



# CANEWS

March 2014

## EDITOR'S CORNER

THE WEB SITE - [www.ringwoodcanoe.co.uk](http://www.ringwoodcanoe.co.uk)

### A BIG thank you to the contributors

Gareth & Barry D.

Just a short issue for March!

Lets have a few more write ups of our winter paddling trips for June!

### DON'T FORGET .....

RCC Forum



Don't miss out on impromptu trips, gossip and banter.

If you haven't registered - please get in touch with Graham or Simon who will set up your registration

### RC Photo Gallery



Share your photos with all members

### CAPTION COMPETITION

Visit the website for the caption competition....if you have a caption but cannot log in please email the secretary.

I'm not sure all of this issues entries were entirely not x-rated, but here goes....



*Baa aarl, Baa arl, I love the Baaarle said Timmy's paddling chum . Timmy just smiled lovingly, and then went back to tying another sheepshank. What for you ask ? Ewe wouldn't want to know .*  
**Mike W**

*Ewe are my sunshine, my only sunshine  
Ewe make me happy when skies are grey  
You never know, dear, (Wot Deer) how much I love you  
Please don't take my kayak away.* **Mike W**

*You were fleeced Tim , that ones already stuffed . It brings a whole new different meaning to 'Deliverance' . BAA SHEEPY BAA.* **Mike W**

*The grimace on Tim`s face tells us he was not happy it was his turn to wear the wellies and not Dolly the sheep.....!!!!!!* **Elliott G**

Me : 'What's his name Tim ? '

Tim : Roger

Me : Roger the sheep

Tim : Lets Paddle first

Me : I'm off ....

**Mike W**

*"I know she smells a bit, but I always make room for a blond hitch hiker."* **Barry D**

*I heard that Tim was seen hanging around with a 'Blond Rocker'..... Hmmm, she wasn't what I was expecting. Still what should one expect from a bloke who wears a a boat for a hat?* **Dot**

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## THANKS FROM THE DORSET DISABLED CANOEING UNIT

It was decided again this year, that we would donate the £200 given to us from the Fordingbridge Rotary, in recognition of our help with the duck race, to the DDCU.

For those of you with good eye sight, their thanks is below:



### Dorset Disabled Canoeing Unit

Affiliated to Canoe England and Associated with Poole Harbour Canoe Club

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12<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Dear Barry

On Behalf of everyone in Dorset Disabled Canoeing Unit, I would again like to thank all of you at Ringwood canoe club for your very generous donation to DDCU. Your continued help will again make a great impact upon our finances for the coming season. We cannot thank you enough for your support.

With kind regards

Fionnuala Hough  
Chairperson  
DDCU

Barry D

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## ANOTHER THANKS....

On our recent day trip on the Walkham in February, we gained a couple of strays – a nice lady called Olwen and another young lady -lizzy who was paddling with her. They had lost the rest of their group and were looking for someone who could lead them down to the get-out.

Ross M lead them down the bottom part of the Tavy fantastically and the rest of the group proved very supportive in making them feel welcome and passing on a few tips.

Olwen managed to track us down via the website and sent the group a big Thank you and said ' It would otherwise have been a long walk carrying our boats!

Well done guys!

Nicky R

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## UPPER DART DAY TRIP 22 DECEMBER 2013

### A 'FIRST-TIMERS' EXPERIENCE

Organised by Ross Macildowie and led by Jake Deakin.

In the build up to the paddle there had been good rainfall during the week with the flood warnings dropped by Thursday. We all met at Kilmington Cafe for the obligatory warm-up breakfast and to consider the paddling options. As Wes and I were first-timers we were hoping for a stable medium river level which is considered the best introduction to the Upper. It is more difficult at lower levels (as there are fewer available lines) and at high levels the force of the river takes it up another notch. Generally it takes about 6 hours after rain for the Upper to reach its level. Hope was high as all indications were good - the rain had stopped, there were blue skies and a quite balmy 9 Celsius forecast for the day.

The team comprised: Ross Macildowie; Jake Wiltshire; Jake Deakin; Richard Hampson; Wesley and Gareth Sampson. Unfortunately, overnight storm damage to Ross Levine's Bournemouth house roof meant he had to rush back from Dartmoor to get it sorted - he was gutted as this was also to be his first trip on the Upper. He was missed!

We arrived at Newbridge for 10:30 and the inspection was on. Perfect. We were good to go as the river was up to the ledge. I was pretty excited but nervous - what an opportunity, father and son were to get their first run of the Upper together with a team of experienced paddlers to guide them. The backup walking gear I had taken was not needed! We all got into our drysuits, except for poor Wesley (guess what he wants for Christmas!), loaded up Jake W's van and set off to Dartmeet.

