



*Waveney Valley Canoe Club*

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*The Friendly Family Club*

## **WVCC AUGUST 08 Newsletter**

So far this summer the One and Two star kayak assessments have been completed with great success. The Three star courses are still continuing, as it is a much longer course. Whilst holidays tend to interrupt the canoeing in the summer once the schools break up. This year we seem to have an excellent attendance both Tuesday for courses and Thursday for club night.

The committee will be planning some trips in the very near future for to use their newly acquired skills. One trip to be planned will be the night paddle, so watch out for news of this exciting trip and fingers crossed for good weather. To be on the broads at midnight is quite special.

This newsletter edition includes a report of the White Water safety trip to Wales, it is such a shame we do not have moving water in Norfolk so more could enjoy the challenges this group experienced.

The committee are very pleased to announce that Caroline Doyle has been appointed Child Protection Officer.

A number of coaches assisted a group of visually impaired people from Lowestoft to paddle on the Waveney. They really appreciated the evening and new experience, thank you to those coaches that helped that evening – it sounded very rewarding.

[www.waveneyvalleycanoecub.co.uk](http://www.waveneyvalleycanoecub.co.uk)

If after reading the following letter from Mark you feel you would like to assist or you are interested in the post then please speak to Dave Cassell.

Mark, the committee are sorry to see you leave, you, Jenny and new baby are always welcome. Good Luck.

Dear all,

It is with regret that I am announcing my resignation as Race Coordinator for the club. David Lester and I have organised the race for some 15 years and unfortunately other priorities are making it increasingly difficult to find the necessary time to plan and oversee a successful & safe race.

I would like to personally thank David who, over the years, has dedicated an enormous amount of time to assist me in the race administration and preparation.

The races have always been thoroughly enjoyable, very well attended (by clubs near and far) and successful events. It has always been essential to have a strong team of people undertaking a variety of tasks from cheese grating and roll making to portage safety cover and results collation. A huge thank you to all those who have helped make the Waveney race a success and an important date in the club calendar.

It would be a sad loss to the club if the race doesn't continue and I hope we can find someone to fill this position. I will of course be happy to help anyone who would like to take over.

I am not finding it possible to race train weekly but hope to be at the club from time to time to catch up with everybody.

Happy paddling, Regards

Mark Sheldrake

## **2\* Canoe Trip – Bungay to Ellingham - 8 June 2008**

After a week of almost none stop rain, the day dawned clear and bright. Robs' good luck with the weather had struck again and we were promised a warm, sunny day.

After collecting the necessary equipment and a briefing from Rob the 20 assembled paddlers were ready for the off. Due to the numbers and the use of both kayaks and canoes, it was decided also carryout a Rivercare clean up as a part of the trip, so a few rubbish bags were taken along to collect any litter.

The first challenge was to get onto the water. The rain had swelled the river level and there was a fast flow by the access point. One by one everyone got onto the water safely under the watchful eyes of the coaches, Rob, Alan and Paul. Once all were afloat the trip began and we started to make our way downstream. Paddling was hardly necessary as the flow meant that it was possible to drift at a reasonable speed without much effort.

Almost immediately we start to find plastic and glass bottles and other items of litter. By the time we reached Wainford Sluice two sacks were almost full.

Wainford Sluice was the first portage requiring everyone to get out, carry their boat and re-enter the river on the other side of the sluice. The high river level made this easier, with the downstream portage point submerged it was safe for all to simply

slide back in. The short break gave an opportunity to assess the flow over the sluice and ponder whether the boil would hold a boat, the general opinion was that it would, but we didn't test this theory.

The trip continued with more drifting and litter collection, this time including a complete car wheel. At this point we had our first wildlife encounter, a swan family with four signets where walking in single file along the bank. Not much further on we were joined by a herd of cows standing on the river's edge. They appeared inquisitive, but not impressed by our paddling. Not long after we reached the half way point at Ellingham. Here we took a short break for drinks and snacks and some more weir assessment.

