

## **DEVA Canoe Club**

### **Annual Report for the period**

### **1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015**

First of all, please accept the new Secretary's apologies for the delay in writing this report as it should have been compiled before the 2015 AGM. If you object to its lateness.....tough!

Unfortunately in February 2015, Helen Williams asked to resign as Deva Secretary due to her work commitments. The club wishes to express its thanks to Helen for her secretarial help over the last few years but she remains a much valued co-opted committee member. The role of Secretary was accepted by Keith Brocklehurst, a member of the club for 4 years and co-opted committee member at the time of nomination.

The club started in May 1999 and has now been going for 16 years and we hope will continue to do so for many more years to come. Our membership continues to be steady at a little over 100 members although many of these are different ones to what we used to have. Every year without fail we gain a few enthusiastic newbies and lose a few existing members to family life, DIY and other (less exciting than paddling) time consuming activities. It's worth a mention that most of those who formed the club back in the last century are still active members albeit with a little more snow on the roof but the fire inside is still burning brightly.

DEVA's age range is still 18yrs to 75+ yrs. old with everything in between. Brian Sanderson remains our oldest member and his enthusiasm and energy, despite his handicap (the tricycle) is an inspiration to all. Keep on paddling Brian as your infectious laugh keeps us all going and who would the OF's rescue at Llangollen if you weren't there (Secretary Keith perhaps?)!

Our membership for this year was made up of 102 males and 14 females. Perhaps we need to think of new ideas to attract a higher percentage of the fairer sex. Any sensible ideas from the Deva male species or lonely female paddlers would be always be considered by the committee.

Our members still range in ability from complete beginners who've barely been in a boat to fully-fledged mad heads addicted to the adrenaline rush of throwing themselves and their boats off waterfalls.

We have members from many paddling disciplines and with a variety of craft preferences. They include play boaters, surf kayakers, open canoeists, scenic flatwater paddlers, scary top end white water paddlers, sea kayakers, basic whitewater paddlers, and probably anything else you can think of that involves a plastic vessel, a pole and a bit of water!

We pride ourselves in being a friendly bunch, keen to help others and introduce them to the joy of our sport. We all have one thing in common which is we all paddle for fun and enjoyment and don't take anything too seriously, including the compilation of this report!

We have spent most of this year, fighting to ensure that the county's proposed development of a Watersports Hub does not seriously impact on our wish to maintain a low cost, friendly and local Adult canoeing club on the river Dee. We are a long way from the end of this fight but at least we have secured a high level input position at the site's re-development stage. Keep your paddles crossed for a successful outcome to this project. As usual, a huge thanks go to all that helped with this and especially Peter Cook, Alan Reay and Ian McMullen who have been leading the fight and attending all the meetings they insist on timetabling.

Huge thanks go to everyone who has helped with the riverside opening / closing rota during the summer season. The quantity of volunteers meant each person only had to do the odd few nights, but without them the riverside sessions could not have run. If you wish Deva to continue, which it can't without help, why not offer a few minutes of your spare time to occasionally help.

Similarly, thank you to Phil Proctor in particular, and all those who signed up as coaches/helpers to make sure newbies always had experienced company to look after them on a Thu night and eventually introduce them to the weir. There were also additional club leads this year in order to ensure we could continue to run regular club weekend day trips, without being reliant on anyone always being available, so thank you to everybody involved in this. Without these experienced paddlers volunteering their time we wouldn't be able to offer all our leading, coaching, advice, etc free of charge as we always have and intend to continue to do so.

The riverside opened up on 10 April 2014 and ended on 2 October 2014 with a "Night Paddle" from Eccleston.

Thanks to Simon Carver who organised the club's yearly lakes trip and to Chef Kerry Arnold for a great weekend that all participants thoroughly enjoyed and those who opted not to go definitely missed out. DEVA CC still remains the only place where your "Library Books" can give you a hangover!

Also thanks to everyone who organised the year's Deva trips, too many to name individually but those who participated know who you are.

Examples of the year's Deva trips include:

Sea kayakers getting out with trips from West Kirby to Hilbre, Little Orme to Llandudno, along the Conwy estuary, Colwyn Bay etc. as well as their occasional SunDee paddles.

