

TCA Newsletter June 2024

We are now well into early summer and I don't know about you but the long days are filling me with energy! What better time to get outside and enjoy the water!

Club nights

A gentle reminder to please use the booking sheet. Booking on the sheet means the coaches know to expect you, it also helps with gauging use of equipment. Please also remember to remove yourself if unable to attend. This helps getting the groups on the water promptly – meaning the coaches are not left waiting for people that aren't going to show up. Plus it keeps Phil happy!



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Kit at end of club-night

Please remember to flag up any broken/damaged or lost kit. We get it, things have wear or tear and things get lost. It is always better to let the coaches/leaders know of anything faulty so no-one gets hurt or has issues when out paddling in the future.

Volunteer your time

Beginner sessions are held on a Wednesday evening – we do rely on volunteers to help run these courses and are always looking for people to help. If you would like to assist or look to achieve your paddle sport qualification then please speak to Pete or a coach for further info. Volunteers need to be confident in their craft and be able to both assist with rescue and self-rescue in order to help safely.



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Wet Rescue Practice

Always a marmite topic! Wet rescue practice is something we would expect **ALL** our club members to take part in. TCA is a water-sport club. Our aims are to engage our members about the water-sports available but also to ensure they can rescue themselves and if necessary help with the rescue of someone else.

It is most definitely a “Plan for the worst, hope for the best” scenario. Each of us who paddles does so with the aim of staying in or on our crafts. This does not always happen! Think for a moment of when this may change? A few examples may include:

- Swell from passing water craft may knock you in – jet-skis, boats etc.
- Active skills practice may cause you misjudge and to fall in – think of when we practice edging and low/high brace etc.
- An ill-health episode may occur on the water to yourself, someone you paddle with or someone you meet on the water.
- An abrupt change in weather causing change to your paddling conditions.
- Paddling in conditions beyond your capabilities.

We do often find that once coaches mention the dreaded “capsize practice next week” then paddlers suddenly find themselves too busy to join in!

Why practice?

- It means you can rescue yourself should you fall in
- Coaches/leaders can safely help get you back in your boat with you understanding what they are asking you to do
- Practice will help reduce fear of falling in
- Everyone in the group can recognise how best to help – this may mean rafting up, assisting with the rescue, rescuing equipment etc.
- Regular practice keeps your skills fresh

Remember that water sports are NOT risk free! We need to ensure that we as individuals are prepared for different scenarios and potential dangers.

Why not speak to a coach about rescue practice and keep an eye out for any rescue training days/evenings. We do our best to time it to a lovely clean high tide and the weather is much warmer* now so no excuses! (*OK, its a BIT warmer!)



Saltash Regatta

The Saltash annual Regatta is being held on the 13th/14th July 2024 (weather permitting) Ina is looking for volunteers to help offer safety cover for the Tamar swim. The swim is a privately organised event by invite which the club traditionally helps with safety cover. In order to help you

must be a confident kayaker/canoeist able to quickly and confidently help with rescuing swimmers. This is an across the river paddle in the full tidal flow with the public watching. Please see Ina if you are able to offer assistance.

New Website

If you haven't seen it already please check out the new website! The IT team have done a bloody brilliant job at putting this together. As always this is done by volunteers freely giving their time. It is helpful to post photos of trips on our Facebook page if you are happy for these to be used on the webpage.

Check it out on the link below!

<https://www.tamarcanoeassociation.org.uk/>



Solo paddle trip – yes or no?

You may have noticed that your lovely newsletter author likes to post photos from recent solo SUP trips. So it raises the question – how safe is it to paddle by yourself?

Like anything in life – it is very much a personal decision, and each of us may take a different view to the risks involved. Some like myself, run a personal risk assessment and decide to go ahead. To others the risks may be too great and they would much prefer to only paddle in a group or with the club. There is no doubt about it that the risks are greatly more significant to a solo paddler.

