

The River Barle October 2009

A trip to the Barle was organised by the Youth Committee to experience white water but, as Dan says, low water meant a late change in plans.

Approximately 25 people met in the quiet, rainy Exmoor town of Dulverton late on a Friday night.

Accommodation at the hostel was basic yet clean, comfortable and warm. As a result of this, everyone got a good night's sleep (except for the younger club members who stayed up to the reasonable time of 1.30 am on Friday night/Saturday morning!). For breakfast each day we had a choice of porridge and bacon rolls, both of which were very nice. After breakfast we made our packed lunch with sandwiches, crisps, penguins and fruit.

On Saturday, after making our lunch and deciding where to go, we set off for the River Taw in Devon as the Barle was too empty to paddle in. We unloaded the boats at an old garage that we were allowed to use and were given a quick briefing of the trip. After this we dragged our boats a few hundred metres down the road and over a railway crossing to the launch site. There, the group leaders decided which way to go, as there were two forks at our launch. The river was icy cold and rather deep in places but 'bump and scrape' in some places as well. Most of the fun bits were roughly half way through our trip and I really enjoyed surfing on the fastest bits we found.

We paddled about 7 or 8 miles and I felt exhausted at the end. Then, just as I thought it was all over and I could just get out, we had to drag our boats up a very steep set of stairs and over a railing before carrying them another 100m across a bridge to the car park. I waited for my Dad who was in another group but found out he'd left our car at the start point of the trip with all our kit in it so we had no warm dry clothes to wear. I had to wait for him to go and get it (*lesson learnt – send dry kit on down to the end next time!! - Dad*).

Supper was great and I was absolutely zonked and fell asleep in my clothes on my bed and didn't wake up until morning.

The next morning everyone woke up late and we cleared up. No one had really decided what to do as the Barle was still too low. Some wanted to go surfing, but it was cold, rainy and there probably wasn't much surf so most people went home early. We stopped at the Haynes Motor Museum in Sparkford on the way home and saw Merry's car in the carpark as we left, so we know he went there too!

Despite the low water and the long drive, to wrap it up and give a mark out of 10 I would give the trip a 10 as I really enjoyed it. Thank you to everybody who helped organise the trip (Jason and others) and cooked (Rose, Anne and Wendy mainly with help from others).

Daniel Evans
20/10/2009