

DEVA Canoe Club, Club Report 2010/11 For AGM on Thu 6th June 2011

The club has now just completed its 12th year in existence and is still going strong, even with the recent difficulties faced as regards the Riverside Centre. We still have a membership of over 100 paddlers, having lost the usual yearly few and gained 32 new ones this year. Our female population has increased from 22 to 34 this year. However the female members are still outnumbered by the males on a 3.5 (male) to 1 (female) ratio, you lucky ladies.

Our members still range in interest from raging river paddlers to sedate lake paddlers, as well as choppy watered sea paddlers. Yet the one thing we all have in common is that we all still paddle for fun and enjoyment. The age and ability range has remained constant with members aged 18 years old to 70+, and complete beginners right up to “madheads” (extremely experienced paddlers, known for their adrenaline addiction, otherwise known as “the Bingham’s”). We also still have a variety of preferred craft among our members from open canoe to whitewater playboat and sea kayak to river runner and aim to give all newer paddlers the chance to try a range of crafts to find their preference.

This last year has seen a lot of difficulties for the club as regards the Riverside Centre, which I’m sure you are all aware that following a letter from connexions, we nearly lost access to. Huge thanks must go to all of the committee, especially our chairman Peter Cook, for all the time and hard work spent fighting to maintain our access to the centre. It was also nice to see how strongly our members felt about their club with various members offering their help and many more contacting their local councillors when it was requested.

There have been further changes to the committee due to peoples work commitments and we hope to add more new members next year to spread the load. Thank you to both existing committee members and those new ones soon to join us, for keeping the club running smoothly. The organisational abilities of the club have been noticed and commented on favourably by new members.

The clubs forum and facebook sites are gaining in popularity, especially for members organising peer group paddling amongst themselves.

As a club we have had a wide range of whitewater day trips as usual including River Severn, River Wye, Halton Rapids, Lower Tryweryn, River Dee (various sections of). There have also been regular sea kayaking day and weekend trips as well as the weekly “SunDee” paddle.

During weekdays the usual group have frequented Llangollen on most Tuesday mornings throughout the year (water levels and weather allowing) and a new group has started to form there on a Tuesday or Wednesday evening (work allowing) towards the end of this club year, during the light evenings. A further group of our members, majoritably the newer ones accompanied by Alan, has formed and generally meets there on a Sunday. There has also been the usual Thu night sessions

held at the riverside centre from April to Sept. These included the annual demo night provided by Brookbank, try-it sessions for sea kayaks and open canoes, tea and biscuits every evening and a sneaky post-paddling drink for those that stop off at the Falcon pub on the way home.

For the first time that I know of the clubs Boxing Day paddle had to be postponed until later in the year due to the weather, as the River Dee was bank to bank solid ice. Those who went to the Burrs for a paddle on Xmas Eve were also disappointed for the same reason and as such ended up in the local pub instead.

Last years annual club residential trip (i.e. weekend away) returned to the Lake District, as favourite of DEVA CCs as there is something for everyone there. We had an impressive turnout, making it quiet snug in the bunkhouse (which is actually a huge disused hospital that has been converted). This trip was the highlight of the year for many members and all who attended had a thoroughly enjoyable time, in fact members were still talking about it months afterwards. So again thank you to Simon Carver for organising this, Peter Steel for cooking and to all others who helped out leading on rivers, etc.

There were also many ad-hoc trips last year among groups of friends to Wales, Scotland, Lake District, Alps, etc and talk of more to come.

Socials have included among other things the usual end of season meal, tenpin bowling, drinking and dancing in Chester.

DEVA is very keen to promote safe paddling, especially with the increase in water related tragedies that have made it to the news in the last year. We have always had the popular basic safety and rescue day generally held at Llangollen and this year in addition we had 2 other safety courses. These were the external AWWSR course by Lowri Davies of Flowfree and the in-house WWSR course run by Simon Carver, Peter Steel, Ray Davies and helpers, both of which received superb reviews from all who attended.

The financial position of the club continues to remain healthy with the Riverside sessions paying for themselves via evening fees. Thus leaving money in the club to purchase new kit and equipment as required, as well as to continue offering bursaries and training grants to club members (upon successful application). This year we have increased our fleet of kayaks and invested in a couple of sets of inflatable roof racks. This means those loaning club kit can now also loan a method to transport it and as such hopefully making it easier for members to attend weekend trips.

Due to the clubs financial position the membership fees for 2011-2012 will again remain at the current level, which is £10 per person and £5 per additional family member.