

The Stopper

Editorial

For some of you it will be a very long while since you last caught site of a Stopper (unless of course you happened to be upside down in one!) and for others only a few months. Why the difference? Well a large number of the last batch were 'lost' at the Pool so the distribution did not quite go to plan and only a few of you had the chance to read the literary highlight that was the Autumn Stopper.

Apologies for these distribution problems (please don't blame me I only put it together!) but from now on we will be e-mailing the Stopper as well as making copies available at the Pool for you to collect.

One benefit of the problems in distributing the last Stopper is that this time I don't have to write a whole new Stopper – some of the comments I made last time are still valid and as many of you never had the chance to read them I don't see any real harm in repeating them

It's been a while since the last Stopper, now the question is, have you missed it?

In times gone by (when I first joined the Club!) the Stopper was the only way of communicating with Club members and letting you know about trips, events and training. Times have moved on and as a Club we now put much greater emphasis on the use of the club's web site www.bromleycanoeclub.co.uk and e-mail to keep everyone informed about what's going on. It quicker and more timely than the Stopper can ever be. So if you are reading this thinking I don't know what 's going on in the Club then make sure we have a current e-mail address for you and check out the web site. Equally important if any of your personal details change or you change your e-mail address please let us know by emailing frank@bromleycanoeclub.co.uk.

That said, we would still like to produce the stopper a few times during the year. Whether we can achieve this is largely dependant on you. Firstly what do you want to see in the Stopper? and secondly, if you go on a trip, a course or an event then please write a short article. It doesn't matter what shape or form it's in, a word processed document is great but some scrawling on the back of a pub beer mat is equally useable (provide it's legible of course!), it really doesn't matter, the important thing is for the members to write about their trips. So any articles, comments etc. for the Stopper please e-mail them to graham@bromleycanoeclub.co.uk or pass them on to myself or any member of the Committee.

I'm pleased to say that we did receive some positive feedback on the last issue so please feel to provide more of the same!

The next edition will be 100% new material - including Bromley CC & CC!

Happy paddling

Graham Whiting

Pool Sessions



The observant amongst you will have noticed that we now have our very own Notice Board on poolside located near to the entrance/exit of the female changing room. In addition to e-mail and the Stopper we will be using the notice board to remind you about forthcoming trips and events and so please have a read.

By way of a reminder we have three pool sessions:

8.30 - 9.00	Under 16s in boats, all welcome to swim.
9.00 - 9.30	Boats for all, all welcome to swim.
9.30 - 10.00	16s and over only in pool. All under 16s to leave the pool area.

The 9:30 to 10:00 session is for 16s and over only and to be fair to all there can be no exceptions.

Please respect the requests of those running the sessions and the life guards on duty, their decision is final.

Please vacate the boats between sessions. This makes it easier to manage the session and ensures that everyone gets a fair chance to paddle a boat.

If you do bring your own boat to the pool you are reminded that Club rules state that you are required to allow others to paddle it and to keep to the session timings above.

We are always looking for extra hands to help run the sessions so if you'd like to help or would like to know more about what's involved please speak to Alistair Watson.

Club Equipment



A plea to anyone that borrows club equipment. Can you please return it promptly and let Tony Manning or one of the Committee know of any problems or damage. A lot of time is spent tracking down missing kit and sorting out problems at the last minute because kit has been returned damaged, time that could be better spent organising trips. We understand that wear and tear and damage happens we just need you to let us know about it.

We are in the process of replacing some of the older Club equipment and have 6 buoyancy aids, 6 spraydecks, 3 split paddles, 2 emergency shelters, 4 throwlines and 6 helmets on order. Please look after them.

Coach Training

The Club always seeks to encourage members to pursue coaching qualifications. For active members who contribute to the general development of the Club we are able to consider a contribution to the individuals training and assessment costs. If you are considering coaching training or undertaking a course that leads to a coaching qualification then please contact the Committee, as we may be able to help with funding. Also our BCU region sometimes has funding available that you may be eligible for.

Over recent months three active Club members have benefited from these schemes while undertaking Level 2, Level 3 and 5 star training.

Odds and ends

- A new white water course has opened in Holland that is almost identical to the Olympic course in Athens. That said there must be something different about it as according to the local Kayak shop the Chinese Slalom team broke their boats and dozens of paddlers ended up in hospital in the first few weeks after it opened. On top of which we have it on good authority that it costs £30 for 1 hour. Probably best to stick with the Nene or Nottingham for the time being!
- A reminder to any BCU members that if you present your BCU card at the till in Cotswold Camping you will receive a 15% discount.

AGM and Ceili

After all the positive comments we received about last years combined AGM and Ceili we have decided to stick with, what you told us was, a wining formulae. So once again get your dancing shoes on for a night of chaotic fun filled Ceili dancing. It doesn't matter if you are young or old, can dance or have two left feet you'll have a great evening. The AGM this year is on Saturday 3rd March at Hayes Village Hall. The AGM will run from 6:15, followed by the Ceili at 7:30. A light buffet will be provided but please bring your own drink and glasses. Tickets for the Ceili (you don't need to buy a ticket if you only want to come to the AGM!) are available from the Pool on a Monday night, but be quick, they are selling fast!