Soon it was time to head for home, when we face our second challenge of the day. We were now paddling against the flow, which meant that it was not going to be easy getting back. Fortunately most of the litter had been collected on the downstream leg, so we were able to concentrate on the paddling. The last animal sighting of the trip was an owl hunting over the field next to the river. This was an unusual sight because it was just after 12 on a bright sunny day. Obviously owls are not as nocturnal as believed.

About half way back to Wainford Rob tried giving Alan some coaching and within no time Alan took a swim. This called for some practice at deep-water rescues. Rob collected Alan on the front of his boat and paddled him to the bank. Meanwhile Andy and I emptied the upturned kayak. Andy and Rob then assisted Alan back into his boat. This episode prompted some investigation into the cause of the capsize, and Rob soon diagnosed a poorly adjusted footrest as the problem. As it was not possible to rectify this mid river so it was decided that Alan should join me in the Canadian canoe. This made my journey home much easier, as I now had some help with the paddling.

The final approach to Wainford proved difficult as the flow was fast and the river was obstructed by over hanging trees and a bridge with limited headroom due to the high water level. This resulted in a queue of boats battling against the flow while they waited to get off the water.

From Wainford it was short battle back to Bungay, where the flow was again a problem. The circulating water tended to push you into the broken pier, but after some hard work paddling and manoeuvring everyone made it safely to journey's end. The whole trip actually took about 4 hours, therefore it qualifies as a trip towards the course awards, so get your logbooks filled in and signed by a coach.

To finish the trip there was a photo call for everyone with the three bags of rubbish we had collected along the way. Then it was time for lunch and the ritual BBQ lighting. The latter of which took at least three men!

A big thanks to Rob, Alan and Paul for arranging and supporting the trip. A big thank you also to everyone there, your efforts have improve the environment and you should all be proud of your contribution to maintaining our river.

## **Graham Day**

### **White Water Safety & Rescue Training – 16 to 18 May 2008**

#### **Jimmy Jay's, River Dee, Llangollen, Wales**

**Role Call:** Rob Fisher, Andy Ing, Keith Shuttleworth, Craig Shuttleworth, Graham Day, Matt Day, Chris Jefferies, Andy Church, Dave Lines, Steve Hogarth, Gavin Plant, Shaun Pickering

#### **Friday 16 May 2008**

The day started early at 4.30am and with a small miracle. There was a power cut and it was only because my wife happened to wake and check the time that I was up at all. I woke Matt, my son, got dressed and washed in the semidarkness. Rendezvous was 5.00 at Andy Ing's to load boats and kit into his van. All were present and correct and with everything stowed we left on time at 5.30.

There was a brief stop at Cambridge Park & Ride to pick up Andy Church. The first main stop was at Corley Services on the M6 at about 8am, where we could visit the toilets and have a quick brew. At this point it started to rain and Gavin, who was already in Wales, sent us a photo of his cooked breakfast. We weren't at all jealous, standing in the car park in the rain! Back on the road we treated ourselves to a ride along the M6 Toll and eventually reached our destination at about 12.00. Upon arrival we met up with Gavin and stretched our legs around the Paddleworks shop. Keith was looking for a new helmet, but his head was too big for anything they had! Instead we did a deal on three pairs of neoprene trousers. I subsequently had to buy my son a pair also, so if you see us out together the Liquid Blue Team all match.

A quick drink and bite to eat and we were finally ready to get onto the white water that we had travelled so far to try out. A short boat carry and we were on. Due to the recent spell of dry weather the river level was quite low, but it was moving more than the Waveney, so it was perfect for the Whitewater Virgins in the group. We started by running a small weir and then ferry gliding over it, then down river to a stopper, where everyone tried riding it. Some of the more experienced paddlers tried to get more than one on at a time, which resulted in Craig rolling over. During his roll back up he managed to get his foot stuck in his foot plate, much to his obvious pain, but Andy was not aware of this immediately and continued to jostle him. Eventually he got the message, disaster was averted and Craig got his foot back. We moved on to another couple of descents and then it was time for more refreshments.

