

# The Stopper

## Editorial

I'm pleased to say that I have had quite a few articles submitted for the Stopper. A big thank you to everyone that put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard it is most appreciated. Articles from members make for a bigger and better read.

The Club has updated its Code of Conduct to take account of changes of policy by the BCU. The updated code is available on the website and you are encouraged to read it. If anyone would like a paper copy then please let me know.

I've now been paddling for over twenty years. Despite this I have in the last three months paddled three new rivers in the UK and paddled down a couple of waterfalls. By attending a course I had my paddling critiqued for the first time in many years and came away with much to think about and skills to try and put in to practice next time I'm out on the river. I'd encourage you all to get out there and paddle, consider taking some formal training and above all be safe and have fun.

Happy paddling          Graham Whiting

## Pool Sessions



To help ensure we leave the pool promptly at the end of the evening would juniors please put away the junior paddles and other equipment at 9:30 when they leave the pool. Can adults please help with putting away equipment at the end of the evening. Thank you.

The committee have recently updated the Pool Rules to take account of the three sessions and the involvement of pool lifeguards along with nominated Club representatives in running the sessions.

## POOL RULES

1. The pool lifeguard and nominated Club representative must be present before activities commence.
2. Boats and kit should be clean before pool use.
3. No sharp edged or damaged equipment to be brought into the pool.
4. Sixteen boats is the maximum permitted in the pool at any one time.
5. No seal launching from the poolside.
6. Please swim and relax in the swimming lane and observe the centre's rules as shown at either end of the pool.
7. When teaching, be aware of the pupil and other dangers.
8. When paddling, be aware of instructors and other paddlers.
9. Please ensure that everyone has the opportunity to paddle. Personal boats should also be offered to others wishing to paddle.
10. When practising freestyle techniques (pirouettes, looping etc.), check that you have the required space, that it is safe to do so and that a helmet is being worn where appropriate.

11. Please ensure that boats are kept clear of the swimming lane at all times.
12. Fun sessions will be permitted unless the pool lifeguard or nominated Club representative deems it unsafe.
13. Ensure that equipment is removed from the pool and returned to storage as soon as the pool session has ended.
14. No hanging on the lane markers or ropes.
15. All boats (including personal boats) must be vacated between sessions.
16. All under 16s must leave the pool area by 9:30.
17. The pool lifeguard's and/or nominates Club representative's decision is final.

A copy of these rules will be displayed on our poolside notice board.

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

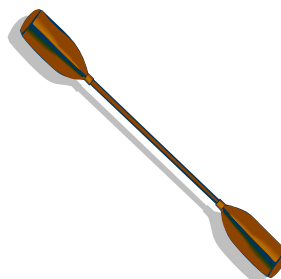
### Club Equipment

Following discussions at the AGM, we are planning to upgrade some of the pool boats. Modern boats are much shorter so we will first need to modify the racking at the pool before we can change the boats.

To help us to replace and updated Club equipment we do make a small charge to cover wear and tear if Club members borrow equipment. The charges are £3 per day, £5 per weekend or £10 per week. These charges do not apply to Club training sessions or trips.

We have recently bought some new Club equipment to replace lost items and update older equipment:

- 16 helmets
- 4 rescue lines
- 3 split paddles
- 6 buoyancy aids
- 2 rescue shelters



### Bromley Canoe Club on National Radio!

You may be surprised to know that Bromley Canoe Club got a mention on the Chris Evans Radio 2 show back in February. It was the Friday night of a Club trip to the Dart and Chris asked listeners phone or text to let him know what they were up to at the weekend. Someone contacted him as the following conversation took place ....

