



## **MAD PADDLES**

### **NEWSLETTER July/August 2013**

#### **Club Matters - Andrew Millest.**

MADCC has had a busy summer so far; Monday and Thursday night club sessions have been as popular as ever and have attracted some new members. These sessions can't run without the dedication of the club members and coaches who turn up regularly to supervise, take the register, and get all the kit out - then scratch their heads as they puzzle over how to get it all back in the shed again. Thanks to everyone who is making the club a success!

As always, with my Editor hat on: thanks to the authors of the excellent articles in this issue.

#### **Update on proposed new club house at Hurdsfield – John Kavanagh**

In order to obtain a view from Cheshire East Planning Department on how a full planning application might be considered, we submitted a pre-planning application for a combined Canoe Club / Sea Cadets' Unit / Community Activity Centre to be located on the canal side in Hurdsfield.

We have now had a meeting with a group of Cheshire East Council planning officials. The outcome was that they gave us the overall impression that there should be no major problems with a full application. There were of course a number of provisos and avoidance of being too committed.

We presented our vision for the use of the site. The planning officer explained that the area is designated as open space and we will need to justify our choice of location. That both the sea cadets and we are able to provide details of our investigations into other possible sites will be important here. As there have historically been garages on the site is our favour and the planning officer did not seem to suggest that the location was inappropriate. There would need to be re-assurance about times of use (not too late or noisy) bearing in mind the possible impact on those houses backing on to the site. Similarly we will have to put together an assessment of the likely amount of cars coming and going. The tree officer had not actually been to the site but will be going this week. There are no tree preservation orders on the site. He was happy to accept that there would be some tree loss but it may be that some individual specimens may need to be preserved. The conservation officer was generally pleased with the visuals produced by the architect and had only a few minor comments to make (e.g. if we wanted to put up signs/building names etc. that these should be clearly identified on the full planning application). We had a brief discussion about emergency access to the site and they seemed satisfied (subject to confirmation from highways/fire brigade) that ability to bring a tender through the access route and pumping water from the canal would be sufficient.

The planners will put a written report together, which we are expecting to receive soon.

On the whole, this was a very positive response. Clearly the general principle of a building on our proposed site, which would have benefits to the wider community, would be looked on favourably.

The next steps are to get a formal agreement from the Council that they are willing to transfer the land for the proposed use. With this and a favourable pre-planning report we will be in a strong position to begin a serious quest for grant funding for the project.

## **Cheshire Ring 2013 – Andrew Millest**

Andrew Gage and his team of helpers laid on a really excellent Ring Race this year. As club chairman, I was absolutely delighted to see a MADCC K2 relay team taking part – and even more pleased that the team included me! All three of the club's K2s were used in the event - and it was good for me to be able to feed back to Sport England that the Mirage they had funded had already seen some serious racing action.

The MADCC had a great race and were only narrowly beaten by a team of more experienced paddlers from Trentham. Next year we will be aiming for a win!

As well as enjoying the race, sponsorship of the MADCC team has now raised close to £1500 for Macmillan Cancer Support, thank you to all our sponsors.

Andrew Gage has already written a full race report which is available from the club website (<http://madcc.btck.co.uk/CheshireRingRace/Records>). I thought you might like to see below the feedback from some of the other competitors in the event. It reflects well on the organiser, the helpers, and our club. Be proud of yourselves!

**Jon Bolton + Colin Smith** C2 Chester Canoe Club: An excellent but very hard race, well done to you and your team. Thanks for the mention in the race report - if we could have finished the last 20 odd miles in a similar fashion to the first 70 we may have been better able to challenge the record, who knows. A great experience and certainly ranks with the best races.

**The Jolly Paddlers:** The jolly paddlers would like to convey their thanks to all the organisers and competitors who made us feel so welcome. Even though we were a scratch crew we felt so pleased to participate in such an amazing competition. Hopefully next year we will return more competitively and give some teams a run for their money. Due to our charity event (we have now raised almost £3000) we do hope we have helped to publicise this event and make more people aware of what fun can be had in a kayak. Thanks for all your support.

On behalf of **Trentham Canoe Club** can I echo all the other teams & thank you & the other organizers, competitors & supporters for all your efforts? A tremendous time was had by all – a real buzz. All of our support crews commented on the friendly, almost party atmosphere at the change-over points. Our paddler Lynda has now raised over £1000 for Cancer Research. Hope to see you next year.

