

# REGENTS NEWS

## October 2011



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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the October edition of the Regents newsletter.

It's been a time of ups and downs for the club since I last wrote.

There have been many great, memorable times. Lots of people have done lots of courses and achieved great things. You can read about our new, qualified Level One coaches on page 03 and Ian Tokelove tells us how he almost passed his Level Two assessment on page 15. We also have a number of people who have successfully received their 1 star BCU awards and are at the start of their journeys to bigger and better things.

Leslie Shingleton had a slightly easier time organising her 2nd club trip - a fantastic surf trip to Wales and Polly Rossetti tells of how the intermediates took on the mighty Olympic course and (mostly) won.

There's some reminiscing of warmer, sunnier times on pages 06 and 13 as Dalius Tauraitis gives us the bullet points of the alternative Slovenia trip and Marc Lebuhn reminds us all of Alpine fun and adventure.

Sean Clarke gives us his own individual account of the 'Newbies' trip to Mile End Mill on page 11 and Rebecca Smith conquers the 'Weir of Death' on the river Exe on page 04.

Poor old Ian Tokelove has more luck when he runs away with Christine Dove to do their 3 star sea kayaking

assessment on page 18. He knows how to show a lady a good time.

However, the club has been through one of its most sad and traumatic times in recent years with the death of our dear friend Bobby Chen. I would imagine that everyone read Daryl Hewerdine's moving tribute to Bobby that was sent round at the time. In this newsletter, Sasha Jespersen tells us of some of her own, special memories of Bobby and we have another chance to see some photos of him doing what he loved best - photography & paddling.

Personally, it's been a bit of an unusual time for me as I found myself, post the Alps trip, well and truly knocked up! It was a double whammy at that - for those of you who don't know my sister Alix (RCC's very own Chair) & partner Jon are also expecting. I have to say that I shed a small tear as I put my kayaking kit up in the loft for the first time in several years. It won't be up there for long, but I'd be lying if I didn't anticipate a brief hiatus from my paddling career!

May the rest of you continue to fly the kayaking flag with pride and joy in my absence.

Katie x  
[editor@regentscanooclub.co.uk](mailto:editor@regentscanooclub.co.uk)

Cover image: Regents about to hit the waves on Leslie's surf weekend.

# THE NEXT LEVEL

by Amy Lilley

In 30°C heat at the start of October(!), five of us from Regents - Rachel, Sarah G, Sasha, Steffi and myself - spent two weekends doing our Level 1 coaching course.

The course was at Laburnum boat club, which for those of you that don't know, is our neighbour on the canal. It's the club with the slide you've always wanted to go down whilst paddling to the lock and back!

The Level 1 is the first in the series of coaching qualifications the BCU offers. To take part you need a 2\* and the FSRT (foundation safety and rescue training). This particular Level 1 course was female only and subsidised by the BCU as part of their initiative to get more women involved in coaching. Apparently paddlesport is too male dominated.... not that you'd notice in Regents!



October sunshine on the Regents Canal!

Our coaches were Beth and Janet and we were joined for our FSRT day by our very own Christine who was being observed running the FSRT so she can get it signed off.

Day 1 of the course covered theory, safety and risk assessments in the morning and then coaching styles in the afternoon. Beth and Janet ran some short sessions to show the different styles of coaching before debriefing and us planning our own sessions for the next day.



Have I really just broken my paddle?!

On day 2 we each ran our first session – half of the group in kayaks, half in open boats. This was interesting given there was a very noisy youth club on site at the same time who were playing a game where they turned a boat upside down, stood on top of it and duelled (like on gladiators), where they had to knock their partner off the upturned boat and into the canal! It looked fun but meant coaching without being distracted was something of a challenge!

Day 3 had us running our 2nd session (in the other type of boat) in the morning and doing the FSRT assessment

in the afternoon. This covered safety and rescue skills such as throwlines, towing, t-rescues and x-rescues, as well as rescues from open canoes. Given it really was about 30°C we couldn't possibly have picked a better day for repeatedly throwing ourselves in the canal for someone else in the group to demonstrate a rescue!

On the last day (day 4) we recapped the key points from the course so far then had some free time to cover any



More open-boating.

aspects of the course we hadn't done right first time - throwlines for most of the group.... We then did a written test and got some individual feedback from Beth and Janet on the course and what we may want to go away and work on/do next to develop our paddling and coaching.

Overall the course was excellent and a very worthwhile way to spend a few days. I'm sure all of us look forward to putting it into practice on next year's beginners courses and Regents now has five new Level 1s

# THE WEIR OF DEATH?!

by Rebecca Smith

It had been about a month since my last white water trip, and being a keen newbie I was definitely looking forward to getting out of London for a weekend of paddling on the Barle and Exe rivers – that is if we ever got out of London! I was travelling to and from Dulverton with Liza and Freya. After finally locating each other along a busy Hackney Road and making a few unintentional circles in the horrendous London traffic, we finally made it out of London about an hour and a half later!

Liza, Freya and I were the last to arrive in Dulverton and although I enjoyed the unique experience of travelling in Liza's van, it is not exactly the fastest of vehicles. We saw a few cars with kayaks on roof racks whizz past us on the way. “Yep....see you in a couple of hours...!!” says Liza as she frantically tries to speed up in her van, something that clearly was just not going to happen.

On Saturday the plan was to paddle the River Exe from Brampford Speke into Exeter. Ian T's car went to check the get-on point and the rest of us went to check a weir called Cowley Steps to see if it was runnable. Once we got there, some of the leaders called it “the weir of death” (possibly in an attempt to scare some of us newbie's?!). It was decided that it was runnable and we all drove to meet Ian T and his passengers at Brampford Speke. Then there was the shuttle run, and whilst we waited for the shuttle to return Steffi, Christine and Polly went through throw line practice with us. Little did one member of the group know how useful this would be later on in the day!

Once everyone had returned from the shuttle we finally got on the water. I thought the faff had ended and it was time to get paddling. But no, I reckon less than about 200m from the get on point we turned a corner and there was an entire cattle of cows crossing the river – incredibly slowly – and there were hundreds of them!



Mooooo!!