Under the Club's constitution we are obliged to hold an AGM and we require a quorum of members to attend in order for members to be able to elect the committee and for the Club to continue! So please do support your Club and come along to the AGM.

If you have any items you wish to raise at the AGM then please submit them in writing by 19th February to the Chairman Phil either in person or by e-mail to phil@bromleycanoecub.co.uk.

We are always looking for extra pairs of hands to help run the Club. If you are interested in joining the committee and would like to find out a bit more about what is involved then please speak to one of the existing Committee members before the AGM. That way you will be ready to volunteer on the night!

Club Trips

We have been busy out and about paddling over recent months. We have had Club trips to Cuckmere, the Wharfe and the Exe and Barle. We also had our traditional New Years Day paddle on the Thames. Unlike last year this actual took place on the 1st January and despite the previous nights celebrations over 20 of us made it to the River – it must be said though that a few did look as though they would rather have stayed in bed!

If you want to read more about what we have been up to – then please write about your trips.



Tony Manning's 20th paddling anniversary – the Tees Trip

Twenty paddlers, a photographer (to record the happy scenes) and a token girlie made this an anniversary par excellence.

'Twas a few days later than the exact date, but no matter, this time I stayed in my boat, played the waves, rolled a few times and stayed warm to the end. Back then I recall the paddle from Middleton to Cotherstone involved more than one swim, rapids were approached with anticipation, white knuckles and clenched cheeks. I was shepherded from start to finish, totally reliant on those with far more experience. Now I was leading the group, in total empathy with those new to this section of the river and loving it. You could say I've been there, done it, got the bug and keep coming back for more.



Recollections from that first trip are few (after all I am getting old), but I did recall spots where I had the occasional swim and that I was a tad cold and damp when we arrived at Cotherstone. Then I paddled a yellow Perception "Dancer", this time it was a yellow Wavesport "ZG4.8, which is nigh on half the length of that big banana shaped boat.

Day one's trip includes the classic "race course" section, where the river Tees winds its way through scoured tree lined gorges and open Northumberland countryside. Here the river shakes off some of its tranquillity, has rocks that need avoiding and rapids that

build to a bit of a crescendo before the get-out. This year I could look around and see that the trees had not yet all turned a true autumn golden hue. Nether-the-less they made for a spectacular scene, with the distant hills and open moors beyond the black glistening river.

Years ago (about WW1), we stayed at Hudeway in Middleton-in-Teesdale. This weekend we are staying at the Raygill Riding School. As the name suggests, it was appropriate to pass a few minutes with the neighbours (they love Trebor Extra Strong mints) and say hello to the horses in their stables. Somewhat different to that first trip, where I recall on the Saturday evening, a horse was rounded up from a local field and nigh on brought up the stairs to the bedrooms to say hello to the girls in their dorm. With twenty something plus staying at Raygill there were not really enough beds to go round, but we made do. After our experiences, I wonder if horses are **stertorous**?

Saturday evening we dined out.

Unlike my first year, when on the second day when we went from Cotherstone to Abbey rapids, this Sunday's paddle was a more challenging run from High Force to Low Force.

The timely arrival of the High Force Hotel's staff to open the car park booth, put paid to any chance of us nipping on the river without paying our dues. More than that, we could not put on immediately below the spectacular High Force falls. After a brief faff, we have re-organised our groups to account for those not paddling and are ready for the off. Down to the S-bend (dog-leg) rapid it's straightforward paddling. The start of the grade 4 run is obvious (made more so by the presence of the group before us, as are already pacing the bank, pointing to interesting water features), so we too hop out and start scouting our route. Stills and video-clips have since been posted on the Clubs web-site and they are a timeless record of events. Paul's exit from an upstream pinning and Kirsty's swim down the dog-leg being the most note-worthy events.

Re-grouping again, we set off for the final series of rapids - which culminate in the drop over "Low force", a full 3.2m drop. Again event are recorded on the web-site, so download and enjoy. The run in to "Low force" was entertaining and has a stopper with a certain affinity for me and my boat. Having run "Low Force", some go back for more.

I re-call arriving at the bottom of "Abbey rapids" and having to climb the sheer rock walls after the third swim of the day, feeling very cold and taking a long time to stop shivering. Today the sun was shining, it was still warm and, everybody else who paddled was like me, full of a warm satisfying glow.

Looking back at this trip we were reminded by Paul's pinning that **kayaking is a risk sport**. Of greater concern was Kirsty's swim, in the course of which she hurt her ankle. As a reminder from analysis after the event - it is essential for leaders to ensure inexperienced paddlers are clearly advised of the consequences of running a complex rapid. It is appropriate for inexperienced charges to be properly advised i.e. a recommendation you don't run this section of river. This has further importance, especially when divided groups become inter-mingled.