So, lets think through some of the considerations:

- are you a confident paddler?
 - New or nervous paddlers should take plenty of time to build skills and confidence before even considering the idea of a solo trip. There is no time frame on this – it is very much how you as an individual feel although coaches may be able to offer some insight as to how they think your skills are developing.
- can you self rescue?
 - see above re: rescue practice. Could you rescue yourself when tired or injured? Should you ever need to implement a genuine real-life rescue you need it to go right. This is why rescues should be regularly practised so they become second nature. Remember, even very skilled paddlers have things go wrong – and rescues can still fail.
- are you paddling somewhere new or somewhere familiar?
 - have you checked the area? It is a good idea to speak to others who have paddled the area you have in mind. Local knowledge means a lot for safety. If it is a familiar area do not become complacent – remember things change including beach shape, access points etc.

- have you checked you own craft – is it in good condition?
 - have you checked your boat/board and ensured it is good condition and suitable for the trip you have in mind? Have you got kit to do an emergency repair?
- do you have the correct kit?
 - solo paddling means YOU are responsible for YOU! Have you got an appropriate buoyancy aid? Have you got appropriate clothing for your trip? Food and water? Sunscreen? First aid kit? Phone?
- do you have a means for calling for help?
 - This is a big one! You MUST have a means for calling for help and this MUST be upon your person. It is no good having your mobile helpfully stashed in your kayak to keep it safe and dry if something happens and you lose your boat...! Have you charged your phone to full battery?
- do you have an awareness of the local conditions with regards to weather, tides, currents etc.?
 - Consider conditions of wind vs tide. Are you aware of any strong or unpredictable currents?
- have you checked the weather?
 - check and re-check the weather and again just prior to your trip. Wind can change speed/direction very quickly. Where is the wind blowing too/from? Onshore/offshore? Are you prepared for the sun/rain/wind/cold/heat?
- have you told someone else your plans?
 - Absolutely critical to consider this. ALWAYS let someone else know where you plan on going and approximate times. This can mean the difference between life and death if something goes wrong...
- worse case scenarios?
 - “Prepare for the worst, hope for the best” – you HAVE to consider the “What if’s”. Odd or unusual things can happen anywhere at anytime. Whilst you cannot think of every eventuality being well prepared certainly helps.
- are you in good health?
 - do you feel well enough for the trip? Did you sleep well? Do you have any injuries or health conditions to manage? What if you injury yourself?

Please note the information discussed here is only a taster of things to consider and is NOT a guide, it is designed to make the reader think of what MAY be involved in the planning of a solo trip.

We would always recommend seeking as much information and advice as possible and recognising the risks involved. Risks are always significantly greater if you are a solo paddler.

*****As mentioned above if you are considering a solo paddle then YOU are responsible for YOU*****

The coaches can provide advice and guidance in terms of skill development and kit suggestions and I would urge people to research themselves for further advice from reputable sites such as Go Paddling (British canoeing), RNLI and the coastguard.



Wildlife

Please keep your eyes open to the wildlife of the water we paddle on. This time of year often sees many seabirds nesting – if paddling near to the coast or along the river be alert to nests on rocks / in trees. As responsible paddlers keep your distance and observe from afar to prevent upsetting the parents and young. Avian flu although generally low risk can still be a risk so approach any deceased bird life with care. I would strongly advise only handling deceased birds with gloves/masks on and only if you absolutely have to.

As the water warms up you may start to see jellyfish return, thankfully our chillier waters means most jellyfish we encounter only give a mild sting. Check out the link for jellyfish identification!

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/how-identify/identify-uk-jellyfish>

Also keep your eyes peeled for Beavers! As mentioned in previous newsletters Cornwall and Devon wildlife trusts are assisting in programmes to re-establish beavers and word has it they are doing well in our area! Whilst I am not expecting them to swim right up to our slipway you never know when you might suddenly spot one near a river bank!

Check the link for beaver facts!

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/learn/fascinating-facts/beavers>



If you would like anything included in the newsletter please drop me a message on FB or find me on a Thursday evening!

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