



MAD PADDLES

NEWSLETTER April 2013

Club Matters - Andrew Millest.

By the time you read this newsletter, the first Thursday night session at Brereton will have taken place, marking the start of the MADCC summer season! Monday nights at Bollington begin again on Monday 15th April.

The MADCC calendar on the website is there to provide you with full information about club activities and the club forum is the place to look for last-minute information about events, trips and other ad-hoc paddling sessions.

One important date for your diaries is the Go Canoeing event that we are hosting at Bollington on Saturday May 18th from 10am until 3pm. Just like the event we held last year, the aim is to get people who are not currently involved in paddlesport to come and have a go. Last year, in addition to the coaches and helpers who supervised the on the water activities, it was great to have members of MADCC around to talk to the people who were having a go so please come along and help advertise our club if you can.

The other important date for your diaries is 29/30 June – the date of the Cheshire Ring race. Last year MADCC was unable to field a team but in 2013, with our new Mirage K2, we have the equipment and we need 5 junior or female paddlers and 5 senior paddlers (who can be male or female) to make up our relay team. If you want to have a go at this really enjoyable event then please contact Tony Machin or me.

During the past few cold months members have not been in hibernation. Congratulations to Neil Evans for achieving his 3-star open Canadian qualification and also for completing the training sessions as he works towards gaining his Level 2 UKCC coaching award.

Tony Machin and Adrian Fisher have been setting high standards in racing with a 2nd place in K2 at the Gailey CC race. Well done for a great performance on a choppy canal venue – described by others who were there as “like paddling on the Conway ascent in places.” Earlier this year the same pair was also 2nd in the Weaver descent race hosted by Runcorn CC – only being narrowly beaten by Mayers/Wignall who are both ex- or current international level paddlers.

As always, with my Editor hat on: thanks to the authors of the excellent articles in this issue.

Update on proposed new club house at Hurdsfield – John Kavanagh

We have been through a period of little action since the New Year (for various reasons outside our control) but things are beginning to move again. The pre-planning application for the design that members were shown at the club AGM last November should be submitted very soon. This will give us an indication whether a full planning application is likely to be successful. Another important step we are pursuing is the transfer of the land from the Council. We have assurances that our application is likely to be successful, but we still have a paperwork process to go through and this is being done in conjunction with the Sea Cadets.

We should therefore soon (end of June, we hope) be in the position of knowing better where we stand and positive responses on both planning and land transfer will give us the ammunition we need to approach grants bodies for significant capital grants.

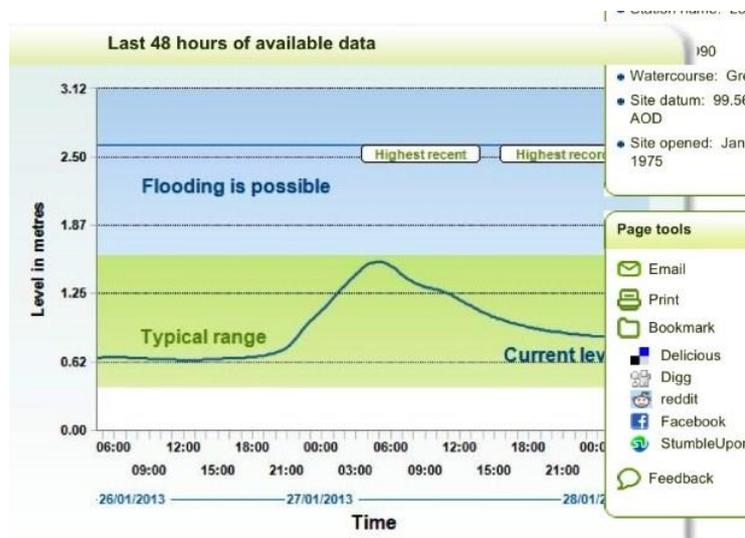
Moving Water Trips January – February 2013. Alan Tonge

Alternatively; - 'TheGreta Escape' and 'Up the Crake without a Paddle!'