**Stuart West + David Pedlar:** I'd also like to thank you and all the people involved in the race, particularly those that were awake during the middle of the night. The support crews of the other paddlers and the paddlers themselves also helped a great deal in cheering us on. I would love to say that I enjoyed it but I don't think 15 hours of paddling can ever be enjoyed however good the race or scenery is.

The Cheshire Ring really holds its own challenges the hardest of which, for me at least, are the long pounds without any locks or portages and then the long portages round tunnels or flights of locks. It's truly a unique race and long may it continue. Don't think there will be another straight through attempt for a while, May be a relay entry next time...

**Jean Ashley + Adele Blakeborough:** Thanks very much to you and all your support Crew ... who organized another great ring race... so slick you even managed to order the wind-free, lovely warm weather! We must do a race report and spread the word of your race, it's certainly worthy the title 'DW of the North' ... I even think it's a tougher paddle and some of the portages are really long and easily compared to the infamous 'Crofton'.

It was great to see a battle for the K2 Team prize. Think our Chester Team missed out on that this year, there was some great banter along the way! Awesome result for Stuart and Dave ...and a record that may stand a while, unless they are back next year!

I hope the camera crew didn't get in anyone's way, they were really nice guys and in awe of every single paddler out there, they were very impressed with everyone and the support crews, they couldn't quite believe how much food was being consumed! I'm just hoping when the film comes out ... 'Ordinary People do Extra-ordinary things' it gives marathon racing a great boost and publicity for your race! I will forward you the detail when it emerges!

Pass our thanks on to your 'Support Team' and well done again Andrew. Hopefully see you again next year ... but maybe it will be in a Chester Team just for a change!

**The Buccaneers:** Many thanks too from the Buccaneers- another great weekend in splendid company- whether it was the fellow paddlers and their support parties, or you and your most welcoming, helpful and efficient organising team.

**Bob McCall.** You have a gem of an event there which for my money more than rivals the DW, and I'm surprised you don't have more participants given the atmosphere, scenery and organisation. (Having an escort over the first tunnel set the tone for me...nice touch!).

Can I also reiterate my thanks to your guys (Quentin and Paul) who fixed my rudder at mile 27. Having done an erratic fourteen miles through Manchester with no steering they pretty much saved my race, and I'm really grateful for that.

...and one for Neil Evans: well done. We thought, given the original start times, we'd pipped you, but hearing the state you were in at the finish line and about some of the issues you had: hats off! Thanks guys... A memorable weekend.

## **Beginners' Moving Water Trip – John Dicks**

Sunday 19th May was a moving water trip to the River Irwell at the Burrs Country Park in Bury. For various reasons Paul Davison only had two ~~vietims~~ trainees so Stephen and I had his undivided attention for over 2 hours of an introduction to moving water.

The river level was showing as empty at 0.34m according to rainchasers.com. That's just below the website's definition of "scrape" at 0.35m and over the course of the trip we found out that they had it about right. There were several places where our boats bottomed out. Combined with weather that was overcast, calm and quite mild the conditions could not have been much better for a first trip on moving water.

We started by paddling along the start of the Manchester, Bury and Bolton Canal which took us from the car park to the put in on the river. A combination of weed, low branches and silt made the 500m section seem like very hard work. Getting off the canal was an experience too. For someone who is used to getting out when there is a whole tow path to flop about on, a 2m long step that's only about 30cm wide with a 1m wall immediately behind was something of a challenge. The next task was choosing where to put in on the river. There is a 6 m high weir that was built to maintain a supply of water from the Irwell to the canal. In such low water conditions, those who were brave enough put in upstream and shot the weir. For Paul and Stephen it was not an issue. Those of us who's cowardice is devout who don't like rollercoasters (me) chose to put in at a rocky beach just downstream.

It was not just our trip that was undersubscribed. There was only one other paddler on the water when we were there. We teamed up with Chris from Oldham Canoe Club as it gave mutual extra safety cover having two experienced paddlers with two moving waters novices on the river. Paul proceeded to make full use of him to give extra demonstrations of what we were trying to learn. Thanks to Chris for all of his assistance.