I was in a group with Gemma, Freya and Jam and we looked on as our brave leaders Ian T and Liza decided to try and take on the entire group. Something that I found out about Liza during the long journey to Dulverton is that she has a qualification in cattle farming....maybe this would help her in this situation? I still think she must have felt a little bit vulnerable sitting in her bright green kayak amongst hundreds of cows. As for Ian T's tactic, I was not so sure he should have got out of his boat and start waving his RED paddle at a bull. Bull + red = Dangerous! But, with their combined efforts, Liza and Ian T reigned supreme as they managed to clear the way, probably terrifying innocent cows in the process. Paul,

one of the leaders from the group behind us paddled up to ask what was taking us so long. We explained about the cows, but it did not look anywhere near as bad as when we first arrived because Devon's answer to the Lion King had almost cleared by the time he got there. I will just say that the other groups will never understand....

We did quite a lot of flat paddling which was broken down by practicing breaking in and out of eddies when the opportunities arose, and of course shooting down several weirs! Eventually we got to the large stepped weir called Cowley Steps (or the “weir of death”) that we had inspected earlier in the day.

Liza and Ian T went to have another look to decide whether we should run it left or right or straight down the



Cowley Steps (or the weir of death!)

middle. Our group decided to go left and we all managed to get down it successfully. We then sat at the bottom and watched the other groups come down. They did a mixture of going either left or straight down the middle. Now remember how I said that the throw line practice was useful for one person in particular? Well that person was Bethan, but she was totally awesome! Bethan took the

middle line. Once she came off the first step onto the second step her boat got turned so she ended up coming down the second step onto the third step sideways and she ended up capsizing. She calmly swam to get herself onto a ledge of rock which separated the middle from the left side of the weir. By this time her boat was caught in the tow back of the second step in the weir and it clearly was not budging. Bethan was thrown a throw line (which she caught really well) and was then told to carefully go back into the water to try and clip the carabiner onto the boat so that Ian T and Liza could pull the boat free. Bethan did exactly this, so calmly and collectively then got back up onto the ledge as her boat was pulled free – so much for the “weir of death!” Bethan was then thrown a throw line where she was pulled to safety. Well done Bethan!

We then continued on our river journey. I think we did one more weir before some of us got off the water. We paddled a bit more and a few more got off the water to join the others for some retail therapy in a kayak shop in Exeter. The remaining few carried on to run the final last weir before the River Exe becomes tidal. I joined that group and once we all got down safely Ian T asked if I wanted to try and run it backwards. Let's just say I did not need much persuading! I liked the way this weir just forcefully spat you out at the bottom – and I didn't capsize! I was then followed by Fritha and Ian T for more backwards weir action. As the river became tidal here we then portaged over to the canal back to Haven Quay in Exeter.

After various shuttles, rearranging of boats and of passengers we all headed back to Dulverton, except for one person. Unfortunately Ian T ended up doing a misguided shuttle run and ended up going back to Exeter....alone. But if you look on the positive side of the situation at least he did not have to wait for his food when he got back to Dulverton....

The next day after a lot of discussion about water levels it was decided that we were going to paddle the River Barle from Dulverton to Exebridge.

Due to the lack of rain over the weeks prior to our trip the water levels were quite low. However Polly said “This is the highest I have ever seen it”. I wasn't sure if this was sarcasm at first, as although I have not been doing this



Marsh Bridge, Dulverton

paddling business for very long at all, even I could see the water level was fairly low. But later Steffi pointed out a part on the river where on one previous trip the group had to get out and drag their boats across the rocks as the water was so low. I was then told by somebody that this was the Regent's way!

During our river journey along the Barle we practiced more white water skills and tried surfing in some waves as well as running some more weirs. Once I got off the water and into the car park I was welcomed by one of Greg's chocolate brownies. They were absolutely delicious and I was very happy and content munching away. Thank you Greg, I am sure everyone enjoyed them!

I think I speak for most of us on the trip when I say it was a very tiring yet satisfying and enjoyable weekend.

Since joining RCC and managing to get myself onto a couple of trips I realise that all club trips are unique experiences that create new stories to tell. However, I am also learning that sometimes they can be associated with a fair bit of faff too! Thanks to Ian T for organising the trip and to the leaders who provided a safe and fun environment for us to learn and build on our white water skills.

I will now leave you with this final (and slightly random) thought. Have any of you ever tried a Dr Pepper drink? If so what does it actually taste like? This was a hot topic of conversation in Liza's van on the way to Dulverton on Friday night. Freya, who works for Dr Pepper told us that some say it tastes like cherries, some say marshmallows, others say almonds, and I say “could these flavours actually be any more different?” Having never tried Dr Pepper before, Liza and I were very curious to know what this drink actually tasted of. Therefore it was necessary to stop at a petrol station to buy a can of this controversial drink. I thought it tasted of cherries and Liza thought marshmallows. So members of RCC, what do you think??!!



# THE OTHER REGENTS' SLOVENIA TRIP!

by Dalius Tauraitis

## Day 0.

All very excited. Time to go. Airport. All 6 arrived. 4 kayak. 2 do not kayak. Big boats. Check-in successful. All boats fit. Everybody very happy. Exciting week ahead.

Easyjet. All eat and sleep. Short flight. Already above Slovenia. Very green. Big mountains. Snow on top. All awake. Successful landing. All very happy.

Two cars. Boats on top. All go. One car lost. Big mountain. Slow driving. One car in Bovec. Second car lost. First car big dinner. Tasty meat. Very good dinner. Second car in Bovec. Perfect house. Big garden. Dishwasher. Soft beds. All very happy. Second car hungry.

Lots of beer. Good company. Beautiful night. Successful arrival. All very happy.

## Day 1.

All very excited. Paddling today. Very hot. Sun. No Clouds. Long packing. Still packing. One still packing. Still packing. Finally all packed. Boats on car. Go. Big river. Blue water. Really really blue water. Very cold. +7C. A bit scary. Fast water. All in boats. Go. No longer scary. Lots of fun. Easy water. Good kayak. Two fun rapids. 1 hour all finished. Too short. Need more action.

Ladies bring food. Very good food. Very tasty. Love our ladies.

Another river. Very small. Very fast. Very scary narrow rapid. Scouting. Water still beautiful. All full of energy. No longer scary. Perfect run. Very dynamic. All smiling. Great day. Good kayaking. No loss of human life. Big dinner. Lots of beer. All very happy.

## Day 2.

All very excited. Long breakfast. Long packing. One still packing. Boats on car. All go. Ladies also. Camera woman. Love our ladies.

Beautiful gorge. Sun full on. Water cold. Slides and drops into water. Long stretch of river. Flat water. Bushes around.

Finally long exciting rapid. Lots of boulders. Nice small drops. Beautiful kayaking. Not scary. Action pictures. Action movies. Good ladies. Lunch all together. All continue.

