

REGENTS NEWS

February 2011



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the February newsletter, which has actually come out in March as, despite all of your valiant efforts to get content in to me in time, I was too busy in February to do anything with it! Apologies for that!

Spring feels like it might finally be springing, but it's been a mean old winter. Those of you on the February Dart trip can attest to that, with the old, friendly waters of the Loop transformed into a terrifying torrent. More of that in the next edition, but we have much to delight and awe you in this version.

The heavy rainfall meant that some Regents members were able to experience a couple of delightful rivers in January that most people had never paddled before - Charlie tells us all about it on page 9.

The ridiculous snowfall in December made paddling the Dart a bit of an impossibility - in fact, made most things a bit of a struggle, as Matthew reports on page 7 and Sasha relays on page 14.

The 'newbies' have been up to their usual keen antics. A happy gang have been getting onto the canal regularly, despite the perishing conditions, and getting out and about on a number of trips. Lara-Louise gives us all some encouragement in her article on page 12.

The club has also run another couple of successful rolling courses. I'm not entirely sure if anyone made a roll (apologies and congratulations if I'm wrong!), but most people seemed to find the courses extremely helpful. Sarah Gibbs lets us have her take on one of the courses on page 16 and she's persuaded Dan to let us have some helpful hints to go alongside it on page 17.

Somewhat embarrassingly, I seem to be the only Regents with any kit to sell, so I'm the sole contributor to 'Jumble Kit Corner'...you know how to contact me if anything takes your fancy!

Likewise, there's been a bit of a dearth of babies for the 'New Little Regents' section. I understand that Bogden has become a father (congratulations, Bogden!) but could not seem to get a picture for this edition. To compensate, we have a few pictures of some recent babies who are growing up fast, for you to cluck over. A couple made it to the February Dart trip, but due to high water levels, decided not to get on this time.

I also had a mixed response to my call out for contributions to Pet Corner! Paul sent a lovely image of his & Christine's beloved cat, Henry, although he has actually featured before. Greg offered up his wife, Annie, which I felt was entirely inappropriate and told him so in no uncertain terms (!), Sarah Gibbs suggested one of her lambs from 'Lambing Live' (but technically, those lambs have probably been served up for Sunday lunch by now) and Polly sent us an obituary to her dearly departed guinea pigs (Kafka and Skinny), see page 10.

On a slightly random note, Ed Macey-McLoud sent over a picture of himself as a young boy. I'm not entirely sure why, but thought him such a cutie (?) that I decided to include it.

I hope you enjoy this edition. The deadline for the next one will be 15th May and hopefully we'll get the second installment of Ralph's epic Salmon river trip to mull over then.

Katie x
editor@regentscanooclub.co.uk

cover pic: somewhere in Scotland by Mark Lamb

BIG BOYS ON THE ERME

Ralph Wilson & the gang take on this notorious gorge.

We paddled the Erme in south Dartmoor in November 2010 and it was all the better for doing it this time without a local leading us tightly down it all (though JC's help was largely appreciated first time round). This time, Mike L was at the front for much of the time, and Dan sometimes. But I was definitely shy.

We parked at the car park next to the bridge at the top of Ivybridge with the interesting-looking rapid just above it (don't forget the rapid continues underneath the bridge as well...).

We then drove over that bridge, and up the lane on river right. (Well, first we got lost going up from the car park on river left). Parked near the viaduct bridge to unload and change. Then Mike self-shuttled to leave the van at the big main car park in town - accessed by boat egress via some steps on river about 50-100 yards past the previous bridge rapid, and before a weir that's apparently just further below.

We carried the boats up to the Slot. It's fairly obvious when you reach it, some way above a broken weir. Although the Slot looks relatively innocuous (at least at lower flows) we all decided to put in below after inspecting and deciding the run-out was dangerous.

We spent about an hour (or possibly an hour and a half) on the water in total. It was non-stop action, with only short pools after each drop. Every one was a winner - loads of grade 4, steep twisty and turny.

The broken weir not long after the start looks like possible left or right (right would have an extra turn or two in it).



Mike ran left okay. I ran left and pinned vertically - I think this must be the well-known rapid for pinning, and I believe it was probably where Allan had to eject from his boat in a hurry a few years back. Thankfully in my creeker and with lots of luck a quick backpaddle stroke and within a couple of seconds the boat's nose lifted - the pin was only semi-vertical. A bystander said Mike had taken the drop harder left, whereas I'd gone over the top more towards the middle of the left hand side.

After plenty of fun we reached the viaduct and a couple of the hardest rapids - longer, possibly steeper, around corners, etc. Probably grade 4+. The book advises inspecting. Dan had indeed had a look whilst we should have been carrying Mike's boat to the start during his shuttle. I'd like to think it was actually properly readable from the river anyway.

There were no portages on the trip, although the Slot would



have been if we'd carried up further. I don't think there's a huge amount of action immediately above that drop though.

It is definitely worth bearing in mind that the level was probably something below medium, perhaps low-medium, definitely not high. The main ledges at the bridge rapid near the end were lightly covered, nothing more, and there were totally distinct lines to run. According to the previous day's weather forecast it was due to have rained fairly well during

the middle of the night, easing off by about 3am. According to the book the Erme takes 3 hours to rise, and stays runnable for about 12 hours.

Just as on my only previous run down the river, I ended up going over the final ledge too far centre/right, not as far left as I would have liked. But this time it was kinder to me on landing and somehow I missed the worst of the roostery bump rock(s) that stick out just below. Mike and Dan seemed fine.

All too soon, in one way, it was over. We agreed it had been a “quality” paddle for sure.

Many thanks to Lisa and Rachel for allowing us to do our own thing that day.

OUCH! SARAH HURTS HER SHOULDER

Sarah James gives us the gory details of her shoulder dislocation.

On a cold November’s day, I set off once again down one of the best stretches of river in the UK – the Upper Dart! My companions for the day were Andy, Alix and Steve S. Having paddled it many times before, I was feeling pretty relaxed and set off down the river looking forward to an enjoyable day. After paddling the first half of the river, I was pretty pleased to find that I was paddling well and had pulled off some pretty good lines. After my one and only previous experience of running Euthanasia Falls (where I found out the hard way that my paddles didn’t fit through the slot if I held them horizontally,

and that I can’t handroll in grade 4+ water!) I decided to go for attempt two and managed to style the chicken chute – complete with my paddles in hand at the bottom – woohoo!