Next was the full river run, which started with a portage over a field, crossing a railway line, up a bank and along, what appeared to be a never ending, disused canal. The preferred option to travel the canal was to float the boat and pull it along whilst walking beside it. In places where the canal passed under bridges there was not path, and the bank was quite narrow. At this point I fell in, I was expecting to get wet so was suitable dressed, but I had not envisaged getting wet in this way.

After a quiet start we reached our first feature, which was a rapid to left of river, in front of a hotel. Keith ran it first and got washed into a small tree growing out of the

bank. He then got out of his boat, so as to guide everyone else through. Matt was next and Keith skilfully guided him into exactly the same line, so he also ran into the tree. A quick rethink and the rest of us were guided into a better line and made it through without incident. Next was Serpents Tail!

For anyone that has not seen it, try You Tube or the club website, but Serpents Tail is a grade 2/3 rapid with four sections. Everyone got out above it to go and have a look before running it. After much discussion a route was chosen and those who were up for it returned to their boats. Those not rushing to their boats provided safety cover, whilst the others took it in turn to ride it. Here I should mention that I soon stopped being the only wet person in the group, as there were several spills, swims and rescues. No names, but you know who you are! This excitement over, we proceeded to bump along the bottom of the river for a while, due to the low flows. In one shallow, Matt got stuck on a rock and Craig went to assist, but ended up getting stuck beside him on another rock. The significance of this was not noticed until the next day, but Craig had just put a huge scratch and dent in his borrowed boat! We soon reached the stretch of river we had paddled earlier in the day. This called for some more practice ferry gliding and bow ruddering into eddies.

It was getting late and we had been up since daybreak, so we repacked the van and prepared to leave. Gavin and Rob went to collect Steve from the railway station, whilst everyone else headed for the bunkhouse. Upon arrival we put our kit in the, less than adequate, drying room and then set off again to a nearby pub for food, a pint (or several) and some banter about the day's events. Gavin, Rob and Steve met us there later and joined in the amusement. Back at the bunkhouse most people headed for bed, as it had been a long day, but a few hardy soles stayed up for more beer. I wasn't amongst them, so I am not able to shed any light on the goings on.

### **Saturday 17 May 2008**

The day started at a more reasonable hour and after using the washing facilities and having a cooked breakfast we were ready to learn. We assembled in the dining area and were introduced to our coaches for the day; Ash, Jules and John. They were all very experienced open paddlers, who seemed a little disappointed by our concentration on kayaks. After introducing themselves it was our turn. Rob started with a well-prepared speech about his experience, reasons for being on the course, things he would like to learn and other tales of endeavour to impress the coaches. In fact he went on for so long that Gavin only had time to tell them his name. It's not often Gavin says the least!

We were briefed on the course content and then set off to the Whitewater Centre on the Tryweryn. Upon arrival we had a look around, whilst the coaches established that the river was fully booked by others, so it was back to the cars/van and back to JJ's where we had been the previous day. The course started with some basic theory, which can be summarised as C-L-A-P (Communication, Line of sight, Avoidance and Position). Then it was time to get wet. We started with the penguin warm up, after which our first task was getting safely across fast flowing water in groups and with the use of a prop (paddle, stick, etc). Next was floating with your bottom and legs up, so as not to get trapped or bumped. At this stage rescue aids were introduced and we started to rescue each other by encouragement to swim and using paddles and throw lines. This got more complicated with the use of belays and multiple person rescue

teams. By the end of the day we were all wet, getting cold, and had lost count of how many times we had rescued each other. All of the day's activities had been completed without removing a single boat from the van.

