



September 2018

Editor's Corner



Welcome to the new look Canews !!

After many years using the format created by Graham Bland in the 1800's I felt it was time to freshen things up and use the up to date logo and a brighter background.

I hope you all like?!

A big thanks to this issue's

Contributors:

Nick L, Barry D, Sue J & Brun

Summer Paddling



The met office haven't released any official figures yet but, It has been one of the hottest summers that I can remember, and It has boosted

everyone's enthusiasm to get out there and get paddling.

We have had some fantastic and different trips including a long weekend on the Gower peninsular, an adventure on the Oxford Thames, a Devon/ Dorset Bivvi and a record number of people (in recent years) attending Tuesday nights at Mudeford. Thanks to everyone who have organised these.

Lets hope that the Winter brings a bumper year of rain to fill up the rivers for White Water Season.

Caption Competition



'Deflated' Barry D.

'Crushed' Chas C.

'Design Flaw discovered in inflatable kayak' Nick L.

'I told you to order the mega size colostomy bag' Mike F

Breaking News. Plastic bag fights back. Swallows human in revenge for bad publicity' Mike W

Wow that's how to get Tango'd Nigel W.

Message from RCC's new(ish) Club Chairman....

Dear everyone-

Well, what an amazing Summer we are having! I hope that everyone has managed to get out on the water one way or the other and has managed to enjoy that wonderful, all-too-brief feeling of getting wet without a drysuit and not getting too cold.

I've been pretty busy myself; as well as trudging over a few Cretan mountains, I've managed to get in week's guided sea kayaking with old PHCC friends around the Venice Lagoon and the back streets of the City, as well as an amazing time with Cove Rockhoppers messing about around the North Pembrokeshire Coast. I've now got lots of good memories, quite a few good photos and absolutely no money! I think now it's high time I stopped gallivanting around and spent time focussing on Club events over the coming six months. Club members are organising a wide range of activities for all abilities, so I'd encourage everyone to join in and perhaps try something new.



Having been now in RCC for almost a decade (Oh) I know that under Ross and Barry's capable hands, we have a very good, safe and friendly club that generally works very well. That being the case, I don't believe that we need to change anything fundamental. My priorities for the rest of the year will be in helping club paddles and weekend trips happen, debunking the myths around how much work is involved in being a Committee member and clarifying/ 'tweaking' a few areas here and there.



The first decisions that the Committee has made so far this year are 1) to update the way in which we hold and share members' personal information to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations; 2) to look at providing a dedicated web photo area and 3) agreeing to a request that we should all advertise all but the most last-minute Club paddles via Email, rather than through Facebook. If you've got a paddle you'd like to arrange, Email Simon Burke (not me...I'm almost as savvy as Dot with IT) and he'll push out an Email and update the events page on the website.

An important point of principle is that nobody should feel hesitant about suggesting or organising a Club paddle. It can feel very daunting if you've never done it, and it still can even if you have... but it shouldn't be. I'd like everyone to be able to understand what's involved and what help is available from the club.

Julian Butler Race 2018



This year we had 9 keen paddlers (I hear you doubters but yes, they all were this year). The weather was great and they all seemed to enjoy their paddle, but all but one of them had some criticism of the handicaps they were given. The odd one out tried every excuse in the book to get a better handicap before the race but she came in first and then let us know that she's paddled nearly every day this year and covered loads of miles. Clearly the time in the boat paid off.

I was nursing a couple of minor injuries and under doctor's advice to rest them both so decided to stand aside. There was no other volunteer in sight to be timekeeper anyway so I did the lazy honourable thing.

I would have started Amy first as a relative novice, but she felt lonely and waited for Lorna, Sheila and Jason, and they all set off together. Last year's winner, Jason was the only one not paddling a sea kayak

of some sort so in his white water kayak he had a lot more work to do. I think Amy & Lorna held hands all the way round because they crossed the finish line together. In fact, those four were never overtaken by any of the later starters. It might be that the ebb tidal stream was speeding up and they had an advantage with less current at the start, and deeper water over the sandbank, or it might just be that I was rubbish at handicapping. I haven't paddled with Lorna for ages and was impressed with how much she's improved. She and Mike are practically living in their boats though so I should have guessed.

Tactics played some part because the lead group all went anticlockwise around the Avon loop, as did Simon & Evan, while Bev, Jake and Mike went clockwise and realised that they were worse off because of the way the currents were at that state of the tide.

Jason chased Sheila all the way round but couldn't catch her. In fact Sheila knocked over 5 minutes off her previous best time (2013) and over 7 minutes off her most recent time (2015). That is particularly impressive as most of the others were 2 or 3 minutes slower this year than previously, presumably because of the strong ebb current on the way up the harbour and river. (You might think it would speed the return and cancel the time differences out, but that's not the way it is, as any mathematician will tell you.) The exceptions were Jason, who shaved a fraction of last year's time and Jake, who hasn't paddled the race in a kayak since 2011 when he was only 16 years old. He only improved on that time by one minute, but this year he was only 3 minutes off the course record so both he and Jason had excellent times bearing in mind the slow conditions.

