

Blyth Kayak Club

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Chairpersons Report for Year 2015



2015 has been an unusual year in our kayaking calendar. Instead of the usual cry of 'too little water', we have had far too much in the local rivers, with flood conditions in force for several months at the end of the year. The sea conditions have also scuppered our plans, with high winds being the main problem. Hopefully we will start to see an improvement in water conditions in the near future.

Despite the poor end to the year our members have still taken part in a wide range of paddles. Our main competitive paddle, the May Day Durham to Finchale Abbey Race, was a great success this year. There was sufficient water in the river to avoid most of the areas usually associated with scrapes and we were extremely successful across the board, winning 9 of the 13 trophies awarded.

Our novices this year have enjoyed a series of paddles on the River Wansbeck, Blyth and on the River Tyne at Prudhoe. We were thrilled to be able to spot some rare visitors to the River Blyth and the River Wansbeck on our novice paddles – a number of white egrets. A big thank you goes to Brian, our club 'twitcher' for letting us know of their visit to our region.

Our traditional camps have again been very successful. North Berwick was kind to us with fair weather and calm seas. We enjoyed a fantastic paddle around Bass Rock and were kept company by the entertaining seals as we paddled back along the shoreline. Our visit to the Lakes was also successful, again with the weather being kind to us and evenings enjoyed barbecuing and sampling the local hostelries!

Talking of seals we have paddled around Coquet Island several times this year. This will always be a favourite paddle as we never tire of watching the antics of those residents. On one occasion, we encountered a particularly friendly character who tried to climb up onto Lesley's sea kayak! Perhaps we will meet him or her again.

Regular dates in our diary have been kept and enjoyed by a mixture of long-term and new members. Our paddle from Newburn to Tynemouth was as enjoyable and interesting as ever and we have continued to provide safety cover at the Druridge Bay and Queen Elizabeth Park triathlons. Our Family Fun day at Druridge Bay Lake has led to the introduction of new members and we have supported Paddleability both at the Queen Elizabeth Lake and the Wansbeck Rowing Club. Our reputation as providers of reliable and experienced safety cover has also led to a request for us to provide safety on the Kielder triathlon and swims, with a weekend stay included. This was enjoyed by all of the members who took part. Away from the water we have enjoyed a club bowling social evening and hope that this type of function will be enjoyed again in the coming year.

The club took part in a memorable event earlier in the year when we were part of the celebrations to welcome the tall ship Habbet, purchased by the Royal Northumberland Yacht Club, into the harbour. We took part in the parade of sail and escorted the ship to her mooring berth. Hopefully in 2016 we will be able to play an active part in the Tall Ships Regatta to be held over the bank holiday weekend in August.

As the final part of my report I would like to give my thanks to all of the coaches and committee members who give up their time to volunteer for our club. I would also like to thank the members, and their relatives who have supported us so well in 2015 and hopefully will continue to do so in 2016.

Pat Jones

Pat Jones - Club Chairperson