We started off with practicing breaking in and out of the main flow and rapidly learnt the value of keeping the upstream edge high to deflect the flow of water under our boats. Shooting the first of the small "weirs" also taught us the value of paddling hard once we reached the stopper at the bottom. It wasn't particularly large but neither is Stephen's playboat!

There was plenty of opportunity to break in and out of the flow as we proceeded downstream. We found ourselves eddy hopping and often forgetting the basic principle of facing upstream when we were in the eddies.

There were several more small weirs or steps to shoot so we were introduced to ferry gliding and reverse ferry gliding whilst looking for the downstream “V” in the water that indicated where we should aim for when going over them. Once we were below the drops we worked our way onto the stopper waves and spent a few minutes surfing them. It seems absolutely bonkers that you can be downstream of a small waterfall and just sit there or even have to paddle backwards to avoid being dragged back upstream.

We had a try at working our way back upstream in places but despite the low water levels there were some stretches that even Paul struggled to make progress.

Our trip back to the car park was nearly over when we arrived at a point where the river splits in two and flows over two steps. River right was too shallow to paddle so we were committed to river left. I got over the drop and was looking for an eddy when I got caught by the flow from river right re-joining the main stream. Unable to switch edges in time, an impromptu capsize drill was inevitable. Because of a multitude of boulders the water was too shallow to swim properly but equally the bottom was so uneven that getting ashore to empty my kayak and get back in was entertaining (to those watching). Once I'd got my breath back we paddled down to the take out point and said farewell and thanks to Chris before loading up and driving home.

## Sea Kayaking on the Isle of Harris – John Bunyan

I'm gradually working my way down the archipelago of the Outer Hebrides – my previous trip a few years ago was to the Isle of Lewis and this June I travelled with my family to stay for a week on the Isle of Harris.

The fact that the Isle of Lewis and the Isle of Harris is technically either end of the same island is rather confusing, but geographically they are quite distinct with the relatively flat fertile lands of Lewis in the north contrasting with the mountainous and more barren landscape of Harris in the south. The feeling of separation is further enhanced by the fjord-like sea lochs that cut deep into the island leaving only a small neck of land connecting the two “isles”.

Any family whose children are asking “are we there yet?” within an hour of leaving home should not travel by car to the north of Scotland. Leaving Rainow around 6am we headed north and our route took us through the Lake District, the Southern Uplands, through Glasgow and on up past Loch Lomond.... And that's about half way! We then negotiated the honey pots of Glen Coe and Fort William before making our way up to Kyle of Lochalsh and the Skye bridge.

The inhabitants of the Outer Hebrides, and Harris in particular, are very religious and since we would be arriving late Saturday evening and couldn't rely on anywhere being open on Sunday, we stocked up on provisions at the supermarket in Portree on Skye. Shame really, I like to support local communities, but travel logistics and standard opening hours prevented this till at least a few days into the trip. So finally just after 4pm we arrived at our ferry terminal at Uig with an hour to spare we could relax knowing we weren't on a schedule any more.



The ferry was delayed because the weather had closed in, but we were soon boarded and made our way up to the favourite haunt of “island hoppers” in North West Scotland – the legendary Calmac ferry restaurant and its hearty fare. Suitably studded-up we passed the rest of the time on deck watching the view (which unfortunately wasn't very good

because of the weather) or sitting around reading in the lounge. After the three hour crossing we disembarked at the Tarbert ferry terminal in low cloud and driving rain. Perhaps not a good start, but it was forecast and the weather was going to get better as the week went on.

Finally, around 9pm, we rolled up at our rental cottage and unpacked.

For the first couple of days it was very windy, but the sunny intervals were increasing and we had a chance to appreciate our beautiful surroundings. A short stroll from our cottage was a sandy beach with steep dunes that we visited every day (mainly to walk the dog). This beach seemed to catch the surf from the Atlantic and with the waves breaking over eye-height I was not tempted to get the kayaks out quite yet.



By the Tuesday, the weather was starting to play ball and the forecast was for the winds to die down and for the sun to come out. So just after noon I set off on my first paddle of the trip.