Once again, I failed to judge the handicaps accurately and there was a wide spread of finish times. It's just really difficult when some people improve their paddling so much!

It was unusual not to have any open canoes taking part. It is a lovely paddle in a tandem open canoe so please think about that possibility for next year and start selecting your partner.

Barry.



	Boat type	Start time minutes	Finish time minutes	Lapsed time minutes	Position
Sheila Ryan	Sea kayak	8	68.8	60.8	1
Jason Palmer	White water kayak	8	70.4	62.4	2
Amy Quarendon	Sea kayak	8	71.9	63.9	3
Lorna Adams-Jones	Sea kayak	8	71.9	63.9	3
Jake Deakin	Sea kayak	22	72.9	50.9	5
Mike Jones	Sea kayak	18	73.9	55.9	6
Simon Whipple	Sea kayak	14	74.2	60.2	7
Evan Cotterill	Sea kayak	18	74.4	56.4	8
Bev Deakin	Sea kayak	16	76.8	60.8	9

You never know where you're going with RCC...

... but this time it was up an overgrown drainage ditch armed with just half a paddle

Bastards. My first canoe trip for over a year and still they keep trying to kill me. Billed as a great day out, paddling on the Thames and suitable for all types of craft, the 'Oxford Paddle' sounded just like my cup of beer. The fact that the Thames around Oxford is also known as the Isis should have alerted me; sharing its name with a terrorist organisation is probably no mere coincidence.

All began well. Everyone – I think there were 17 of us at the start of the trip – met up on time at Donnington Bridge and, in contravention of RCC rule 37b, was on the water by 10:30 am. Heading upstream, I was under the impression that after a short distance we would be hanging a right and paddling up the River Cherwell. I was really looking forward to touring the backs of Magdalen and St Hilda's colleges, or maybe the University of Oxford's Botanic Garden. Alas, 'twas not to be – a low-strung chain barred all but the lithest of limbo dancers.

So on up the Thames we paddled. Past Salters' Steamers at Folly Bridge and onwards, until we came to Osney Lock. We paired up with two narrowboats to get through the lock and the lockkeeper assured us that he counted 17 canoeists in and 17 canoeists out. So far so good. He also cheerily added "see you later, on your way back", but I informed him that our Tour Master, Cap'n Worth, had organised a loop paddle and that we wouldn't be coming back anywhere near Osney. "Farewell then, me hearties, bon voyage and all that". Little did I – or anyone else for that matter – realise the error of my ways. Or rather, the error of Cap'n Worth's ways. And as for means, well, there weren't any.

We paddled a further 200 metres before heat exhaustion got the better of us. Luckily a pub called The Punter lay in our path. Despite none of us paddling a punt, they allowed us in to slake our thirst. And very nice it was too. Resuming our upstream progress, we paddled past extensive community allotments until we came to a narrow tributary river left, obscured by a veritable wall of willow trees, which Dot identified as the route that we all needed to take. We sent Jilly in as a probe but she failed to return, so the rest of us gingerly followed suit.

We needn't have worried. Well not yet anyway. Immediately in front of us lay Tumbling Bay Bathing Area – a superb pool formed by weirs at either end. It had been an open air swimming pool since the 19th century, but fell into disuse in 1990 when Oxford City Council closed all its Thames bathing facilities. We stopped for a leisurely lunch, during which time most of our party went swimming. Keenest, of course, were our two Water Babes, Lilly and Freya. Least keen was our Water Dog, Brun, who early on had decided that weirs, even small ones, should be treated with respect. His uncaring owner, Nigel, threw him in regardless, so he was forced to join Freya and Lilly on tennis ball retrieval duties.