Tony Manning

Training

At the end of last year we held a training day at Boulters weir with Kayako Jacko and a number of Club member have attended a White water safety and rescue course at the Tryweryn.

We are in the process of arranging a First aid course and later in the year when things have warmed up a bit we will be running training days at Albany Park and a training trip to the Nene.

Youth Games

Bromley Canoe Club have taken part in the London Youth Games for a number of years now and have achieved some very good results. We will again be entering a team so if you are interested in tacking part in this years London Youth Games in July or would like to know more about the Games then please contact Alan Tigg.

Dates for you Diary

We are in the process of putting together a diary of trips for 2007. Full details will appear in the next Stopper. Details will also be circulated by e-mail and appear on the website. If you have any questions about a trip or are wondering if the trip is for you then please ask.



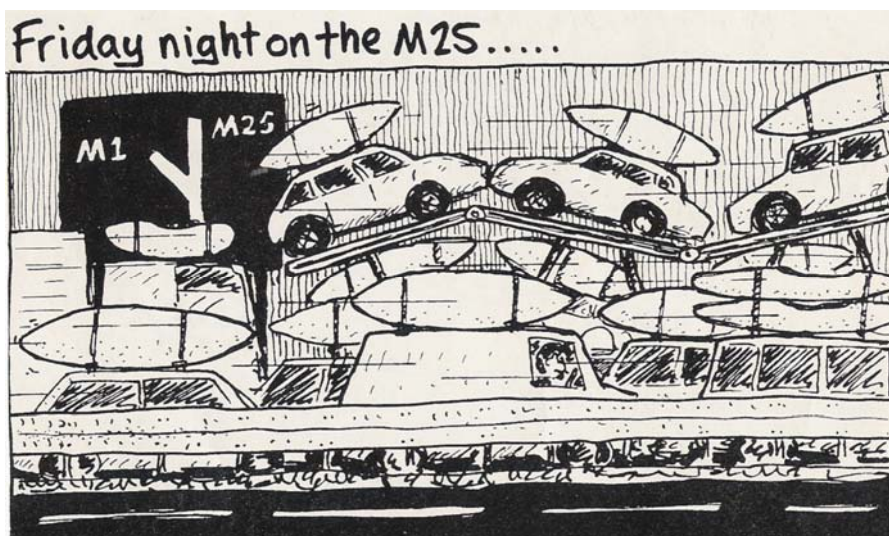
We are also considering running taster sessions for Sea Kayaking and Open Canoeing. If you are interested in either (or both!) of these then please e-mail paul@bromleycanoeclub.co.uk so that we can gauge interest.

Last year Sam ran a very successful Club trip to Scotland over Easter. We have nothing planned for this Easter so if anyone is interested in running something then please speak to one of the committee.

Date	Venue	Suitability	Contact
January 2007			
27-28th	Dart(upper) - sorry this trip is now full.	Experienced white water paddlers	Frank Bown Phil Burrows Mackley
February 2007			
24-25th	Dart (upper and loop) – sorry this trip is also full!	Some experience (depending on water levels)	Frank Bown
March 2007			
30 th -1 st April	Exe and Barle	Some experience (depending on water levels)	Frank Bown
April 2007			
TBA	Possible White Water Safety and Rescue Course – North Wales		

We are also arranging for a First Aid Course during the Spring – dates to be advised.

Paddle fun

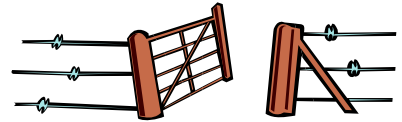


...and finally

As you may be aware, there is a big problem with access to water in England and Wales (particularly white water). There is on going BCU campaign (www.bcu.org.uk) and an Government e-petition has also been started. The following information has appears on the BCU website.

River Access Campaign-Support Rivers to Access Petition

Roger L. Revell has set up a petition at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Canoeists> calling for the Government to pass legislation to give canoeists and all other users of un-powered craft the free right to navigate all rivers and canals in England and Wales (similar to the right already enjoyed by cyclists to use bridleways, cycle tracks and roads).



Please have a look at it and consider adding your name as a signatory. The more names it can receive will show the Government once again how important access is to a large part of the population. People want to enjoy their natural heritage for many reasons. In this day and age the restrictive situation in England and Wales is very archaic and needs changing.

Remember that after signing the petition, you will receive an email from the Government website. Your name will not be added to the petition unless you respond to the Government website's email.

What we are calling for is the type of legislation that is a version of the Scottish Land Reform Act 2003. This Act is applicable to manually powered craft. The Act codifies responsible access to land and water it protects the environment and activities of all canoeists, anglers, other users, and landowners who are all required to adhere to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. This Act gives rights but also responsibilities and covers all users of the outdoors. The Act has been successfully implemented in Scotland so why not else where?

If you are also concerned to secure access to water please consider signing this petition.

