble Canoe Club for a year and I truly mean it when I say: "I'm going to miss you all." Some more than others, but still I'll miss you all.

See you in a year's time...

**Iain Robinson**

### PS - 16th June

Received my contract for a job with PGL at Camping les Tamaris on the Mediterranean Coast. I'll be working from sit-on-tops, which isn't ideal but I've got my foot in the door now. My contract runs out halfway through August so I'll be back around then and off pretty sharpish to find some more work before New Zealand. I'll probably be up for some mid week paddling – Stock Ghyll anyone?



*Paddling on my Five Star Training, June '07*





# Welcome to Wales?

**Paddlers:** Pat & Norman, Clive & Janet, Nick & Eileen, Albert & Kath

Organising a sea kayaking weekend is a tricky business. Tying in suitable tide heights and times with available weekends threw up only three possibilities over the summer. As one of these coincided with the club's West Tanfield camp, we initially ruled it out. However, when that event was unexpectedly cancelled, Pat's organisational skills got into gear and a private enclosure on a campsite by the river Dolgellau was duly booked.

After more than a week of almost constant rain and several calls to the campsite and Floodline, it was with an air of foreboding that we packed on Friday morning to drive through yet more rain to Wales. We needn't have worried, as the camping ground was nice and dry. This was probably due in part to the amount of rock in the ground, as witnessed by the number of bent tent pegs as we tried to pitch the tent. We spent the rest of the day

driving around the various points of access for the next day's trip. We enquired of a rather scary woman (whose purple hair matched her jumper) at the toll bridge at Penmaenpool if it would be OK to take kayaks out of the water there. She was definite that it was "out of the question" to do that there or "anywhere in the area". This, along with the numerous notices seemingly put up by the militant wing of the local angling club, convinced us that our brand of tourism wasn't universally welcome in these parts.

Saturday dawned fine, so our plan to paddle the Mawddach estuary from Barmouth was definitely on. Some of our group were a bit concerned about the tidal flow under the railway bridge, but after dropping off two cars at the get out, we inspected it on the drive into Barmouth and they were good to go. After checking in with the Harbourmaster we launched into the rising tide from the sandy beach below the harbour wall.



The tide was flowing fast and we were soon heading for the bridge at a good seven knots according to Norman's GPS. Once past the bridge we could all relax a little and enjoy the stunning scenery of woodland and Welsh mountains. It was a pleasant trip following the main channel as it weaved between the sandbanks of the wide twisting estuary. All too soon we were approaching the toll bridge at Penmaenpool where we had left the cars earlier. We stopped at a little beach before the bridge and had our lunch in the sunshine, facing the pub (where, in keeping with Ribble tradition, we didn't go in for a drink). As it was too early to finish, we set off again and went to explore the upper tidal reaches of the estuary.

We soon encountered a local fisherman who questioned our right of navigation on the tidal water, and said we were "disturbing the fish". Norman commented that if he was a fish he would rather be "disturbed" by kayakers than have his lips ripped off by fishermen. The guy seemed keen to take photographs of us, and we naively thought he was impressed by the colourful spectacle our group made. It was more likely to post on some "rogue's gallery" website for disgruntled anglers, so we returned the favour and took his picture on our way back. Back at the bridge we hauled out at the beach we used for lunch and carried our boats past the old railway signal box (now an RSPB centre) and got changed. This simple act was also not without controversy, as a passer-by tersely commented that we were "disturbing the birds". Mind you, I could sympathise with this, as Norman's legs

are not a pretty sight. There was also was a complaint about our "plastic naval". This was either some strange Welsh put-down, or they meant "plastic navy", both of which were lost on us. We drove back into Barmouth to collect the cars, and stopped to look at the strange collection of kites (including an inflatable dog and Superman's legs) which were being flown over the beach, before stopping at a beach-side cafe for ice creams. Back at our campsite, a herd of ants (or is it a flock?) had set up a nest in Nick's waterproof jacket, which he had to deal with before he and Eileen went for a walk to round off the day. For the rest of us it was a BBQ and sleep-inducing alcohol.

It was wet when we awoke on Sunday morning, and it rained on and off as we broke camp and made our plans for the day. It was a bit windy for the offshore trip we had planned, so we decided to do another estuary trip, this time on the Dwyrydd.