After a quick portage around Surprise, Surprise and with the majority of the river now behind me I began to relax and cruised on down the next inconspicuous little rapid, sniggering at Steve who had pretty much fallen in at the top and done the entire thing on his head, rolling up at the bottom. If only I had been so lucky...! As I neared the bottom of the rapid I suddenly clipped a rock and was flipped without warning. A split-second later, before I had managed to tuck in, my upper arm skimmed over a rock just under the surface and I felt a solid “thunk”.

Uh-oh, I thought, I’ve just dislocated my shoulder!!! No... , I thought as I cruised along upside down ...it would hurt much more than that - I’ll try a roll. (I really did think like this!!!). Nothing happened – in fact my shoulder wouldn’t move at all despite instruction from my brain to do so, so I popped my deck and surfaced next to Andy, fortunately in a large pool at the end of the rapid. I soon determined that it is pretty much impossible to swim one-handed with even a slight current, so everyone in the group helped to fish me and my kit out.

Having had a fair bit of first aid training over the years, as soon as I was on the bank I was sure that I had indeed dislocated my shoulder and little did I know that the real pain was yet to come. I had even been trained to reduce shoulder dislocations (i.e. put them back in) but suddenly faced with the idea of doing my own filled me with fear. A few years ago I watched Dan’s brother put his shoulder back in only to dislocate it again 5 minutes later, turning white as a sheet. No thank you. Andy very honestly said that he didn’t know how and I don’t think I would have let anyone touch me anyway unless they were very good at pretending they knew what they were doing. I quickly dismissed the idea of the rescue services coming to get me as we were in the middle of nowhere and they weren’t going to be there any time soon. Which left only one option – walking to the bottom.



Andy and Steve set off by boat to raise the alarm and Alix had the unfortunate job of accompanying me down the bank. We started walking, with my arm in a makeshift sling. It soon turned out that the path was more of a scramble in places and every stumble that I made (and there were many) caused pains to shoot through my arm and much swearing and tears (sorry Alix). The walk took a very long time and Alix had to encourage me almost every step, reassuring me that we were nearly there. We both knew this wasn’t really true but wanted to believe it anyway. Eventually a path reappeared and shortly so did Andy, Steve and Marc, from the car park at the bottom. I was extremely glad when I finally got to the car park probably an hour after I hurt my shoulder and I found Mark L waiting for me with his car.

We whizzed off to the hospital in Newton Abbott with Mark pretending to be an ambulance, only without the blue lights. Sadly Newton Abbott turned out only to be a very minor injuries clinic so we pressed on to Exeter, this time at

hyperspeed cos by now the pain was getting worse and I'd started wailing a bit! (Sorry Mark). I was very pleased when we arrived at the hospital but this was short-lived as I had to stand at reception and answer 20 questions by the receptionist -name, d.o.b. fair enough - address... come on, can't you see I'm in pain here.... marital status.... what's that got to do with anything...?!!! Probably due to the loud sobs and not wanting to upset the other patients, I was seen immediately by a triage nurse and given category 2 for very urgent – woohoo. Unfortunately Mark and the nurse had the job of trying to remove my kit and I'm pleased to say that (with a lot more swearing and tears, sorry again, Mark) they managed to remove my BA and drysuit intact!!! Only my thermals didn't survive but enough was enough. Shortly after, Dan arrived and Mark headed off.

I was given a trolley to lie down on and some of the best gas in the world - entenox, a mixture of nitrous oxide and oxygen (if ever asked, yes - you want it!!!). This didn't even remotely get rid of the pain, which by now over 2 hours on was probably a 9/10, but it did remove my ability to react to the pain and sent me into another world. A strong dose of morphine later, the pain went down to an 8/10 which was very disappointing as I'd been waiting for this moment for a long time! After querying this, the nurse kindly remarked that I wasn't going to be very good at childbirth and then Dan kindly remarked that I wasn't good with pain (met with more swearing and crying, countered with more gas). I then headed off to x-ray and was subsequently told that my shoulder was dislocated (grr - I knew that 3 hours ago) but thankfully not broken and that they would put it back in when the recuss. room was free. Seeing that I was only semi with-it, Dan then seized the moment to announce that he had unfortunately driven into a rock on the way to the hospital and that the car was not feeling very well either.

Half an hour (and much more crying and wailing and begging for more morphine) later, the nurse came back with a doctor in tow to mend me. He seemed like a nice guy and said that the trick was that I have to relax - he was just going to lift my arm to find the point at which it didn't hurt and then prod my shoulder to find out where it hurt



(final straw - burst into tears). Turned out that something had got lost in translation (he was German I think) and what he actually meant was that he was just going to gently massage my shoulder into place. With lots more gas and the doctor pulling hard on my arm and wobbling it, a weird thing happened - the pain went away!! My shoulder was still dislocated but with lots of gentle massage and occasional traction after half an hour the doctor stopped, dripping with sweat at this point from pulling on my arm for so long! I realised my shoulder had gone back into place without anyone noticing! An x-ray confirmed this and I was soon sent on my way, feeling like a new person.

Following the A&E doctor's advice, I popped into my local A&E the next day at Whipps Cross to book an appointment with the fracture clinic and was shortly seen by a triage nurse

there and had to suffer around 25 questions this time including religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation (well, maybe not the last one!)

Knowing that aftercare is extremely important for shoulder injuries, I left the hospital feeling pretty concerned about my chances, but then it dawned on me that I had private health insurance through work, which has turned out to be worth every penny. The consultant advised that for someone under 30 the chance of a re-dislocation is about 80% and so for someone who is actively involved in sports it is worth operating to repair the torn ligaments (Bankart repair) and stabilise the shoulder. A week later I went under the surgeon's knife and I am still undergoing physio ten weeks on. I have now managed to return to things like running, swimming breaststroke and skiing (the latter against the doctor's orders) and hope to be back in my kayak in a few weeks' time, building up my strength on the canal before I attempt white water again in a few months' time!



Through the keyhole...

JUMBLE KIT CORNER



Bern 'Artistic' helmet in burgundy. Good condition - worn for approx. 1 year. Size Medium (55.5-57cm) £30



Nookie 80L dry bag with rucksack straps. Ideal for storing & transporting all your paddling gear in. £10



Peli Case 1050 'micro case series'. Size 20cm wide x 13cm across x 8cm deep. Waterproof. Ideal for keeping kit dry in your boat. £8



Size 5 pair of 'Crewsaver' neoprene shoes with drawstring fastener. £5



Size 5 pair of 'Typhoon Titanium' neoprene boots with zip fastener. £10



Peak UK shorty cag with neoprene neck & waist and latex arm seals. Size medium. Perfect for Alpine paddling and tanning those arms! £35

If anyone is interested in any of these items, please contact katie@katiecordell.com

SNOW BOTHER

Matthew Harvey writes the first report of the eventful Xmas Dart.

