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## NEWSLETTER

No. 9

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2007

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Many events to cover in this newsletter. First, I apologise for taking so long in getting this one out. I know how much you all look forward to them!!!!

Before launching into this newsletter, I need to give some thanks to some people. Without the hard work of **Mike Perrott** and **Gavin Price** our pool sessions in stroke would not be happening. A big **Thank you** to them. Another huge **Thank you** goes to **Bob Slee**. Not only did he take us for a very informative tour around his factory but he also held the reins and guided the proceedings on Saturday evening at the pool. Also, a thank you to those who helped supervise at the pool.

### *FIRST POOL SESSION – by Gavin Price*

Clevedon Canoe Club's first pool training session splashed down on Sat 27th Jan with a crowd of 50 plus turning up with their own kit as well as the community fleet. Lynne sat at the entrance taking the cash, at £4 a go it was a bargain.

The hour and three-quarters, first of ten booked over the next couple of months, was intended to give everyone a chance to gain confidence and skills.

Bob Slee, MD of Palm Canoes, took charge and beginners, absolute beginners and experienced were grouped ready to launch.

In the first wave, paddlers were shown how to hold the paddle, how to get in, how to sit and then the all important how to slip out; what a surprise, it was dead easy, like falling off a log!

Numbers meant that the pool was quickly overflowing with eager paddlers all practising their skills. Kayaks were shared so that all could have a go, kids, teenagers, mums and dads.

Experienced adults helped around the poolside, encouraging everyone and watching ready to help. A big pat on the back to all those who sacrificed their own paddling time to assist and help the less experienced participants.

The atmosphere was fun, fun, fun and 'can we do this all and more again soon?'



## Future Pool Sessions

Saturday's pool session was a huge success. Unfortunately, some of the boats were not as clean as they could have been, so to remind everyone:-

**KAYAKS** – It is very important for the health and safety of the pool that all kayaks used are clean. If we get the water dirty then we will be kicked out. For those of you who own your own equipment and are able to, please bring them along. If anyone is able to transport kayaks from the boat house please let Nigel Barnes know (If you need his telephone no. then I can forward it too you). If you are able to transport them be aware that you would have to collect them during Saturday and check that they are clean enough for the swimming pool. You will also have to return them afterwards.

**PADDLES** – No metal tipped paddles please only plastic ones.

**SWIMMING** – Please note that although this is a swimming pool we will not be allowing general swimming alongside the canoeing because of the danger of collision.

**PREMISES** – When bringing canoes into the pool you can bring them through the main entrance and take them straight through to the area alongside the pool (just past the automatic doors). Please be careful not to scrape the boats along the doors or walls. We may be asked to pay for any obvious damage or, worse, we could be stopped from using the pool in future.

In light of the number of people who turned up, we have decided to reduce the fee for children to £3.00. It will stay at £4.00 for the adults. If, the number of people attending remain high then we will re-consider the prices at a later date.

## Sponsorship

Gavin has received some money from AXA Sun life insurance co. They have sent us a cheque for £50. Thank you to them.

## BCU 2 star canoe course 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> March 2007

*The course is aimed at those who have some kayaking or open canoe experience. As the new BCU coaching awards will require you to have done both kayak & open canoe star tests to join the scheme this course is ideal for anyone who is intending to do a BCU coach award, and existing coaches who want to be able to transfer across to the new BCU scheme.*

*The course will also be a great intro to a different type of boating for kayakers, and anyone who has done some open boating and wants to consolidate their skills.*



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*The course will be over 2 days on the above dates, based at Young Bristol's centre on Bristol Docks. Equipment is provided or bring your own.*

If you are interested then contact Mark Aplin on 01373 864 918 or 07966 631 335 or e-mail him at [mark.aplin@talk21.com](mailto:mark.aplin@talk21.com).