We launched from the delightful little village of Borth y Gest about four hours before high tide, into a narrow channel with a strong flow eastwards towards Porthmadog. It wasn't easy, as we had to paddle against the flow to reach the open sea and head south around a huge sandbank to find the river channel leading to Portmeirion. Our first attempt to find it wasn't a great success, and we ended up in a shallow dead-end after turning at a huge marker buoy we thought marked the channel. Getting back out to open water was a time consuming and energy sapping experience, as the tide was pushing us back in

and the shallow water prevented us from using full paddle strokes. After much grounding and cursing we made it out, and headed further south. We eventually found the river and followed it to within half a mile of Portmeirion, dragging our boats through shallow water for the last hundred metres or so to have our lunch on the rocks below the ornate 'lighthouse'. It was amazing to look across the sands to where we had started and realise that for all the effort we had only come about a mile as the crow flies.



Suitably refreshed, but a little pushed for time to catch the last of the tide in the upper reaches, we set off past the delightful little village of Portmeirion with its mock

renaissance Italian architecture. We didn't have much time for sightseeing, as it was from here that our route-finding nightmare really started. The following couple of miles were a succession of false channels and sandbars, which had us out of our boats and hauling through shallows on several occasions. At one point, after passing under a small bridge, we couldn't agree on a route, so Nick went with Clive and Janet up one side of the river while the rest of us tried the other side. After a few minutes I looked across to see Clive out and hauling the double, with Janet acting as coxswain and directing operations. My success was short-lived as minutes later I was carrying my boat over another sandbank to be able to continue. It was about this time that we realised that we had run out of tide and were now paddling against the river flow. The last mile was a slog against the current, and we were glad to see the get-out where the river runs by the lay-by and our cars. After a quick drive into Borth y Gest to pick up the cars we set off for home, passing through a heavy downpour with spectacular rainbows to round off a cracking weekend.

***Albert Risely***

## ***3-star Course***

Now that the summer 2-star courses have reached a (hopefully successful) conclusion, it's time to turn our minds to 3-star training.

Achieving the 3-star award means that you can consider yourself an intermediate paddler rather than a beginner. The skills you will have to demonstrate are more complex than at 2-star, and you will also have to demonstrate 2-star skills to a better ability level.

We would generally expect 3-star candidates to have completed 2-star and then have taken part in a number of club trips over a period of several months.

We are in the process of sorting out our plans for a 3-star course. The BCU are making a number of changes to the Star awards which come into effect very shortly (see [http://www.bcu.org.uk/bcu/CoachingItemPDFs/upload\\_1339.pdf](http://www.bcu.org.uk/bcu/CoachingItemPDFs/upload_1339.pdf) for details) and our coaches will have to discuss these and decide how best to handle them.

In the meantime, if you are interested in taking part in a 3-star course later in the year, please get in touch with Terry Maddock and let him know.

***Terry Maddock***

# ***Chairman's Chat***

The wettest June since seventeen hundred and something - now that's more like it. And July seems to be continuing the good weather! Ooops, sorry to all those South Yorkshire tykes. I dare say they think all this precipitation a bit precipitous. The piccies of canoeists paddling down streets was novel, but I did notice a lack of buoyancy aids and other safety gear. As I write, the Ribble is at bank top level and we have a flood warning for tomorrow - so I may shortly regret my levity regarding water levels.

The Club's first Coaching Forum will have met by the time this enviable organ is published. It will have discussed, amongst other things, the price of ale, the new BCU Star Award Syllabus and our Club courses. The Coaching Forum is open to all Club coaches and those who assist them on our courses. So, if you want to come along, you either did, or you've just missed it!! If the latter, give your name to Clive for putting on the list for next time.

So, "Who's Clive?" you may ask. Well, if you're one of the rare members who haven't come across our Training Officer, you may

soon be able to take a gander at our website and see a photographic likeness of some (if not all) Committee Members with a bit of blurb about what they do (or don't) - it's bound to get christened the Rogues Gallery isn't it?

A rather wonderful thing happened at our last Committee Meeting. Tony Marsh agreed to take on the role of Secretary. Many heartfelt thanks to Tony for solving what was about to become a serious problem. No doubt their portraits (complete with halo and wings) will appear on the Committee Page of the website.

Well done to all those who were on the recent 2 Star Course. A Presentation Night will be arranged for August or September at The Hand & Dagger to issue the certificates and badges. I've just realised I missed it off the Agenda for the last Committee Meeting or I could have told you a date. Or maybe I intended to leave it off and discuss it at the Coaching Forum - yes that must be it!

***Terry Maddock***

## ***Lakeland Weekend Camp***

***17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> August***

This year the Family camp will be at Coniston Hall. The camp site is on the road out of Coniston towards Torver, on the left. About 10 minutes walk from the village.

