



MAD PADDLES

NEWSLETTER October 2013

Club Matters - Andrew Millest

It seems that the fine late summer weather has kept everyone's thoughts focused on paddling and not on writing, so as editor I was pleased to get two excellent articles from Neil and Quentin!

A reminder to members that the club AGM is coming up on the 16th November at Bollington Community Centre, Ovenhouse Lane, Bollington, SK10 5EY at 6.30pm and that there are places available on the committee for you to contribute to the running of the club. The committee does tend to be comprised mainly of long-standing members and we would love to have some fresh blood. As chairman, I think we have really benefited from being joined last year by Alan Tonge, who as a relatively new member of the club has brought new thinking – so please don't be shy, come and help run the club!

AGM and committee membership – Brian Hamer

Several members of the committee are due for re-election this year so the committee would like to encourage members to become involved with the club and join the committee as new adult or juniors reps.

The Committee meets just once a month, in a pub, with beer, and looks after the business part of running the Club on behalf of the members. Lots of people help the club in many ways without going near the Committee, and the club could not operate without their excellent help. However, we do need a representative committee with willing members. The rule for re-election after 3 years is intended to give a regular turnover of members so we have a combination of experienced club members and newer faces with fresh ideas and enthusiasm. We have been fortunate to have a full committee in recent years which helps to share the load and people are not expected to get to every meeting. We also do quite a bit of discussion and canvassing of views by email.

We need a representative committee to make the club work so please step forward. Andrew Millest or any other committee member will be happy to have their brains picked about what we do. Elections will be held at the AGM, although in practice we normally have only just enough people to fill the committee so there is rarely competition for places.

The current committee is shown below with the posts up for 2013 renewal highlighted. If you are interested in joining us then contact Brian Hamer to obtain a nomination form or just step forward at the AGM.

Committee Position	Person	Elected	Serves Until	Un-elected roles
Chairperson	Andrew Millest	AGM	AGM	Newsletter editor

		2011	2014	
Vice Chairperson	Alan Armstrong	AGM 2010	AGM 2013	
Treasurer	Pat Davison	AGM 2012	AGM 2015	Welfare Officer
Secretary	Brian Hamer	AGM 2012	AGM 2015	
Membership Secretary	Nigel Kinge	AGM 2012	AGM 2015	
Training Officer	Neil Evans	AGM 2010	AGM 2013	
Adult Rep	Liam Gallagher	AGM 2010	AGM 2013	
Adult Rep	Alan Tonge	AGM 2012	AGM 2015	
Adult Rep	Rob Stanard	AGM 2010	AGM 2013	
Adult Rep	John Kavanagh	AGM 2010	AGM 2013	
Junior Rep	Rosie Saxon	AGM 2011	AGM 2014	
Junior Rep	James Greensmith	AGM 2010	AGM 2013	
Junior Rep	Liam Dyer	AGM 2012	AGM 2015	
	Mark Hayes			Youth Officer

Proposed new club house at Hurdsfield

As a teaser; to learn the very latest on where MADCC and its partners are up to, you will need to come to the club AGM to hear an update from John Kavanagh.

The Welsh Open Boat Symposium, Bala Lake – Neil Evans

This annual event alternates between the three open boat associations of Wales, England and Scotland. It provides a wonderful opportunity to pick up paddling skills, in a relaxed friendly atmosphere, with all helpers and coaches providing their time free of charge.

SATURDAY: A trip on the Dee at Llangollen.

In line with the ethos of the weekend, a local driver gave up his day off, to provide trailer transport for 10 open boats. We all had a great day out and learnt lots from our 2 coaches. It

involved a journey upstream of about a mile, using lining, tows, eddies and the occasional bit of brute strength. The biggest danger was the slippery rocks under foot. We stopped for lunch; afterwards we practiced ferry gliding, breaking in and out of the main flow. Then it was time to retrace our steps and run the rapids downstream. It is always worth paying attention to the rapids on your way upstream, with particular attention to the bottom parts. There is a theory that you learn more from your mistakes and miscalculations than your successes. For example: not being aware of the final obstacle in a rapid, not lining up accurately at the top, getting too close to hazards, travelling at the same speed as the water, poorly executed support strokes, and tandem paddling both on the same side. All these lead to boat emptying practice for some of our group, but excellent learning opportunities.

SATURDAY NIGHT: Light entertainment

I met up with Mark Finch and discussed his exploits of his white water descent higher up the river. Went to a hilarious slide/film out-take show, put on by a crazy Irish/Canadian open boater. I can't even remember his name, but there was a lot of slapstick humour. A typical example was him trudging up a very steep bank, on greeting the person at the top, he raised his arm to shake hands, in doing so, his boat slid all the way back down in to the lake. Afterwards into a make shift bar, with lots of local bottled beers. I hadn't got my reading glasses, so picked the one with the prettiest label, and, yes it was a fine brew.