River Greta (into Keswick): Sunday 27th January 2013

The river Greta is a short river that forms from the confluence of the Glenderamackin and St John's Beck just over 3 miles east of Keswick. The Greta is one of the most popular river runs in the Lake District but needs some rain a day or two before hand to be paddable. At only 4.5 miles it's not the longest of rivers but it's quite steep dropping over 220 feet in that distance (9.6m/km in new money)

We were lucky on the last weekend in January as heavy rain combined with snow melt (we naively thought it was the end of winter!) filled the river overnight. Levels at the Low Briery measuring station went up like a cork from 0.6m (low) at tea time on Saturday to over 1.25m when we put in on the Saturday: anything over 1m is classed as high.



Greta Levels at Low Briery

An intrepid but select band of hardy paddlers (me, Alan A, and Paul) met at the services and were considering a range of other options on the off chance that there would be too much water in the Greta (for me at least) we arrived at the put in to find a couple of local paddlers about to set off, their advice clinched it for us; the river was going to be full but manageable as a lot of the more technically challenging features would be washed out. Miss magnetic rock (stay river left) and avoid the big hole under the packhorse bridge (river left again, what can go wrong?!) A quick trip into Keswick, detour round the road works, and a change in the pencil-works car park later we were back ready to set off.

The put in is at New Bridge which actually straddles the Glenderamackin and St John's Beck where they meet. The Glenderamackin was a torrent of brown muddy water while St John's Beck (which flows north out of Thirlmere) was steady and clear.

We set off just after 12:15, an early dip refreshed me as I tripped over an eddy line practicing ferry glides across the flow at the New Bridge put in, but I managed to recover and off we set none the worse for wear.

The first few hundred yards is fairly gentle but it's not long before you are into boulder gardens though today these were swamped leaving wave trains and just the odd crunch off submerged rocks.

Magnetic rock rapids which are mentioned in all the guides for this river had lost their magnetism and the rock itself was not evident as we went past, I for one was quite relieved.

Shortly afterwards we picked a line river left through a broken weir and carried on through a section of rapids, again washed out with wave trains and some fairly big holes. Glancing back Alan claims he saw the whole of the bottom of Paul's boat heading skyward as he bounced through a hole. Paul admitted that he had sworn a bit at that point but avoided a dip with a well-timed high brace.

Not long afterwards I found myself sideways in the bottom of a hole and went in (hence the write up again!). I held on to boat and paddle and let the flow take me downstream until we managed to get in a very small eddy. Feet first when 'swimming' served me well as I scraped over several rocks on the way, escaping with just a light grazing.

Unfortunately the eddy was against a steep bank so I had to half-empty my boat whilst standing in the river. My hands were cold when I got back in my boat and I struggled with my spray deck, Alan's hands were suffering too as he was clinging to a rock bracing me and my boat against the bank, eventually we made it 30m downstream to the next eddy, where Alan and I sat for 10 minutes regaining the feeling in our hands, very painful lots of swearing from me!

This was exactly opposite the Lower Briery measuring station and we noticed that the water level was showing 1.1m on the scale fixed to the bank just after 1pm (having peaked at around 1.5m at around 5am)

A few hundred yards later the river splits round an island, with the normal line being river right, (river left takes you down a drop between some boulders then a scrape down a broken weir). Our chat with the locals at the start had left me with a strong left bias and having missed the eddy river right I ended up perched precariously in a small eddy behind a rock just above the boulder drop river left, after a good 'coaches eye' looking at it, Paul and Alan joined me and we committed to the river left route, punching through the hole at the bottom of the drop and making our way over the broken weir just downstream. Fortunately with so much water we made it down bouncing off the waves cushioning the rocks on the way.

The hole at the packhorse bridge didn't look huge but we gave it a very wide berth staying river left and heading into the very large eddy just after the bridge.



water.

The Confluence of the Glenderamackin and St John's Beck (NY263 239) at about 2:30pm water levels having dropped by over 1ft since we put in.

The last mile or so through Keswick was fast and bumpy but luckily no surprises, we got out on a large sand bank river left just by the pencil-works and wearily dragged our boats up to the car park at about 1:45pm, without my dip this would have been a very quick trip as the

locals had predicted. At around 6C, it felt much colder in the windy car park, it was great to get into dry clothes and back to the car. This was a thrilling trip and I was fortunate to be accompanied by a couple of experienced paddlers giving me the chance to paddle a little out of my comfort zone, although next time I'd be happy to paddle the Greta with just a little less water.