Big gorge. Scouting. Long scouting. Fast water. Very fast. Very narrow. Big stones. Very scary but very beautiful. Two go. All perfect. Happy screams. Two more go. All perfect. Happy screams. Very beautiful. Ladies take pictures. Very good pictures. Love our ladies.

River goes on. Relaxed paddling. Playing around. Very easy. Could be harder. Yesterday's section. All relaxed. Very easy. Happy faces.

Amazing day. Incredible kayaking. No loss of human life. Big dinner. Lots of beer. All very happy.

## Day 3.

Same as always. All still excited. Still long packing. Hot sun. New river section. Flat initially. Some playspots. Boat too big. Need playboat. Next time.

Boulder garden. Beautiful. Huge rocks. Wide river. Strong water. Play like at home. Smooth run. All feel great. Deserve a break. Slalom section ahead. All very excited.

Long scouting. Amazing river. Blue water. Not to scary. Looks do-able. Eager to run. One stays on shore. Beautiful pictures from bridge.

Smooth easy drops. All good. River gets scary. Looked easier. More scary. Now really scary. Huge drops. Pleased I've got a big boat...

...Small problem... Big problem... Panic... Finally all OK. Thinking. Hard work. 3 hours. Success. All sweating. Smiles. Relax. All satisfied. Good experience. Full spectacular day. All exhausted. No loss of human life. Big dinner. Lots of beer. All very happy.

## Day 4.

2 more will arrive today. Non of them kayak. One can't walk. Will be fun.

3 go paddling. Plan - whole river in one day. Easy paddling. All river known. Beautiful mountains. Legs outside kayaks. Relax full on. Very nice day. Full day experience.

## Day 5-7

See above. All survived.

## Day 8.

Depart. EasyJet. Home. Great time. Beautiful memories. Beautiful pictures. All very happy. Work tomorrow. Kill me now.

# ANYONE FOR (A CREAM) TEA? DUTY ROTA

by Jon Winder

## Nutritional Advice:

With the Barle and Exe trip booked for early October and a flood of Dart trips not far over the horizon, I thought it might be useful to offer a short guide to Devonshire cream tea, surely the most important part of any weekend in the West Country and essential in a balanced kayaking nutrition regime.

As an aside, allegedly the cream tea was invented by the monks of the Benedictine Abbey in Tavistock. When the abbey was being rebuilt after the marauding Vikings trashed it, the monks fed the workers with bread, clotted cream and strawberry preserves. Apparently they enjoyed it as much as a tired Regent's paddler and it's been a hit ever since.

If you're confused about what order the various components should be assembled, don't worry you're not alone. The Guardian, Evening Standard, BBC Cornwall and even the New York Times have all investigated this troubling dilemma recently and added nothing useful to the debate. The people of Cornwall, as well as the Ritz in London, claim that it should be jam and then cream, while traditionalists in Devon believe that it should be cream and then jam.

A recent poll of Regents members found that they didn't give a stuff, as long as there was lots of everything.

If you're not booked onto a trip to Devon, fear not, you can order your cream tea supplies from [www.devoncreamtea.org.uk](http://www.devoncreamtea.org.uk) (order before 3pm for guaranteed next day delivery!).



Yummy!

Ralph Wilson	Mon 7th Nov 2011
Jon Winder	Thurs 10th Nov 2011
Ev Abbott	Mon 14th Nov 2011
Thomas Gardiner	Thur 17th Nov 2011
Imogen Armstrong	Mon 21st Nov 2011
Beata Switek	Thur 24th Nov 2011
John Ballard	Mon 28th Nov 2011
Thomas Beaumont	Thur 1st Dec 2011
Joanna Billings	Mon 5th Dec 2011
David Browne	Mon 12th Dec 2011
Alix Cordell	Thur 15th Dec 2011
Katie Cordell	Mon 19th Dec 2011
Michael Cross	Thur 22nd Dec 2011
Caroline Day	Thur 5th Jan 2012
Greg Dinner	Mon 9th Jan 2012
Annie Dinner	Thur 12th Jan 2012
Anne-Marie Donovan	Mon 16th Jan 2012
Christine Dove	Thur 19th Jan 2012
Megan Dowsett	Mon 23rd Jan 2012
Sarah Ford	Thur 26th Jan 2012
Dave Freestone	Mon 30th Jan 2012

# 'THE BOBBY'

by Sasha Jespersen

A lot has been said about Bobby in the last few weeks. We've all seen his passion and professionalism as a photographer. During the summer, Bobby came up to Lee Valley just to take photos of Marc and I as we made fools of ourselves in playboats. After the arrival of Bartik, he quickly abandoned us to take some action shots of someone who knew what they were doing. But not until he had laughed with us, persuaded us to try out new moves and chatted with us as we clung to the side exhausted.



Bobby with his beloved camera.

Much has been said of Bobby's kindness and willingness to be there for friends. When Pete and I finally got legally married at 3pm on a Tuesday afternoon, Bobby didn't hesitate to organise his day so he could be a witness, even though it meant he wasn't allowed take photos because the registrar demanded his full attention.

But not that much has been said about the kayaking move that Bobby invented. I'm not talking about the many tricks he would do with Daryl on the canal. This move, now aptly known as 'the Bobby' was purely for moving water, and primarily, moving water on fake courses.

The move was nailed on the Legacy course in early September. It involved sitting in one of the fast recirculating eddies, and while mid-sentence with a fellow paddler, capsizing, then rolling back up and finishing the sentence. On this particular legacy trip, Bobby got this move down to a fine art, usually in the eddy on river left after the main drop.



Is he gearing up to 'do a Bobby'?

Bobby was so proud of this move, that when a group of us were watching footage from this weekend at the Prince of Wales a week or so later, he excitedly got us all to watch closely, not at his skilful side surf across the big drop, or his superb breakout, but the part where the water was swirling his boat around Marc's and where, mid-sentence, he simply fell in. Of course he was back up in an instant, laughing so hard he went straight back in.

On my most recent paddle on the Legacy course, I put in quite a few 'Bobby's', but I couldn't pull it off to the standard that Bobby could.



Bobby looking forward to a good paddle.

Note from Ed:

I'm sure I speak for the whole club when I say thanks Bobby, for lots of great times. You were a dear friend to many and you will be sorely missed.

Bobby had been taking photos for a catalogue of our club boats. He might have asked you to pose for him! Marco Vittur is going to help finish the collection, so watch out for the launch of the catalogue in coming months.