SUNDAY MORNING: Fire-lighting.

On these weekends it's sometimes a good idea to have a break from paddling and try something different. Our guide was a chap who had worked with Ray Mears for 10 years, so he should know something about the outdoors. I met up with our group, to find there were quite a few characters, so it promised to be a fun morning. One white-bearded, weather-beaten man had already been given the nickname of 4:4:4 by the youngsters, in reference to his pancake making exploits on the campsite the night before. Apparently if you pitch your tent nearby, he will cook pancakes for everyone, until his mix runs out. Hence his main nickname of pancake man.

Again we all learnt lots about the art of fire lighting, from where to find the best material the start your fire. Which trees are most suitable and oil rich. What type of bark can be used and scraped to form ignition tinder. On gathering our material, we were given the one match challenge, which all just about passed and then how to repeat this with metal strikers, and how to get the spark's intensity on one spot. With the fire burning, you can make a brew with watermint, it's easily identifiable by the mint like aroma when crushed.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON: Poling.

Learning to stand up in a boat is always useful. We paddled out from the campsite to the south end of the lake, where we found some shale and stone beach areas, ideal for this activity. Eventually, we manoeuvred our way up some gentle shallow rapids on a river that entered the lake here. We were coached, for example, only punt forward, when the boat was facing directly up the flow, and using the pole the correct the boat angle when the bow veered off line. From a coaching perspective, we should always be careful with verbal directions. For example, one student on getting stuck on a rock was instructed to get his weight out of the boat, on to the pole, at the same time stamp on the yolk. This was a little unwise as the coach failed to mention it should be a horizontal push with the foot. It resulted in a horrible splintering noise of cracking ash, under a size 10 boot, being brought down vertically. Ouch!

SUMMARY

A really good weekend, and as a regular club coach and helper, it was nice to have other people looking after me for a change. You can also pick up coaching tips and ideas from other coaches. The next Open Boat Symposium will be held in the Lake District on the weekend of 31st October/1st November 2014.

The Cheshire Ring (an alternative way to do it) – Quentin Blagg

I had wanted to pedal the Ring since helping Jacquo paddle round in his leaky boat back in 2009. I actually had it in the plan for July of last year; in the event, my lovely all white off road

bike was nicked over in Holland and it was November before I had a replacement. I gave it a go, but it was hopeless right from the start. The towpaths were a sea of mud, it was getting cold, and then I had a flat just before Lymm. I have never been so happy to bail out! I was still determined to do it, and so again July was the chosen time. The year continued badly, some serious broken bones and the replacement bike was itself nicked, this time along with my wife's bike, by means of a chain saw hacking through a motorbike chain! This was one determined thief. Fortunately, I'm not easily put off, and pressed on with plan C. Bad luck struck again, and I came off trying out the 'replacement replacement', and cracked 3 ribs. Fortunately !!, I was due to have 10 days riding in Greece with some friends a few days after the fall, decided to carry on, and felt a whole lot better in the sun sipping Amstel and getting the miles in. So much so, that on return in mid-September, I decided that this was the moment.

Weather reports were checked carefully, and the last Saturday in September was promised by Carol Kirkwood, the lovely Breakfast Weather presenter, as probably being the last really sunny day of 2013. The hybrid bike was prepped carefully, clothes chosen, energy bars and Ribena purchased, and timings carefully planned.



As it worked out, my wandering wife was away again with girlfriends on holiday, so I was able to clatter about at 5.00 am making porridge and drinking tea after a good nights sleep. My plan was to stick rigidly to the official route, starting at the Miners Arms, staying on the towpath unless absolutely impossible, and having a 12 hour pedalling target. Amazingly, I almost managed all 3.



6.00 am at the Miners Arms, and all was quiet and dark, no moon at all. I had good lights on, was wrapped up warmly, well fed and watered, let's go. By 6.30, dawn was emerging, and I had good daylight by the time I crossed the Marple Aqueduct. Prior to this, I had rattled down one of the lock entrances, my drinks bottle had jumped out, and all that lovely Ribena had helped top up the canal. Well bless me says !! The going was firm and fast, and it was Ashton Marina before I met anyone. Down the mucky, glass ridden stretch into Manchester, past the Velodrome and Etihad Stadium, and I was on Canal Street's gay section by just after 8.00. Even at this time, there were fishermen on the banks, some actually under the City bridges; the fish must like being dry! Emerging at Castlefield, a late night clubber flagged me down; he was staggering away towards Old Trafford, but wanted to get home to Openshaw. I did my Good Samaritan bit, made sure he was safe and steered him towards home and bed.