Like any Regent's weekend, the December Dart trip saw paddlers parted from their boats when the going got tough, gear abandoned and picked up hours or even days later, and boaters rescued with some smart rope work and the help of bystanders. But how did all this happen when not one person got into a boat, and not one boat was taken from a car roof?

Earlier, back in London, Polly and I called Sarah G to check the plan. Sarah said that if she successfully got to the garage at the end of the road and back, then we'd press on to Dartmoor. Successfully got to the end of the road and back!?! Later, with the first mile behind us, I spoke to Claire T and explained that Hornsey Lane and Highgate were passable with care, but do not venture down any side roads, they're treacherous. Treacherous! Devon is a long way if you're fighting just to get out of London.

The issue, of course, was snow. The first casualties didn't even leave London, but most gave it a whirl, despite dark pessimism spread by email through the day. Mark L was out in front and every now and then an update text would get through: 'M5 down to two lanes'; 'road over the moor closed'; and finally, 'car abandoned and walking the last mile'. We were next up. As we slid across Dartmoor, Sarah remained ever so calm. 'This is worse than the f*#@ing Upper Tryweryn!' she screamed. We too walked the last mile, by which time it was snowing heavily.

The sequence of events for the rest of the night is hazy, but roughly speaking: team Liza gave up and stayed the night in Exeter; Ralph and Karen procured a personal police escort across the moor, abandoning their car with a mile to go; smarty pants Paul and 'snow chains' Ian W made it to the door; Ben and Caz, equipped with more booze than Oddbins, and team Elaine, all prepared to sleep in their cars, unable

to go forward or backward in the snow, were scooped up by drunk locals in a 4-wheel drive and driven to the hostel; Dan's car, approaching from a different direction, also gave up at the bottom of a hill and was abandoned, with all passengers rescued by drunk locals; Mark and Claire were towed across the moor to the hostel by more drunk locals.



So hooray for drunk locals. By morning, everyone who had tried had made it, although a good many with little more than what they were standing in. The day was bright and sunny, and about 4 inches of snow had fallen over night. Paddling was not an option, so we set off on a long walk in the snow. Dartmoor was beautiful and we scrambled up Bellever Tor. With youthful abandon, I chucked a snowball at Mark R's genitalia (not a large target, let's face it) and was slam-dunked into the snow, and we waded waist high through gorse bushes. We finished at the pub and ate dozens of ploughman's lunches. Then the sledging commenced.

Liza had gamely carried her body board the whole way and in fading light, some of us built a pelvis-shattering jump at the bottom a hill, just in front of more gorse bushes, and sledged like it was our last day on earth. Overall, I'd say Christine grabbed the most air, Marc was the best rodeo rider, Liza and Claire gave the most consistent team performance, Polly and Sarah were the most technically refined, and I laughed hardest when people hurt themselves.



Back at the hostel, Mark R and his elves prepared a traditional Christmas meal with all the trimmings: sausages and mash, with vegetables and gravy. It was great, but really we should focus on the custard. Golden like summer sunshine and smoother than the velvet on a fresh set of antlers, it was supreme. Father Tattersall handed out the secret Santa presents, some of which looked somewhat like recycled presents from last year (with Paul not even denying it). Sunday was merely a matter of reuniting people and cars, towing cars out of ditches, conducting a finger tip search of Dartmoor for Liza's house keys (unsuccessful) and heading back to London.

So there we have it. No kayaking, no swimming, and one or two whispering that it was their favourite Regents trip ever.

DUTY ROTA

Marie Czajkowski	Monday 14th March 2011
Anne Marie Donovan	Thursday 17th March 2011
Ed Macey-MacLeod	Monday 21st March 2011
Megan Dowsett	Thursday 24th March 2011
Tim Egan	Monday 28th March 2011
Jane Elliott	Thursday 31st March 2011
Nicola Elwell	Monday 4th April 2011
Peter Evans	Thursday 7th April 2011
Sarah Gibbs	Monday 11th April 2011
Alex Goldsbrough	Thursday 14th April 2011
Edward Green	Monday 18th April 2011
Genia Gulyas	Thursday 21st April 2011
Matt Guy	Monday 25th April 2011
Matthew Harvey	Thursday 28th April 2011
Charlie Hepworth	Monday 2nd May 2011
Joe Hine	Thursday 5th May 2011
Neil Hoxby	Monday 9th May 2011
Sarah James	Thursday 12th May 2011
Victoria Jones	Monday 16th May 2011
Rebecca Keary	Thursday 19th May 2011
Richard Kembury	Monday 23rd May 2011
Marc Labuhn	Thursday 26th May 2011
Mark Lamb	Monday 30th May 2011

REGENTINAS

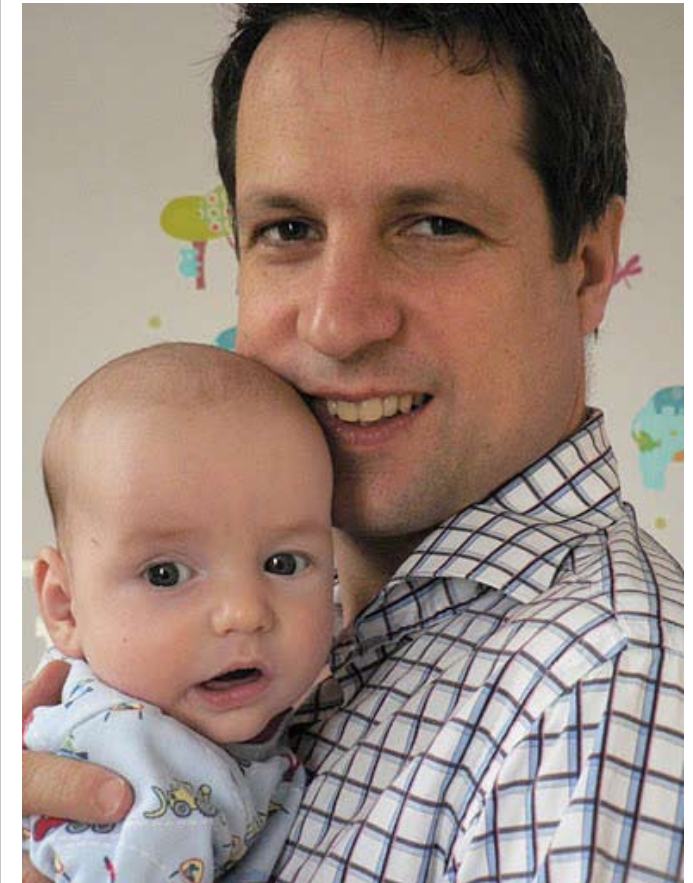
Some of our newest members are growing up fast!