# SURF'S UP!

by Leslie Shingleton

Well, you'll never believe it, but we had sun in the Gower, waves, fabulous accommodation on the beach, plus AA relay x 2 (and I don't mean the alcoholics anonymous type!), plus my own car break down.

Some questions for the next pub quiz : who had the most expensive break down leaving the Gower? Was it:

- Simon with his oil sump debunked?
- Sean with a radiator leak?
- Lesley with her power steering pipe leak?

Answers on a post card! I would say there is a prize, but I'm afraid all donations go to the saddened drivers!!!

However, we weren't going to let these minor issues jinx this trip. Those of you who read my last article on a newbie organising a trip will be fully aware that we were going to have fun this time, whatever happened!

And what a trip this was - a beautiful setting on the Gower, accommodation on the beach, with a pub a stone's throw away, morning toe dips in the ocean, beautiful country-side and lots of fresh air, plus waves to satisfy the most die-hard surfer... Apologies to those who tried to book on this trip when it was full, and I hope I don't cause too much jealousy when I say that this was a fantastic Regent's trip, not least because we were mourning

the death of a great friend and playing hard just like Bobby would have wanted us to, but it was also a time to learn about kayaking on the great waves of the Gower.



Heading down the beach.

30 of us in total descended onto south Wales, staying at Port Eynon youth hostel, which was on the beach, with room for us all, plus a kitchen to cook apple crumble with green and black ice-cream and custard, and a table to play cards on (the exact rules for 'shit-head' were hotly debated till 2.00am and I still have no idea what the final rules are except that 10 kills the pack!!). A slight downer were the beach flies who tried to sneak into the kitchen if someone wasn't keeping a check on them. A post-requisite to a hard night's card playing had to be

Greg's infamous omelettes for breakfast – yummy - everyone wants Greg on their trip for the delicious breakfast he so kindly makes for everyone except himself! Simon and I had to leg it off to Tesco for more eggs, cheese and ham, plus enough porridge and bananas to satisfy the keenest paddlers (NOTE - if you are organising a trip with Christine or Tom on it, then make sure you have enough porridge oats and bananas or you might find yourself upside down for longer than anticipated!). As trip organiser, I learnt I had to be careful about what food I did provide, as Daryl claimed his dislike of marmite far out-stripped Simon's fear of bananas....!!!

The next day we were fresh and revitalised and we went to Llangareth beach to compete for space with the boarded surfers types. I think we can honestly say that we out numbered them, and kicked and few out of the way...by accident of course!!! Luckily it was a large beach, so not too many boarders were taken out by our large kayaks.



Well, surfing is a completely new language to learn for the river kayakers, and a good website to go to is [magicseweed.com](http://magicseweed.com). It will tell you best surf and height of waves, how to read the swell and look out for dumpy waves and the clean and green in-betweens. Obviously I have no idea what any of this means, but the grown-ups discussed all of this a lot so best to learn the lingo! A good book helps both on and off shore!



Tom swots up!

Preparation seemed to be the name of the game and a key thing to remember to bring is KY jelly! This may seem a little strange, but that sand and salt around the rims of your neck and wrists will make you look like you have had an affair with a jelly fish so slap plenty on, plus sun tan lotion. I know Wales is pretty unlikely to have sun, but the you would be amazed at how red you get even if raining and cloudy! If your neck does end up looking like it's been garrotted, Lou's top tip is to use Healing neck gel.

Surfing is definitely a fit persons sport. You can expect to be dragging and paddling your boat back out after surfing a wave on a regular basis. The trick is to bring a sling and karabiner to drag your boat down the beach (which is pretty big) and back again. As your boat is also spending so much time getting drenched, a sponge is also a top tip from Christine, as it saves all that raffling with emptying the boat.

After hard day surfing, fun can also be had with a bit of a wild swimming in the sea, or if it floats your boat remember to bring a boogie board - Dan sitting astride the Hello Kitty boogie board was a feast for the eyes to behold! Duncan and Imogen were the envy of the entire club, with their Spiderman board and Duncan continued the theme with his matching Spiderman towel!



Very manly, Dan.

Now sleeping arrangements are a crucial factor to one's energy levels and a good night's sleep can make all the difference. James can testify to this; choosing bed partners poorly, he ended up sleeping on the couch, to Greg's shock first thing in the morning! If you don't get enough sleep, you can just snooze on the job as Simon did!!

Finally remember that sand gets everywhere when you're surfing, so be prepared to be emptying sand out of your clothes, car and kayaks for weeks to come. If you have hired a regents kayak, you have to make sure that it is pristine and sand free – you can give it a good inspection before leaving the beach if you're that keen!!



I hope everyone had as much fun as I did surfing on the Gower. I'm looking forward to organising trip number 3 which is the Wye and Usk!!!

# EPISODE V: THE NEWBIES STRIKE BACK

by Sean Clarke

A long time ago in a river far, far away...

It is a dark time for the Newbies. Although the Howls of Laughter from more experienced paddlers have been destroyed, Imperial club members have driven the rebel Newbies from their hidden base and pursued them across the wilderness.

Evading the dreaded Imperial Clubfleet, a group of freedom fighters led by Mark "Paddlewalker" Rowe has established a new secret base in the remote village of Llangollen.

The evil Lord Darth Taylor, obsessed with finding "not-so" young Paddlewalker, has dispatched several remote leaders into the far reaches of Wales. We join the rebel Newbies as they set up their base at the Wern Isaf Farm...

Six land based vehicles with wheels (now becoming unknown methods of transport other than to carry paddle equipment) arrive at the Wern Isaf Farm to find a large open space to set up camp. Yoda and R2D2 set up the main communications tower and satellite dish to which all other Newbies are drawn when they arrive.

Yoda and R2D2 leave to reconnoitre the surrounding fields and find the local sources of sustenance. Next to arrive are Reu-Ben Solo, Shawbacca and Princess Geia. They manage to get a large tent and mini-hot food supply set up. They are soon joined by Brendo Calrissian, Wedge Dishers, C3PO,

Commander Ingham and Obi Jo Kanobi. Fearless Mark "Paddlewalker" Rowe arrives to bolster the confidence of the rebel Newbies.

Also close at hand are the Imperial Clubfleet led by Darth Taylor - Benbo Fett, Emperor Toketine and Sith Gibbs. Their arrival brings with them a torrential downpour during which there are still tents being set up - some more successfully than others. Emperor Toketine having had much experience with impending doom (rain, hills and camping) sets up camp away from the rebels and Clubfleet. It wasn't until morning that the Rebels and Clubfleet realised that being up on a hill rather than in the ditch was probably the better option - we now know for next time.