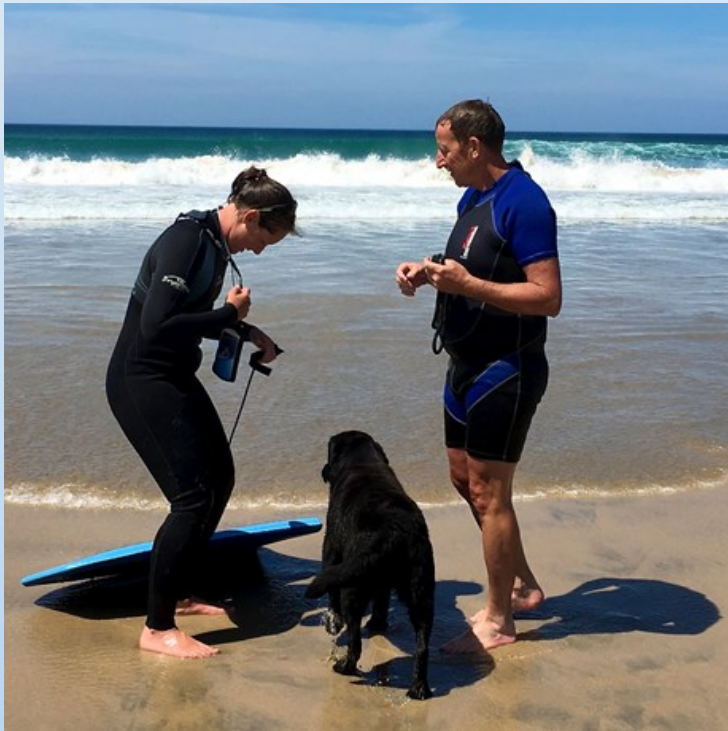
Nick L

It's a dog's life

It's alright I suppose. Being Brun, I mean. The trouble is, these RCC people – and I include my friend Nigel in this – mistake my desire to be friendly for enthusiasm about water. Actually, nothin' could be further from the truth. In my view, water's for drinkin' and not much else. It certainly ain't for washin' in and even more certainly it ain't for swimmin' in. If a Labrador was meant to go swimmin', it've been born with flippers. Obviously.

On top of this, I'm often forced to endure the indignity of wearing a PFD – and a bright orange one at that – just so that my friend Nigel can grab a handle and lob me in the water any time he chooses. Consequently, I tend to stand out in a crowd. Dogs are 'sposed to merge and blend, you know. Merge and blend – not stand out. Plus, just you try shakin' yourself dry in a PFD – it doesn't flippin' work, does it.

“Fetch!”. That's another stupid thing. If you wanted the bleedin' thing, why d'ya throw it away in the first place? Humans. Mad.



And just for the record, should the issue arise, I'm goin' to draw the line at skiin'. There, I've gone and put my foot down. OK, OK, feet. Paws. Whatever.



Fordingbridge Duck Race

Spoiler alert: yellow won (again)

As in previous years, RCC helped to ensure the smooth running of the annual Fordingbridge Festival Duck Race.



Unnamed RCC member attempts to win by sabotaging competitors' entries

This year, those turning up for morning weed clearing duties included Stuart, Dot, Evan, Amy, Mike W, Nigel and Brun. There was less weed than usual, perhaps due to the extended heat wave throughout June and July, so folk managed to fit in a bit of canoeing capsizing before the race.



Stuart concludes that he has possibly slightly overwatered his marijuana crop

Evan had remembered to bring shears, so he promptly assigned himself willow management duties – though the use of a long-handled right-angle model in a Canadian looked decided unwieldy at times.



Evan begins to wish he'd settled for weed-pulling duties

The boom across the river was installed without fuss, though it failed to stop about 30 ducks intent on making a bid for freedom at the end of the race. During the course of the morning and early afternoon, Dave and Annie, Sue J and Lisa C with Charlie and his friend Ollie arrived to bolster resources. Lisa and Tim R dropped by for a chat.

According to various totally unreliable sources, the duck race was due to start at 2:00 pm. Then it was 2:30 pm – 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm – 4:00 pm. All of which provided ample opportunity for RCC members to grow bored with the mundanity of duck racing and start trying to sink each other.



Brun ponders what life must be like for a normal land-based Labrador with a normal caring owner

It all started innocently enough: a splash here, a splash there and then everywhere, um, a splash splash. From my vantage point on the river bank, Charlie and Ollie seemed to be the main protagonists. Sneaking out of the reeds on their paddleboard, they stealthily crept up behind folk and caught them unawares



Trouble looms.....

Cap'n Worth attempted to restore some semblance of order by drowning Charlie, much to the horror of his mum, but, like so many of the Cap'n's plans, this went slightly awry. The outcome is the subject of a separate photo story in this edition of Canews, but suffice to say Charlie emerged relatively unscathed while Cap'n Worth resorted to frantic bailing.



Having successfully despatched Cap'n Worth, Charlie turns his attention to Sue.....



Following Annie's rave review of 'When Michael Met Charlie', Cap'n Worth decides to show her his bailing technique

The race eventually got underway at 4:10 pm. The final 10 minute delay was due to communication between the announcer in the main display area and the Duck Release Control Officer – there wasn't any. It took 10 minutes for a breathless runner to get down to the river and gasp "Go!" before collapsing on the bank. Anyway, the ducks were set free and off they, um, gently drifted.

Don't ask me what the outcome was – I got talking to someone and arrived at the finish long after the winning duck. But I'm fairly certain it was yellow.



Nick L

Photo story — Cap'n Worth's demise