Jake D was going to lead the group with support from Ross. Jake D took us through a series of hand signals that would be used on the river. Funnily enough he was not surprised that I didn't know any - something endemic in Ringwood Canoe Club apparently? Then we paired off, checked each other's equipment and did a few warm ups. The paddling order was explained and we were in. Having just hit the shortest day of the year the light was not going to be on our side and we would need to monitor our progress accordingly. Jake D's fame meant other paddlers wanted to stop and talk to him - is there anyone on the river who does not know Jake?

The start of the Upper is perfect. Nice and gentle to warm up and assess how you feel. The approach was for Wesley to shadow Jake D at the front, Gareth to shadow Ross, Jake W to move up and down through the group in support with Richard guarding the rear allowing him to move in and help when needed.

It is difficult for me describe the actual paddle as I was so focussed on following Ross' line through the many rapids but a few sections really stood out. Fortunately Jake D and Ross avoided using many of the very intimidating names (was that last rapid called cannonball or cannibal - did I hear that right?) until we were through them. The Boulder Field was pretty full on and I got in some excellent rolling practice. We were nearly through the Mad Mile when I thought it would be a good time to test out my new Palm buoyancy aid I had just got for my birthday. It worked a treat! Wes at this stage was doing fantastically well, following Jake D's

'exciting lines' until his first slip of concentration in trying to forge out a new route with a resultant 'safe-pin' between a couple rocks. Jake D was out in a flash, grabbed the back of Wes' boat and pulled him around. They climbed out at the bank and walked a bit up river to put in at a decent eddy. It didn't quite classify as a swim as Wesley only got his feet wet (see Wes - you don't really need a drysuit). Jake W got to test out his rolling and unfortunately hurt his shoulder which gave him an added incentive to try and keep his head out of the water for the rest of the paddle. Jake W, sporting a brand new Seals deck (the one with the rubber insert under the elastic cord which makes it really tough to put on) now needed help stretching it back on after river inspections. On one occasion Jake D sat on the front of Jake W's boat to help stretch it back on, let it go by mistake only to have it shoot back into Jake W's face - it can be as dangerous on the side of the river! At least it kept his boat dry unlike Ross' who was mumbling about why his boat was taking on water despite his brand new 'made in America' deck.

Euthanasia Falls was next. We got out river right to inspect and as we walked above it, I looked down and felt my heart rate increase by at least another 50 beats per minute - I thought I was already on max! We watched a few paddlers descend it and then decided that it would be over to Richard to talk us through the line and demonstrate it to the team. Richard's plan was to make the eddy river right just above the falls, take the boof line, drop onto the foam pile with a quick move right and shoot through to applause and cheers. The execution was perfect and it was done with a smile - I will know that I am decent paddler when I can smile going down a grade 4 drop. Jake D was next to go. As with all good leaders Jake D thought it important to give a full demonstration so he also included a neat little roll at the bottom. Wesley, the perfect student, followed Jake D exactly including the quick roll up to the sound of cheering. Not to be outdone I took what I thought was the perfect line, dropped down but by the time I had rolled up was too far downstream to hear the applause! Ross was conscious of the limited daylight left so we needed to make a move.

On the way to the next feature of note (Surprise Surprise) I started to tire which together with a lack of precision resulted in me not quite missing a mid-river branch. Another swim but Ross rescued me and emptied my boat ^ . It was an unnecessary swim but when I realised I no longer had the strength to put my deck on (Richard helped me out and did it for me) I knew the excessive rolling 'practice' during the day had taken its toll. The decision at Surprise Surprise was easy. Ross and Richard took me river right and walked me around so I could sit on the rocks below, rest, eat some chocolate and watch the two Jakes and Wes run it. Surprise Surprise is not that big (well at least not from where I was sitting!) but looked extremely technical to me. A couple of big boulders at the top to avoid with a constant changing of line, dropping into the shoot and having to avoid a very nasty looking ledge at elbow height on the right. Missing your line could really hurt. Jake W got though with panache, Jake D gave a cool back deck roll demo at the bottom while Wesley also hit the perfect line and seemed to glide down in his playboat.

The run in from here to the get out at Newbridge was fantastic with some fun rapids and small drops with good places to play if you have the energy and time. Jake D did an impressive exit by launching himself out of the river onto the top of the slab while I literally stumble from my boat. Wesley and I swapped boats for the little carry up the stairs and to the car with my excuse being that I wanted to be seen coming off the Upper carrying a playboat but the truth was I was so exhausted it was all I could lift.

We finished off the day with a cream tea (for Jake D without the tea) at Cafe Green Ginger in Ashburton. The debate about the toughest line to take on Euthanasia (boof or diagonal) continued to rage - in the end it was still unresolved but everyone agreed the boof line we all took was definitely the 'ballsiest'.

