

PAIGNTON CANOE CLUB NEWSLETTER WINTER 2011



Tim Durrant & Jon Roberts on the Dart.

Another well overdue newsletter! That must mean there's been lot's going on!

Firstly, Thanks to Simon Darby for all his work on hammering my ramblings into a fine newsletter over the years but has now moved on to other things. Cheers Si, It's been most appreciated by all the club members & myself.

Please note the Membership fees, new date for renewals, pool fees & Christmas meal info.

Cheers Rob C. 07986898083



Lawrence on the River Usk – South Wales.

New Website Developments

Jon Roberts is updating the website & requires any good photos of any of the clubs activities for the site, Please email him on jon@westcountrybusiness.com

There is a thread on the website forum about thoughts & ideas for the revamp & any ideas are most welcome. A preproduction version of the new site is up & we are hoping to go live with the site soon. This will be advertised on the Facebook Page & the Forum beforehand so no one misses out.

Future Members

Well there must be something in the water or maybe just too cold to go paddling but the future generation of paddlers has been swelled by Neil & Jo, Matt & Karla, & Rob & Kay who have produced Baxter, Dylan & Samuel, respectively! Best wishes from the club & hope to see you all back on the water.

Club Mobile

Want to make contact with Matt, our Club Secretary or to give a contact number for the club to someone interested in more info? Then use the new club mobile number. People can leave a message & Matt can get back to them at a suitable time. Tel 07530258146

Next Years Beginners & Improvers Course

This is planned to take place on the Tuesdays Feb 28 unti April 17th & then in the harbour in May. Course forms & more details are available from Myself (07986898083), Matt (0753025814) or Tim (01803527072)

Agm + Pool News

There was a very good turnout at the AGM at the end of September with lots of great feedback from the floor.

Some decisions needed to be made. The first is that Membership fees have gone up to £15.00, this is to cover a financially bad year with losses at the pool, probably due to the cold hard winter putting people off paddling in the cold. As mentioned before the membership year is going to run from October to October, making it easy to tell who is a member at the pool sessions. £15 for Adults & Family Membership, Plus £3 for each additional person. Polo Night £5 a head on Dec 20th (No Pool on 13th due to maintenance) Finally, the committee is still the same. Thanks to everyone for your continued support.

Gareth's Thoughts about Canoeing

I love canoeing. I liked going in the dark caves at Berry Head. Some seals came to see me and I picked up some rubbish to save the seals' life. They are my new friends.

It was too wet in the harbour. I liked going round Thatcher Rock, and I saw lots of birds.

I laugh at Mumsy when she gets wet. Her hair sticks up!!

I liked the barbeque on the beach. I ate sausages, salad and a bit of fish.

Tim helps me; he is a nice nice person, and very kind.

My favourite bit was in the swimming pool. I liked paddling with my hands, capsizing, and walking under water with the canoe on top of me.



Gareth & Rob in the topo. Jo in the background.

Swim supports

Well there were a number of these that wanted out support. While always pleased to do our bit for the community the dates all seem to be around the same time & always in prime paddling times.

There was the Cross Torbay Swim, organised by the British Long Distance Swimming Association. It's a long day but there is a small donation that can go towards that new piece of kit. There was a sponsored swim from Brixham to Meadfoot in aid of Plainmoor Pool, this did not seem to have such good organisation & that puts a lot of unwanted responsibility on our paddlers. There was also an Air Ambulance swim again this year. This took place at Breadsands around a marked course making it a less exposed for the swimmers. Finally there was the Palmer Dart, a small meeting of friends from Tooting Bec Lido in London. Swimming from Totnes, down to Stoke Gabriel. Looking out the Plesure Craft



heading up river it was a lovely trip with the tide finishing with Coffee & Bacon Butties at Stoke.

Thanks to everyone who gave up their time to help on all these swims.



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Summer trips, were well supported with the first notable trip for fish & chips at Torquay changing when we got there as the chippy was closed. Hugh did a huge sea launch back into the harbour much to onlookers amazement. Thanks to Stuart & Jo for looking after the gear while we stuffed our faces!

The BBQ's were well supported both at Silver Cove & later on at Churston Cove with lots of lovely food forced on the chairman! (It was Great!)

The usual paddles around the big rocks at Meadfoot went well with some lovely sunlight & some returning faces... Phil, Tina & Derek! Nice to see you all back on a Tuesday night.

We had a fair share of bad weather & good fortune, Babbacombe to Coombe Cellars went ahead after a very wet & unlikely looking day. Kingswear to Brixham ran despite a worsening forecast that turned into a lovely sunset trip. The last trip from Kingswear didn't happen due to horrid conditions & a trip at Totnes was changed when two of the five who turned up decided that hot chocolate was a better idea... Leading from the front & chanting "Less than three there never should be" I joined the chocolate crew & twisting the others arms, we all headed for the pub & a nice warming drink.

We did of course run my favourite trip, up the creek to the Watermans Arms for a pint in the beer garden. All together, a full seasons paddling.

Talking of numbers at the Brixham round to the caves paddle, there were 29 kayaks about, ours, Ibex's & some around at St Mary's bay. It's was quite a sight!

Other trips

Tim organised some weekend day trips with various people getting new members out in sheltered conditions. One of these was my first trip up the Erme estuary from Wonwell Beach up to the weir at Fleet House. A fun day in the sun with Hugh, running the weir. Plus Stuart & Jo on sit on tops trying out closed cockpit kayaks & enjoying the difference. I got to paddle my first sit on top... even standing up on it, unfortunately, Stuart in my boat timed this moment for his first kayak capsize & rescue session... All great fun! Thanks Tim & Stuart. Stuart & Jo bought kayaks soon after & we hope to see more of them out paddling with the club.



