

Waterside B – a back-marker's view

Bernie Boyles (having only joined the club in Dec 08) was persuaded by me to paddle the Waterside B as a K2 Senior after our slow effort in K1s for Waterside A. We had a few practices on Saturday afternoon on the canal in Fleet but this was our first competitive race together in this Mirage 3. We set off at 10.12hrs and it was quite hairy as we were held for a long time at the start. Nevertheless we reached our first checkpoint, Monkey Marsh lock in 38mins. We then paddled through to Aldermaston without a stop and arrived there at 12:53hrs. Stopping for what now appears to be far too long we set off on the return journey. Many crews are quite rude on the water and it seems to us that any water etiquette goes right out the window in these races. We even had one K2 crew try to push us off with their paddles at one lock, and a complete melee at Widmead where a barge by at the get in proved a real hazard. On the way back things did slow because of the current and the wind but we managed it all. Arriving at the finish at 14.06 we therefore clocked a time of 3hrs 54min. Not that fast and after some short analysis and chatting to Charles and some BCCC members at the finish we have concluded we did stop for too long at the portages (4min at M Marsh, 7 min at Aldermaston, and 4 min at M Marsh on the return). We did enjoy it though and for a first run together morale was high all the way. We'll get better and faster soon and look forward to Waterside C. A colleague mapped us on a GPS and we even clocked up at one stage 7.72mph on the way out and even on the last two lock stages we managed 5.54mph against the current. Bodes well we trust. Many thanks to you all for your encouragement and guidance”

Ian Mattison