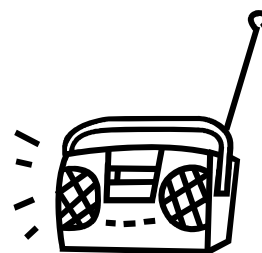
**Chris:** Hi Chris please give a big shout out to Bromley Canoe Club who are kayaking this weekend on the River Dart staying in Princetown near Dartmouth prison.  
You see Johnny they're a canoe club but they are kayaking not canoeing

**Johnny:** ...and we did the difference between these two about a month ago.

**Chris:** one still gets the feeling they are messing with our tiny minds

**Johnny:** they are, they are:

**Chris:** which is not difficult.



Well done to the anonymous caller on the Club's behalf, there is no such think as bad publicity!

## AGM and New Committee

The Club AGM took place at Hayes Village Hall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March and as part of the evening's formalities your new committee were elected:

Chairman:	Phil Burrows Mackley
Treasurer:	Tony Manning
Secretary:	Paul Gee

Committee members:	Frank Bown
	Alistair Watson
	Cat Rose
	Graham Whiting
	Debbie Glazzard
	Usha Stevens



The evening was rounded off with a great Ceili, excellent food (kindly prepared by Tony and Jen Manning) and a trip outside to stand in the cold and view the lunar eclipse!

## Club Trips

So far this year the Club has been very active out and about paddling. We have had Club trips to the Dart, the Thames and Newgale. In addition some of you have taken the initiative and booked yourselves on to courses and organised trips.

If you have enjoyed a paddle recently then why not share it with the Club in the next edition of the Stopper. Please e-mail your articles to [graham@bromleycanoecub.co.uk](mailto:graham@bromleycanoecub.co.uk) or pass them on to myself or any member of the Committee at the Pool.

## Boofs and Drops

*"A reliable boof stroke is to the advanced boater what the Eskimo roll is to the novice".*

These words, written by Olli Grau, started me thinking about my non-existent boof stroke and how I could advance my technique for running drops and more challenging rivers. With this in mind I decided to enrol on a 'boofs and drops' course with the top coaches at Plas y Brenin, North Wales. Wes and Graham Whiting were also interested in the idea of improving their skills so decided to join me on the course on the weekend of 24<sup>th</sup> March.

Unfortunately, Wes hadn't realised that weekend was, in fact his and Wendy's first wedding anniversary. Luckily for Wes, Wendy an understanding paddling widow who actively encouraged her husband to paddle off huge waterfalls. Perhaps she had an ulterior motive for allowing him to go!

The course began on Saturday morning with introductions from our coaches, Dino Heald and Jon 'Spike' Green, who are both level five inland kayak coaches with many years paddling experience across the globe. The group, seven of us altogether, discussed our previous kayaking experiences and expectations of the course. Every boofs and drops course is tailored specifically for the individuals and group involved, depending on the skills and experience of the students attending and water levels at the time.

In order to determine the content of our course; we were assessed by Dino and Spike on the upper section of the river Tryweryn, on the section of rapids known as the 'Grave Yard'. Throughout the day, we took our paddling back to basics; the only strokes that were allowed were forward paddling and a recovery stroke, if absolutely essential! We were constantly refining our body and boat positions by repeatedly practising breaking-in and breaking-out of the main flow and ferry gliding between eddies.

After a spot of lunch, the group moved down to the next rapid called the 'Ski Jump'. Our new task was to use the water to move us to our intended destination by combining our improved body and boat positions. My first couple of attempts weren't great, as I missed the target eddy and hit the stopper almost side on. In fact Spike commented that if I wasn't in such a big boat I would have had a 'good trashing there'. I'm glad to say that he let me run the course knowing exactly what the outcome would be. Ultimately, my skills improved through persistence, determination, guidance and watching others, but the lesson was definitely learned the hard way!

After a full and exhausting day of paddling we all headed back to Plas y Brenin for tea and cake and a theory session on running drops. Dino and Spike were happy that the standard of the group was high enough to have some 'real fun' on day two and we were told that we would be running the mighty 'Swallow Falls'. The name of the falls seemed to reverberate around the room as everyone let the thought of running a waterfall, which had only ever been run by handful of people sink in. Needless to say, we all hastily retired to the bar to contemplate the day ahead over a few pints.