On Saturday we are planning an estuary trip on the Esk from Ravenglass, Saturday's tide is a better height for the trip. This is a trip for long boats, either sea boats or touring boats. High tide is about 3.30 and I believe we need to be on the water two hours before. For those not wishing to do the estuary trip

there could be an alternative session on the Lake.

Sunday will be a Lake trip, may be down to Peel Island and back, depending upon the weather.

For further details me a call.

***Clive Robinson***

# ***Ribble Swimmers Club Update***



What's new in crap paddling I hear you ask, well to tell the truth lots, the 'Ribble Swimmers Club' has been very busy and has again seen an increase in membership for the second period running as well as myself –The Stig- being elected as President for 'Services to River Rescues', hey –it's because of the RSC members that its so much safer for all you people out there.

The Swimmers returned to 'Oooh Washburn' again and despite landslides blocking the road, managed to get some paddling in. Burger Boy was first on the scene and had already made one full speed no stopping get

out of the way run in a very fast flowing release. When River God and myself arrived on the bank BB had a face like a rabbit caught in a car's headlamps. Not to be deterred we jollied ourselves up and took to the river, which had slowed a little by now. As this was an evening session the plan was to reach the second bridge and get out, to walk back up so as to maximise paddling on the technical stretch. I eddied out before the bridge as BB sailed past in his 'hey hey I'm not stopping' pose and not wanting to disappoint, he got the first swim in, and what a cracker it was – read it and weep all you novice swimmers. Over the big drop he went, missed the massive

eddy on river left, pinned himself on the rock above the next rapid before going backwards down the rapid and coming out and swimming a good 100 yards, wow - awesome technique. As I sauntered down river to retrieve him everyone walking back up confirmed they had seen his perilous passage, and kept a straight face when describing it. He was okay so we tramped back up and ran the river a couple more times before he did exactly the same again at the same spot – just to prove it wasn't a fluke. Another great swim of 30 yards before I managed to stop laughing and drag him from the water, his boat however went for about 300 yards before it was stopped.

Back at the midge infested car park I got changed whilst BB and River God walked back up. They wondered what was wrong when I came down to meet them with a towel wrapped around my head. As they got changed they found out, if you're paddling the Washburn in summer take some midge repellent.

The next paddling for me then was the CST and Level 2 coaching course, how worrying is that for you all, I could be your rescuer or coach in the future!!! The courses were at Burrs - scene of my first and last moving water roll about 10 swims ago. Guess what, I rolled up again, yippee first roll of the year.



The next session was the 'Teesside White Water weekend', where BB and I were determined to perfect our roll. I hadn't seen

BB since the Washburn and his opening statement 'look at what those midges have done to my legs' just begged the reply 'oh yes, they look all fat and swollen', how those midges just loved BB's yummy juices.

Teesside, don't you love it, a safe place to swim. BB had a cracking first day racking up with 6 swims including 2 from the top to bottom of the course, on the down side he rolled up really well and got into double figures with his rolls. I managed no swims and 6 rolls. The second day produced no swims for BB but I managed to get 4 in when 'Cruncher' battered me every time I went through it, in the end I did manage another 5 rolls. River God managed to keep his tally moving in the right direction with another swim from the Spanish Fly - despite having great success in rolling it most of the time. The swimmers club also got a new member when Jo 'The Map' Hacking was enlisted on the grounds of 'sufficient personal injury whilst swimming'. I wasn't sure she yet merited full membership, but her loving father identified other swims she has undertaken this year to bolster the application.

Overall the Teesside weekend was a great event with lots of good fun and banter, I'm reliably told it will be run again next year so keep an eye out for it.

The Ribble Swimmers Club is always on the lookout for new members to join the illustrious ranks of Burger Boy, River God, The Map and myself, but unfortunately have had to reject Jonathon Shaw's application despite his swim at Teesside. Keep on trying and we'll seek you out when you reach the appropriate standard.

As the 2007 swimming table stands, I think BB is well out in the lead with 16 swims and myself in second place with around 14. Don't forget to report your swims to the club and one day you could be this famous.

***Juan Moreswimmer***

# What A Difference A Day Makes



**Paddlers:** Norman, Pat, Mark, Cynthia, Albert, Kath

The Ravenglass Seaquest event was scheduled for a date in March when we were battered by 60 miles an hour winds, and had therefore been postponed to Saturday 19th May, when surely the start of summer would ensure calmer conditions. Wrong!! True the forecast wasn't for 60 mph – rather it was for 40 mph – not much of an improvement. The original intention was to spend the weekend on Cumbria's West Coast, combining the Seaquest with Tom's flat-water trip on Ennerdale on the Sunday. Tom's trip was cancelled a few days before due to the bureaucracy of United Utilities now meaning that they needed several weeks to produce the necessary permit which used to take a couple of days to come through.

