



RCC Matters Autumn 2015

We've been getting qualified, going on club trips, doing loads of training at Bourne Outdoor Pool to fine tune our skills and one of us has a tale of woe to tell off the water.....

Sara Davies

Awards

3* touring kayak

Congratulations to:

Ben Cooper, Sara Davies Paul Laugharne, Dom Markham, Ken Pollitt, James Richardson, Ron Seymour and Steve Winship

who have passed their **3* touring kayak** assessment. Many thanks to Mike Cockerill for coaching us.

FRST

James Richardson, Ben Cooper, Dom

Markham, Sara Davies, Ron Seymour, Steve Winship, Ken Pollitt, Paul Laugharne, Judi Sheahan, Ray Egan and John Hawkins attended the **Foundation Safety and Rescue Training** course on Saturday 12 September 2015 which is beautifully described below by Dom Markham:

“This was an interesting day in all sorts of ways. For a start, nothing is more fundamental than safety: coming out is optional, coming back in one piece is mandatory, right? In keeping with the club's relaxed attitude to life, while the subject matter was serious there wasn't a tabbard or hard hat in sight. Barrow titan Colin Broadway, together with fellow Barrower Ian, and 'Canadian' Dave from Newark began the session in the classroom of the watersports centre. The audience was nine of your wannabe- (or perhaps someone's-gonna-have-to-be-) MBLs. We can be proud and indeed relieved that we all passed, and even have paperwork to prove it. While the award is attendance based, it is possible to earn yourself the 'Unsafe' classification, but nobody did on this occasion.

There are a couple of mnemonics to help remember what we are meant to be

embedding into all our paddling practice to promote mutual safety. The first one is 'CLAP' which is quite memorable and an opportunity to snigger knowingly, but harder to recite when asked. The main elements are the importance of Communication, Line of sight, Avoidance of danger and that P-thing at the end. The next mnemonic was 'STVE', which is possibly an Inuit word and very hard to pronounce. It sets out the priority order for making sure people are safe during a rescue: Self, Team, Victim(ooh) and lastly Equipment. Again, an approach based on common sense as you need to be safe yourself to save another, shouldn't really be putting other members of the group into harm's way, and all the insured or otherwise replaceable stuff can be collected up at the end.

After the classroom session, we moved outside for some bank work, which mainly consisted of demonstrating how feeble we were at throwing lines or ropes even a few metres to one another. There is some benefit of pointing at the target with your non-throwing hand, but mainly this makes the whole spectacle even more amusing to look at. Happily, there was a hen-party picnicking nearby at the time, so we achieved some more good PR for the club. And if you need something dislodging from fifteen feet up a tree with a rope, Sara is absolutely your woman.

In the afternoon there was a lot of thrashing about in the actual water. Most of this went well, and importantly emphasised the value of buoyancy bags in boats - something we really do need to consider investing in as a club. We also learned that 'towing' includes 'shoving' in the sense that pushing a stricken craft was far easier than trying to drag it along on the end of a rope. Easier still if you tie the two boats

together. A technical name for this is the 'Mississippi tow' as James has probably mentioned to you by now. We did some much needed practice with open boats, the best bit of which I thought was using the submerged boat as a step to get into the rescue boat. Of course there was also then the 'all-in rescue'. This went well in so far as all did indeed go in, and eventually out again, but the key learning was that we spent too much time in the water. This could be shortened by only refitting spray decks once everyone is back aboard, albeit we did debate the necessity to get sealed back in again quickly in heavy waves. In a nutshell, we need to get ourselves and each other out of the water ASAP.

A good time was truly had by all, and on a serious note, this was really valuable and practical training which will undoubtedly come in handy soon.



A busy evening at Bourne 31 August



Emily successfully learning to roll.