The River Crake – 'source to sea': Sunday 17th February 2013

A gathering of ten eager paddlers must rank the River Crake as one of MADCC's favourite rivers. Nine kayaks and one big green '*Kayak-Crushing*' open boat set off in beautiful sunshine and the lightest of breezes to paddle the mile or so down to the south end of Coniston where the lake drains into the opening of the River Crake which over 6 miles leads down to the Leven estuary and Morecambe Bay.

Water levels were 'medium', at around 0.65m at the Lower Nibthwaite measuring station.



Swallows and Amazons revisited: 7 paddlers on Coniston with the Old Man in the background (the mountain, not the paddler bringing up the rear!)

After the lake the river passes through some reeds and a lagoon then narrows and picks up speed, around half a mile later comes the first short rapid as the river drops round some bends through a wooded area, everyone passed through these safe and sound without being run over by an open boat (yet!). For me the main obstacle on this stretch of river was the trees, there are a lot of willows encroaching from the bank and with the fairly fast flow I was dragging my way through overhanging branches a little more than I was comfortable with. I eventually listened to advice and really began to understand the benefits of a solid reverse ferry glide when it comes to avoiding these hazards (I will keep practicing this in order to retain my good looks!). Working downstream we had some fun dodging from eddy to eddy especially as Mr Finch was expertly practicing eddy hopping in his open boat in readiness for his pending assessment. It is quite unnerving when he swings in beside you at high speed! Working on down the river various groups paused here and there to play on a couple of waves forming over small weirs and other stepped drops. Shortly after one of these stops I caught an edge breaking in and over I went (this is beginning to be a habit!) my fledgling pool roll wasn't up to the real thing so I made a wet exit, bobbing up just in time to see two of my kayaking colleagues one after the other wedged under the front of the open boat, everyone was so intent on keeping an eye on me and positioning for a rescue that the eddy river right had become a little congested! So here it is in print, an apology – sorry guys my fault! Again no harm done and we made our way slowly towards the most challenging section of the trip, Bobbin Mill rapid, just above Spark Bridge. We stopped above the rapids for a breather and to work out a plan. The rapid starts with a drop over a diagonal weir then heads under a metal footbridge with further drops as the river works round a fairly long right hand bend. A couple of paddlers stationed themselves in eddies by the bridge and by the rocks beside the next big drop and off we went one by one keeping very river left under the footbridge then carrying on through the rapids towards Spark Bridge below. I negotiated the drop down from the weir, took the correct line under the bridge and carried on down the next section (with Paul's encouragement ringing in my ears) but somewhere on the right hand bend at the bottom I

ended up sideways and again I was in. Based on my swimming experience in the Greta I tried to hang on to both paddle and boat but in the end my paddle was twisted from my grip and never seen again!

Learning point: in this situation drop the boat! There is a big eddy under Spark Bridge which I knew about and I could see as I was nearly at the end of the rapids, someone would have caught my boat and it's easy to see if they don't, my black Werner paddles however were an entirely different kettle of fish. Another learning point was using the lost and found forum on the UK rivers guide website, fascinating reading!

With my pride dented several of the party attempted to cheer me up by claiming that they'd nearly gone in, or that they'd had to work hard to recover, in one case someone even claimed to having had to stop part way down to empty his boat, but it didn't really help.

Thanks to Alan who lent me his paddle and paddled the last mile or two to the get out at Greenodd using Mr Finch's spare paddle, and thanks to him for bringing a spare.

One of the key features of this trip is the 'Chippy' at Greenodd, which luckily for a Sunday was still open so several of the party sampled the delights, I didn't bother; with a good 3G signal I was straight on my phone looking for a replacement brightly coloured paddle on the internet (my new one is bright yellow which should improve the odds of recovery if I drop it!).

I've been a little worried in writing these accounts of our adventures that I might put people off our regular moving water trips, this is not my intention. We've paddled some really good rivers this winter and although they've been exciting for me as a novice I've always felt comfortable, well supported by the club coaches and have learned something new every time. It would be great to see more novice paddlers taking the step from flat to moving water, moving water trips are planned throughout the year but heavily dependent on the amount of rain near to the dates, why not speak to the coaches, try to come along in the summer to practice skills and maybe set yourself a goal to join more of the trips next year, and if you fall in I'll help you with the write up for the newsletter!

The River Dove tour – Neil Evans

An annual official tour of 11 miles, with 3 weirs, on the lower reaches of the Dove, organised by Burton CC.