James Lancaster (and dad, Mike!)



Rebecca Green having fun in a trolley.



Oh, what a cutey!...and baby Dougie Hatton's a bit of alright too!

A WEEKEND OF REGENTS' FIRST DESCENTS

A Trip to South Wales 15th/16th January 2011 by Charlie Hepworth.

After two abortive paddling trips in December, I was really hoping that the saying of “all things come in threes” wasn't going to ring true. Fortunately the opposite happened and the rain gods not only smiled but positively beamed down on us, as it rained solidly for the 3 days before our arrival. The amount of rain meant that the usual options of the Wye and Usk were washed out so our attention turned to their tributaries. It is rare for the levels to be high enough to run these tributaries, in fact so much so that the 3 rivers we paddled were all Regents first descents.

Saturday saw us splitting into two groups with Christine, Ian, Dan, Mark, Alix and Ralph heading off to run the Afon Irfon which is a grade 4 river with some grade 5 sections. According to the guidebook this is a “steep, continuous and technical river which starts out on a remote moor”.



Ralph on the Irfon (upright so far!!)

Meanwhile the rest of us headed off to run the Afon Grwyne - a beautiful river which flows into the Usk. It felt alpine in it's style as it is a twisty river with small eddies and a fairly strong flow. We all had a blast with lots of fun grade 2/3 shoots and drops. The main feature was a triple stepped weir, of which the top weir had a really nasty tow back (as Elaine's boat discovered after languishing in it for some time!) We then headed back to the bunkhouse via the obligatory Regents diversion - a tea stop at a nice café in Crickhowell. For the evening we stayed in the bunkhouse where after a hearty dinner, we celebrated Ian and Liza's birthdays with a delicious cake baked by Lucy.



Polly & Katie on the weir.

On the Sunday the destination was the Tarell, another of the Usk's tributaries. This river really bought home to me how quickly river levels can rise and fall. When we got to the get-on, it looked as if it was going to be a real scrape down but by the time we got off, it had risen by a couple of feet with the colour of the water changing from crystal clear to a muddy brown. It

was another fantastic run of a grade 2/3 river through mini gorges with lots of small waves and stoppers. It had a few more features than the Grwyne, with the first a horseshoe weir known as Zimmer Falls due to the fact it was by an old peoples home. We then had lots of small step like rapids and broken weirs to negotiate before arriving at Island Falls.



Liza takes on Island Falls.

This was probably the major feature on the river, but it was quite a friendly rapid and was run without incident. The final feature was a slot n'drop which was just by the get-off. This was quite a tricky rapid and with a stiff stopper should have been run river left, a fact bought home by an experienced Regents paddler being extracted from his boat (mentioning no names, Ralph!!)

PET'S CORNER

Tragically, Pet Corner features an obituary this edition of two adored pets and, to cheer us all up, a shot of Paul the Wath and Henry the Cat (try to work out which is which!)

Kafka 'Spoff' Pig and 12/2003-12/2010 and Skinny 'Bousk' Pig 12/2003-8/2010. Dearly departed & much loved pets of Polly & Matthew.

Kafka Pig (Spoff to her friends) only went on one Regents trip – Scotland 2010 – but her calming influence (and mild incontinence) left a mark on everyone who went. She conned large amounts of cucumber out of paddlers by screeching until they gave in and particularly enjoyed hiding up Mark Rowe's sleeve. Her relaxed, good mannered temperament made her a favourite with the Wath. Spoff did, however, hate Thought for the Day. Some Regentsers were lucky to meet her sister, Skinny 'Bousk' Pig. In contrast, Bousk was an excitable, loud and cunning pig. They both enjoyed singing for breakfast together, running around under the duvet and, of course, cucumber.



Spoff and Bousk in Polly's helmet.



Ooh, don't you want to give that tummy a scratch? And Henry the cat looks quite loveable as well.

BEEN TO NENE?

A gang of Regents struggle to make it to Nene & back. Ed Macey-MacLeod talks us through the drama.

For those who haven't had the pleasure, the Nene is a concrete course which pumps the dirty water of the river Nene around to enable those of a certain disposition to practice their ferry gliding, boofing and other adjectives I haven't yet brought into my paddling lexicon.

It's a delight and whilst I haven't sampled Broxbourne, I have been to Cardiff, and if Cardiff is the school bully the Nene is the stuttering child too scared to challenge anyone; it's that gentle.

So the trip, my first trip in quite some time, was classically Regents; the fun on the river was nothing compared to the fun to be had getting there and back.

It's lovely to return to something familiar and so after rising and

departing my bed at the far-too-early-for-a-Sunday time of nine am. I got to the club to be greeted by Mike, Marco and Lou. We were joined shortly after by Megan who was back from her traveling-enforced-paddling-sabatical and sporting a rather fetching homemade haircut and a look of despair.

Elaine, our designated driver, had lost her keys. The circumstances were never fully explained, but alcohol could have been involved. Which meant, shame and mock horror, neither Megan or I would be able to go. There's always a point on a trip where if given a full-on proper excuse not have to go to and get wet on a cold and windy river, you'll take it.

Except someone will always know some way of getting there; in this instance it transpired that the Wath was heading down.

During a quick phone call, I established that Paul was going down although he didn't really want to. He had had a blast at 'Beginner of the Year 2010' Caroline Heraghty's birthday party but was suffering for that over-indulgence. However, because he had committed to taking down two Castle lads he was still going and there would be room for one more, either Megan or me. (In fact the two lads were from Regents - Bob and John. Never having been a member of Castle, I'm unsure how the identity crisis works, is it to do with proximity to the club? If so, I should probably join Battersea!)

Anyway, digressions aside and with boats loaded onto Mike's car, we set off, sans Megan, who was at this point feigning illness and suggesting it were better that I went. Mike would drop me off at Castle where I would jump in with Paul, he'd pick up Liza "Van of the Year" Sumpter, and we'd all meet in an hour and a half at Nene. Along with Lucy, Louise, Charlie and Ed Antoniak.