Trip Reports

Trip to Mawddach by Harriet Laugharne

We arrived in Wales with the traditional Welsh greeting of a downpour, ready to embark on the club trip up Afon Mawddach, between Barmouth and Penmaenpool. Arriving at Barcdy campsite we were greeted by several club members, and after setting camp, the welcome waft of hot dogs (although somewhat late for tea at 10 pm). When we awoke the weather threatened to put a dampener on the planned trip. However, when the club arrived in Barmouth, energies were high and even the rain could not stem our excitement. As we prepared to leave the harbour with the sea to our right and a stunning estuary to our left, our first open water trip afar from Rutland appeared to look something found only in a picture book.

We set off with Lynette leading at the front and Trevor bringing up the rear. It was inevitable given the low tide that we were to hit a sandbank, causing much humour amongst the group given Mike's previous notice that "we should be alright" given we were on a rising tide. When the hand propelling of kayaks failed, we begrudgingly reverted to getting out of our kayaks and getting our feet wet. As predicted though and much to the delight of all, we were before long reunited with deeper water. Our paddle continued, met with several 'hellos' and distant waves from hikers and a persistent squabbling of the sea gulls from overhead. The stunning Welsh highlands upstream continued, as did the pouring rain.

As we ventured away from the sight of Barmouth we were greeted by a variety of wildlife, including several herons on the

shoreline; each stood patiently until the leading group had passed, only to fly off in angst of the noisier paddlers behind. By this time the group had almost separated into two with myself in the faster group and my sister in the other. As the channel split into two the lead group followed James along the estuary as it meandered to the right. However, as we paddled on, it became apparent that the other group (now present on the horizon) had not elected to follow but had chosen to take the left hand and not-so-deep channel, which 300 metres or so later proved impassable. Much to my amusement, my sister could soon be seen walking on the sand bank looking rather sodden closely followed by her boat, which other members of the group had kindly offered to carry for her. As the minutes ticked by whilst we waited to be reunited in our paddle upstream, James was afforded the opportunity to retrieve some 'art' from the shoreline in the form of a sun bleached log which he strapped proudly upon his kayak; unfortunately though, that log did nothing to slow his pace. Before long and by the time the rest of the group had fully caught up the pub was within sight. Although lunch, hot chocolate (and beer for the adults) wasn't far off, we had just enough time to wave our greetings at two young boys and their family on the bank who were in awe at the sheer mass of kayakers paddling by before arriving at the pub. A couple of hundred yards later, Emily and I arrived at the half way point, tired but relieved to have made it as far as we did without as much as a snack break or a tow!

Both replenished and treated to fair weather, the group departed at roughly high but tide. Heading back seaward to pick up the ebb tide, the change in the estuary was apparent: previously alive with seagulls and herons, the sand banks and rocks had all but disappeared

under a sea of murky blue high water. The distinct channels and meandering route we had taken on our journey upstream had all disappeared. As we paddled past the ever-stunning landscape assisted by the ebbing flow of water, time and miles flew by. It seemed that we were, in the blink of an eye, back to where we started, only this time not on a sand bank and slightly more fatigued than we were in the morning.

Much to our delight and despite being tired, we were then encouraged to experience the open sea and to try our luck in the surf near the town beach. Jules, Steve, Richard, Lynette, James and Judy shot off in the direction of the 'larger' waves whilst my sister and I tentatively followed on behind under strict instructions not to 'sit in the trough'. As smaller 1-foot waves splashed onto my cockpit, my kayak would lurch forward. Surprisingly, I found that it took more effort than I had expected to keep straight and alongside the wave. As my ride broke, I realized that I had shared both my experience and wave with Peta and Kevin, both of whom seemed pleased to have rode the surf both safe and dry. We were soon joined by Dom who had held back for a slightly higher wave, which he managed to ride closer towards the shoreline than we had.