Day One of the paddling battle commenced well. All rebel Newbies made it down to Mile End Mill (MEM) in one piece and loved the equipment shop onsite - some wallets suffering more than others. The bacon and sausage sandwiches served to equip the Newbies well for the first day. The river level was at 6! Lots of water to paddle!

Paddling commenced with the Imperial Clubfleet trying to divide and conquer the Newbies by splitting them up. They failed to dampen the spirits of the Newbies.... this dampening occurred naturally as we each ended up taking a swim. The two groups started above the main get on point and honed our ferry-gliding and break ins/outs. Emperor Toketine even made the Newbies all ferryglide with our eyes shut. Needless to say there were several whoops, screams and muffled tears until we realised that this was actually a really great way to get to learn how to feel the water under the boat.

Mark "Paddlewalker" Rowe, under the glaring eye of Darth Taylor and Benbo Fett, took some of us Newbies up onto the banks to show us the do's and don'ts of throw lines. There is no nice way of putting it so... we all need more practice! Either practice in throwing in a straight line, throwing over a distance or not throwing the bag directly at someone's head. In case you're wondering, Benbo Fett was the one attempting to take down Shawbacca - but failed miserably. Score: 1 to Rebels: 0 to Imperial Clubfleet

For the most part, C3PO improved drastically in preparing for the inevitable. C3PO had (until this trip) always grabbed the emergency cord before she tipped over i.e. grabbed her nose and had time to take a nice deep breath and even at times let out a yelp or two. C3PO managed to overcome this and just let out a yelp before going over. A marked improvement and if you saw her in a recent pool session... you'd never believe she was the same person!

The stopper in the middle of MEM was boasted as a nasty, dangerous and awful place to be. Us Newbies saw this as vicious Clubfleet propaganda and decided to paddle it anyway. C3PO, Shawbacca, Commander Ingham, Yoda, R2D2, Princess Geia and Obi Jo Kanobi were defeated at least once each by the stopper. Nasty piece of work by the Clubfleet. Score: 1 to Rebels: 1 to Imperial Clubfleet.

As usual Reu-Ben Solo and Brendo Calrissian didn't swim on day one. They showed that us Newbies (collectively anyway) do possess the paddling prowess to stay upright - when required.

And thus ended day one of the Rebels and Clubfleet's incursions at MEM. All agreed to be friends and socialise together that night. We retired to the pub overlooking Town Falls and thought wistfully of the time that we would be able to paddle Town Falls.... it wasn't to be the next day!

The BBQ was very successful and credit goes to Mark "Paddlewalker" Rowe and Benbo Fett for getting the BBQs lit after the initial panic of no lighters, matches or kindling!

Day two commenced with some very wet gear - lesson learnt... if it looks like it's going to rain and you're camping.... it probably will. Some items were dry but not much. Drying rooms are a much nicer option - find one if there's one available!

All rebel Newbies made it back out on the water for day two. Same groups as the day before but we swapped Imperial Clubfleet protagonists. A successful day was had by all. To top it off we were given the opportunity to free swim the last feature - AWESOME fun! Do it if you get the chance (and of course if it's safe to do so). Several of the rebel Newbies relished in surfing the waves of the last feature. It was great fun and probably started the spark of play boating in the minds of a few of us. Though that's still a long way off.

Memorable moments from the trip:  
 C3PO and Obi Jo Kanobi joining the Newbie Rebels group  
 Darth Taylor leaving Benbo Fett in the stopper  
 Benbo Fett's face as he was in the stopper  
 Reu-Ben Solo FINALLY taking a swim  
 Yoda barbecuing his shoes (no joke)  
 Thanks again to Sith Gibbs, Benbo Fett, Emperor Toketine, Darth Taylor and of course Mark "Paddlewalker" Rowe for being great coaches and leaders.

And in case you were wondering:  
 Rebel Newbies  
 Mark = Mark "Paddlewalker" Rowe  
 Reuben = Reu-Ben Solo  
 Jo = Obi Jo Kanobi  
 Brendan = Brendo Calrissian  
 Gemma = Princess Geia  
 Imogen = R2D2  
 Duncan = Yoda  
 Neil = Wedge Dishers  
 Sean = Shawbacca  
 Clarissa = C3PO  
 Claire = Commander Ingham

Imperial Clubfleet  
 Ben = Benbo Fett  
 Claire = Darth Taylor  
 Ian = Emperor Toketine  
 Sarah = Sith Gibbs

## HELLO BABY!

Hearty congratulations to Agne and Dalius on the birth of their beautiful baby boy, Roland. What a cutey!! We expect to see him bank-side very soon.....



## STARS IN THEIR EYES

Congratulations to Ben Smith, Clarissa Horilczenko and Fred Lehmann who all took and passed their BCU 1 Star assessment in early September this year on the canal.

The BCU star tests are recognition of the paddlers' personal paddling skills, and are an opportunity to get individual feedback and development. The club can assess BCU 1, 2 and 3 Star.

More star tests are being run along with training sessions if you are interested please look at the club calendar or email [safety@regentscanoecub.co.uk](mailto:safety@regentscanoecub.co.uk).

Note from Ed:

I'm aware that some other people have recently taken/ passed their 2\* and 3\*, but that information was not available to me at the time of going to print. Whoever you are, you will be given due congratulations in the next newsletter!!



# ALPS TRIP 2011

by Marc Lebuhn

We at Regents are a sociable bunch. We like to talk, we enjoy a drink together in the pub, and will take any excuse to have a good time with our fellow paddlers. But what really brings us together are the trips; spending time in remote places in search of white water (and settling for a nice tea shop if there isn't any). We do trips to Devon, to Wales, to Scotland, more recently to Lee Valley, but if there is one trip that towers above all the rest, it is our annual pilgrimage to the Alps.

This year was no exception, and so at the end of June a staggering 44 of us set off on our journey. Despite it being a very long drive, time passed quickly, helped a great deal by Jon Winder kindly preparing a tube quiz for us, with promises of a grand prize for whoever completed it and had a good story about public transport. I forget who won, or what the prize was, but it wasn't our car so clearly it was all fixed.



Hmmm. How are we going to get home now that Liza has killed our (new) car?!