However, the accommodation was booked, so the Greens & Cynthia travelled up on Friday evening, with Albert & I following on Saturday morning.



I had e-mailed the organiser of the event, Annette, who had decided that she would go ahead as most of the paddlers were very experienced and liked 'interesting and challenging' conditions, so after a quick coffee on arrival at the caravan, off we set to see the experts in action. We arrived on the beach at Ravenglass just in time to see the start of the race, and yes, it was windy, and yes, it was challenging and definitely not the day for us! It was however a lovely spot and

we consoled ourselves that the wind was due to drop and we would try again the following day.



A drive up the coast seemed the order of the day, and we explored St Bees which was truly awesome with huge waves crashing over the sea defences, and Whitehaven which was warm and sheltered, so much so that we had ice creams just to make it feel like we really were on holiday.

Pat had negotiated with the owners of the caravan site for us to have exclusive use of their pool, so on our return after quickly changing into swimming gear we took to the water for a 'safety & rescue' session. At least the water here was warm, chlorinated and not the slightest bit choppy unlike that earlier on in the day – much more my style! We practised rolling, eskimo rescues and 'all in' deep water rescues and were amazed to find that almost 2 hours had passed in a flash. A box of red wine and Pat's steak and kidney pie rounded off the day very nicely.

The met office were right, and Sunday dawned sunny with a light breeze blowing from the west, so cars were loaded with boats and kit and off we set for the free car park in the centre of Ravenglass. There were a number of other paddlers there getting ready, all of whom had competed the day before and as the check points were still in place they were out to beat not only their own times, but also that of the winner of the event.



Ravenglass itself lies on the estuaries of three rivers, the Irt, Mite and Esk and was an important naval base for the Romans in the 2nd century with its own fort, although little remains of it now. It is an attractive small town whose main street is paved with sea cobbles and leads down to a hard gravel beach. This means that you can drive down to unload boats, but the cars must be put back on the car park unless they are equipped with water wings as the tide comes right up to the road. This done, all we had to do was to wait for the water level to rise sufficiently, and then we were off.



The Seaquest checkpoints had been placed in various locations on all three rivers and were awarded points according to the difficulty in reaching them. We had already decided to concentrate our efforts on the Esk, but the day was so beautiful and the scenery so magnificent that we lost our competitive streak and decided to just chill out and enjoy the trip. We soon reached the bridge carrying the railway over the river at Eskmeals



Viaduct, and then as we rounded the bend the lakeland hills came in to view and stayed with us for the rest of the trip. On our left was Muncaster castle amongst the trees which apparently saved it from destruction by Oliver Cromwell as he couldn't find it on his approach on horse back – if only he'd had a kayak things might have turned out differently! The river carried on twisting and turning until the large shingle bank where we became grounded. We were just debating whether it seemed a good time to get out for a brew when we realised that we were floating again and that the river had gone from nothing to about a foot deep in probably less than a minute. Good job we hadn't got the butties out then!

We soon reached Muncaster bridge carrying the main road up the west coast, and continued a little way further before stopping for a welcome brew, and then beginning our return journey just before the tide turned. As we neared the viaduct once more the estuary looked very different from when we had set

out - what had been a fairly narrow channel was now a huge expanse of water.



However, the tide was dropping rapidly, so we didn't have too much time to linger as we neared the end of our journey, but we vowed to return in the not too distant future. It had been a fantastic trip, and there were still two other rivers to explore.

***Kath Risely***

# ***Rhosneigr Surf Camp***

## ***3rd – 5th August***

Have you ever tried surfing in your canoe? Sitting down, not standing up – though you'd get extra marks for style if you did stand up successfully. If you have then you may know about our annual Anglesey Surf Weekend. If not, read on.