Other weekend day trips included Lower Tryweryn, Serpents and MEM in Llangollen, River Severn (including Jackfield rapids), Washburn, Halton Rapids, Irwell, Goyt, Conwy, Wye and Dudley Tunnels

Safety and rescue courses for Sea and White Water users

Beginner's Sea and White Water events

The club OF's Christmas paddle from the Sarah Ponsonby to the Country Park followed by the usual lunch at the Sun Trevor.

### Boxing Day paddle

In addition, and for the first time this year, we held riverside sessions on one Sunday each month (October 2014 to March 2015) from 13:30 to 15:30. These were well attended and enjoyed by all who participated. It is likely that these will continue in 2015/2016.

DEVA has become well recognised at MEM, Llangollen. If you are there, why not introduce yourselves to Rosie and Josh (Llangollen Outdoors) as DEVA members.

Our Tuesday morning group (the OF's), the seasonal Monday evening group and Sunday's year round group all frequent MEM.

A particular vote of thanks should go to Deva's in-house paparazzi (aka Terry Hudson). Some of us know from experience that he has an uncanny knack of being able to capture a sequence of events from any distance, in perfect focus and in glorious technicolour before, during and after it happens. So next time you're about to capsize, smile for the camera! Carry on clicking Terry!

Thursday nights as usual were home to our seasonal (April to Sept) Chester river and weir sessions which included the all-important hot drink and biscuits at the end. These Thursday night sessions were followed by a social drink in the Falcon pub for a number of members.

On the social side of things we had our end of season meal in October at the Old Hall Farm pub on Cheshire Oaks, which was very much enjoyed by all who attended. Thanks to Kerry Arnold for arranging.

The club's Facebook page (Deva Kayakers + friends of) is going from strength to strength with approximately 170 registered followers. Existing members have been out in force posting ad-hoc friendship trips on our Facebook wall and newer members are learning it's always worth asking if you can join in even if you are unsure if you meet the required ability level, as long as you are honest about your own ability. After all none of our regular members will purposely put you at risk or on water that you won't cope with, so the worst that can happen is they reply with "not this time due to your ability level or the current water level". Often (water level allowing) you will find that they will willingly take you and look after you if it is at the top end of your ability, so thank you to all members who have been doing this and as such helping less experienced paddlers to improve their skills.

But please remember, anyone wishing to organise a trip on Facebook should ensure they make it clear that it is a peer group paddle and not a club organised trip as well as indicating what standard of paddler the trip is suitable for (e.g. Grade 2/3 must be competent paddling the Lower Tryweryn).

Approval for a club trip can be obtained by contacting the committee through the club E-mail and any 'Approved club Trip' will then be advertised to the membership

through the club E-Mail. Full details of an approved trip will not be advertised through Facebook. A club trip can be organised by any club member but must have a 'committee approved' leader within the group responsible for leading on the water. If you have any questions please contact us by email.

The financial position of the club continues to remain healthy with the Riverside sessions paying for themselves (i.e. tea, biscuits, centre rent, etc) via evening fees. Therefore money was available to purchase new kit and equipment as required to allow us to continue offering boats, kit, inflatable roof bars, wet suits, etc. for use on club trips to any members who do not have their own. Thanks go to Simon Carver for managing Deva's finances.

Due to the clubs financial position the membership fees for 2014-2015 remained at their current level (unchanged since the millennium), which is £10 per person and £5 per additional family member. It is likely that this will be changed in 2015-2016 to cope with the Riverside Centre rental fees expected to be imposed by CWAC.

Riverside fees also remained at £2 per evening for members and £3 for non-members, with a nominal fee of £2 to borrow club kit for an evening and £5 for a day trip.

Deva now have a club logo and club clothing with this logo on it (Thanks to Helen Williams and Kerry Arnold for arranging). There is a choice of polo shirts £12.50, tee-shirts £8 and hoodies £20, plus postage. Products are being supplied by Sportsform in Bedford, we are listed on the left of their front page, otherwise follow this direct link. <http://sportsform.biz/90-deva-canoe-club>. You need to order from and pay them directly, if several of you want to join together to form an order and see if it saves postage then feel free (the website states postage at checkout) but you need to sort it out among yourselves!

Keith Brocklehurst (Deva Canoe Club Secretary) 23 June 2015