At the bunkhouse, the drying room situation had worsened. We were last back to a place filled with kayakers, so every possible hanging point had been taken. This called for drastic action, so we commandeered the outside builder's equipment and rigged up our own drying area. Unfortunately, whilst ingenious, it was not very warm outside, so nothing dried much overnight.

We had booked an evening meal in the bunkhouse, which was ample and much needed by the time it was served. That finished it left the rest of the evening for us to entertain ourselves. Those with the foresight to bring some alcoholic refreshments headed for the common room and made us comfortable for a long night of drink and chat. The less well prepared piled into Gavin's car and headed off in search of an off license. Eventually they got back with fresh supplies and the party started. As time passed and the contents of tins disappeared so the crowd dwindled.

I should perhaps mention here that we had been joined during the day by Lois, who had been booked onto another course, which had been cancelled without her knowledge, so she had been included in our group. Having been with us all day she joined us at the bunkhouse, however none of us had expected her to be sleeping with us in our dormitory. This was a great surprise to us, but she seemed to take sleeping on top of Keith in her stride!

### **Sunday 18 May 2008**

A bit like Saturday the day began with washing and another cooked breakfast. Our coaches for the day were Leo and Jules, who took us, back to JJ's for the third day in a row.

We portaged straight up to the top of the river, but this time we paddled the canal, which made it seem easier to start with but it was still a long way. At the end we had to wait for the coaches to catch us up. Jules, now hot in his dry suit, commented that us boys from the flat lands didn't hang about on flat water. We pointed out that this is what we are used to, no gravity assistance.

Before getting onto the water there was a photo opportunity, and then Leo talked us through the standard safety equipment that he carries for all trips. Once on the water we split into three groups and took it in turn to lead through the various features, with one person going ahead, deciding on a route and then seeing everyone else on the group through. We then reached Serpents Tail again.

Leo was already there along with the first two groups. I was in the last group and as we approached the eddy above the rapid Leo met us and told us to run it blind. Chris and I thought this was a test, as it went against everything he had previously told us, so we challenged him on this course of action. Chris quite rightly insisted on getting out and having a look, but Leo persuaded the rest of us that he had already set up safety cover and if we took a line 1m from the right bank we would be fine. Keith went first, followed by me, and then Andy as a lead for Matt to follow. Keith made it

through and waited in his boat at the bottom. I made it over the first two drops but got turned around on the second. After an unsuccessful attempt to get into an eddy I went over the third drop backwards, at which point I rolled over and out, so I swam the last drop. Now it is here that I should have been rescued, but all I could hear was people shouting 'grab the paddle', which I thought meant I should get my new Werner paddle. What they actually meant was grab the paddle they were offering from the bank to rescue me. By the time I had realised what they meant it was too late and I had drifted past and had to swim myself to the bank. This was a useful lesson in how swimmers do not always react rationally to unexpected situations. Having got out I walked along the rock bank to join the others only to find Matt sat on a rock with blood running from his forehead. He had followed Andy and tipped out on the second drop and banged his head on a rock. The cut was not serious, but he was a little shaken and took some time out to gather his thoughts. There is still no evidence of any common sense having been knocked in by this blow and not even a heroic scar!

Last to go was Chris who had seen enough and returned to his boat. To add a little more difficulty and following a discussion the previous evening, he ran the rapid for the second time whilst humming the theme tune to Rhubarb and Custard. Show off!

We took lunch here, before practicing some more bank rescues of people swimming down the rapids. We also had some further tuition on belays, trapped boats and trapped feet rescue techniques.

To end the day we returned the boats to the van and headed back into the river on foot. The intention was to swim in the stopper to practice getting out of a hole and trying to rescue someone from a hole. This was going well until Rob, who was standing on a rock at the side of the wave, lost his footing and dropped like a stone onto his bottom. This not only looked painful but meant that we had to rescue Rob from the river instead. This brought the training to an end and we packed up ready for the journey home. When we were packed we met Leo at a nearby hotel where he debriefed us and signed our paperwork. All that was left was the long and tiresome journey home.