For what it is worth, based on my experience as a first-timer on the Upper, this is what helped: a decent breakfast or maybe two if dad is paying (thanks for that Wesley); good water at a medium level; a range of experience within the group to look after the novices, flexibility in your approach (portage and rest when you should); a little ambition; and most importantly a positive attitude. After all, the idea is to enjoy yourself! The things that helped make us feel good and build our confidence were the positive talk, the encouragement and compliments on things done well. Our thanks to Ross for organising, Jake D for leading and Jake W & Richard for helping us through an amazing day of paddling. It's great that our club has experts to facilitate this.

Good luck Jake for your trip to Chile.

**Written by Gareth with contributions from Wesley.**

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## **RIVER AVON**

Always a social event on the club's paddling calendar, and this year was no exception. The sun shone, the river was full of water and we had 22 assorted boats with the full range of abilities on the river. We had a good number who hadn't paddled this stretch before, they were lucky to see it at its best and it was great to welcome some new members to our trips. Tim was running late as usual and this time failed to find us so paid the high price of paddling somewhere else without us. If anyone else was late, perhaps because you forgot to change your clock, you missed a great day.



After the floods, the meadows were still saturated but the river was within its banks and safe, although there were a few more trees across the river than normal. One near the start of the trip had fallen from the bank and its top branches were brushing the opposite bank. We could just squeeze through in single file but Sarah Wellard, who had never been on moving water before, got a bit tangled up and blocked the way for her son, who capsized and made his entry onto the prestigious RCC swimmers list. You're in good company there Jonathan. Perhaps you can turn the tables on your Mum next time. Ask our Chairman for a few tips.

The weirs and hatches gave some entertainment for the fun seekers and the spectators. We stopped for lunch at Standlynch Mill weir as usual, but this time there wasn't enough headroom under the footbridge even for young Jake to squeeze through in his playboat.



Wesley Sampson was easily tempted to go for a swim in the stopper though, and he swapped buoyancy aids with his Dad so that he had a good anchor point on the back for a line. With that attached he dropped off the weir and obviously enjoyed his swim and the controlled experience of the power of the water. So much so that, after he was pulled out, he wanted another go. This time though, he soon stopped smiling and it was clear that something was very different. He was pulled to

safety again and as he staggered out of the water we could see that the buoyancy aid had come very loose and had ridden up too high, so that was why his face was underwater most of the time. Good kit is no use if it isn't fitted properly, so that was a useful lesson learned by Wesley and hopefully a few others who witnessed it.

The hatches above Downton that caught out the unwary last year had a tangle of trees that looked to me as if a swim into them might be terminal so, although one was clear, most people took discretionary routes over the little vertical weir upstream of them, or overland. Wise choices.

It wasn't a great day for wildlife and we were a bit early for most of the breeding birds, but Bev & I did see one brood of ducklings. Bird of the day for me was the Cetti's warbler; a little brown job that you hardly ever see, and its call isn't the most tuneful, but it is incredibly loud and we could hear them all along the river, even over the chatter of the ladies.



Most people ended the trip at Cow Bridge as usual, and again Wesley was tempted with offers to lift him onto the railings for a big seal launch. He's up for anything but isn't so light now so the lifters struggled a bit. Worth the effort though guys, well done. He, Gareth and both Jakes continued on to Fordingbridge and reported back that East Mills flume was at its best level for playing on (for future reference, 1.25 metres on the Environment Agency gauge online). They missed more socialising and afternoon tea in the garden at Overtheway but I guess that didn't worry them at all. Thanks to Dot, Lisa and Bev for yummy cakes.

Thanks also to the shuttle drivers – very much appreciated but not often rewarded. Although the Longford Estate, who own most of this stretch, gave their usual formal warnings that the river is generally non-navigable, they arranged for their river keeper to unlock the gates at the start. The Harding family who own the west bank at Charford gave us their best wishes and below is a copy of their email. Patrick Hickman who owns Hale House is always equally

supportive and arranged for his river keeper to open the barrier so that we could park at Cow Bridge. It is great to have them on our side.

*Dear Barry*

*We would be more than happy for you to continue your trip past us again this year – with the usual proviso about being careful if there are any stock about.*

*Thank you for your kind enquiry about my father – unfortunately, after several years of poor health, he died last September. Life had become very difficult for him so it really was a merciful release. He always liked to see people enjoying the countryside and so I know that he would be pleased that you will be canoeing past the meadows again this year.*

*I hope that you have some good weather for the day and hopefully the meadows will have dried up a little by then.*

*Kind regards*

*Belinda*

**Barry D**