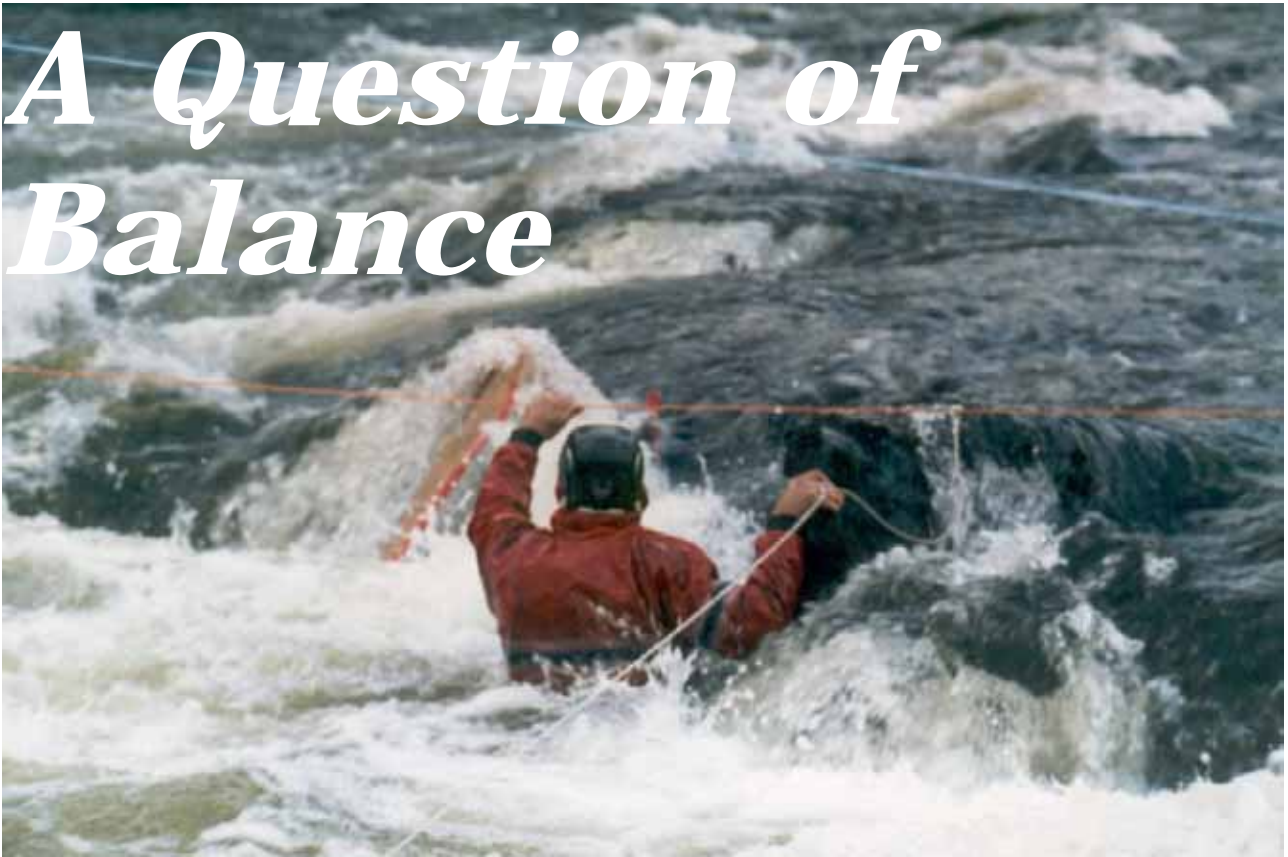
One of the few things that you can do in a kayak that beats surfing a glassy green wave on a fast river is surfing down the face of a glassy green wave on the sea – especially if the sun's shining. Every year we have a weekend camp at Rhosneigr on Anglesey. The idea is to pack in as much surfing as possible and have a generally sociable weekend. We don't always get brilliant surf, but there are other attractions – seal spotting around some of the offshore islands, beach games, kite flying, beer and barbecues - whatever.

If you've not surfed before this is a good opportunity to learn. As long as you have reasonable control of your boat and are prepared to swim a bit you should have fun – the D'ribbler award was won one year on the basis of an afternoon at Rhosneigr.

Rhosneigr is on the North West corner of Anglesey. If you've been before you'll know where the campsite is, if not get in touch with me and I'll direct you. The site is fairly basic – no water park or cabaret, but it has hot showers and is not normally crowded. We usually travel to Anglesey on Friday night, but you can always come up on Saturday.

***John Kington***

# A Question of Balance



After reading the article “Ribble Swimmers Club Take on the Washburn” in the May issue of the newsletter, I was prompted to write this article. (After I had stopped laughing that is.)

As someone who has been paddling on and off since “Adam were a lad” (not Burger Boy Adam) I started to think about my own experiences when I was just learning to paddle with the Club. I realised that things have changed significantly in the last 20 years or so and started to ponder the reasons **WHY** and **HOW**.

The reason **WHY** is probably explained by the big difference in the design and construction of the kayak. This craft is now much shorter and more robust and will take a lot of punishment at the hands of today’s paddler and still come out in one piece. This means that it also a much safer boat to paddle on white water than the composite kayak of 20 years ago.