### **Thanks**

I would like to thank Rob for arranging the whole weekend. Rob, Andy and Keith for providing the coaching to the Whitewater Virgins on Friday, and to the terrific coaches provided by Get A Fix; Ash, Jules, John and Leo himself.

The weekend was great fun and will no doubt be remembered by all for a long time.

### **Graham Day on behalf of the Whitewater Virgins**

**PS** I am pleased to report that after a period of discomfort Rob's bottom has recovered and has improved to the extent that he is now able to sit down again.

## **Exorcising the Walberswick Demons!**

Sunday 29 June four of us met at Walberswick at 9am to ferry cars to Lowestoft, Sarah kindly brought us back to the kayaks for 10am. The weather forecast was for strong SE winds and HW around midday. Bob Bertram a virgin Salty Sea dog joined us but he was a little unnerved not knowing what to expect!

The rest of us Dave, Rob Randall and Keith had mentioned about ridding the demons of the "The Walberswick Incident" the scratches still exist on my Orca from last year's 4star assessment.

The river was flowing at a pace out to sea at Blackshore (6 knots +) before we entered the flow Dave said keep to the left and battle through as it was going to be choppy! If you capsize stay with your kayak and you will be picked up at sea! I think poor Bob if he could he would have turn around.

So in the flow we shot off and I think Bob used a number of expletives! He said ".....Me! They have gone and left me". It was quite hairy entering the sea, a bit like a roller coaster ride but we all made it through and out to sea without any mishap although Bob was a little breathless.

Going with the tide and wind we made good progress to start with it was very hot and those that had put on cags thought Bad Mistake but it soon became cloudy threatening to rain and the temperature was about right. It was quite hard work being pushed by the tide to the shore when we wanted to track ahead. We reach Benacre in one-hour 15mins, it is quite scary to see the cliff erosion in the Sole Bay, one house look as if one good storm and it will collapse down the cliff to the sea. Sarah Cassell who parked near by and walked down to the shore joined us at Benacre for our lunch break.

Once back on the water the tidal stream helped us make really good progress and we covered the second stage in an hour. We arrived on the sandy beach by the pier, a few people were braving the wind but not too many were in the sea.

Trip summary, Bob did a great job and kept up and is a welcomed new Salty Dog. He will use the Walberswick experience as a benchmark for future trips. The rest of us put rest to our Walberswick Demons, well it's all part of the learning curve really.

**Salty**

## **Forthcoming Events – Trips TBA**

Watch the web and your e-mails for news on forthcoming trips, once the holiday rush is over plans will be made.

## **Trips**

If you plan to go on any of the above trips you will need to telephone the trip organiser at least 2 days before the trip to book your place. The organiser will then make final arrangements how contact needs to be made to confirm the trip in case of bad weather.

## **Essential on all trips**

Buoyancy Aid, Warm Clothing (several thin layers) **DO NOT WEAR DENIM**

Warm hat-gloves and bring a spare set of clothes-towel-cagoule

Packed lunch and hot drink

## **HELP!**

**Any news or stories, snippets you wish to place in the Newsletter** - please send to

Keith Poulson <mailto:k.poulson@btconnect.com>

Key Committee Members			
Chairman	Dave Cassell	01508 498433	<a href="mailto:Dave.cassell@btinternet.com">mailto:Dave.cassell@btinternet.com</a>
Vice Chair	Robin Sawyer		
Secretary	Andy Church		<a href="mailto:andrew.church2@btopenworld.com">mailto:andrew.church2@btopenworld.com</a>
Treasure	Julie Ing	01986 788465	<a href="mailto:Julieing@btconnect.com">mailto:Julieing@btconnect.com</a>
Child Protection	Caroline Doyle		
Check our web for changes – ‘What’s On’ <a href="http://www.waveneyvalleycanoecclub.co.uk">www.waveneyvalleycanoecclub.co.uk</a>			