The wind had moved round to be mainly from the SE, so I opted to paddle from Tarbert venturing out into the sea loch to the west under the shelter of the hills on the south side of the Loch. Paddling by yourself always heightens your awareness and any unexpected wave or squall of wind causes the pulse to quicken and a small rush of adrenalin. Without any companion to aid you in case of difficulties but also no conversation to distract you, you get totally immersed in your surroundings – a sensation I was soon enjoying as I quickly left the relative civilisation of Tarbert and paddled under the imposing remote mountains of South Harris.



I wasn't sure how far west I would venture – my rough plan was to paddle along the south shore of the Loch then maybe swing north west to the islands of Sodhaigh Beag and Sodhaigh Mor to return via the north shore. However the temptation of a visit to the island of Taransay was too much, so once I reached the channel separating Taransay from the “mainland” I set a course due west for the short crossing of a few kilometres. The crossing only took about 20 minutes, but having lost the shelter from the hills a few gusts of wind got the heart racing but luckily nothing too exciting.

I reached Taransay's east coast, just below the ruins of some deserted houses and paddled south to the curving beach and sandbar at Corran Ra for a brief stop. The beach has a sweeping view of the mountains of Harris that were being bathed in late afternoon sunshine. I re-launched, headed north and crossed the sea loch to pass between Sodhaigh Beag and its larger neighbour. The gap was only a few feet wide and when approaching I wasn't sure if there was a passage at all. Once through to the north side of the islands there was no swell and a mirror like sea. I stopped for a snack on a sandy beach on Sodhaigh Mor and was duly entertained by an otter swimming in the shallows just a few metres from where I was sat. I returned to Tarbert paddling into an increasing westerly headwind that I found tiring and I was glad to land and get back to my car, well satisfied with my first outing.



The next day we spent the afternoon on the lovely beach at Horgabost that also hosts the main campsite on Harris, so for about the only time on the holiday we weren't the only people on the beach. Gavin and I had a short paddle

around the bay and we spent a long time trying to divert channels of water from a stream that crossed the beach. With it not getting dark till at least 11pm it gives you a lot of options for a late start, so that evening I went for a paddle in the Sound of Harris, the channel that separates Harris from North Uist.

The beauty about being based on an island is that no matter what the wind direction, you can normally find somewhere to paddle that is sheltered. So now with a northerly component in the wind I decided the Sound gave me the best option.

I set out from the ferry slip at Leverbrough, the community extensively developed by Lord Levenhulme's ill-fated attempt to create a large scale fishing industry. Heading north west I made my way towards the small islands of Saghaigh Beag and Saghaigh Mor but struggled to make any headway against the tide. The guidebook said the tides in the sound are complex, so the best approach is to just take it as it comes, so I duly veered west and ferry glided over to the island of Ensay.



I got out on the large sandy beach and explored the deserted buildings and the small church before re-launching to head south along Ensay's east shore. On reaching the southern tip I turned west again to perform another ferry glide across to Killegray and continued down its east shore and on to the skerries (rocky islands and reefs) at the southern end of the island. By this time the wind had totally died and I was paddling in glassy waters in the evening sun. I watched the ferry motoring its circuitous way from Leverburgh across to Berneray, the island port that serves North Uist. Time was getting on, so I turned north to make my way back to Leverburgh catching a brief glimpse of another otter en route.

I'd had two great paddles, so I wasn't necessarily contemplating going out again, but the good weather was forecast to continue and Nancy was happy for me to paddle again the next day, so I decided to go for one of the classic routes on Harris, the circumnavigation of Taransay.

I used the car park on Horgabost beach again and headed off across the Sound of Taransay to make the short crossing to Rubha Nan Sgarbh and then on to the sandy beach at the back of Loch Na h-Uidhe. This area is the site of one of the main settlements on the island and there are numerous ruins scattered around the velvet green grass. In the warm sunshine it seemed such an idyllic place to live and you wonder why there are no longer permanent residents on the island. Up the hill to the east of the settlement though you can find evidence of the more violent side to the life the villagers faced with the ruined "Dun" (fortified house) situated in the shallows of a loch.

I left the beach heading in a clockwise direction passing by some caves and made my way to the southern tip of the island. From a distance I could see breakers on the rocks at the small headland and with a certain amount of trepidation I ventured around the tip and into the weather side of the island. The sea conditions were now quite confused, with a swell from the south west combining with reflected waves from the small cliffs. As a result I tried to take a wide berth around the next headland but it didn't seem to make much difference so I was relieved to reach the beach at Traigh a Siar for lunch and a bit of a breather. This beach is on the west side of the island, but only a hundred metres or so from the beach on the east side where I had landed in the morning.