The main danger of paddling a composite boat on white water was connected with the

danger of suffering an entrapment. Because boats were fairly long (around 4 metres) and lightly constructed (for speed & manoeuvrability) they could become wrapped around an obstruction like a rock or bridge pillar. If the paddler were still in the boat when this happened he/she could be trapped by the legs and unable to escape.



The problem could be compounded by the material used in the boat’s construction. If it was made of Glassfibre or Diolen then it could be ripped apart (eventually) by a determined rescuer with a knife, who could then extricate the victim. If however the boat

were made from Kevlar or Carbon Fibre or a mix of both, then it would not rip apart, but it would still fold around an obstruction. Many of you probably know that these materials are used in items like Body Armour due to their ability to resist impact by a bullet or knife.

So in general paddlers kept away from hazardous rivers until they had sufficient skill to avoid the dangers (or they just simply drowned).

**HOW** things have changed can be found by reading the article about our intrepid trio of Burger Boy, The Stig & River God in the May issue of the Newsletter. They and no doubt many others seem to have no fear of paddling on white water, which is at times beyond their level of ability (judging by the frequency of their swims), for which they are to be commended. They manage to come out relatively unscathed because they paddle plastic boats which are very robust (they need to be) and they are easy to escape from in the event of a capsized. They also have the required "**Confidence**" to know that whatever shortcomings they may have they are not putting themselves in any real danger.



Whilst **Confidence** is no substitute for skill and ability, it plays a very important part in how a paddler performs on moving water. Without it we simply would not be able to focus on the right course of action. I have seen several intermediate and novice standard paddlers suddenly break down with fear and sometimes be unable to carry on paddling. With females it sometimes manifests itself in tears or in uncharacteristic use of four letter words to those around them.

Confidence can be a very transitory commodity. We usually build it by going through the learning process and acquiring paddling skills and water reading knowledge. We start to feel like we are getting the hang of this "Black Art of Paddling Whitewater", then one day we overreach ourselves and take an embarrassing and unpleasant swim. This can suddenly dent that Confidence to the point that you feel like packing it in and taking up another sport. This has happened to me and in my case I took up golf. (How sad is that?)

I was even worse at golf so I had to return to paddling again. But after much soul searching I decided that what was required was to reach the right **Balance** of skill and ability for the water I intended to paddle. I also reminded myself that I paddled for the enjoyment it gave me, and if it was going to scare me witless then there was no point in doing it. Eventually my confidence returned but it was tempered by good judgement (or so I like to tell myself).

I am not suggesting that paddlers should never venture out of their "comfort zone." This would stifle their personal development and potential to enjoy the sport. What I would suggest however is that each time they plan to venture that bit further, they consider carefully the possibilities and make the appropriate plans. Paddling with more experienced people is a good idea.

Many paddlers set great store in the ability to roll (or not). Ability to roll is a very important skill when it comes to self rescue. Inability to roll however does not necessarily mean that someone should not paddle, but it does place constraints on choice of paddling venues and paddling partners.

In some clubs in the USA paddlers are not allowed out on club trips until they can roll with confidence.

**Should we follow the example of some of these US clubs?**

I personally would not subscribe to such restrictions in Ribble Canoe Club, however, as a minimum requirement, it seems sensible that everyone on a trip should be able to capsize and deal with the resulting swim without placing too much of a burden on those around them.

### **So if we do not follow the US example what do we do?**

The logical answer is to improve the skill level of the paddler so that he/she does not capsize very often in the first place. (This assumes we are not discussing freestyle paddling where being upside down in a kayak is par for the course)

### **What are the consequences of paddling water beyond one's ability?**

**Disadvantages** - Possible damage to or loss of, boat & equipment. Putting paddling partners at risk during or after a rescue. (This is another good reason why club trips are graded according to level of ability.)

**Advantages**- Less confident people sometimes need a challenge to help them develop. After successfully paddling a river or sea trip they previously thought beyond them, they will become more confident. (Some paddlers have the ability but lack the confidence.)

## ***For Sale***

Oh dear, nothing for sale this month.

Well, actually there would have been; in fact there was an advert here – with picture! – all nicely formatted to fill this gap on the page.

So what happened to it? It got sold! Last thing on Tuesday when the newsletter's nearly ready to go, I get a phone call to say it's been sold and can I take the advert out. So what am I going to do? I don't want to leave an empty space – that would be unprofessional – but I

People should be encouraged to develop their personal skills for the sake of safety and enjoyment, and the sense of achievement to be had from skill development.