Several minutes later I gained the courage to try some heftier waves. Surfing towards the shore with the sea-wind in my hair, I felt incredibly content. After a while and having experienced several hairy moments, both my sister and I decided enough was enough and we paused to watch the others at play. After watching Judy take a swim on particularly long surf, Vivian admitted defeat and said that she 'felt much safer in the shallows'. Perhaps inevitably and soon afterwards Vivian was

caught by a 'Great White shark'; suffice to say she met a similar fate to Judy, and having capsized in only a few inches of water perhaps regrets saying she felt safer in shallow water! With club members pleased with their days experience but getting ever more tired in the surf, Mike decided it was time to call it a day. After a short paddle against the flow of the strong tidal ebb into the harbour entrance we were soon back on dry land recollecting our most memorable experiences. A big thank you to all for making my (and Emily and Dad's) first estuary / coastal kayak adventure so memorable and above all, enjoyable!"



And a survival note from Kevin Spiers.....

"After a happy day paddling up and down the Mawddach estuary in gentle breeze and bright sunshine (once the rain and fog had passed), a few hardy souls were left to tackle some proper Welsh weather on the sea at Criccieth. Despite being a rank novice, my performance must have been awesome because Michael (our illustrious leader) sidled up to me once we'd hit 'dry' land and asked me to pen 'a survival note' for the club newsletter.

The beach at Criccieth sits in a bay which protects in from south-westerly winds so the sea looked pretty calm, even to this

overconfident innocent. Our instructions were to paddle straight out, perpendicular to the breakers, and once clear of them, to turn right and assemble close to a stone pier. Fine. Except that, as somebody whose main objective was simply to stay upright for as long as possible, turning right meant turning side-on to the waves. Vivien and I resisted our leader's instructions until Judi paddled alongside offering encouragement. I turned right and prepared to meet my doom.

But it was fine. Once I'd relaxed enough to disconnect my lower body from the upper one, I found the sensation quite pleasant. We then headed out of the lee of the harbour and into the Irish Sea, which is when I found out that stuff about Criccieth being in a protected bay. Whilst my priority remained staying afloat, and within reach of my rescuers, sorry, the rest of the party, Richard, my unofficial coach, tried to get me to improve my paddling technique, exhorting me not to use my skeg under any circumstances.

I could tell that our leader had complete faith in my abilities when James (Club Chairman) and Richard (former Club Chairman), or the Under 12s, as I call them, headed off to play amongst the rocks. "Kevin, stay here, please don't go anywhere near those two!" The other indication of a complete lack of confidence in your survival chances is when a more experienced paddler comes alongside and says, "You're doing really well!"

I'd just about got used to the combination of wind and waves quartering over the port gunwale (ahaarr, Jim lad!) when, in the worsening conditions, Michael suggested that we put ashore. In doing so, the wind would now be coming from over my left shoulder, pushing the waves before it. You will be

aware that I was somewhat north of my comfort zone at this stage. Brief instructions and encouragement were offered and I prepared to (a) surf in a bit but after that (b) back-paddle to allow waves to pass, (c) approach the beach under control and (d) take care not to be pushed sideways or it's game over.

So delighted was I with my flawless beach landing that I danced a jig. Apparently even my kayaking is better than my dancing. Delight was short-lived because we still had the return journey to make. But I was now a veteran beach-launcher and powered out full of confidence and ready for a nice gentle surf back to Criccieth. I was learning so much! Now I learnt that paddling with wind and waves coming from over my right shoulder is not immediately restful. Watching Lynette paddling effortlessly, as if on completely flat water reminded me just how bad I was.

Out of sheer necessity I invented a stroke that could easily have been mistaken for a stern rudder and this kept me from constantly turning right and heading for Ireland. And then we were past the castle and once again in the relative calm of the bay. Whilst we were making our final approach to the beach Michael, clearly disappointed that no real rescues had been required at sea, tried to recruit volunteers for rescue drills after lunch. No prizes for guessing the identity of the rescuee. Fortunately the weather turned from just lousy to properly foul and even lunch was curtailed.

