



The CASTLE Autumn 2007

www.castlecanooclub.co.uk

Welcome from the Chair

Since the last edition, we have seen an end to the Tuesday evening sessions – but they will be back again when the clocks go forwards.

Hope you managed to make use of the paddle clinics. A member of West Reservoir staff was on hand to help with anything from learning the basics to developing flat water play moves. Some of the sessions were themed – with the canoe polo and rolling clinic being particularly popular. As the clinics were so popular, we have arranged for a coach to be available until the end of March on Sunday mornings. They are free so please make use of them.

We are also arranging winter pool sessions. They are a great way to practice capsizing, bracing and rolling in a clean, warm environment. Keep an eye on the Castle website for details.

The water quality has been much better this year – appreciated by everyone – but please remember to take precautions – covering up cuts etc and showering at the end of sessions.

For those of you that have not done your duty yet, please do sign up. The club can only run with your help. I am sure you agree that membership is very

reasonable, but this means we can't afford to pay someone to do our duty. It is really easy – there are clear instructions of what you need to do in the duty cupboard. If you have any questions, contact Dave Ellis who can answer your questions.

There have not been many club trips since the last newsletter. In line with last years survey results, it looks like most club members don't want to go away for whole weekends. However, a couple of day trips have been popular, so more of these would be good. Anyone can organise them – if you want advice on what you need to do to arrange one, try speaking to Susan Webster or Terry Kinsella – watersports manager at West Res.

We are also arranging a get together in the new year on 13 January. To welcome us into 2008, a chance to meet other club members, make plans for the next few months, and a chance to win free membership next year. See the add in the newsletter for more details. Look forward to seeing you on the water soon!

Claire Taylor



From the editor

We've got a nice range of stories in our Autumn newsletter—thanks to Bob, Paul and Karina for your contributions. I'm particularly pleased to have Bob's report on the recent club trip on the Thames, which I hope sets a trend for club expeditions. There's a lot of scope for day trips around London—maybe even venturing out west for some trips through the Thames valley countryside. There's also Paul's report from further afield, describing the sun, sea and whitewater in Turkey. And from the north of this island, my story of what Scotland has to offer.

If you've received a hard copy of this in the post, perhaps you'd like to consider getting it in future by e-mail. As well as reducing the club's costs it's a greener alternative. There will be hard copies available at the reservoir for new members, and we'll gladly continue to post copies to those who prefer. Please keep the stories, news and photos coming.

Jonathan Males

**Free Coaching
for Castle Canoe Club Members**

Want to develop your skills or ask questions about your paddling?

Castle Canoe Club has hired a coach for sessions at the reservoir throughout the winter.

11 am - 1 pm on Sunday mornings from November 07 - April 08.

SPECIAL EVENT– Castle Canoe Club 2008 Kick Off

Sunday 13 January, 1.00 pm.

Stay on after paddling to meet other club members, have some lunch and discuss plans for the year ahead. What trips, activities, or social events would you like?

Canoexpo

This is the UK's largest canoe and kayak show, and takes place on 16-17 February at Stoneleigh Park in Coventry. Lots of gear and guest speakers.

Anyone interested in travelling up with a club group, contact Mark Rowe.

Hiring Equipment from West Reservoir Centre

- Equipment can only be *booked* out on Tuesdays from 6 pm to 8 pm and Sundays from 10 am to 12 pm.
- *Collection and return* can be from Monday to Friday from 10 am to 4 pm. However if you wish to take the equipment during the booking out session that would be permitted.
- Fees payable are £10 per day, however Friday to Monday is £20 and Monday to Monday is £50.
- These fees include 1 x boat,, 1 x B/ aid, 1 x cag, 1 x spraydeck, 1 x paddles, 1 x helmet. There are no reductions in fees for part or one item of kit.
- We will also require a deposit of £100 in the form of a returnable cheque.
- If the cost of replacement of repair is greater than £100 the Centre will endeavour to recover additional costs.
- Equipment will only be loaned out to Castle Canoe Club members (for their personal use) at the Centre's discretion and subject to availability.