### **What is the best way to develop paddling skills?**

Joining a good Canoe Club is probably the most important step in developing paddling skills, and we should take pride in the fact that as a club we offer various ways to teach or actively develop paddling skills.

We are all aware of the various courses we run, but in a less obvious way we develop skills by encouraging novice and intermediate paddlers to paddle alongside more experienced ones (e.g at Halton or on various river trips).

Another good way is to enter competitive events like slalom or freestyle. In my own case I used to paddle in slalom competitions, where I was constantly trying to do that fast & clean run. Always without success of course, but at least I learnt the art of reading white water and basic river techniques.

### **Conclusion**

**The pinnacle of paddling success is to have a perfect roll, but NEVER need to use it.**

***Norman Green***

don't want to run an advert and have people disappointed when the item is already gone.

It's also far too late to start moving everything around so as to make the space go away, I really can't be bothered!

So what am I going to do? Well, I'm just going to waffle on for a while until the space is full.

Ah... Mission accomplished!

# ***Ribble CC Library***

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

## ***Technique:***

BCU Handbook  
 The Practical Guide to Kayaking  
 Canoeing & Kayaking  
 William Nealy's "Kayak"  
 Bombproof Roll and Beyond!  
 Eskimo Rolling for Survival  
 White Water Safety & Rescue  
 Weir Wisdom Rapids  
 Canoe & Kayak Games  
 The Playboater's Handbook  
 Complete Book of Sea Kayaking  
 Sea Kayak Navigation  
 Path of the Paddle  
 Canoeing  
 Open Canoe Technique  
 Anglesey Sea Paddling  
 Rowing it Alone  
 The Handbook of Survival at Sea  
 BCU Coaching Handbook  
 Sea Safety: The Complete Guide

## ***Guidebooks:***

English White Water  
 Scottish White Water  
 White Water Lake District  
 An Atlas of the English Lakes  
 Canal Companion: Cheshire  
 Ring  
 Welsh Sea Kayaking  
*by Jim Krawiecki and Andy Biggs*

## ***General:***

The Rough Guide to Weather  
*Robert Henson*  
 The Liquid Locomotive  
*John Long (ed)*  
 Many Rivers to Run  
*Dave Manby*  
 Norwegian rivers  
 Canoe Focus  
 Working out of Doors with Young  
 People  
*Alan Smith*

## ***Expeditions:***

Travels with a Kayak  
*Whit Descher*  
 On Celtic Tides  
*Chris Duff*  
 Blazing Paddles  
*Brian Wilson*  
 Dancing with Waves  
*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 Dunnett*  
 Odyssey among the Inuit  
*Jonathan Waterman*  
 Barbed Wire & Babushkas  
*Paul Grogan*

## ***Videos:***

Liffey Descent  
 Deliverance (18)  
 Extreme Sports Canoeing  
 A Taste of White Water  
 Wicked Water 2  
 Drill Time  
 Destination Nowhere  
 Path of the Paddle: Doubles  
 Whitewater

## ***DVDs:***

Tony Morgan in the Grand Canyon  
 LVM Lunch Video Magazine  
 Ribble Newsletters (CD)  
 Doublyouess  
 Without a Paddle (13)  
 Whitewater Kayaking  
 The Cockleshell Heroes (U)  
 Mags Brayfield in Nepal  
 EJ's Advanced Playboating  
 The Chaos Theory  
 Jackson Kayak Promo  
 It's Different Every Time  
*Norman Green*  
 EJ's Playboating Basics  
*Eric Jackson and Chris Emerick*  
 Wavesport: Sessions  
 Fort William 2005/06 Trip  
 My Tartan Adventure (VCD)  
 Ribble Canoe Club in Scotland, 2007  
 The 7 Rivers Expedition  
 Locks and Quays  
*Featuring Ribble Canoe Club*

# ***Pool sessions***

The following lists the pool sessions booked at Fulwood Leisure Centre, the contact for the courses and the Supervisor and Committee member on duty.

