

Winter Racing

If you want to keep up your paddling throughout the winter then meet up with the club's racing section and try it for yourself. Even so weather can present obstacles. The canal is prone to freezing for days on end this time of year. The Thames usually runs free but is prone to strong currents when the Environment Agency posts "red boards" and discourages boat movement leading to cancellation of races as happened in January with the half-marathon Frank Luzmore race on the lower Thames.

Saturday was typical. About 30 or so turned up for the February Hare & Hounds only to find the canal had frozen overnight. Some went off to Crookham Village where, surprisingly, the canal was not frozen and others saved themselves for Waterside "B" race the following day. And that is what I want to report on for you.

The race is a 17½ miles round trip from Newbury to Aldermaston and back but does include 19 portages around locks. It is the second race in a four race series on the Kennet and Avon excellently organised each year by Newbury Canoe Club. A cold day and intermittent showers greeted the paddlers but not a sign of ice. There are several river sections with a strong flow to assist the paddlers out to Aldermaston but then they have to fight their way back against the current. The race attract paddlers from up and down the country with several entries from Fowey in Cornwall and one from Kircaldy and with a large contingent of juniors from public schools. BCCC had 15 paddlers in a field of over 440 paddlers in some 256 boats. It is a race for all - mostly in kayaks but also 15 canoes – and attracts paddlers from international standard to club paddlers from 14 years to over 70 and this can be seen in the spread of times ranging from 2hrs 15 minutes to 4 hours 54 minutes.

There were the inevitable thrills and spills, problems with rudders etc, but overall the BCCC results were great:

		Hrs:Mins:Secs
Senior men K2	Jamie Cox/Derek Campbell (LBZ)	2:47:21
Junior K2	James Taylor/Jason Dyer	2:42:54
	Nick Boreham/Mike Rees-Clark	2:48:49
Ladies K2	Isobel/Naomi Smith	2:44:25
Veteran Men K2	Jason Ashwell/Nigel Cole	2:56:48
	Neil Matthews/Mark Evans	3:10:14
Junior/Veteran K2	Andrew/Paul Jeffs	3:28:49
Ladies K1	Sarah Francis	3:33:59
Senior Men K1	Jon Freemantle (no result shown although I understand he finished).	

Isobel and Naomi leading in the Ladies K2 after two races and, with two further races to come, will be hoping for their third consecutive series win.

Well done to all who raced and much appreciation to all who gave support along the route..

Brian Gandy

22/02/2010



Neil and Mark at Woolhampton



James and Jason at the finish



Mike and Nick



Isobel and Naomi