Terry Kinsella Paddlesports Manager, West Reservoir Centre

STOLEN BOAT

Richard Kembery (aka Dickie)'s orange Wavesport Diesel 6.5 was stolen recently at the end of the Aber Glasyn Gorge, along with his first aid kit and throwline. If you are offered such a boat 'cheap' please check as all items were marked up with Richard's name and telephone number. If you see this boat please let a member of the Committee know immediately.

Castle's Thames Tour—November 2007

Bob Neame

The intrepid nine of us, with our variety of boats including one Canadian-style open canoe, loaded up and set off from the reservoir in a small convoy towards Shadwell Basin, just as the wind and rain began to strengthen last Sunday morning. On arrival we picked our way down a short beach to head up river, wind against us but with the current, so the going was fairly easy to start with although quite choppy. As this was my first trip on moving water since starting to kayak earlier this year, I had thought the Thames would be an effortless soft option for a newcomer, but a combination of strong winds, new tide (full moon the night before) and some high speed river buses sending out some hefty wakes very quickly focussed my mind, and the little boat I was in seemed so much smaller.

We set off along the north side, keeping near to the edge, out of the way of any really strong currents, edging by Wapping Police station, down past the Royal Navy centre, and beyond the walled up Traitor's Gate. Then Andy, leading the group, prepared us to cross; and so we headed out for Tower Bridge trying to stay close together as we paddled between the giant stanchions, landing at a temporary beach to have some lunch, objects of mild curiosity to pub goers a few yards directly above us.

For our return, although the wind had dropped a little, we were now going against the current; but the most noticeable thing for me was how the water changed so quickly - one minute quite slack and easy to navigate, the next really choppy, with waves coming from all directions. Not long after HMS Belfast we came across a small colony of barges, where we rested for a while before taking on the return crossing. This we did in a great loop as we paddled hard whilst being pulled downstream back near to the Royal Navy. Then it was on past that police station again, the expensive loft apartments becoming more sparse now (and not quite as expensive), until we found what had a couple of hours ago been our beach. Now we faced a walled section at the side of which were some disappearing steps. The wake of any passing ferry would ram up against the far wall and send water up about 20 feet - a bit like a muddied swimming pool with an excessively overactive wave machine. Andy managed to manoeuvre his way up the steps, connect a line and help haul us in one at a time, back to security of dry land (actually wet tarmac).

This was a great first trip for me, exhilarating to cope with the power of this fat, sleek, old river; and giving me quite a different perspective of the Thames.

Following the success of the November Thames paddle, we've booked another day's paddling on the River Thames for Sunday December 9th. Look out for the report in the Winter Newsletter!



All sorts of things are exposed at low tide!



Karina in front of a bridge

SOUTHERN TURKEY – SEPTEMBER 2007

SUN, SEA AND SAND (WITH SOME KAYAKING THROWN IN TOO!)

Paul “The Wath” Wathan

The venue for this year’s annual holiday with Christine’ former flatmates (Lindsay, Gavin and Shirley) was Kalkan on Turkey’s southern coast. A 4 hour flight from Gatwick to Dalaman and a 2 hour shuttle later saw us arrive at our home for the next 7 days. The villa was equipped with its own private swimming pool in an idyllic position on the hillside above Kalkan commanding panoramic views over the clear blue sea.

On and under the ocean waves

The weather was hot and sunny and after a couple of days of lazing by the pool, we decided some action was required so the 5 of us booked a day’s sea kayaking trip. The trip commenced from Ucauz and we paddled out to Kekova Island where we took in several ancient Lycian monuments and ruins dating back to 2,500 BC. Most of these sites were only accessible from the sea and were so numerous that archaeologists had not started any excavations. Our Turkish guide, Burzin was pleased that we were all experienced kayakers as his usual clients are total beginners, so he could relax and enjoy a relatively stress free day. In the morning we kayaked around the bay and eventually out into the open sea (a detour he doesn’t normally undertake with his usual clients).



There was quite a big swell and the high rolling waves meant we had to work hard to avoid being swept onto the rocky headland. Sea kayaking is certainly a different experience to our usual river kayaking and the vastness of the sea makes you feel quite insignificant. I can see why the ocean needs to be fully respected. After a long paddle against the wind

we eventually arrived at our lunch spot safe in the knowledge that our homeward journey would be a lot easier - we would be going with the wind so we could use the kayak sails. After lunch we visited the sunken Lycian city of Aperlae where a giant earthquake 2,000 years ago resulted in the land surface dropping 2 metres below the sea level. We paddled over and snorkelled amongst the incredibly preserved ancient Lycian roads and buildings, When it was time to head back, we put up the sails on our kayaks only to discover that the wind had dropped to being non-existent so another long hard paddle ensued.

