

## Jason and Nigel's DW Preparation

Training started in earnest for the DW on December 27<sup>th</sup> our first paddle after the Christmas excesses. I could only manage 2 miles without having to stop and get out of the boat and stretch my back, things didn't look promising. After some serious dieting and putting my higher homemade seat back in the boat we managed to complete 11 miles down the Kennet with a small B3C group by December 3rd. The Kennet and Avon Canal has been a favourite location for our sessions as the section below Aldermaston has stayed mainly ice free as the Basingstoke Canal froze and the Thames was on high red boards. We have tried to paddle at least three times a week where possible increasing the miles as well as some interval training

We have paddled every section of the course now with the exception of the tideway and have done a large portion of the Thames in the night time as well so we feel confident we know where we are going. The last month of training has proved more difficult as you get this feeling of just wanting to get on with the race; the terrible weather hasn't helped at all. With Nigel's shift pattern at work and my travel we have had to do most of the training off the water by ourselves which has required some real self motivation. The one night Nigel and I decided to do some cycling as a change it poured down with rain and I got a puncture. As we have said before paddling with Liz and Tracy has been invaluable and I have to thank Denis for ferrying us around.



We have really enjoyed the Waterside series of races and our tussle with Neil and Mark has added to the enjoyment, I think without the swim they had on B they may have sneaked past us getting stronger as each race has come along. The races teach you about efficiency especially at the locks; it can make big differences in time and our regular sessions on the Kennet have improved our portaging no end. Waterside D just gone has given us the biggest insight into just how boring the DW could be, the tiredness hadn't really kicked in but you just want the miles to keep disappearing. We are going to try an mp3 player on the boat to try and reduce some of the monotony; I did think we have the world's longest music quiz as well as the world longest non-stop kayak race

Our Support crews are up to speed and we have all the maps printed and sat navs programmed. The energy drink solutions and food are pretty much sorted out although I need to try and find something savoury as a change from all the sugar. Our red tub (K2 kayak) just needs a bit of TLC before race day, but I have some days booked off to make sure everything is just right. We toyed with the idea of using one of the lighter club boats if we had been allowed but decided we would save borrowing the New New Mirage for our Liffey descent in September!

So do we feel ready? We both think so, but until you get underway and get well into it I guess you just don't know how the body will hold up or what seems more important how strong mentally you

are over that length of time. We have a good teamwork in the boat; Nigel is a real calming influence and keeps our rate nice and slow, while I tend to get excited and shout a lot.

April the 3<sup>rd</sup> will be almost our 2 year anniversary of joining B3C and without the support we almost certainly wouldn't even be getting to the start line, in fact we would probably still be trying to balance in the kayak by holding our paddles in the air which didn't really keep us out of the water. Our race number is 422 which seems to have mixed fortunes over the last three years including one retirement, one disqualification and a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish. We have no disillusion about fast times and are currently aiming to start at 8am Easter Saturday with a 25-26 hour schedule, our single goal is to get to the finish line.

Regardless of whether we finish or not we will be back for the Hasler series in the summer and potentially more DW's although once we've felt the pain it may be better to stick to 4 miles. Good luck to all the Basingstoke crews who are competing over the Easter weekend and I hope you get out of the DW all you want.

Jason and Nigel

March 2010



*At the start of Waterside "D". Who said anything about paddles in the air?*