

Waterside "C" 2010

Thick ice greeted the competitors at Pewsey Wharf on Sunday morning for the start of Waterside C. Quite a few delayed their start in the vain hope that earlier crews would act as ice breakers. By 9:30, whilst there was ice at the wharf it was clear just further along at the start and as far as one could see – that is to the first bend. It was tempting to think it was clear all the way to Newbury: it wasn't because just round the bend the paddlers faced thick ice. Some said it was for 6 miles and some said 7. Whatever, there was no option but to get out and run. Running with a boat for that distance on hard packed ground is draining and it materially added to the finishing times of all competitors.

It was tough going, so well done to everyone who finished. The BCCC had 15 paddlers and their times were as follows:

	Hours/Minutes/Seconds
Jason Dyer/James Taylor (K2 Junior)	3:55:54
Isobel/Naomi Smith (K2 Ladies)	3:59:20
Jamie Cox/Derek Campbell (LBZ) (K2 Senior men)	3:59:27
Mark Evans/Neil Matthews (K2 Veteran)	4:20:00
Liz Murnaghan/Tracy Rees-Clark (K2 Ladies)	4:23:00
Jason Ashwell/Nigel Cole (K2 Veteran)	4:23:51
Nick Boreham/Mike Rees-Clark (K2 Junior)	4:24:47
Jon Freemantle (K1 Senior men)	4:42:57
Sarah Francis (K1 Ladies)	5:32:56
Andrew Jeffs/Paul Jeffs (K2 Junior/Veteran)	Retired



The start at Pewsey. Neil and Mark "Ice? What ice?"



Finished 4 hours 20 minutes later.

Those who paddled might find a photo of themselves on Ollie Harding's website
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/paddling/>

Waterside C – a race of two parts

There was some ice at Pewsey Wharf which was broken by school crews eager to get on with racing. The start line was clear of ice then there was a short paddle before you hit another patch, there was a long portage, broken only briefly by paddling, to Wootton Rivers. A barge caused much excitement, it had broken up the ice from its moorings, which was, sadly, only a few hundred metres away. (Groan) More ice then a brief clear patch before the tunnel. We followed Jamie and Derek through to meet, guess what, more ice out the other side. Crofton is often portaged as a single item, but we, like many crews were glad of the opportunity to paddle for a change. We kept expecting to see more ice but it never materialised. Instead a keen easterly wind stopped us overheating in the sunshine. We took a bit longer than we hoped, but at least it wasn't long to wait for the results. First and second in the ladies K2 event and the juniors have consolidated their position in the Junior Team event. Well done to all competitors and their stalwart support crews and a Happy Birthday to Denis RC

Liz Murnaghan

.....and as experienced by Jason Ashwell

Only 3 more races to go before the DW, weathers been rubbish, flows have been high and training is getting to be a drag as I think we both feel we are almost ready, it's lucky Tracy and Liz are super enthusiastic and have been great to paddle with. So on to Waterside C, the forecast had improved during the week but -4 degrees was what met us on the drive to Pewsey, surely it couldn't be that icy the weather had been quite warm during the day in the week.

C was to be our first race with the full DW kit in the boat adding about another 3 kilos to our already heavy boat, we also wanted to try and slow down a bit closer to our DW race pace and see how we felt after 23 miles. It was a chance to get the support crew out for some practice and learn where the locks are. Tracy was the first B3C paddler we saw on the walk to check in and told us the canal was frozen and we should expect lots of portaging. After quickly checking in and getting on the water we thought this looks OK no ice, it must have melted. 300 yards in and we got out of the boat, oh well we knew there would be some ice. 5 miles later with only minimal paddling we had questioned our sanity:

- we had thought about ditching the kit bag
- how far would we keep going before calling it a day
- is the pain really worth the series T-shirt
- we already knew the course we paddled it the week before
- paddling shoes offer no support while running on frozen ground

In the middle of the run we cruised through the tunnel behind a C2 with no problems and the even though the left/ right paddle calling is a bit boring it does keep you moving along nicely. I wonder how often the Crofton flight is a relief to get to, the ice had gone and we were going to paddle every single lock just to get our money's worth, we passed quite a few of the walking crews though.