I still had another section of the exposed west shore to paddle but it didn't seem as turbulent as the south west corner so I was fairly relaxed and enjoying the journey back around to the sheltered east side.

As I made my way towards Corran Ra I startled a large bird of prey that I'm pretty sure was a golden eagle. I landed again at Corran Ra – the same place I had landed a couple of days earlier – and sat for a while soaking in the vista of the Harris hills and wondering if I would be back again to enjoy this majestic landscape. With a slightly heavy heart knowing this was the end of my paddling on Harris (for this holiday at least) I crossed back to the mainland at Horgabost.

Two days later we made the long trek home. Good news for the kids is that the next island on my grand tour – North Uist – can be reached by a ferry from Oban – a lot nearer!

## Sea Kayaking in Scotland; May 2013 – Alan Tonge

At the end of May a depleted group of 4 MADCC members (Alan A, Alan T and Roger B, led by Mark Finch) set off for the west coast of Scotland, the weather forecast was good, so filled with optimism we headed North. Alan and Alan set off on Friday with an overnight stop outside



Glasgow, by Saturday afternoon we were on the water in bright sunshine and a light breeze for a 12 mile warm up paddle round the isle of Shuna and over to Lismore starting 14 miles north of Oban in the sheltered waters of Loch Linnhe. A stiff breeze and modest tidal flow made the paddle between the islands and up the sound between Lismore and the mainland more interesting, but most of all it was great to be out on the water, with hermit crabs at the put-in a glimpse of an otter as we rounded the first island, eider and black guillemot on the water and a fabulous sheltered beach for lunch; things were looking good.

Heading further North to our planned bunkhouse stay at Plockton on the banks of Loch Carron (near the Kyle of Localsh), we stopped in Fort William for Petrol, a trip to the Supermarket, and a handsome portion of Fish and Chips. A familiar looking estate car in Morrison's Car park

(distinguishing features - two seventeen foot sea kayaks strapped to the roof) proved to belong to the other two members of our paddling party so we were all set for the rest of the week.

Plockton Station Bunkhouse formed a base for the next 3 nights (the weather forecast for Monday was windy and wet as a low pressure area moved over) and on Sunday we travelled to Skye for a paddle from Dunvegin to Stein via the islands of Clett, Mingay and Isay and a fabulous Coral sand beach. The wildlife didn't let us down, with Seals, Arctic Terns, Sea Urchins and deer on the headland. Our planning had told us to be off the water by 4pm and sure enough a stiff breeze blew up in the afternoon and by 2pm we were paddling hard across the bay into a strong head wind and some heavy squally showers. Bracing, but confidence inspiring for the longer paddles we had planned for later in the week.



Monday was set aside for planning, boat packing and a very long shuttle up the coast to Kenmore on the banks of Loch Torridon, only 15 miles as the Crow flies 36 miles by sea, but an hour and a half each way by road!

Tuesday morning saw us set off bright and early from Plockton down Loch Carron (surfing small waves) with an a south easterly wind behind us, the Loch was rich in bird life with puffins, razor bills and guillemot challenging us to take their pictures. Passing through the Crowlin Islands and the resident seals we headed north up the coast towards Applecross stopping at another idyllic coral sand beach for lunch.



Several miles later Applecross was another welcome stop for afternoon tea and cake in the local pub (no one said we had to 'rough it'!) Our planned stop for the night around 3 miles North of Applecross was a beach named Sand (imaginative) we were fully equipped with tents but it seemed rude not to use the Bothy at the head of the beach. This idyllic spot was only improved by a beautiful sunset, a campfire, some beer and wine and the sounds of church bells drifting across the water

from Portree on the isle of Skye\*.



\*Actually this was the alarm on my phone that had been set to make sure we didn't miss the weather forecast – hilarious at the time, but I guess you had to be there!

The following morning was glorious sunshine once again with otter tracks on the beach and an incoming tide allowing us to launch straight from the Bothy. The wind had turned to the North so we would be paddling into it for 9 miles or so with an interesting turn around the

headland east into Loch Torridon, this proved to be the most challenging paddle of the week, but passed without mishap.