An early start on Sunday saw us arrive at Pont Cyfyng Falls just after 9am. We talked about accessing steep drops and what equipment we would need. Our first drop was a four meter basic drop; not too different from a static seal launch. Spike ran the drop first while Dino commented on the techniques that he used. The rest of the group followed successfully.

Next, we moved a few meters further on to a more complicated drop - a small gully slide with a drop into a plunge pool. Once again, Spike ran it perfectly while Dino gave a commentary. We had to approach it fast with the correct edge whilst maintaining the correct body position. Everyone managed it but a couple of people ended up rolling in the bottom plunge pool... not me I should add!

After a quick debrief about the different techniques we'd used and areas for improvement we climbed out of the gorge and prepared to rope our boats up the cliff face. I have to say that it was very strenuous work hauling seven kayaks up a 20 meter rock face with a throw line, but we made it.

After lunch we made our way down the A5 to the increasingly daunting Swallow Falls. Spike and Dino gave us the very important safety talk, telling us we were more likely to injure ourselves walking around the falls than in our boats. They explained that we should be very careful and vigilant at all times and remember what we'd learnt over the last day and a half. I believe that Spike's exact words were "I don't want to be faffing about with mountain rescue on a Sunday afternoon, because a rescue helicopter won't be able to get to us". Thankfully, it wasn't the main 65ft drop we would be running but an easier 20ft slide to the right of it, followed by a second 30ft slide.



Gingerly walking out on the rocks next to the lip of the waterfall gave view to a formidable horizon line; the nerves were really starting to kick in now. We passed our kayaks along to the far right of the drop. Spike and Dino set up a hand rail with a throw line which we used to lower ourselves and our equipment down a slimly wet slippery rock face. There were seven incredibly nervous faces sitting half way up a waterfall in North Wales that Sunday afternoon!

In spite of the nerves, we followed the same drill as we had at Pont Cyfyng Falls only this time Dino gave the demonstration whilst Spike commented on the techniques and methods of running slides. One by one we took it in turns to join Dino at the base of the first fall. The slide was actually quite easy to run. I felt much happier in my boat than perched on a tiny rock ledge.

Next up came the second fall which was another slide as opposed to a vertical drop. This was very similar to the first one just longer, so more time for something to go wrong. Thankfully nothing did. Since I didn't run it as well as I could have, or compared to Wes and Graham, I opted for a second run and nailed it.

All in all, the weekend was a fantastic experience. The first day, apart from being very enjoyable, we learnt to paddle more efficiently and improved our basic river running techniques to which advanced skills can be built. The second day we were able to use these new found skills in a very scary situation. To quote Wes while sitting on small precipices at the top of the falls "Only once in a bloody life time am I doing this at my age"! Although we all learnt a lot, we still have a lot to practise, so sorry lads we'll have to find a few more drops to run on future trips.

Dino and Spike were excellent coaches, paddlers and mountaineers; they made us feel safe in a potentially dangerous environment. The course was extremely well organised and all our needs were thoroughly catered for. The course providers chauffeured us to and from the rivers, they prepared all our food (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and they even had tea and cakes waiting for us at the hotel at the end each day. I'm sure that the next canoe trip the three of us go on will come as a shock and bring us back to earth with a bump, unless of course, it is organized in the same style as Plas y Brenin !!

Overall, I would recommend the course to any confident paddlers wanting to improve their skills or just seeking a challenge.

*Luke Robinson*

## **Training**

The BCU are in the process of revising the award and coaching scheme. All Club training for this year will be based around the current tests and awards.

The Club will be running training days on the 1<sup>st</sup> July and the 29<sup>th</sup> July. The venue for the 1<sup>st</sup> July is still to be confirmed but the 29<sup>th</sup> July training will take place at Albany.

We will also be running Canoe Safety Test training and assessment sessions. The canoe safety has two purposes.