To break up the journey a bit, we stopped overnight before crossing into the Alps, and being paddlers we of course picked somewhere we could indulge in our hobby. The French Alps Recreational Team had organised accommodation in Yurts for us, which prompted a number of us to book into a lovely and rather grand hotel just down the road for a few Euros more. As hardy paddlers, we are of course not averse to roughing it, but with boats, paddles, all the gear and luggage for a whole week, we simply did not have room for sleeping bags. Upon arrival, we did our very best to reinforce national stereotypes, playing a nice game of rounders in the rain (until the ball got stuck in a tree), and proceeding to drink the hotel dry of beer at dinner.

The next morning we drove across the river to the Isle de la Serre slalom site, which is a grand example of what an artificial site can be like. Unlike the concrete ditch that is Nene, here they have made a real effort to make it seem more natural. Aside from being nice to look at, it is also fun to paddle, and makes a perfect warm up, especially for those among us who had not experienced the power and speed of Alpine rivers before. Once we had enough we set off again to our final destination and home for the week - Briançon.

Alas, as a resident of the bottom house, I was not privy to life in the posh accommodation, so cannot say what went on up there. Luckily, the bottom house was the way cooler and fun house, not to mention the epicentre of Sandwichgate, an epic battle of wills that split our otherwise harmonious group into two camps of bitter rivals. It did have a happy ending, however; the two main parties did later make up and marry.

The accommodation, the politics, fun and games at the BBQ, endless gossip, good food, cheap wine and lots of cheese; while they all make the trip that much more enjoyable, the reason we come here in the first place is to



Are these the sorts of looks you can expect during 'Sandwichgate'?

paddle. Not that there is anything wrong with paddling in the UK, but most people do agree that floating down a raging torrent of clear, fresh glacial meltwater in blazing sunshine is simply - nicer than trudging through a bog to a tiny, remote river in Wales, hoping that the persistent drizzle was enough like proper rain to not have to scrape all the way down the river.



Ian cooks up a storm.

For me, this was my second visit to this part of the Alps, and my first taste the previous year did not prepare me for what I encountered this time in the slightest. The organisers once again split us into several groups, both

to ensure that everyone gets to paddle something suitable for them, but also to avoid trying to throw 44 people down the same river, thus reducing the faff to a level that lets us get on the water before night falls. When I first visited the Alps, I was still too much of a beginner to be allowed onto the harder rivers, only getting brief glimpses of what they might be like on the middle Clarée, and blasting down the Briançon Town Gorge. This time, I got to see what it is that makes paddlers from far and wide return here year after year.



I think the aim is to keep the egg whole, Lucy!

Much like back home, the character of many rivers changes completely over their course, with different sections offering completely different experiences. This meant that more often than not, all the groups would head to the same general area, and be paddling the same river, but different parts of it. One notable exception to this was when a small group of extreme paddlers crossed over into Italy to paddle the Germanasca, to return with stories of scary stoppers, gnarly rapids and heroic rolls.

I shall not get into too much detail about the rivers themselves, as literally entire books have been written about them, and much better than I could hope to here. Besides which, ask any paddler at Regents about any of them, and you will unleash a torrent of tales with



Christine making it all look so simple (as usual!)

stoppers and drops growing larger with each retelling, epics that become ever more epic as time moves on and levels that always seem to have been higher the year before you paddled it.

Having read the books, and heard the stories many times over meant that I faced each new day with a great deal of trepidation, which invariably turned first to excitement, then elation the further down the river we paddled. I would be hard pushed to pick a favourite for the week, each river has its own character; how do you compare the steep, technical boulder gardens of the lower Guisane to the raging torrents and enormous stoppers that make the Ubaye racecourse? The former certainly left more of a mark (or more precisely a dent) on my boat, but they are completely different experiences.

What I do notice now, sitting at home writing this months after returning from the trip is that it is difficult to remember the all the times when everything went smoothly, yet remarkably easy to recall every detail of when it did not. Carnage, once it has happened and everyone is safe and sound back on dry land is simply too

much fun to not endlessly retell and repeat to each other later on, and with so many paddlers we had plenty of it. Another rule of carnage is that it becomes infinitely funnier when it happens to someone it doesn't happen to often, doubly so if it happens somewhere it really shouldn't have.



Claire looking equally effortless.

By way of example, there was once again much carnage on the Upper Guil. This is hardly surprising, as it is a challenging section of river that can easily catch out even seasoned paddlers, and a big step up for many who had never encountered anything like it in their paddling careers to date. There is no shame in a swim under these circumstances, and it elicits feelings of admiration for giving it a go, along with plenty of sympathy. However, if one of said seasoned paddlers has an unplanned upside down moment that results in him drifting down the Durance some distance away from his boat and paddle (and another boat that was being rescued at the time), we all find it highly amusing, even if hardly any of us witnessed the event first hand.

Whether we were active participants in the carnage, onlookers or rescuers, or having a good day and styling it down the river, I don't think one among us can claim



Boat rescue.

they had anything but a fantastic week. I would like to once again thank the F.A.R.T. for all their hard work in making it happen, and my leaders and fellow paddlers for some great times on the river.

See you all out there again next year!

## THE NEXT, NEXT LEVEL....

How to take, and fail, a Level 2 Coaching Assessment, by Ian Tokelove

It's 8.30am and the coffee that kick-started my brain is now hammering on my bladder. I'm driving on the M4, away from London and towards the village of Pangbourne, upriver on the Thames. I want to be on time for my L2 assessment, but I really need a piss.

In and out of Reading Services and back on the road, I get to the assessment ten minutes late. I don't mind and neither do the assessors, but it turns out they've already divvied out the boats we'll be teaching with – which means I no longer get a choice of boats. I have to demonstrate I can coach in both open boats and kayaks. I wanted to do my first session with the open boats as I'm not so good at them, and I wanted to make the most of the few coaching skills I have. Now I have to take the open boats out in the afternoon, coaching as part of a 'journey' down the river.

Before we head to the river we face a multiple choice questionnaire. The first four questions flummox me – how should I know what a junior slalom boat is called? – but thankfully I start to recognise some answers. I need 80%. Somehow I manage that, but I reckon I had to guess on every fifth answer.

A chaotic hour follows as a wide range of students arrive for us to test our coaching skills on. Others at the assessment, who live locally, have brought tame friends or kids. I'm given charge of a motley assortment of lads in their 20s, but that's okay, they're keen and friendly.

We do a kayak session, an hour and a quarter on the water, during which I have to demonstrate twenty minutes of 'progressive coaching'. This goes well and the assessor ticks off a long list of boxes on his checklist.