Date	Session	Contact	Supervisor	Committee
Sept 7 <sup>th</sup>	Open	N/A	Mark Loftus	Brian Woodhouse
Sept 14 <sup>th</sup>	Rolling Course	Bob Smith	Grahame Coles	Mark Dillon
Sept 21 <sup>st</sup>	Rolling Course	Bob Smith	Clive Robinson	Peter Jones
Sept 28 <sup>th</sup>	Rolling Course	Bob Smith	Allan Hacking	Adam Fielder
Oct 5 <sup>th</sup>	Open	N/A	Mark Loftus	Kath Risely
Oct 12 <sup>th</sup>	1 Star course	Tom Byrne	Grahame Coles	John Kington
Oct 19 <sup>th</sup>	1 Star course	Tom Byrne	Mark Green	Terry Maddock
Oct 26 <sup>th</sup>	1 Star course	Tom Byrne	John Kington	Martin Stockdale

Prices:

1 Star Course £30, Rolling Course £15 (both plus club membership). All other sessions £3.

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

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

### **Escape!!!**

As Terry has already explained, Tony Marsh will be taking over from me as Secretary. We've still got to sort out the details, more in the next newsletter.

In the meantime we'll try to make it as seamless a transition as Tony Blair managed... (although I don't think I have to go and see the Queen first!)

### **Dates and deadlines**

The next committee meeting will be on September 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm at the Hand & Dagger. The next newsletter will be published on September 18<sup>th</sup>. All submissions to me by Saturday September 15<sup>th</sup> at the latest please.

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

## ***And Finally...***

Is the forum turning into a lonely hearts club already?...

"Hello my name is Adam and I'll paddle with you on Friday because it sounds like you've got no mates. I have limited paddling ability but i am good at eating pies and crashing on couches. I am a non-smoker, a pisces, tall and slimmish and would like to meet a pathetic paddler, prone to falling in and swimming a lot - sounds a bit like you.

Love  
 Me x"



	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	Flat 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	
				✓																			Ian McCreerie	
		✓				✓																	Jacky Draper	
														✓			✓					✓	John Kington	
																						Hon. Treasurer	Kath Risely	
																						✓	Mark Loftus	
												✓				✓					✓	Hon. Secretary, Newsletter	Martin Stockdale	
				✓	✓																		Mick Huddleston	
			✓															✓				✓	Nicky Marsh	
					✓	✓										✓				✓	✓	✓	Peter Jones	
		✓				✓																Competition Secretary	Susan Shaw	
										✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	Quartermaster	Steve Swarbrick	
								✓			✓						✓			✓	✓		Steve Wilkinson	
						✓						✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	Hon. Chairman, Calendar	Terry Maddock	
	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 listed for information only.

## River information:

Burrs 0161 764 9649

[www.burrs.org.uk](http://www.burrs.org.uk)

Canolfan Tryweryn 01678 520826

[www.welsh-canoeing.org.uk](http://www.welsh-canoeing.org.uk)

Tees Barrage 01642 678000

[www.4seasons.co.uk](http://www.4seasons.co.uk)

Washburn/Wharfe 0845 833 8654

<http://www.yorcie.org.uk/>

## Trips / Events

### July

21 Triathlon – Kayak, Run, Bike  
Short & Easy (says Tony M)  
[www.madyaker.co.uk](http://www.madyaker.co.uk)

22 White Water  
Tryweryn, Bala, N Wales  
Dam Release  
Release info 01678 520826

25 Evening Cruise  
R Washburn

29 *White Water*  
*R. Greta (Keswick)*  
*Threlkeld Bridge to Keswick*  
*Terry Maddock*

### August

3-5 *Surf Camp*  
*Rhosneigr, Anglesey*  
*See Article*  
*John Kington*

4/5 White Water Cruise  
R Washburn

12 *Lune Estuary*  
*HT 11.53*  
*Halton to Glasson Dock*  
*Terry Maddock*

15 Evening Cruise  
R Washburn

17-19 *Family Camp*  
*Coniston Hall*  
*Coniston + Esk Estuary*  
*Clive Robinson*

26 White Water Cruise  
R Washburn

### September

1/2 *Youth Freestyle Event*  
*(camping Sat night)*  
*Nottingham HPP*  
*Allan Hacking*

2 **Beginners' Trip**  
**Wyre Estuary (HT 3.24)**  
**Knott End to Skipool & Back**  
**Terry Maddock**

5 Evening Cruise  
R Washburn

9 *Moving Water*  
*R Irwell*  
*Burrs Country Park*  
*Mark Dillon*

16 *Flat Water Trip*  
*Llangollen Canal*  
*Tom Byrne*

16 *Intermediate Sea Trip*  
*Dee Estuary*  
*Hilbre Island + Pt of Ayr (poss)*  
*Alan Clowes*

22 *Youth Freestyle Event*  
*Final of series*  
*Thames Weir*  
*Allan Hacking*

23 White Water  
Washburn  
Dam Release

30 *White Water*  
*R Greta (Keswick)*  
*Threlkeld Bridge to Keswick*  
*John Kington*