But I had survived. A crucial factor for someone who's been asked to pen a survival note. In fact, I felt a genuine glow of satisfaction. I'd put myself well outside my comfort zone and knew that I was a better

paddler, sitting on that beach, than I had been when I pushed off from it earlier that day. The weather was, by now, so awful that having loaded to kayak onto the car I jumped into the driver's seat without changing and drove for four hours in my wetsuit. And survived.

Many thanks to my fellow travellers (and carers), Michael, Lynette, Judi, Vivien, James and Richard.”

The 4 Ls – Lynette visits London’s Legacy Loop...

“I visited London's Legacy Loop wild water course (the smaller sister course alongside the Olympic venue) for an afternoon of wild water racing practice which was great fun. The water is filtered to a clear blue colour and looked very inviting in the sunshine. There is a conveyor belt that you paddle on to take you back to the start of the course without needing to exit your boat - very cool and pampering! My first run was rather more exiting than I expected and I was struggling to negotiate the turns as I was coasting a bit too much so I decided to swap from my wild water racing boat to a wavehopper, thinking it would be easier. Big mistake. I made it to the bottom of the course only to capsize at the end. Wavehopper attempt number 2 also resulted in a capsize in the double stopper at the end of the course, so I decided to cut my losses and return to the lighter wild water racing boat and again made it down in one piece and up onto the conveyor belt for subsequent capsize free runs. With advice from fellow paddlers I gradually improved my line down the course. The key is to paddle positively with a bit of effort at the same time as looking for the line of "future water" rather than what you are presently on. After a couple of hours I was tired, but pleased with

my progress and finished on a clean fast run.”



Where my Summer went by Neil Juggins

“Most sea kayaking injuries occur off the water, from lifting boats from cars and racks, falling on wet banks, carrying loaded boats, clambering over wet rocks with soft shoes on and that sort of thing.

That is not always the case, I will share my experience with you.

A couple of days before my 80th birthday in April I was diagnosed as having severe arthritis in my right hip and that I would need a total hip replacement. For a few weeks I had noticed a bit of discomfort in the area but had put it down to strain or a pulled muscle. So the news knocked me back a bit. I had always considered myself a bit above rheumatic/ arthritic discomfort. Although my wife has always gone on about getting wet and cold and sleeping on seashores etc. My doctor referred me to a consultant and I was put on a waiting list. In June I went on Graham’s trip to the Gower Peninsula where we did day trips from a good campsite. Or to be more accurate, I did the first day trip. It was an easy paddle with rough bits round the headlands, but on the way out I had tried to paddle through an arch and had been thrown back out of it. It took a lot of effort

and I gave up after 3 attempts, as the top of the arch was getting a bit near my head on the wave crests. I think that that was where my problems started.

My Anis has a full plate footrest and I tend to push with my foot as I pull back on the same side with the paddle as close to the boat as possible, this gives me a stronger stroke, less energy going to the "Yawing", but at a slower rate. This is quite important if you are doing a 6 hour paddle in a bit of lively water. It lessens the repetitive strain effect. It is a strategy that has managed to let me keep up with the more athletic members of the club. The trouble is that that the action causes a lot of stress in the groin area as you change from left push to right push. I began to feel it and it was exacerbated by the hip problem.

We got off the water and loaded the boats, (me doing as little as possible) and got back to camp. I had a shower and discovered that I had got a really painful problem, which needed urgent medical attention. Luckily, Peter was in the group, and after several misdirections he got me to a medical centre at closing time. His Fire Engine driving experience in London was evident, I only opened my eyes occasionally. The Doctor on duty was a miracle worker, and got things back into place with the proviso that if it happened again I was to go straight to A&E. That was the end of my Gower Trip and I left for home next morning.