River Dalaman

After a day by the pool, Christine and I headed off for some white water action. We had found a commercial rafting company that offered adrenalin packed trips on the River Dalaman. They said they had a couple of kayaks we could use, a Prijon Wizard and a Samurai – though neither of us knew exactly what these were like or how suitable they would be (particularly for my 16 stone frame!). We joined up with the company at their rafting base high up in the mountains about 20k inland from the coast. We were to be part of a large group of 8 rafts going down the river, occupied mainly by Russians with a smattering of Germans, Poles and Brits. After getting kitted out at the rafting base (my first impression on seeing the Wizard that I would be paddling was “How the hell am I going to fit into that?!”), we were herded into buses for the 2 hour drive over the mountain to the get-on of the “Middle” section. This middle section comprises 12k of continuous grade 2, 3 and 4 white water flowing in the main through a picturesque, high sided gorge with lots of boulder gardens making it quite a technical run. Until a few years ago, you could also paddle the



more difficult grade 5 / 5+ upper section and the easier grade 1 / 2 lower "Family" section. However, the construction of two massive hydro-electric dams have put paid to this and sadly the imminent construction of a third dam will also see the end of paddling on the middle section.

As we unloaded our boats and carried them down to the water's edge, Christine and I were surprised that no-one from the rafting company seemed that bothered about our paddling abilities or even whether we had done any kayaking before. We were basically left to our own devices. As we paddled down to the first rapid I was already getting cramp in the highly tippy Wizard play boat (designed for paddlers of up to 12 stone!) and doing my best to keep the thing upright on every eddy line. So no surprise when I flipped on the first drop. Fortunately, because the boat was so small it was dead easy to roll (unlike my Diesel!). Next came Christine with a perfect line. Then the video-cum-safety kayaker paddling a Fly who was frantically trying to catch up the rafts ahead. He flipped in exactly the same place as me but couldn't manage a roll so we had to rescue him together with his £1,000 camera. First swim of the day – at least it wasn't me!



Once in the gorge, the water gradually picked up and I was starting to enjoy myself after getting used to the tiny boat. As we turned a corner, we noticed that all the rafts had pulled in and the rafters were portaging the first big grade 4 rapid as it had a nasty looking undercut with numerous pinning possibilities (according to the guidebook it was a grade 5). On seeing the man in the Fly portaging we followed suit, much to the delight of two Nepalese hair boating raft guides, who proceeded to jump in our boats and promptly wave wheel their way down the rapid – oh well at least it saved us from carrying them round. The river kept up its continuous pace until we reached the second grade 4 rapid named "The Long Rapid". The raft guides took time to scout this section and proceeded to raft

it one at a time after setting up cover of sorts. There were plenty of incidents here and at least one Russian girl looked particularly worse for wear. The safety-cum-video kayaker said he would be getting on half way down just below the biggest drop in the rapid and I followed suit. Christine ran the whole rapid, again without any problems. Me and the Fly man joined her half way down and he promptly decided to have his second swim of the day. At this point several of the rafts were getting flipped / pinned with their former occupants swimming down the rapid. Some of them obviously thought Christine and I were safety kayakers and were making desperate lunges for our boats. Christine was quite happy to ferry a couple of bedraggled punters down the river but when one rather large looking German gentleman made a grab for the back of my undersized boat I discreetly accelerated away from his outstretched arm (memories of Prelles rapid on the Durance a couple of years back!).

Once everyone had been repatriated with their rafts / boat, we made our way down river and the pace eased off as we exited the gorge – I had survived! The trip ended all too quickly, paddling under an old Roman bridge at the get-off. The day was undoubtedly the highlight of the holiday for me and many thanks to Alternatif Rafting Adventures based in Marmaris.

Chilling out

The rest of the holiday was spent chilling by the pool, visiting the local beach at Patara, complete with its own Roman amphitheatre and shopping in the local markets, which did a good line in genuine fake Rolex watches and designer fashion items. I would thoroughly recommend southern Turkey as a great holiday location where you can also combine some fantastic kayaking whether it be in the sea or down a white water river.