Car confidentiality is the best clause in the world, the best phrase ever created, and nothing can be discussed beyond the five doors of the car. For this is the joy of Regents, speeding up the motorway, with nothing better than to tell stories about everyone and what they've got up to, embellishing

facts so that they sound better, inventing liaisons that never occurred and generally creating bullshit stories that became more elaborate with each retelling.

Driving up, we were blissfully ignorant of more car and passenger events unfolding! Liza, who had been getting a lift from Mike because her award winning van was playing up, had finally managed to get the van started. She had then phoned Megan to offer her a lift. Once the van was packed, it once again decided not to start and plan A was revisited with Megan, defeated again, returning home.



Ed demonstrates that a full-face helmet is essential wear for the horrors of the Nene.

With everyone (bar Megan!) at the course and Bobby in attendance to take some photos we had fun splashing around. Paul's hangover got the better of him and after a few cycles he jumped out to concentrate on his number two passion, goad those on the water to try silly things. I contributed when Liza, Lou, Mike and myself jumped queue just so we could try and boof off the big drop. We sent John down it backwards - he survived! Even if he hadn't, it's a simple thing to swim to the shore, climb out and shake all the water off. Your boat wouldn't go anywhere, as Lucy found out when she unfortunately went over on the second lot of eddy hopping. Her boat just went around in circles in the recirculating water; despite about five men trying gallantly to rescue it including some non-Regents.



John spices things up.

That is the beauty of the course and I'd recommend it to anyone. It's also a great reminder that no matter how rainy, windy, hungover, tired or just generally fuzzy one is, once you're on the water you forget it all and have fun (unless you were up until four in the morning, drinking Yaeger somethings - in which case standing on the sidelines is probably the best).



Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Lou - semi submerged!

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

by Ed Antoniak.

Some of you may be wondering how a small group of Regent's paddlers fared on the Upper Dart this last weekend, so here is a short article for a quiet moment at work :

Although there had initially been interest in paddling the Upper Dart, it was beginning to look like I would be spending the weekend doing gardening and car restoration. My best buddy Tokeywokeylove had pulled out at the last minute, Genia would be busy handcuffing villains and Andy wasn't sure if the river levels would be worth it!

So just as I was pouring myself another glass of Chardonnay, the phone rang and a wave of euphoric enthusiasm spread like an Australian bush fire. The trip was back on and we would be doing it all in one day (Anneka Rice take note).

As Sunday dawned, five intrepid paddlers awoke and climbed into their cars. Five hours later at about 10.30 am, we pitched up at the Newbridge car park. There we met our local "specialist" Jeremy, who had offered to show us some "tasty boof moves" (you may remember him from the Alps). Primed and raring to go, we set about our task.

All was good and soon we arrived at the slot-drop known as "Euthanasia". Half the group (Kiwi Andy, Alex M. & Jezza) had run this before and were OK with it, whereas the other half (Ed Green, Genia & myself) had previously looked at it and decided that there would always be a next time (the old adage " tomorrow never comes" springs to mind).

And so it would have been once more, had not Jeremy devised a cunning plan to lure us down this rapid. Whilst

Andy and Alex quietly slipped away like ghosts in the ether, Jeremy stealthily led us into the final eddy above the drop without telling us. He then gave us some instructions before disappearing over the edge, to the sound of clattering paddles and curses, finally reemerging at the bottom.

Now it was our turn. We became so nervous that none of us wanted to go first. We felt like lemmings about to hurl ourselves off a cliff, and we knew that for the three of us there was no chance of a favourable outcome. It was simply a matter of damage limitation and hoping for a minimal thrashing in the inevitable carnage.



Why is it called Euthenasia?!

Eventually Ed Green could bear the waiting game no longer, so letting loose a cry of "banzai" he launched himself over the cliff and into the abyss. Again, the sound of splintering paddles and curses filled the air before we caught sight of his upside down boat disappearing away down the river. Genia was next, and with a steely grimace worthy of the toughest cop, she followed suit. A few moments later and her upside down boat had too, disappeared away into the distance.

As I gingerly edged myself over the cliff, I entertained the notion that I could perhaps retain control if I did it nice and slow. The water carried me down into the slot like a rocket and I stared into the bowels of the earth as the maelstrom of white froth and rock rose up to swallow me. Upside down I was in a familiar place (joke) and managed to roll up at the bottom.

So that was it, Jeremy reckoned it was a Grade 5 ? and Genia went back to do it a second time upside down.

Eventually we completed our descent, and everybody got off the river feeling very happy. Some of us went back to Jezza's for some pasta whilst some of us drove straight back home for four to five hours.

I, incidentally, was back at my house for 8.30pm, and that, my friends, is what you would call "ALL IN A DAY'S WORK"!

KEEN BEANS

Lara-Louise Gilman has some encouragement for our newest members.

Newbies! It's 2011 – still looking for new years resolutions? Get paddling!

So, by last fall (or autumn), you had finished the beginner's course and couldn't wait to start applying those skills. You were sure that by January you would have mastered the Dart, perfected your roll, and planned a trip to perfection. And then...it got cold. And...dark. And, hey, now it's well into 2011 and if you're anything like me, you haven't quite accomplished everything you were hoping to. But, no worries, it's a New Year and that means New Year resolutions, right?

So, what next? The short answer is – go paddling. So, to help get us there, here is a list of excuses that I use way too frequently, along with some resolutions to get around them:

Excuse: It's cold!

Resolution: Yes, it is cold. Miserably cold. But, paddling will warm you up. At the canal, you can come down for one of the fitness sessions, which will get your heart rate up. And if that doesn't work, book yourself on the next trip. Staring down a rapid will certainly get your heart rate up, but

probably in a slightly different way. And if all else fails, it's warm at the pub!

Excuse: It's dark!

Resolution: Yes it is dark. Really dark. But, paddling around the canal is surprisingly pretty at night. There are even new lights on one of the bridges that lightens things up. Or, if that doesn't work, go on a trip as they do take advantage of what little daylight winter seems to offer up. Also, if you want to take advantage of the closest thing London has to offer to a Caribbean experience, head to the pool for a rolling session.



Alix rolling around in the pool.

Excuse: I'm too busy!