I did have three more A&E episodes, the problem becoming more frequent. Peterborough A&E put me on their waiting list for a Bilateral Laparoscopic Inguinal Hernia repair. My own doctors advised me to get the Hernia sorted before the Hip, but of course the Hip date came up first. (14th August) If I

had turned it down it would have put me back at square one, and another 4 month wait would have messed up next year as well. So the Hip Hop went well, I managed to ditch the crutches after a couple of weeks. The other problem was still getting worse and I was becoming rather desperate, spending more time lying on my back hoping that gravity would help. I had to apologise to my doctor for my desperate behaviour. The next day I got a date (7th Sept) for the hernia op. And now after a three weeks I am getting mobile again.

It turned out that I needed a Triple Hernia repair and that meant an extra couple of days in Hospital. I have learnt to self inject in the process as well as learning a lot of gutsy information about what goes on below the surface.

Hopefully I will be testing the water in a couple of weeks to try and regain some of the muscle, which has deserted me since June. Thank you to all who have been concerned for my welfare, and the many offers of help I have had. It is nice to have friends when in need."

L2L Update Sara Davies

To recap, RCC Life Member Sarah Outen has been powering her way through her global expedition London2London:Via the World - an attempt to loop the planet by kayak, bicycle and rowing boat, raising money for four charities and sharing stories about her exploits along the way.

She started in a kayak under Tower Bridge on April 1st 2011 and since then has kayaked, cycled, and rowed about 26,000 miles across

land and sea.

On 14 May she set off on the final leg of her journey to row across the Atlantic Ocean from Cape Cod on the east coast of the USA to hopefully Falmouth in the UK. 3000 nautical miles (as the crow flies), this was estimated to take Sarah about 4 months.

Winds and waves have not been kind and the row was taking Sarah much longer than anticipated. Finally in the early hours of Saturday 3 October she had to abort her row in the face of a severe weather forecast showing the tail end of Hurricane Joaquin with winds of up to 60 knots and waves up to 11m high about to hit her. The coastguard was alerted and a passing ship the Federal Oshima was able to pick her up. Sadly due to the complexity of the pick up, her boat Happy Socks was unable to be retrieved.

This is not the end of the expedition. Sarah is due back in the UK on Tuesday 13 October and is planning to resume her journey, cycling from Falmouth to Oxford as planned and then kayaking from Oxford up to Tower Bridge, arriving around midday on Tuesday 3 November at HMS President from where she set off all those years ago.

Future Events

Bonfire Night Paddle – Sat 7 Nov

Is anyone interested in a paddle on the river Nene to watch the Firework Fiesta being held on Peterborough Showground on Sat Nov 7th?

Starting from the humpy bridge east of Castor near the A47, similar to last year, we will Paddle downstream and into Ferry Meadows,

across the first lake and into the second. While we eat our mince pies and nibbles, we should be able to watch the display taking place on the showground, they were all high altitude fireworks last year.

Afterwards we will paddle through the link at the corner of the lake (and a short portage round a bridge), back to the main river. Then it is only a short paddle downstream back to the start point at the humpy bridge.

The fireworks are due to start at 7:30 so we would have to aim to be on the water by 6:30, (meet at 6pm since all the gear will have to be carried from the car park down to the river).

If anyone is interested, please email Barry on pbjones_bourne@hotmail.com



Barrow Races

The dates of the 2015/16 Barrow series of races have now been announced.

November 14
December 12
January 9
February 13
March 12

These races are usually well supported by Rutland paddlers and involve a timed run down a 1.8 mile flowing river with a short warm up on a canal and best of all start and finish at the Barrow Boathouse pub where we have a snack and a drink while awaiting results. The races are suitable for all abilities and you don't have to be fast. Some people treat it as a short tour. You can use any boat you like. Please let Lynette know if you are interested and have not done it before.

Club Paddle Sessions

Sunday morning paddles on Rutland Water

Club session for all standards, ages and boats
9.30am-12noon.

Wednesday Afternoon Paddles

Stamina building paddles in long boats on local rivers, often with a cafe or pub stop.
Please contact Lynette Shahmoradian

Friday Morning Paddles on Rutland Water

Please contact Mike Cockerill