

IC Canoe Club Scotland New Year Tour 2008-09
The trip of culinary excellence (or the trip with zero water)

People (8 full members, 3 non-full members)

1. Adam "optimist" Holland
2. Luke "the rules" Geldermans
3. Alexa "car breaker" Batten
4. Rory "head banged" Fyffe
5. Will "Marathon" Eldred
6. Alistair "non ceilidhing jessie" Cott
7. Antony "Lothario" Farrington
8. Rachel Fox
9. Mark Wardel
10. Sophie Gore
11. Rik Williams

Trip Report

They went to Scotland with the aim of paddling some gnarly rivers. There was not a single drop of water. They practised safety techniques. They froze to death. RIP.

27th Dec

Met at the union stupidly early, started driving, passed Tim driving south on the M6 somewhere near Birmingham, kept on driving, drove some more. Arrived at the hostel to find they weren't expecting us till the next day, oops! Fortunately they did have 9 beds for us so we didn't have to sleep in the bus.

28th Dec

Got up before sunrise keep to paddle, we headed out to the Spean gorge. We turned up at Spean bridge and we slightly surprised to find the river at the highest level most of us had seen it at. Will discovered that the footrest in his boat refused to move, so Anthony swapped boats with him. After waiting for Sophie to hitch the shuttle everyone put on, fairy steps was conquered by Sophie who arrived at the bottom looking surprised to still be upright and in her boat. Rik however decided to test the water temperature, it was cold! Everyone ran constriction, except Rachel whose boat was swept over it before she got there. Most people then decided to head over to the Arkaig, which turned out to be dog-low. Will's approach to rapids 'plough down in a straight line as fast as possible' rather conflicted with Sophie's 'skirt round everything' approach. Their collision resulting a swim. We were joined that evening, a bit later than expected, by Mark and Alexa. Apparently they had broken down in Alexa's Dad's new car (again), and hence arrived in Marks car. Rory cooked up his famous pork apple and cider recipe setting the standard of culinary excellence for the rest of the trip.

29th Dec

Much faff occurred while we went to Fort William to get a bike shop to fix Will's boat. Encouraged by the water levels on the Spean the day before we went up to the top section of the Spean to find it was empty, after a conversation with the dam people it turned out that yesterday's high levels were due to them accidentally opening one of the overspill pipes. Oh well! Some people went for a walk while the rest of us headed back to Fort William to spend the day enjoying the last ever day of Woolworths and finding the Whisky shop (we also discovered that Nevis canoes would be closed until we went home). Sophie

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cooked us some tasty Thai chicken for dinner, which definitely rivalled the night before. Everyone was then taught how to play poker with Luke checking the rules on Wikipedia.

30th Dec

Due to the lack of anything else to paddle we headed back to Spean gorge, which seemed like a completely different river with now water in. It had definitely go colder, all the eddies were iced up, in fact any water not in the flow of the river instantly froze. The tops of our boats, helmets, BA's, drysuits, paddles and pogies were all covered by thick layer of ice by the time we got to the take out. Comically Rachel's froze forming little dread icicles and Ant even tried cultivating a mini icicle on his helmet peak. The frosted scenery made the river magically pretty, however it was too cold to get a camera out and take any pictures. The rapids changed quite a lot at this low; headbanger was so low you could see the nasty siphon that gives the rapid its name. This was run by most with only Rory getting stuck in the hole at the bottom resulting in a quick OBE.

31st Dec

Some people went walking again while most people stayed in the hostel to do some safety training. We learnt how to tie various knots and are now all experts in setting up Z-drags. Some people then went over to the Arkaig to put this into practice, Adam Luke and Will walked several miles up the Cia Aig (one of the tribs) to see if they could find a wet rock to slide off, but eventually gave up and just paddled the Arkaig. Rik was left in solitude by the commando memorial, while others went to buy haggis neaps and tatties for dinner. As usual new years eve was enjoyed at the Fort William Ceilidh. We were joined by Terry who dropped by to hang out with the cool people. Adam managed to behave himself this year. While Rory led the way with asking underage randoms for a dance, Ant attempted to take a random girl back to the hostel, and Will was made to sit next to the window for the drive back.

1st Jan

There had been talk of heading over to Glen Etive, however the unwillingness of the drivers and general late start meant that we ended up past the Laggan dam again. While Adam and others walked up another trib in the hope of finding more wet rocks to slide off, the rest of us went for a walk. We arrived back at the hostel to Alexa's awesome flapjack. The last evening was celebrated in style with a roast meal.

2nd Jan

We started driving relatively early, arriving back in London at about 8pm. It started raining just as we crossed the border, several people nearly cried.

Money

C&S Board £98.46, IC Trust £119.99, Attendees £138.71 per person