Loch Torridon did not provide too much shelter as the northerly breeze was pushing waves up the loch. Alan A and Roger pulled into Kenmore to collect the car while Mark and Alan T paddled on to the village of Shieldaig 5 miles further up the loch and into Loch Shieldaig. The choice of Shieldaig for an overnight stay was inspired, a free municipal campsite, with a beautiful view up the Loch, a pub and sea food restaurant with good beer and free wifi – civilization!

Thursday saw us recover decamp and drive further north to Gairloch, an evening paddle round Longa Island resulted in another unconfirmed sighting of an otter and lots of seabirds, the view up the Loch to the peaks of the Torridon peninsula was spectacular.

Friday morning saw 3 paddlers set off bright and early from Gairloch up the coast and round into Loch Ewe, at 23 miles this was the longest days paddling of the week, the coast North of Melvaig was spectacular with huge sea stacks and arches to provide interest, as ever we met the odd seal but today were lucky enough to see three huge sea eagles (two juveniles and an adult) and some gannets along with the by now common place guillemots, razorbills and divers. Paddling into Loch Ewe proved uneventful despite the promise of some tidal flow round the headland, the WW2 gun emplacements sitting in the mist at the mouth of the loch point to the importance of this defensive harbour in supporting the Arctic Convoys during the second world war and there is now a push to establish a museum commemorating the bravery of the seamen involved in this endeavour.



Reaching the head of Loch Ewe we decided that we couldn't sneak into the world famous (apparently) Inver Ewe tropical gardens from the seaward side so we settled for a brew and a cake (a theme seems to be developing here) in the coffee shop before heading back to Gairloch.

Being so far north we had a long drive ahead of us so on Saturday we made do with an hour or so having a last paddle in the surf building up in Gairloch before heading for Stirling and an overnight stay in the very well-appointed Youth Hostel finally heading Home on Sunday.

What a great week, 7 days paddling, great company and by anyone's standards some glorious weather.

## Moving Water Trip Tees Barrage International White Water Centre: June 2013 – Alan Tonge

The Tees white water centre <http://www.tbiwwc.com/> may seem a long way to travel for a Sunday paddle but at just over 2 hours door to door, it proved perfectly feasible when 3 of us (Alan, Alan and Paul) made the trip in early June. For two of us this was the first time on a manmade course and for the other this was the first time since this course underwent a significant remodelling. At £7.50 the fee to paddle was very reasonable especially given the changing rooms, lockers, cafe and (albeit tepid) showers. We were all surprised to find the course almost empty on this fine Sunday morning, and guilty that our fees wouldn't even touch the cost of running the four Archimedes screws that keep the water levels high throughout the day. A couple of runs down the long course warmed us up then after making use of the fabulous conveyor belt that takes you back to the top of the course we set about playing on a couple of the waves. The course has several interesting characteristics and is occasionally remodelled (by moving the large plastic blocks bolted to the river bed) to create waves with different features. One interesting feature was that the course changed between every run, depending upon the amount of water being pumped through at any given point.

The course steepens to towards the bottom with the final obstacle being a deep hole known



as the 'Acid Drop', odd times we passed through and the hole was practically non-existent but on another occasion it would have swallowed me and my boat but for a hastily placed high brace, falling in here would have been the ultimate embarrassment as the local play boaters were hanging out in force, for once luck was on my side! One of the most challenging aspects of the course was the large pool at the bottom of the course, which had

some very large swirling eddies and a fierce jet of water from the short course to cross before reaching the conveyor belt to the next round. Paddling here will quickly help you progress, the flow is significant but the course is relatively safe so the inevitable (in my case) swim is free from the risk of strainers or large boulders mid-stream.

There are some interesting videos of paddlers on the course at [www.unsponsored.co.uk](http://www.unsponsored.co.uk)

## Surfing Trip Anglesey: June 2013 – Alan Tonge

In the absence of any rain four of us (with at least three partners and one dog in tow) headed to Rhosneigr for an afternoon of surf paddling in late June the strong westerly breeze was pushing choppy wave up the beach so we drove around looking for the most suitable conditions, Trearddur bay was too sheltered so eventually we settled on Rhosneigr.