**Caption Competition
Best entry wins a prize!**

Kayakojacko Park and Huck—what the ****? Creeking in Scotland. Nov 2007

Jonathan Males

I made a commitment earlier this year to paddle more white-water, so a week in Scotland seemed a good idea. I chose to go with Kayakojacko because I'd had good experiences with them previously and the timing fitted relatively well with work commitments. I caught the Friday evening Caledonian Sleeper from Euston, which stopped the following morning at Roybridge, five minutes walk from our accommodation - an effortless way of getting to Scotland.

We weren't due to officially meet until Saturday evening, but a couple of us early arrivals were keen to paddle so we put in a warm up on the Arkaig. There's one Grade 4 rapid but otherwise this short run comprises some small Grade 2 riffles and waves. The traditional leap off the road bridge where the river flows into the loch provided the biggest adrenalin hit of the day!



The other five paddlers on the course were all from Tower Hamlets Canoe Club and we spent Sunday paddling the Spean Gorge and the Arkaig under the watchful eyes and video cameras of our coaches, Dennis and Ed. These rivers were good preparation for the more committing paddling to come the next day, starting with the Etive. One of Scotland's classic runs, and an ideal introduction to steep creeks, this small volume river runs through a narrow gorge with lots of Grade 3—4 + drops, with the largest, 22 foot Big Man Falls, coming at the end of the trip. We were encouraged to scout each major fall and consider the appropriate safety cover for each other, and the coaches ensured we were each confident to tackle the rapids we wanted to. I really enjoyed this river, both for its beauty and the challenge of its falls.

In the afternoon we headed down the valley and hiked a kilometre up the Allt Mheuran for some granite slabs. This was a whole new game for me, sliding down steep shallow cliff faces with just enough water to float. We were guided through a careful progression to build skills and confidence, and by the end of the afternoon we were careering downstream with wild abandon, tackling several 12—15 foot falls on the way. What a buzz!



Tuesday started with another drive to the Etive valley and a walk up the hill to Alltchaorunn, a classic creek run with rapids including Ecstasy and Pinball. I was nervous as we climbed up alongside the burn, surely these falls were too narrow and too steep for us to paddle? But our coaches were brilliant and we broke the river down into manageable sections, carefully scouting each in turn then doing multiple runs, especially on Ecstasy, aptly named for the rush that comes on first descent. The biggest rapid was Pinball, a Grade 5 rapid requiring careful positioning and boat angle to ensure that your ricochet off, rather than ram straight into, a mid-stream boulder and then a cliff face.

On a high after the morning's paddling, we then drove north to Allt Gleann a Chaolais, a small burn between Glen Coe and Lochleven. This was really steep, and the hike up hill through wet heather was tough. But not nearly as tough as the descent, a crazy series of falls and slides down a narrow twisting stream, the banks thickly covered with trees and vegetation. I should have known that any river that starts with a blind 25 foot drop known as Bitchslap Falls was going to be interesting (translate this as scary).

Wednesday was officially a rest day, but as I

had to return early to London I was keen to paddle, so I settled for a sleep-in then headed out with Ed and Elmo. We intended to paddle the Roy Gorge, a nice grade 3 – 4 run just around the corner, but it was too low so we drove south in search of water, eventually settling for another run on the Alltchaorunn. Despite lower water than the previous day it was still a blast, especially as we ran it straight down only pausing to check Pinball, where we all found clean lines. For a final fling Ed suggested we look at the Nevis, but it was too low so we parked at the 25 foot lower Falls and did a couple of runs—true Park and Huck. A leap off the cliff into the base of the falls brought my trip to a close, tired but more or less in one piece.



Later that night the Caledonian sleeper lived up to its name, and somewhat bizarrely I found myself at Euston station at 815 the following morning, changing into a suit for a business meeting at 900. The trip worked well for me, giving me a chance to take my paddling into new areas, both geographically and technically. Next time I'll make sure I can stay the whole week!

A Bluffer's Guide to Canoes and Kayaks

If you're new to paddling you may be confused about the many different types of canoe / kayak that appear on the reservoir. Have a go in as many different boats as you can, and always ask if you're unsure what's right for you. Kayaks are paddled in a seating position with a double bladed paddle, canoes from a kneeling position with a single bladed paddle.