United were playing West Brom at home, (they lost) and all the burger and souvenir shops were setting up as I rode past. (Major Bridge works involved about a mile off road here, not welcome but no choice). I was ready for some hot grub, but I was about 4 hours too early. A small Filling Station took pity on me, and made me a very nice coffee to go with my Kit Kat. The sun appeared about now, and cheered me up immensely, it had been really chilly so far. Sale Waterside looked really tempting, but I wanted to get as many miles done as possible before a definite stop.

However the little Marine shop at Lymm proved too much of a temptation, and the nice owner



made me a cup of tea.

We chatted about the Ring, he was well clued up on the Club and its main event. I suppose he takes some handy extra cash when support crews drop in.

Time to strip off, and I longed for shorts instead of the three-quarter pair I had opted for. There had to be compromises. Fast going now, over to Broken Cross, with 4 day boats filled with girly pirates. It was a great looking Hen Party, yes I was tempted to join in after being offered a beer, but I was on a mission. B C was reached in 6 hours, and I was bang on target. It was warm and dry, and I was really enjoying this ride.

Big Lock at Middlewich was the next main target, the object being to get something hot inside me. I could have stopped at the Anderton Boat Lift, there's a nice cafe there, but no, it had to be Middlewich. Good call, because as it turned out, there was a street party in full flow, with



dancing and live music.

Too good to miss, and I added an hour to my overall time, as well as an unwelcome extra riding in the dark. Live bands and Morris dancing were good, as were soup and Bakewell tart -yum yum. Red Bull beckoned and off I set at around 15.00. Another big temptation to use the road here, but I would only have been cheating myself, so I stuck with it. This was tough going, no hard surfaces and thick grass to wade through. I didn't enjoy this leg at all, only the sight of a long line of swans near Rode



Heath cheering me up.

RB was welcoming, it was still warm and light and some girls drinking outside whistled at me. Thanks girls, money in the post! After the little climb up onto the Macclesfield Canal, I suddenly realised I was tired and had aching feet. Stretched out on the bank, a friendly boat owner asked if I wanted to join him for tea and cakes; really tempting but I politely refused, as I might not have got going again. However, the little break had worked its magic and I gave it some welly over to Congleton, another shoes-



off break at Bosley and on up the lock flight.

However night had fallen by the time I reached Macclesfield and the towpaths were mine again.

7 miles to go, and I just wanted it to be over. Concentration was wavering, feet and bum were aching, it had been a long day. Clarke Lane came and went, and I spent the last few miles



dreaming of a hot bath and bed. I only managed the latter.

At 19.40, it was over, a quick photo, and I considered a pint at the Miners. Only briefly, I was tired and cold,

and the only place to be was home. 20 minutes later along the Middlewood Way and I was back. All I could manage was a cup of tea, and after wrapping myself in a blanket, slept the sleep of the dead on the settee for the next 10 hours. I was supposed to be out on the Roaches next day with some friends; I missed the meeting time and duly passed my apologies. A long tough day, but as with all achieved targets, a definite sense of satisfaction. I may walk it next year, backpacking over 3 nights. Meanwhile, I will be writing to the Guinness Book of Records, the quickest ever circuit of the Cheshire Ring on a bike, by a 68 year Pensioner, with a metal knee and 3 cracked ribs. Any takers!

Notes.

Basic requirements: Plenty of miles in the legs if you want to do it in 1 go. (that reminds me, I take my hat off to the 'all the way' solo paddlers, well done all of you, a tremendous achievement). I had just returned from 10 days riding in Greece, so was fairly well prepped up. Timing; aim to complete the ride in daylight. I had a total of 1.5 hours in the dark, and had to concentrate really hard. Aim for midsummer when the towpaths will be dry as well. The bike; I used a hybrid with fairly grippy tyres. If it has to entail some dark riding, a really good front light will be your best friend ever. Take at least 2 spare inner tubes, there is always glass and thorns on the towpaths. I carried the bike over the dodgy bits. A pair of padded mitts will be useful; your hands and arms take a real pounding. Grub; not much needed really, there are plenty of options on the route, but have a couple of energy bars just in case. Happy to help if any Club members fancy having a go.

News from Canoe England

The qualified coaches in the club get occasional newsletters which aren't always very interesting! However the latest issue contains a couple of gems which all club members might find of interest.

If, like me, you have trouble retaining all the information that Mark Finch imparts at his FSRT courses then the collection of video clips showing "how to do it" for many techniques for boat emptying, using throw lines, towing etc. will come in very handy: <http://bit.ly/H3UHd8>

The other item of interest is that CE has been working on updates to the BCU Star awards and the updated syllabi, training and assessment notes will go live on the 1 November 2013.

The updates include some new awards, amendments to pre-requisites and updates to the syllabi to reflect current best practice. For full details on these updates please refer to the BCU Star Award Review Update document (<http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/media/pdf/BCU%20Star%20Award%20Review%20Update%20August%202013.pdf>) or see the updated syllabi on the respective pages of the Canoe England Website.