An hour and a half paddling was enough to test all our levels of fitness, with rolls failed rolls, swims and boat recoveries keeping us busy. A long drive for a short paddle, but what a great way to spend a day: although the non-paddlers might not agree as they got wetter in the downpours than we did in the sea. The cafe in Rhosneigr did however provide a great finish to the day.

### **Beginners Moving Water evening trip – Goyt**

Ten of us managed a beginners moving water trip on the Goyt (Roman Lakes Bridge to Brabyn's Park one Monday evening in June.

The water levels were low which qualified the paddle as a 'scrape', but the water passing over the small drops did provide features for paddlers to practice ferry glides, breaking in and breaking out. For several paddlers this was their first trip on moving water and so provided a very welcome gentle introduction. There was enough water to shoot the weir near Marple Bridge river left and most paddlers chose to do this with everyone completing it successfully, so quite a few 'firsts' for the evening.

### **FSRT Training – Brereton – Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July**

Thanks to Mark Finch for running a Foundation Safety and Rescue Training course for club members on 27<sup>th</sup> July, this is an important step for those interested in gaining coaching qualifications, but can be thoroughly recommended to any paddler looking to improve their safety skills and become more independent in their paddling. Some interactive theory sessions in the morning were backed up by extensive practical training in the afternoon which saw us several hours fully or partly submerged in Brereton Mere, a welcome opportunity to stay cool on such a hot and muggy day! The FSRT class of 2013 can be seen below!



## Apocalypse Now – Quentin Blagg

An exciting tale of two brave paddlers on a boy's day out.

'How about another paddle on the Dee'? That's me ringing Chris Wood, fellow camping enthusiast, paddler, biker, hill walker, and lover of strong ales. 'I've got a new river boat I want to try out, what were you doing this Saturday!' So it was that we arrived at the pretty little village of Farndon, on a nice sunny morning, and were soon off on our out and home trip. We made a lovely start under the old stone bridge, with me now able to keep up with Chris, thanks to my new Piranha toy. As I keep trying to convince my long suffering partner, a man can never have enough toys. Think I'm losing the argument though.

A few miles downstream, and the reason for this title, old houseboats washed up, creating an eerie atmosphere, similar to the scenes in the famous war epic, starring Martin Sheen and Marlon Brando. Remember it, as they paddle upstream, with boats washed up on the river banks? It was the same this day, with decaying houseboats washed up high, really weird. There must have once been some very high water in the river.

Chris got some nice pics, and on we paddled in total peace, with just the odd bird for company. Not exactly alone as there were some lovely holiday cottages on the left hand bank; most owners waved and seemed pleased to see us. BBQs and beer were the order of the day, yum yum. We stopped to enquire how far it was to the next village and was there a pub there? Yep, Aldford is just round the next corner, and there is a very nice pub there serving Sunday lunch. Hmm; me in a shorty wet suit, Chris in his Joseph's Technicolor dry suit, I don't think we would have been too welcome in the main banqueting hall. Undeterred we paddled on, and on and on. Just round the next corner turned into a 3 mile push and the sight of Aldford church steeple was most welcome (as was the nice landing stage in the Grosvenor Estate, where the boats were tucked away from view.) A quick trot over the c.1800 iron bridge led us towards the village, with the pace quickening as Chris caught the scent of beer on the wind.

The Grosvenor Arms had all that we desired. Good beer and crisps, and sarnies were taken discreetly out of sight of the midday diners. A little path across the fields made sure we could avoid illegal wall climbing, and soon we were back at the rather exclusive Grosvenor boat house. 'Glad they've kept an eye on the boats' remarked Chris. 'All part of the service' said I. All that remained was a return paddle back to Farndon. We passed a boat load of drinkers, and got a cheery beery wave. We had passed them earlier in the day; 3 hours further on and most were nicely smashed. Soon we came across another boat from the outward trip; 2 guys fishing and dozing in the afternoon sun. They took some pics of us and promised to send them on via smart phone. Sad to say they never arrived. Next up was the little river coming in for the right. Chris had remembered it and bashed his way through. I didn't and had to ferry glide my way up it. Bill and Paul would have been proud of me. Back via Apocalypse Now, and soon the arched bridge of Farndon came into view. All that remained was to finish the day in style, with a couple of pints in the village. Another great day out for the boys.

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