Freestyle / Playboat

Ridiculously short, thin ends and usually uncomfortable for any length of time. Good for playing in rapids or for flat-water tricks but too slow for much else.



General White-water

More volume, more rounded shape than a freestyle boat, but often still has sharp rails for surfing. Good choice for an all round boat.



Creek Boat

Rounded ends and higher volume, designed for big rapids and waterfalls. Not as nimble as a general WW boat but more forgiving in extreme situations.



Sea Kayak

Specialist boat for touring in the sea or estuary. Fast in a straight line and carries plenty of gear.



Wavehopper

Plastic version of a downriver racing kayak, designed to go fast straight down rapids. Unstable but good for fitness training.



Recreational (e.g. Kiwi)

Good introductory boat, stable and large cockpit. Can be used for fishing or sheltered water touring.



Slalom Kayak

Another specialised boat, long, fast and manoeuvrable. Competitive boats are built of carbon fibre and kevlar and weigh 8 kg.



Open Canadian Canoe

The Volvo estate of the canoeing world, leisurely, comfortable, takes a ton of gear and / or several people. Not great in high winds or exposed conditions.



Meet the Committee:



Claire Taylor; Chair

As chair I co-ordinate the committee meetings, and hassle people about things that need doing to keep the club running. I also act as a link between Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) who run the site, and Castle. Simple really
claireonthebus@yahoo.co.uk

Paul Wathan: Treasurer

Responsibility for all matters financial and looks after the Club's accounts i.e. paying in membership fees, paying out all items of expenditure e.g. rent to West Reservoir Centre, BCU affiliation fee, equipment purchases and all other expenses related to the running of the Club. And prepare final end of year accounts and balance sheet for approval at the AGM. Paul.Wathan@Camden.gov.uk



Susan Webster: Secretary

As club secretary it's my responsibility to take minutes at our meetings and sort any post for the club, as well as responding to general inquiries. Sucasweb@hotmail.com

Mark Rowe: Social Events Motivated by the success of the summer BBQ Mark has an outlandish plan for more social events. Not sure how this role fell to me apart from the fact that in a semi alcoholic state I found my hand going up and someone seconding me at the AGM. This surprised me as for the last couple of years I have played the role of a grumpy old man. However not one to shirk a new challenge I have found that I'm quite excited about the role and have in fact become quite a jolly fellow. If you have any ideas please let me know. For taking the credit I will happily organise something of your choice within reason. Mark.Rowe@islington.gov.uk

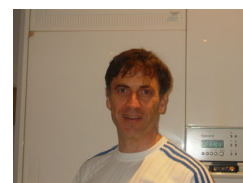


Lindsay Hough: Membership Secretary My role consists of updating an ever growing spreadsheet with all the information provided on the membership forms by all renewing / new members, ensuring all membership monies get handed to the treasurer and updating the website database ensuring all members receive club news and updates. In addition I keep an attendance record of all members and visitors to the club to ensure all those persons using the club are paid up members. This information is then distributed to the Duty Officer to assist in planning the duty rota. Castlecmembership@yahoo.co.uk

David Ellis: Safety Officer: My role is about making sure we are all aware of the problems we could encounter when we are kayaking. It ranges from the obvious – setting the duty rota and e-mailing people to confirm that people will turn up, to the more detailed - ensuring that the emergency contact list is up to date just in case there is an accident at the reservoir or on a trip. Its also about talking to the staff at WR and passing on useful information – like we are closed due to blue green algae and explaining what it is. If you think we are missing a safety issue or want to know more e-mail me and I will try to sort it out. Castleccduty@googlemail.com



Ian Tokelove: Communication: Updating the website, message board and communication. ian@foodcomm.org.uk:



Jonathan Males; Newsletter Editor

Self explanatory role which largely involves hassling people and battling with out of date desk top publishing software. Contributions welcome! Jonathan.males@btconnect.com

Communications sub-committee

General enquiries: Carmen Aitken
info@castlecanooclub.org

Message board moderators: Jonathan Wood and Barry

Trip organiser

Barry Fitzgerald barfitzgerald@gmail.com

Need to buy your own canoeing gear? Talk to a committee member about a range of discounts that are available to club members