

## Avon Trip Jun 7<sup>th</sup> 2015 (A Newbies View)

A glorious sunny day saw 16 paddlers gather at the Elephant wash slipway in Leamington for a day of fun on the water. The trip was mainly for 2\* canoeists, but all were welcome, and the group included 10 canoes (almost enough for 1 per person) and 3 kayaks - including me; a lowly 1\* on his first trip away from the lake. The trip was originally intended to return to Leamington, but Plan B had us ending at Warwick, so a quick car shuttle later and we were ready to go. (Thanks for the pic Penny)



The route went West down the Leam to meet the Avon, up the Avon to look at the Saxon Mill pub (and the weir) and then back down the Avon, past the Leam to Warwick. But we had some coaching and fun along the way. The first 'fun' was the weir just outside Leamington which most people ran, and most of those ran it without swimming... a couple of us swam! – But as some people said later... if you are not swimming, then you are not trying/learning!



Milliseconds before a swim! (Thanks for the pic Neil)

Along the Leam and up the Avon which was quite shallow at points and then I saw another first for me – people standing up in the canoes and poling! – I guess that is one of the delights of the 2\* course I have to look forward to (or is it?). Up the Avon there was another weir which we portaged around (and took the opportunity to stop for a snack). We moved on further up the Avon to look at Saxon Mill weir and then back down to the weir. The weir looked easier than the previous one, with a lot less water going down. Most ran it, but I'd had enough of weirs by then and portaged around it. The final run downstream to the car park in Warwick saw my body saying 'enough' so I missed out on the loop down to the castle. However one final aspect of the trip, was the demonstration from Paul and Morgan on how to (intentionally) capsize canoes and carry out peer rescues (another 2\* activity to look forward to!)



Overall an excellent day out, thanks to all (Penny, Dave, Paula, MartinW, Andrew, MartinS, Simon, Nick, Richard, Neil, Kat, Russell, Cheryl, Paul and of course Noah!) for looking out for me and encouraging me, I learnt a lot – not least of which is to properly secure your stuff in the kayak before you go for a swim... jamming it in place simply isn't good enough.

The next day... did I ache? Yes – but that will wear off, and it's a day closer to the next trip!