### *Trip to Symonds Yat 4<sup>th</sup> or the 11<sup>th</sup> March*

Some of us are going to Symonds Yat for a paddle on either the 1<sup>st</sup> or the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of March, depending on the weather. If you don't have your own boat but wish to come along then you can hire them there, but they are not cheap, or you can arrange to borrow one of the clubs. If you wish to borrow one from the club then you need to organise transport by either conveying it on your vehicle or speaking very nicely to someone who is going and has room for an extra kayak on their roof.

I would like to clarify that there will be no instructors on this trip and inexperienced paddlers will be paddling at their own risk. The area where we will be paddling is a gentle section of the Wye

### *Factory visit*

We had an amazing trip around Palm Equipment's factory in Kenn. This article is by Tom Barnes one of our junior members.

### *PALM EQUIPMENT FACTORY VISIT by Tom Barnes*

**On Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January around 20 people had a tour around the Palm Equipment factory in Kenn. Bob Slee gave the visitors a briefing of Palm's history explaining that they have been running for 27 years and have been out at Kenn for 6. After this briefing the tour started – complete with safety glasses.**

**Bob took us first into the Clothing Warehouse. They have recently increased the capacity to over three times the old capacity – now 650 pallets. Soon all the gaps would be filled, in time for the peak season. In the warehouse the Aluminium Moulds for the Kayaks were also stored.**

**Then we were taken into the Clothing Repair area – whilst the clothes are now made in the Far East – all are repaired here. Bob said that if an item of clothing was in the post to them one day it would most likely be back in the post to the customer the very next day.**

**Next we were taken into the Fitters workspaces (spot Neil's & Pawel's). Bob showed us the prototype for a new sit-on-top fishing kayak which will be called the Dagger Strike. A sit-on-top takes 20 minutes to fit out while on the other hand a complex Sea Kayak takes 4 hours.**



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After this came the Boat Warehouse – like going into Santa’s Grotto. In there at the moment are around 1700 boats of many types and colours. Bob had to invest in a second floor because there was not enough space for all the boats on the ground floor. Soon all the spare space will be filled with more boats ready for the peak season – thoughts of a domino tumble remain.

Then we were taken to look at the Thermal Moulding machine which changes a 5kg sheet of plastic into a thigh brace, or seat etc. The heating and moulding process for one part takes just four minutes. This machine was the first one that Bob built.

Now comes the best part of the tour. We were taken into the oven and cooling room. We were shown the polyethylene powder used to make kayaks and some of there components. The time needed to bake (at nearly 300 C) and cool a kayak takes only just over an hour. For four minutes after the kayak is removed from the Oven it is still ‘cooking’ (at 109 C). Any kayaks that are less than perfect will be recycled or may be given to community fleets.

The oven is called a Rock ‘n’ Roll Oven (built by Bob himself and Australian called Franco). The heat in the oven as well as being used to bake kayaks also heats the boat warehouse - a vent allows the excess hot air through. This allows the Boat Warehouse and Factory to stay at a constant temperature of 25 degrees centigrade.

Then we were told some facts:

- The first Palm Kayak was built in a tent on the Avon Schools Camp in Exmouth.
- The old Palm factories were at Newquay, Weston-Super-Mare and Portishead.
- Palm can make personalised boats but the laying out of the polyethylene takes a very long time – the technique used is ‘top secret’.
- Bob can recognise all the kayaks he has brought to life by their colour, looking inside or by smelling them!!
- New moulds cost about £20,000.
- 25% to 33% of the Kayaks sold in Britain today are made at Kenn. They manufacture 51 different models.
- All Dagger and Islander boats can be recycled by Palm.
- Palm recycles all excess material.

# **CLEVEDON CANOE CLUB**



Overall everyone on the visit had a really good time and felt privileged to be given the opportunity to have a tour around the Factory. Our thanks go to Bob Slee for this unique and rare tour around the Palm factory.

Unfortunately I didn't win a T-Shirt – well done to Morgan Lamb and Caroline Norrish who did.

**Lynne Lamb**  
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