Resolution: This one is a toughie. Social calendars, work calendars, family stuff, school commitments – there does seem to be an endless list of to-dos every week. Put Thursday night into a calendar – luckily Caz is around to remind us – and make room for it. Better yet, make a plan with someone else from the club to come down and paddle. If you haven't been able to make a trip yet, talk to any of the 'adults' and help organize one so you can pick dates that work for you. Finally, keep an eye on the calendar on the website so you're on top of all the going-ons coming up.

Excuse: I've not paddled in so long!

Resolution: Well, this is a vicious circle – not going paddling because you've not paddled means that you won't paddle any sooner. The best way to resolve out of this one is to head back to the canal for an easy way to get your feet wet (but not too wet.) Thursdays there are paddling for fitness sessions where Liza and Mark can give you some guidance on how to get into your best paddling shape. Also, there are a few trips coming up that will help build your confidence back up with the added bonus of going to the teashop at the end of it.

Excuse: I don't know anyone!

Resolution: Well, this one isn't technically true since you've probably got some buddies from your beginner's class. Of course, there are lots of people at Regents to meet and it can be hard to keep everyone straight. But start with the people from your beginner's course. Then hit a trip, sit next to someone you haven't met and introduce yourself. Not only is Regents a place to learn, but it's a great social scene as well (including some excellent truth-optional gossip). So, the next time you're on a trip, talk to a stranger. Ideally, the stranger should also be a member of Regents, but it's all good.

There are lots more excuses that I can come up with, but there are even more ways to get involved with Regents and the most obvious first step is into a boat. After that, you can also join or help organize a trip, write an article, go to a canal session or just head to the pub on Thursday nights. Oh and if the cold, dark, miserable winter starts to get you down, just remember that old proverb: 'No matter how long winter is, spring is sure to follow.'

NEW WEBSITE OLYMPIC NEWS

New website for Regents.

Ian Tokelove has put together a new website for Regents at www.regentscanoeclub.co.uk.

The re-designed website is a great resource for members, with a calendar of upcoming trips and events, copies of all our past newsletters, a gallery of pictures and videos, and lots of useful information about training opportunities and other club activities. The links page also lists dozens of retailers and training providers - and should be your first stop if you are looking to buy kit or book a course.

As the website is new, Ian is aware that the site may still have a few glitches, so if any members have feedback on usability, or have difficulty finding the information they want, Ian would be grateful if they could get in touch with him at web@regentscanoeclub.co.uk.

Regents Canoe Club London N1

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Latest newsletter out now

Read the latest newsletter (November 2010. PDF format - 5.5MB file size)

Canoe and kayak club in Islington, London N1

Regents is a very active and friendly adult club based in Islington, London. The club runs beginner's courses and organises regular trips to white water rivers as well as the occasional trip to gentler flat water locations.

Some members also participate in slalom and river racing events and occasionally head off to the coast in search of surf.

Club nights

The club meets on Monday evenings from 6.30pm to 8.30pm and on Thursday evenings from 7.00pm to 9.00pm on the City Road Basin of the Regents canal at Graham Street, London N1. For details of pool sessions see club calendar. The club is not usually open on Bank Holidays.

Facilities

Boats, paddles and buoyancy aids are available for use on club nights, changing rooms and hot showers are also available. The club owns a good deal of equipment which can be hired outside of club hours by club members. Members have free use of all equipment and facilities during club opening hours.

Surf trip pics
Kayaking in Scotland
The River Bark, Em Moor

Well, the Olympic Whitewater Centre at Broxbourne seems to be finished and the athletes have been training on it all winter. It looks like it should be a fantastic site, with both an Olympic course and an Intermediate course.

Paul Wathan has forwarded this link to prices for the Olympic Canoeing, so check it out if you're keen to get to see some of the action:

<http://media.ticketmaster.com/en-gb/img/sys/tournament/london2012/oly-canoe.pdf>



The site at Broxbourne.

XMAS DART #2

Sasha Jespersen gives us her take on the festivities.

The weather emails began at 9:38am on Friday morning: 'Heavy snow shower forecast for 6pm to midnight tonight. Light snow in the early hours of the morning. Then cloud Saturday, heavy rain Sunday. Only problem will be getting across the moors, this evening. That could be a problem.'

By the time we were getting ready to leave, there had been around 30 emails about the weather, but everyone still seemed keen to go, so off we went.

It was reasonably good going, not too much traffic getting out of London, and the M4 and then the M5 were moving along quite fast. But the reports of heavy snow from 9pm until 9am the following morning was playing on our minds. It was already 10pm by this stage.

We didn't have to wait long before we hit it! About 10 miles out of Exeter we hit our first flurry of snow. The car ahead of us slid across the three lanes to end up in the left lane. We slowed down, we couldn't see more than 5 metres ahead of us. Our confidence of making it to the hostel by 11pm waned. But then the snow stopped.

And then it started again. Every 5 minutes we hit a new flurry of snow. But the road was still reasonably clear, so we pushed onward, somewhat slower though.

Relying on Elaine's satnav, we climbed to the top of the moors. The steep roads were icy, and there were moments when the tyres didn't seem to be gripping. But still, we hadn't heard from anyone in a while, so we assumed they were all safe and snug in the hostel. How bad could it really be?

Mounting the final climb, the top of the moors were bright with all the snow reflecting the moonlight. We curled through the narrow lanes, driving over deeper and deeper snow. Driving out of a village, we drove past a parked car on a left

turn we should have taken. It was Ben and Caz.

We turned onto another country lane. All three of us were a bit shocked at the amount of snow, but the satnav was telling us we were 15 minutes away from the hostel, so on we went. After a brief pause for a group of ponies crowding the lane, we half drove, half slid down a hill and after a sharp turn, narrowly missing a stone wall, we stopped and waited for Ben and Caz.

Once they had caught up, we continued, up a small hill in the road. Not even halfway, the tyres stopped gripping and we spun in the ice. Pete and I climbed out to push, but as the air started to fill with smell of burning rubber, we gave up.

Elaine turned around and stopped at the bottom of the hill while we considered our options. It was here that we met our first local. He strolled down the hill we had just attempted to climb. We thought he was coming to help. But after smirking at our tale, and calling us stupid Londoner's, he continued on his way. Since we were so close to the hostel, we decided to drive part way up the hill we had come down to park the cars in an abandoned quarry and call for someone with a 4WD to pick us up.

But we didn't make it up this hill either. We dug the snow away, we lay some grit we found on another section of road, but we could only make it halfway. Elaine reversed back down the narrow lane and we found some space on the side to fit both cars.