We break for lunch, and a bit of verbal questioning ('what kit checks would you do before a coaching session?'). We all agree it's been hard so far, with several of my fellow coaches already worrying about failure.

After lunch I find that my group of five students has just been given to somebody else, a guy who failed his open boating bit on a previous course and needs to retake. I get three of my students back, but have to relinquish two. Stupidly I don't think to check I have students of similar ability, and I end up with two who've just done their two star award and one who has never been in an open boat before.

You're supposed to have designed a lesson plan for these sessions, but as I had no idea of the age, skill or fitness of my students my lesson plan was basically 'wing it'. I get the students into the open boats, after they (and I) have tried to identify the front end of a single person open boat. I start with some on-the-spot coaching but the assessor wants me to get moving (she's assessing two groups, and the other group has already set off). So off we go. I provide plenty of tips and training, and everyone learns and improves, but I have a feeling I'm not ticking as many boxes as I should be.

I finish the session with a quick game and the students head off happy. The assessors now want to test our paddling skills – so it's back into the open boats. We're

paired up and told to face the stern of the boat. We now have to paddle backwards, but the guy at the front has to steer (whilst looking over their shoulder). I've never done this before, and judging by the efforts of those around me, neither has anyone else. At least I do better than my co-paddler, who steers us into a fishing line.

The assessors aren't impressed with our open boat skills and it shows. We practice a bit more, and the assessors get a bit happier. Then we do some rescue stuff.



Ian's nemesis.

The first rescue scenario presents the three students on the bank with three unconscious, 'head down' victims in the Thames, one of which is me, wishing I'd worn a drysuit. The rescuers seal launch two open boats and get our heads out of the water, but then they find they can't

do anything with us. The only real option they probably had was to jump in and do a swim rescue – although one of the assessors suggests they could have asked a passing open boat (two adults, two young children) to assist. One of my fellow coaches wisely points out that this could have endangered others, but the assessor chooses not to reply.

We get ourselves showered and finish writing up the day's sessions, whilst the assessors spend an hour or so discussing our performances. The waiting begins. Everyone is nervous.

After another half hour or so I am called up, and face two of our assessors. They go through everything I have done – "this was good, this was fine, this was good, etc" but the very fact that they are listing every element tells me that not everything was good or fine. We get to the open boating, the end of the list – and they're sorry to tell me that I've failed this section. I didn't demonstrate twenty minutes of 'progressive coaching', I demonstrated a stroke incorrectly and I got a stroke name slightly wrong. Unfortunately, I have to agree, I didn't do a good session and I should have done better.

The good news is that I only have to retake that one, failed session, back in the bloody open boats. So I now have to spend more money on another three star course to get my skills up to scratch, and I have to spend more time in boats which I have no real interest in. But that's the way the British Canoe Union works – you have to learn to coach in open boats as well as kayaks. So if you see someone going backwards on the canal in an open boat, with a scowl on their face, say hello, cos it's probably me.

I received a subsidy of £32 from the club towards the cost of his Level Two coaching assessment. For more information on club subsidies see <http://www.regentscanoeclub.co.uk/training.html>

# THE OLYMPIC FLAME

by Polly Rossetti

"I'd really like a go on the Olympic course" I said to Mike casually, as we stood on the bank watching smug adolescent playboaters make their decent of the meaty class IV drops. Knowing that I had very little prospect of ever even taking the LV Olympic test, let alone passing it, I felt safe in the knowledge that I would never have to follow through on this rash proclamation.

Lesson one – never say anything you're not sure you really mean to The Cross and expect to get away with it. It was barely a week later when Mike informed me that my wish had been granted – exclusive use of the Olympic course had been arranged so that intermediates like me could find out what it was like to get trashed in water beyond the level of our ability and competence to paddle. Splendid.

As the big day approached, Mike's helpful summary of the course "big drops, powerful holes and surging eddies... not for the faint hearted" did nothing to quell my increasing levels of anxiety. As it happens, I am decidedly 'faint hearted' and have often been undone on the river as much by a lack of courage as a lack of ability. I was beginning to wonder what I had signed up for, and more importantly, why.

Saturday 15th October finally arrived, and for most of us destined to take on the Olympic course it started with a nice gentle warm up on the legacy (well, alright, it was absolute carnage out there) followed by a spot of alfresco lunch on the terrace overlooking the course. The

beautiful sunny day seeped into a glorious sunset, and then as darkness fell so developed a considerable nip in the air. “It’s going to be really cold later” remarked Claire Lancaster with a grin.

With a warming tea in hand Matthew, Sarah and I embarked on a circumnavigation of the course. We weren’t due on the water until 8 pm by which time the only light came from the floodlights and with all the rafts gone and only a handful of Regenters remaining, the course took on a decidedly eerie quality. In the murky half light the depths looked darker, the crashing waves whiter, and the drops steeper. Lesson two – everything looks scarier in the dark. Especially grade 4 rapids.



The author in happier, brighter, warmer times.

Once all 17 or so brave/idiotic paddlers were gathered outside the centre, Mike embarked on his ‘motivational’ team talk, which consisted mostly of telling us that Matthew would be waiting at the bottom to ‘pick up all the boats and swimmers that come past’ and that most of the people lined up to do safety cover had pulled out. How comforting. It is however, true to say that, as Liza observed, Mike was the most animated any of us had



The dark, menacing waters of the Olympic course.

ever seen him, and there is no doubt that his enthusiasm and encouragement helped even the most timid amongst us summon up enough courage to get on the water.

Most of us started half way down, thus avoiding the largest drop and most viciously re-circulating eddies. Despite this, many of us still came a cropper either in a small but surprisingly retentive stopper, or in the pilling folds of white water at the bottom of the drop. I got flipped and had to wait for what seemed an inordinately long time under the water, my paddle surging this way and that in the frothy abyss, before it seemed calm enough to roll up. After two goes from the half way point (and two rolls from me) Liza’s suggestion that we ‘go to the top’ didn’t seem like a great one. But as she pointed out, then we can say we’ve done it... and get off!

Marc kindly offered to do the honours and lead Liza and I down our first decent. As we headed up the conveyor it occurred to me how much further and steeper it was than the legacy one. We emerged at the top and there was a moment of calm (except for what Liza refers to as my ‘anxious babble’) before, with my heart racing, we set off. Perhaps the most challenging thing about the course is the distinct lack of opportunities to have a nice rest. Almost every inch of the course requires concentration

and purposeful paddle stokes, and the eddies are almost all re-circulating to a greater or lesser extent.