Rachael and I decided to paddle tandem, in our open boat. We arrived at Aston Bridge to find fields with surface water and river running strongly, so we expected an easy paddle. The start area was full of various craft with more than 60 paddlers, eager to commence the journey. We got on the water first so we could have a feeling of discovery and isolation. Paddling in the winter when trees are leafless, opens up views and vistas that are unavailable during the summer months. The river had obviously been several feet higher, seeing all the debris entrapped in the tree branches.

The first obstacle to avoid was a large fallen tree in a bridge arch. We were advised it would be a gentle S to ensure safe passage. I would describe it more of a sharp Z, everyone got swept sideways into the trunk, but we all survived!

Everyone should always pay attention at the briefing. I didn't and was expecting the first weir to be an easy concrete shoot, something like Northenden weir on the Mersey. Luckily we got out, had a look, and made the correct call and portaged. The shoot was only 2 feet wide and required the boat to be lined up with verbal directions from the bank.



Below the weir was our picnic beach, quite a crowd of onlookers had gathered to give encouragement and safety cover. Those who got it wrong had a very cold swim. One tandem crew lost a lot of heat very quickly, as could be seen by their blue lips. The swimmers were revived by an army of kelly kettles that gave forth warmth and hot drinks. Perhaps they should be included on the essential kit list for extended trips? A solo open boater demonstrated his skills by gliding sideways on the bottom wave and deliberately filling his boat up, to show how you could still remain in control, although he did have lots of buoyancy bags and a good dry suit.

With the river being in full flow the 2nd weir had a very big wave waiting for the unwary, exactly as described in the brochure.

The 3rd and final weir was a nice friendly wide shoot of 4 feet, with a safe messing about area below. It was then a short paddle to the get out, just before the aqueduct bridge.

In conclusion, it was a nice gentle tour of grade 1 with 2 weirs of possibly grade 2, depending on conditions.

How to become a UKCC Level 1 canoe coach – Neil Evans (Training Officer)

The level 1 coach is a qualification that gets you onto the coaching ladder and is a brilliant self-development goal, as well as keeping our club's coaching pool alive and well. For young people the L1 qualification is a good target for Duke of Edinburgh awards and looks brilliant on applications for university...

Before committing to the L1 scheme you can learn a lot and get good coaching skills by assisting the club coaches with their groups on a club night. If you have attended regular club nights for a year or two, you should be experienced enough to say hello and introduce yourself to newcomers, explain what we do at MADCC, and be able to help out coaches with groups of beginners.

If the L1 is on your list of things to do then there are some basic requirements:

The minimum requirements are that candidates must be over 16 years old, be of 2 Star standard, have passed FSRT, and have a first aid certificate. At our club, we like to go a little further to do a thorough job of preparing our members for the L1 process.

- 2 Star pass and have experience of the 3 paddlesport disciplines that MADCC supports – general purpose kayaking, open boating, and race boat paddling/competition.
- FSRT Foundation Safety and Rescue Training.
- First aid qualification
- Work with a qualified coach on MADCC club nights, to gain hands-on experience.

- Have an understanding of the MADCC and BCU Child protection policies

Access to the training needed to fulfil the basic L1 requirements is free when it is run by the club. **Dates for aspiring coaches' diaries are Saturday 6th July for 2 Star assessments, and Saturday 27th July for FSRT.**

Once you have obtained the basic requirements, the next step is to register with the BCU, using the Coaching Register form and book a L1 training and assessment course. These are usually held over 2 weekends. That's 3 days training and one assessment day.

There is generous funding available to club members who want to become L1 coaches (and for those who want to carry on up the coaching ladder): MADCC can contribute 30% of the course fees from our own funds, grants from the BCU NW region can provide an additional 30%, finally Cheshire East Council will also provide grants to contribute to the course fees so with a bit of planning and guidance you can get qualified for free!

Having passed you are now ready to coach within your remit. Level 1 coaches can assist a higher level coach, run taster sessions, coach in a variety of craft, and assess paddle power start and 1 star awards.

If you like helping people, then coaching could be for you. And becoming a coach will certainly improve your all-round ability, both as a canoeist and person.

In MADCC, Andy and Dawn Hargraves obtained their L1 during 2012 and Liam Gallagher (junior representative on the club committee) is aiming at his L1 for 2013.

If you would like further help, come and chat to me, Neil Evans, on a club night.
