

100 Mile Paddle Report from Caroline.

Saturday - A long day, with bad weather threatening but we made it to the Monington Falls camp site and pitched tents just before things got really wet. Being lazy Wendy, Rita and I chose the pub option for food - and what an option that was - a full roast dinner with more than we could eat - which was just as well as everyone arrived half an hour later and had plenty to finish off. Walked back in torrential rain, and that heavy rain continued through the night

Sunday - After yesterday's lengthy day this was a lazy start whilst we tried, to some degree, to dry out. The river had risen a couple of inches, and that rain helped us all the way to Chepstow. Just a short trip and we were in Hereford by 3pm. As entertainment before we got off the river, Fitz challenged Rita to a game of stand on the gunwhales - with a predictable tip over of the canoe. Fitz remained dry (not sure how), Rita didn't. As entertainment to the christening party who had taken over the rowing club, we camped besides the rowing club, then off for a curry in Hereford city

Monday - A good days paddle but good speed from a full river. With wind also figuring, Adam and Ben attempted various sailing techniques. Adam had style, if not speed. A stop off in the afternoon at Hoarwithy was just the ticket - lovely pub the Little Harp with a good variety of beers and cider. A further stop later in the afternoon saw the boys entertaining themselves with stone throwing; couldn't see the point myself, but Ben was the winner. Evening we arrived at Hole in the Wall. A deserted PGL site, but we made the most of the facilities, including the toasty teacher's lounge. I hear there were werewolves.

Tuesday - Freezing all night and when trying to get out of the tent at 6am found zips frozen shut! Managed to unjam one, but that teacher's lounge was a life saver again. On the river at 9am and made good progress to Ross. Fitz was the hero - acquiring bacon sandwiches for those that wanted them - best bacon sandwiches ever. Then down to Kearne Bridge and Yat rock where we stopped for lunch. Then onto Symonds Yat for a beer and some playing on the rapids. The last campsite was a basic sheep field, but handy being right on the river. Fitz, being in a bivouac had a bit of trouble with the sheep! Our last night meal was at Weatherspoons in Monmouth - we ate the place out of Mixed Grills

Wednesday - Timing was critical as we had to catch the high tide at Tintern. So it was on the river at 8am and a steady progress to make sure we didn't miss it. After a little confusion we all got off at Tintern and waited for the tide whilst we had drinks and snacks. On returning to the boats it was obvious the tide had arrived, as the beach was gone and boats were floating. But we all got on OK and made our way into the gorge. Surrounded by spectacular cliffs we sped down to Chepstow, past the castle and onto the pontoon, where we were able to get ourselves and boats out without having to wade through mud. That was 2pm, which gave us an hour to clean up and sup a beer before our pick up arrived - perfect end to a perfect trip

Caroline