After Crofton we settled into a nice rhythm paddling and portaging efficiently, Naomi and Isobel flew past us in their new blue Vajda and were out of sight within a few minutes. The course was quite busy but everyone seemed in good spirits with some good banter. At Kintbury we passed Jon Freemantle in the heavy club Trainer which must have been a real headache to run with, we also caught up a couple of boats who had passed us earlier and the competitive instinct kicked in. A lime green K2 had been playing leapfrog with us on the run and water and we were now in front! For the last 5 miles we paddled harder to keep in front of them made more challenging by the strengthening easterly wind. The crane in Newbury gradually got larger and we finished in 4.23.50.

It wasn't the race we had wanted to see how we felt, but a new experience nevertheless. The support crew learnt how to feed us even if my Mum did stuff food up Nigel's nose as well as in his mouth. Well done to all the B3C crews in what was a challenging race especially Sarah and Jon in K1's and thanks for all the encouragement along the course.

Jason

Waterside C- A whole new experience- Neil Matthews & Mark Evans

I knew the day was going to be interesting as the thermometer on my car hit -7C on the way to meet our able support crew, Brian & Stella at 6.30a.m and the canal at Fleet looked frozen solid.

After an excellent drive down we arrived at Pewsey at 7.50 and the temperature had warmed up to a barmy -4C and yes the canal was frozen as far as we could see and the rumours were that we would have to start off running, until at least the tunnel, which was about 5 miles away.

By the time we had checked in, got changed it was around 9.00 and the ice seemed to have broken up and the start was at least in the water. Mark and I waited until around 9.30 to get in, hoping by then that the canal had been cleared of the ice and we could have a leisurely paddle, rather than a 23 mile run.

Neither of us had ever paddled more than 18 miles, run more than around 1 mile with a kayak or had ever been through a big black tunnel!

This was going to be a whole new experience!

We therefore started at around 9.35 and got into our stride for at least 500m before hitting thick ice and had to climb out onto the tow path. For the next 4.5 miles we yomped our way down the tow path, managing to get in twice for around a 250m stretch, until we hit the tunnel, which was of course free from ice.

The tunnel was a pleasant surprise, as all the stories of total darkness, ghosts and vampire bats, may have been slightly exaggerated. We could see the other side quite well on such a sunny day and we managed to keep upright and in time and could have gone much faster if it had not been for the K2 Junior Girls Crew who crawled along the side in front of us. At the end of the tunnel we were put in a holding pattern waiting to get onto the pontoon as yet again the canal was frozen over.

After another 1 mile of yomping we hit the Crofton Locks and finally saw free water and dived in like a released seal. After around 6 miles of yomping our legs were completely shot and we decided to minimise any further running and paddle at every opportunity.

Brian and Stella met us at the second lock at Crofton and we topped up with Jelly Babies and a drink and were looking forward to some paddling at last.

We both felt pretty good going past Waterside A start, not surprising really as we had only been paddling for 3 miles and we were going at a good pace, but as usual with about 4 miles to go we really started to feel the tiredness set in and longed for the A34 bridge to appear and the cranes of Newbury to be seen on the horizon.

Eventually they appeared, along with the last bridge and lock, where we jumped in and were just passed at the finish line and nearly dumped in by the tidal wave from Owen Peak and Dan Seaford's motor powered kayak, passing us by.

Our time of 4.20 minutes was 10 minutes behind Brian's strict schedule he had set us, but we were told the run to Crofton slowed us down by 10 minutes so we were spot on schedule after that and, more importantly, ahead of Jason & Nigel!

Only 2 weeks to recover before Waterside D. We must be completely mad, but then again that will be **another whole new experience!**

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