

Symonds Yat – 19th July 2009

Brian & Anne Biffin – Canoes
Lee Matthews & Mark - Canoe
John Golightly - Canoe
David & Fiona Vickers – Canoe/Kayak
Ian & Alex Thomas - Kayaks
Carl & Luke Veness - Kayaks



We all arrive at Symonds Yat with five canoes and five kayaks and launch onto a very high fast flowing river Wye. The more adventurous kayakers – Fiona, Alex & Ian use the launch shoot, whilst me & dad play it safe and use the steps.

We had planned on running the rapids to the bottom and then working our way up the ‘steps’ playing on each one as our confidence grew, but the river was so powerful that going upstream proved almost impossible, and all the eddies had been washed out, so we spent a little while practicing ferry glides across the river in the pouring rain.

We all group up and decide to carry the boats up to the top of the rapids and then work our way down again.

Us kayakers form into a group with John coaching us from his canoe.

John went down first and showed us where to aim for, and the five kayaks followed. We all made it into the eddy and listened to John as he told us where we were going next. “Break in and then quickly break out behind the island.” Sounded simple but looked impossible, “Who’s first?” shouted John, I looked behind me and suddenly realised that I had been ‘volunteered’ by the rest of the group - thanks!

We all eventually make it across and spend a little time at the bottom of the rapids playing.

After various swims and rescues we decide to go for lunch and have to drag the boats up the bank on ropes and carry them above the rapids.

After lunch we get back on the water and spend a couple of hours playing in the river by the launch site and watching Anne playing the damsel in distress in her submerged canoe waiting to be rescued, and Mark finally got to realise how responsive a canoe can be once he'd got rid of all the ballast weight that was sat behind him!



A good day that saw us all end up wet either from swimming or the torrential rain that appeared throughout the day.

The river was just too high to be able to use the rapids upstream, but even at the bottom of the rapids we were able to scare ourselves silly.

Thanks to everyone for all the help and coaching skills.

Luke Veness