Playing Chicken with a BGS

Friday night, late July, dinner down the beach hut watching tank landing craft moving around HMS Bulwark anchored in the Bay. It was a lovely evening and the activities were fascinating. It looked like there was a fast rib playing sheepdog keeping the odd pleasure boat at a sensible distance from the assault ship. Every now and again smoke billowed from some part of the infrastructure. I guess they were doing fire drills.



Saturday was spent helping a friend move flat. Sunday morning I went down to Torquay Harbour briefly and watched big Tank Landing Craft, for the sake of brevity TLC (I know they are called Landing Craft Utility, capable of carrying a Challenger 2 tank, but TLC has a nicer ambiguity) shuttling crew, friends, family, local dignitaries and other punters to and fro from the ship. The military vessels looked the business and had that very satisfying low rumble/growl of powerful engines idling along, patiently waiting to be given the opportunity.... One notable incident. For a few minutes TLC1 was delayed on the slip. The second TLC came into the harbour and loitered in the open water by the marina. At this moment a 4x4 with speedboat on trailer turns up. TLC1 backs out with a full cargo of standing public. 4x4 immediately reverses (fairly well) the trailer down the slip and into the water, launches the boat and leaves a teenage girl holding it, chest deep. He drives off. And disappears. TLC2 moves close'ish, clearly itching to land passengers who have been standing in the hold for too long already. Five minutes later still no sign of 4x4 driver. NCO's are encouraging girl to throw them a line to secure the speedboat out of the way. Eventually she does. TLC comes in to cheers from the watching crowd and girl's embarrassed look. Still no sign of 4x4 man. What was he thinking?

Sunday early evening. At last some time to go and have a close look. Paddling out from Preston I can see that the stern is no longer low, the TLCs are presumably tucked up inside the no longer flooded stern hanger. One set of davits was empty though. I wondered how close I dared, or would be allowed, to get. In principle there is an exclusion zone of 50 metres around Royal Naval (grey) ships or 150 metres around a submarine. This zone is extended to 250 metres if one of the above is underway entering or leaving the harbour. But it may be that with world tensions as they are this would be 'interpreted', just in case of sneak attack by stealthy suicide kayakers or other nefarious sea goers.

I stopped and took photos regularly. Various Sailors and Royal Marines could be seen moving about deck. As I got closer one, very definitely on the skyline, moved right to the bow of the ship and swung a fitting on the rail to a profile position revealing a machine gun. Above the 5 of Pennant Number 15 can be seen the round hungry pointy end of a 0.50 inch heavy machine gun mounted in a permanent position, a second marine next to him with binoculars. Off camera to the right are at least 3 other manned machine guns that I could see. 30 seconds after taking this photo the guy with the bins suggested I 'Move away from the ship'. I waved and promptly moved back a couple of hundred metres. It seemed only polite. Then I went anti-clockwise around the vessel. HMS Bulwark is a Big Grey Ship (see the photo). Coming round starboard side I could see that the anchor chain was being drenched in water as it was being pulled up, so maybe I was being asked to move back because of concern for my safety, rather than because I represented a clear and present danger to HM forces.

In the meantime I listened to various radio traffic, including a comment that a couple of crew were being picked up 'a little the worse for wear'.

The anchor broke water as I reached the 2 o'clock position, and I heard on the radio that she was now underway and turning to port (there were almost simultaneously two blasts of the horn). Port was away from me, which was nice.

In the mean time the delayed Landing Craft Vehicles & Personnel (one of four normally on davits) was coming out of the harbour at full chat to catch up with the BGS. The LCVP was on collision course with me (maintaining the same bearing with respect to me as we both moved). So I stopped paddling and presented a full broadside aspect to make myself as conspicuous as possible. It altered course and went round me, which was also nice. It was then hoisted aboard ship whilst HMS Bulwark was accelerating out of the Bay. Presumably with a couple of jolly Jack Tars soon to be encouraged to sleep it off in the lower and darker reaches of the ship.

The radio squawked one more time from HMS, thanking the Harbour Master for Torbay's hospitality over the weekend. Sail safely lads and lasses. Glad you are on our side. Tim

Christmas Meal – Saturday 17th December 7.30pm Olde Smokey Marldon

2 courses £13.95 Per Person, 3 courses £16.50 Per Person

Friends & relatives will be welcome to join us & celebrate this time of year.

Starters

- 1 Homemade soup of the day (Served with granary bread)
- 2 Chicken Waldorf salad (bound in a lemon mayonnaise dressing)
- 3 Creamy garlic, coriander & bacon mushrooms (Served with granary bread)
- 4 Crab & Prawn Fishcake (Served with a sweet chilli dip & salad garnish)
- 5 Selection of melon & fig (in a mulled wine syrup)

From the carvery

- 1, Traditionally roasted local turkey (with sage & onion stuffing & sausage)
- 2 Succulent Roast Beef (with Yorkshire pudding)
- 3 Vegetarian nut or quorn roast (with vegetarian gravy)
- 4 Parmesan crusted pesto salmon (with a white wine cream sauce)
- 5 Broccoli, Mushroom & Stilton Pasta Bake (Topped with bread crumbs)

All served with a selection of vegetables & roast potatoes from the carvery

Deserts

- 1 Traditional Christmas Pudding (Served with brandy sauce)
- 2, Selection of desserts from the sweet cabinet

Followed by Coffee & Mince pies.

Please see Jo at the poolside with your meal choices & payment. All before the 6th Dec. Please.



And Finally...

the BBC show Live and Deadly was filmed at the river dart country park. The presenter Steve Backshall is more than a keen kayaker, having paddled the DW, on the sea & the whitewater.

Kati caught up with Steve on the day & was suitably starstruck.

Check out Steve's website to read more about him. <http://www.stevebackshall.com/>