- Firstly, to provide a paddler with the necessary safety awareness which will enable them to ensure the safety of themselves and others.
- Secondly, to provide a paddler with rescue skills which can be used to help themselves and/or others in difficulty.

This training will take place in two parts, a session at the pool on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July and a session at Albany on the 29<sup>th</sup> July. It is essential that you attend both sessions.

The Club is still planning to run a first aid course but finding a suitable venue and the required dummies (no not the trainees!) has meant it has been delayed. Keep an eye on the notice board and website for details.

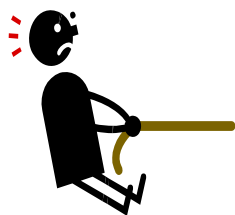
We have organised a White Water Safety And Rescue Course in July. If you have been thinking about attending this course and need any encouragement then read on to find out what is involved.....

### **White Water Safety and Rescue Course 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October**

Whilst enjoying a pint in the Railway and chatting to Nick Cotton, I was approached by Phil and Tony, a friendly hand was placed on my shoulder and I was asked "you wouldn't mind writing a piece for the stopper about the White Water Safety and Rescue Course would you". Smiling through slightly gritted teeth I said "no of course not"

Well here's my account of what was an exiting, fun and above all important course.

**Day 1.** Twelve of us gathered in the classroom, Phil and Martin introduced themselves as our instructors and we in turn introduced ourselves, which revealed a wide range in our experience levels. With the ice broken, Phil ran through the six sessions that would make up the 2 day course which were as follows:



1. Safe swimming
2. Use of throw lines
3. Use of chest harness
4. Tension downstream diagonal
5. Safe paddling
6. Entrapments

Theory is minimal on this course and after splitting into 2 groups we got kitted up and followed our instructors to a position on the bank just above the chipper.

I think we all experienced some trepidation as we listened to what we would be doing in the fast flowing waters of the Tryweryn. Soon though we were defensive swimming down rapids and aggressive swimming into eddies even body surfing across a weir. These self rescue techniques are vital and it has to be said a great deal of fun when practised in a controlled way. Following this we got to grips with throw lines, first practising on the bank and then doing it for real as people took it in turns to be the rescuer and the rescued.

After lunch, we learnt about the safe use of the chest harness, which is used in live bait rescues. We then took turns in experiencing the loads on our bodies which would occur if the line were to become snagged, and practised releasing the chest harness. This practical exercise really brings it home to you that using the chest harness is a high risk option that needs to be carefully considered. This concluded the first day of the course, and after showers, and hanging gear in the drying room it was back to the bunkhouse.

Dinner was provided for us in the cottage next door, we sang happy birthday to Rob (his 18<sup>th</sup>) then strolled into Bala and spent a pleasant couple of hours in the pub.

**Day 2.** Reveille was at 7am. Paul Gee got the coffee going as we all gradually emerged. Once fed and watered we got our stuff cleared from the bunkhouse and set off for the centre.

The first session of the day was entitled "Safe Paddling" and therefore we would need our kayaks. The object of this session was to learn effective methods of communicating between group members whilst kayaking and understanding their importance. We then went on to boat based rescues, and enjoyed getting onto the water to put it all into practise.

In the next session we learnt how to set up a tension diagonal and practised getting our group members all safely from one bank to the other. You could say it's a bit like a wet version of a zip line.

The final session of the day and most complex involved learning methods for extracting pinned boats using mechanical advantages via pulleys and vectors. More importantly we dealt with rescuing people who are entrapped, which culminated in a real time scenario where we had to rescue our instructor who had got himself positioned in the middle of the river pretending to have his foot stuck. After several failed attempts we finally got a line across the river and was able to effect a rescue. It wasn't exactly a slick operation but as they say, "you only learn from your mistakes".

That sadly was the last session, and after returning our sodden gear there followed a de-brief. Afterwards everyone agreed it had been a great course, both for their own safety and that of others, and well worth getting cold and wet for.