Marc showed us a good line and we all made it to the bridge OK, at which point I joined him in an eddy and Liza, either unable to stop or just too cool to bother, sailed on past. I then broke out ahead of Marc, not because I wanted to, but because I was falling out of the eddy and before I knew it the ‘big drop’ was approaching. I took it too central and despite a few frantic stokes was flipped over, shortly followed by Marc. Liza was left to watch helplessly as both Marc and my boats sailed past upside-down. Thankfully we both rolled up and found ourselves in eddies, ready, after a moment to compose ourselves, to continue on down.

The rest of the run was fast and furious, but high on adrenaline and with a good portion of luck we all made it down to the bottom unscathed. The experience had been truly thrilling. The course is full on, intense, steep, very white and most of all incredibly fast. As the water flattened out and we realised we had made it to the end whooping and high fives ensued.

I had a further three runs, all terrifying and exhilarating in equal measure. While I was just concentrating on surviving, some of the more accomplished Regenters were able to show us how it should be done. Tom was surfing across the man eating wave with ease, Christine made the whole thing look like an evening on the canal, and Mike, of course, can catch every eddy at will.

By the time 9 pm came most of us were elated but exhausted. My arms felt weak and my hands had fixed themselves in a claw like pose, such was the vice-like grip I had maintained on the paddle for the past hour. As we stood now safely back on dry land, Ben seemed to sum up the experience best: “it was awesome, I’m absolutely buzzing, I’m loving everything about my life right now”.

# ROCKS, CAVES & NEEDLES

by Ian Tokelove

On a dark, August night I found myself driving around a rabbit-riddled field on the Isle of Wight with another man's partner, Christine. We had arrived on the 9.40pm ferry and headed for the only campsite prepared to accept campers at such a godforsaken hour – they go to bed early on the Isle of Wight. We pitched our tents by the light of the car's headlights, and woke to find we'd camped right next to the main road, rather than the spectacular cliff-top setting across the field. Ah well.

We were there to take advantage of a two day training and assessment course for three star sea kayaking – all for a hundred quid. We'd both done a bit of sea kayaking in the past, and were fairly confident our white water skills would get us through the assessment.

After an al-fresco breakfast we headed for Freshwater Bay and the Sandpipers Hotel – where we were to meet our assessors and fellow students. We took a wrong turn, and found the locals happy to provide directions, most of which were hopelessly incorrect. Christine finally asked a bloke who was working in a gent's public toilet and he put us right – he lived next to the hotel so thankfully he did know what he was talking about. Having parked up and introduced ourselves, I then had to sprint back to the car and turn the charm quotient up to 'maximum' to placate the frosty car park warden who was about to slap a hefty fine on my windscreen. I didn't get a smile, but I didn't get a fine either.

Day one was training day. The other students had their own, sleek, fibreglass kayaks, whilst Christine and I ended up with heavier, but tougher, plastic kayaks.

Out in the sheltered bay, floating on crystal clear water, we did all the usual three star stuff – moving forwards, backwards, sideways, turning etc. With many sea kayaks you have to edge away from the direction you want to turn – a knack that doesn't come instinctively to a white water paddler. The craft are much longer and slicker, and handle very differently. We practiced rolling and rescues, and towing with tow lines

We made a short journey eastwards beneath the sea cliffs, nothing too taxing, but a chance for the instructors to pass on some useful paddling tips, and we then headed back to the classroom at the rather worn Sandpipers Hotel. Here we studied charts, discussed the tides and winds and the shapes of buoys (important stuff), before Christine and I took the cliff road back to the campsite. We ate well that night in a local pub, supped the local beers, and swapped a few kayaking stories.



The salty sea-dogs.

Day two was assessment day – and a journey was called for. We were to paddle westwards along the coast to the Needles, a journey of three or four miles, riding the tide like a conveyor belt. Sandwiches were packed, water was stored and kit was checked. We had only just cleared the corner of Freshwater Bay when we spotted a series of caves, hollowed into the cliff base by wave action. Our instructors encouraged us in – the conditions were fairly kind and we could easily surf in on the gentle waves. Cave connected to cave, providing a wonderful aquatic adventureland. Big smiles all round.

Back on the sea our instructors invited us to lead the others in rock-hopping – getting your kayak right into the cliff edge, and using the rise and the fall of the waves to negotiate tight turns and barely submerged rocks. Christine and I happily led the others through a chaotic maze of our own making. In our plastic boats we didn't have to worry about expensive punctures or cracks, and our white water background made us comfortable in amongst the rocks and surging waves. We both loved that bit.

Once we'd made the Needles we grabbed lunch on a beautiful beach which offered a panoramic view of the Needles. Sadly there wasn't much privacy for those ladies who wanted a 'reststop' as there was a steady supply of site-seeing tourists ripping past us and around the Needles on robust, inflatable dingies.

Once back on the water we headed back to Freshwater, fighting a messy, choppy sea and headwind. My so-called paddle fitness rapidly faded, conversation died, and I just tried to concentrate on good technique and not worry too much about the increasingly large waves that were hitting us side-on. But the sea kayaks are wonderfully forgiving, and I only needed a few, occasionally panicky support strokes.

When we got back to the caves they didn't look so inviting, with a decent swell rolling into each cave mouth, but it was time for rescue practice. We took turns rescuing each other from the caves – the victim (still in their boat) clinging to the rescuer's kayak, whilst the rescuer did their best to paddle two boats back into the sunshine. Then some rolling and the wet bit – out of your boat and eskimo rescue time.

Christine and I passed the assessment okay, and were told we'd be up to four star standard once we'd done a few more trips. For some reason the instructors thought we were up for 'big' water, a misconception I happily cleared up.

All I have to do now is convince the rest of the club that we need to invest in some sea kayaks – cos even if I could afford the £1,000+ price tag there's no way I'm getting seventeen feet of sea kayak into a one bedroom flat.

For your info:

We paddled with Isle of Wight Sea Kayaking ([www.iow-seakayaking.co.uk](http://www.iow-seakayaking.co.uk)) and recommend the camping at Grange Farm <http://grangefarmholidays.com/>

I received a subsidy of £40 from the club as I had to undertake the three star training as a prerequisite to my Level Two coaching assessment. Subsidies are not normally given for three star training. For more information on club subsidies see <http://www.regentscanoecub.co.uk/training.html>.