After calling Paul and Christine pleading for a 4WD pick up, we learned that they hadn't yet arrived at the hostel either. So we resigned ourselves to a night in the cars. We had a few sleeping bags, plenty of warm clothes and lots of beer. As we opened our first beer, a land rover bounced around the corner, stopping scarily close to our cars.

This time a friendly local, on his way home from the pub, decided he would get us to the hostel one way or another. Unsuccessfully (but in hindsight perhaps fortunately) we tried to find the tow bars on Elaine and Ben's car. He

decided to just drive us, the three girls first, and then Pete and Ben. 'Just grab a few things and we'll go, quickly', he said.

Thinking there was now no one at the hostel, I grabbed my bag of car snacks and the first things I found in my bag, a towel and my sleeping bag. Also, having seen the movie 'Wolf Creek' a few years ago, where three British backpackers go missing after being picked up by a friendly local in the Australian desert, I also put my knife in my pocket. In that light, and possibly making Pete look very rude, Elaine, Pete and I went first, while Ben and Caz waited for him to come back.

The satnav said it was 4 miles to the hostel, so I started getting worried when we had been driving for a while and we still weren't there yet. His tales about driving trucks in the former Yugoslavia and parts of Africa did make me feel a bit better, and it helped that with Elaine on my lap I couldn't see out the front window. He said we were getting close, but as we pulled around a corner we slid across the road and into a deep ditch. The car was at a 45-degree angle and we couldn't get out of the passenger door because of a very close tree. So we climbed out of his door and pushed. It seemed like we would never get out, and we had no idea where we were.



Pile up!

But after some aggressive driving back and forth, the landrover pulled out of the muddy trench and we were moving again. But towards the wrong hostel. Realising our mistake, we then changed direction and headed to Bellever. Walking through the door, the lounge of the hostel was warm and full of smiling faces eager to hear our story. Without stopping to breathe, the three of us relayed the evening's events. Only when we had explained every detail did we realise that everyone had an equally amusing story of how they got there. Only 3 cars had actually made it up to the hostel car park.

Shortly after, Ben and Caz were back with us, and our local rescuer came in for a beer. In front of the fire, we heard everyone's travel tales before finally going to bed, some only as the sun was starting to come up.

With very few boats at the hostel and very little water in the Dart, Saturday was spent hiking across the tors. The blue sky and deep snow was amazing, just perfect for sledging!



Snow on the moor.

After getting wet in the snow, my one item, my towel came in handy, and I managed to fashion a skirt out of one of the spare duvet covers while my trousers and socks dried on the heater.



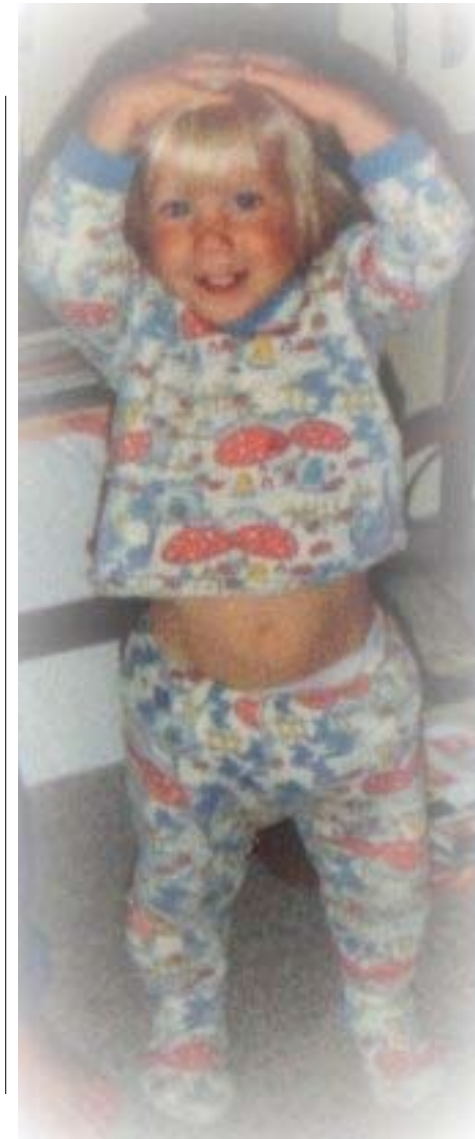
Ho ho ho. Santa Dan hands out secret santa gifts.

On Sunday, there was a nervous air over breakfast after reports of snow in London and heavy delays on the M4. I was also concerned that our car wouldn't get out. With a plan to make sure everyone got out, Elaine, Pete, Ben, Caz and I set off to find our cars with Paul and Ian and their 4wd's. In the daylight, it was easy to wonder why we had thought it was a good idea to go down the lane where we got stuck. Neither car could make it out in the still snowy conditions, so were towed by Paul and Ian.

But in a surprisingly short time we were all on the road. Getting into London was not a problem, although the roads were still snowy. Although there was no paddling, it was a fun weekend, and I'm so glad we went!

RANDOM STUFF

This edition, we have for your delectation, a photo of Ed Macey-MacLeod as a young boy. Nice 'jarmies.



THE DARK ART OF ROLLING

Sarah Gibbs on the Introduction to Rolling Course.

The Kayak roll. The most mysterious, elusive and downright frustrating part of kayaking. A dark art known only to those select few. When you can't roll a capsized can lead to a humiliating, exhausting swim, a scramble up a steep gorge and a rather inconvenient climb over a barbed wire fence into a sewage plant (I speak from personal experience here). When you can roll, you're upright in a few seconds and you have your boat, paddle and dignity intact.

Rolling isn't the be all and end all of kayaking. You can kayak for years without being able to roll (I certainly have) but if you want to stay dry and build your kayaking confidence then it's a great skill to have. Like being able to break in and out or ferry glide it's another trick up your sleeve, a useful weapon in your paddling arsenal but, like all of these things, it's also easier said than done.

Regent's run regular pool sessions, fortnightly in the winter and monthly in the summer, and a couple of times a year there's also an introduction to rolling course run over two nights. This is when your kind and generous coaches impart their greatest rolling wisdom. As a recent graduate of this course I'm here to share some of that wisdom. Naturally, the keenest among you will be only asking only one question – did I learn how to roll? Well let's not jump ahead of ourselves. First things first.

Now you're sitting comfortably I'm going to share the biggest secret of this dark art and it's something that's really helped me. There are no quick fixes. You might be lucky and learn to roll first time, but for most people it takes dedication and hard work to achieve a reliable white water roll. I'm not talking hours, I'm not talking days, I'm talking months. Ask around, ask all those people you look at jealously when they smoothly roll up after a capsized. They all had to work at it.