*Bernie McSorley*

## London Youth Games



In July juniors from Bromley Canoe Club will be taking part in the 30th London Youth Games. Every year over 20,000 young Londoners from the 32 London Boroughs and the City of London, compete in over 30 different sports competitions that comprise the Games. The results from all the different sports competitions are added together and the winning Borough wins the Jubilee Trophy. We wish our canoeing team the very best.

## Dates for your Diary



Date	Activity	Venue	Suitability	Duration	Contact
<b>June 2007</b>					
8th	Paddle	Yalding	Flat water	Evening	Paul
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Boat Demo and Paddle	Yalding	Flat water	Evening	Paul/Tony
<b>July 2007</b>					
1 <sup>st</sup>	Training	TBC	TBC	Day	TBC
6 <sup>th</sup>	Paddle	Yalding	Flat water	Evening	Paul
14-15th	White Water Safety and Rescue/ White water	North Wales	Whitewater improvers	Weekend	Phil
29th	Training*	Albany	All	Day	Frank
<b>August 2007</b>					
4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup>	Whitewater	Washburn	Whitewater improvers	Weekend	Cat
25-27th	Surf	Bude	All	Weekend	Usha
<b>September 2007</b>					
9th	TBC	TBC	TBC	Day	TBC
22 <sup>nd</sup> -23rd	Whitewater	LASER Nottingham	All	Weekend	Phil
<b>October 2007</b>					
6-7th	Whitewater	Exe and Barle (Dulverton)	New to Whitewater	Weekend	Frank
27-28th	Whitewater	Usk	New to Whitewater	Weekend	TBC
<b>November 2007</b>					
17-18 <sup>th</sup>	Whitewater	TBC	Experienced Whitewater	Weekend	TBC
<b>December</b>					
8-9 <sup>th</sup>	Whitewater	Lune	Whitewater	Weekend	TBC

First Aid Course – dates to be advised.

\* To be able to participate in the Canoe Safety Test training and assessment on the 29<sup>th</sup> July you will also need to attend a session at the pool on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July.

## Paddle fun

### Bromley CC and CC?

What's all this about ?!

Meet Bromley Classic Car and Canoe Club!

Let me explain

It occurs to me that there are lots of old wrecks in the Club. I own 2. One is a Jensen Interceptor. The other is a ..... Jensen Interceptor. One is old - 1973. The other is very old. 1954.



Tony Manning has a Fiat X1/9. Black. Italian. Mid engined sports car

Graham Whiting has a Sunbeam Alpine. White. British. Front engined sports car

Phil and Donna have an MG. And an MG... One is orange and a Midget. The other green and a BGT

Graeme Heath has a Lancia Integrale. And a Triumph Spitfire

Matt has a white 2.8 Injection Capri. In Chamonix

Glenn once did the Monte Carlo rally in an Austin A40 Farina

...and finally Luke has a Vauxhall Corsa

If there are any other Classic Cars in the club please let me know. But please understand it isn't compulsory to own one.

Happy paddling. And motoring. But not at the same time

*Alistair Watson*

### **...and finally**



In the last edition of the Stopper there was a piece about an access petition that hopefully you signed up to and supported. Well for a change this month we have a piece about an access petition (can you spot a theme here!) that again we would ask you to consider supporting. The Welsh Canoeing Association are campaigning for legislative change and have pre-printed some post cards with the follow wording.

#### Your River, My River, Our Rivers

Elsewhere in the world all three of these statements co-exists as Inland Water is a publicly accessible natural resources; unfortunately in Wales only one of these statements is true.

Now Wales has its own powers to create legislation, it has to be time to follow the model set by Scotland in the Land Reform Act (2003).

FAO Secretary of State for Wales

The Wales Office  
Office of the Secretary of State for Wales  
Gwydyr House  
Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2ER

We don't have any post cards available but you can still support the campaign by writing to the Secretary of Sate for Wales at the address above or by registering on-line at [www.welsh-canoeing.org.uk](http://www.welsh-canoeing.org.uk) and following the links from Access and Rivers Guide on the left-hand side.