They all still have to work at it. So don't feel bad, don't feel ashamed, just change your expectations. If you roll up after your first pool session – brilliant – now try it again. Now try it again on the canal. Now try it again on white water. Now try it again on your offside. If you don't roll up after your first pool session – just be patient – keep trying and it will come. And by 'keep trying' I mean come to every pool session you can get to.

For the course, the coaches break down the roll into sections and use Kent Ford's DVD "The Kayak Roll" as a teaching tool in the bank based session. Personally I'd buy this video for the cool music and the excellent high quality production values alone, but its explanation of the roll is clear and simple and worth the price of admission. You can see a taster of it here: <http://vimeo.com/5208125>. Do not ask to borrow Claire's copy. Dan's is already scratched from an unauthorised loan.

The roll we're trying to master is the sweep roll. This basically combines a sweeping movement of the paddle and what's known as "the rolling knee" to bring yourself up in one fluid motion. The "rolling knee" can also be known as a hip flick or hip snap but basically it's using your core to move your boat and you to the surface. You are NOT pulling yourself up with your arms, that way lies a dislocated shoulder, a rescue helicopter and expensive surgery.

I can't even begin to teach rolling in this article. If I could I'd be publishing a book and retiring on the proceeds. To learn to roll you need to get yourself to the pool and work with someone who actually knows what they're doing, but here just a few things that the course helped me with. For me, my problem has always been overthinking the roll. Breaking it into component parts has helped. The set up is all about the paddle position on the surface of the water. Once you're upside down push the paddle to the surface, wrists cocked, hands loose. For me it's then about visualising the finish or



Set up position.



Finish position.



Joining the dots.

end position. I can't get my head around the push paddle out, use rolling knee and unwind stuff. I'm upside down in water and the moment I start thinking I'm done for. Instead I just focus on where I'm going to end up and put my paddle and body in that position. Everything in between should just be joining the dots. For those not in the know the end position is wrists cocked back, paddle sort of diagonally across the body, looking down at the blade, oh yes, and UPRIGHT.

So can I roll now? The answer is – not yet. But I'm still trying. I'm closer than I've ever been and I am not going to give up. In the meantime thank you to everyone who may have to chase my boat in the near future. I'm not swimming, merely practicing my roll without a boat.

Tips for practicing your roll

- Goggles and nose clip make life in the pool so much more pleasant. Nose clips are available in good kayak shops and online. Attach your nose clip to something so it doesn't drop to the bottom of the pool.

- Make sure that your boat is snug and you're using the foot and thigh rests.

- Try and get consistent advice and help or you'll get confused.

- Find a friend to practice with. You can spot each other and turn each other over if the roll isn't successful. You should be able to do this with a T rescue or a swimmer rescue. If you don't know how to do this just ask.

- Don't overthink it – just do it. Believe that you will come up and one day you will.

ROLL ME OVER

Dan Tattersall adds to Sarah's words of wisdom.

Every coach has their own "tool-box" of tips, tricks and exercises to teach and refine the dark art of rolling. I've listed a few of my favourites below, but this is no substitute to coming to loads of pool sessions, grabbing a coach, and getting rolling!

Orientation / Warm-Up Exercises

Before learning to roll it's important to feel confident when in the water and upside down in your boat.

1. Round the World – whilst upside down, lean forwards, to the right, backwards, and to the left with hands reaching to the sky each time. As with all the following exercises, buddy up and use a swimmer to boat rescue when you're done.

2. Doggy Paddle to Shore – helps with orientation and flexibility, as well as being calm under water.

Rolling Knee Exercises

Understanding the connection between you and your boat is the key to a good roll. It might look like the arms are doing all the work, but it's actually what goes on in the boat that matters.

1. Edge Control – hold boat on edge for as long as possible, think about points of contact. How far can you go?



Practise on the pool side.

2. Rock the boat – make waves. Now do the same upside down. Think about the rolling knee contact with the boat.

3. T-rescue – use a float, your buddy's hands, a paddle (buddy supporting it) or side of pool (think about fingertips on egg shells!). Twist the boat, don't push on the support. Head up last (blow bubbles).

Setup exercises

Before setting off you've got to make sure you have the best possible starting point. Take time with a coach / buddy to perfect this, and use these exercises to provide a focus.

1. Whilst in the setup position, tap the water surface with paddle, making a big splash. More advanced – vary the angle to learn with muscle memory the perfect blade position - tap with too much, then too little, then spot on. Learn what it feels like.

2. Get to the setup position underwater (rather than setting up on the surface before rolling over). Feel the familiar points of contact between your hands, forearms and the boat.



Practice with a friend.

Sweep Exercises

It is useful to practice the rolling sweep in exercises outside of the roll itself. The following exercises will start you off.

1. Sculling for Support – hold boat on edge and use the rolling sweep motion backwards and forwards. Think about blade angle!
2. Dummy sweep – get your buddy to guide the paddle for first quarter of roll sweep. Then mimic this motion yourself.
3. Body rotation – using a coach-assisted roll, focus on the torso twist. Concentrate on timing your rolling knee motion, it is earlier than most people expect, in time with the start of the sweep.

Exercises to address common problems

1. Punching Arm – if you're a puncher (with your back hand), tuck a small float into your armpit to keep the elbow close to your body. Alternatively try tucking a small bunch of keys or £10 note into the inside of your elbow to keep your back hand close.

2. Paddle Direction – if you're yanking down on the paddle rather than sweeping smoothly across the surface, release your grip during the setup so it's feather-light. Focus on the rolling knee. Don't forget to open your eyes and watch what that blade is doing.

3. Lifting Your Head – if your head is coming up early, it is often a symptom of another problem (e.g. are you breaking the surface with your paddle?) but blowing bubbles for as long as possible can help. Also watching the front blade or hand (focus on an imaginary watch) helps keep the head down and a focus on body rotation.

4. Timing is Everything – the back blade hitting the boat is often a sign of timing problems, as is a boat that remains passive at the start of the sweep, beginning the rotation late. Focus on engaging the rolling knee as soon as the body rotation and paddle sweep begins. Also, the paddle sweep and boat rotation need to be perfectly synchronised, starting and finishing at the same time.

If you're still not sure what's going on, get someone to bring a waterproof camera and film your attempts. Finally, don't be afraid to revisit exercises focusing on key building blocks of the roll (eg back to boat rotation). "Only perfect practice makes perfect!"

Happy Rolling!