

WANSBECK PADDLE SPORTS CLUB

It might be the same in other clubs, after Christmas the delights of winter paddling are beginning to pall and people lose focus. In past years we've tried to break this up by having something exciting to do in February, including a wonderful sea kayaking trip in Spain. This year however the club has a bit less in the coffers and the members are worried about spending.

We came upon the idea of celebrating the improvement in the weather with an early sea kayaking spring festival. So during the February half term we organised a week for club members and invited people along from other clubs. Heavily subsidising the event with funds we'd raised at the Anglesey sea Symposium we had a week of sea kayaking offering 3 star training and assessment, 4 star leader training and assessment and the Coastal Navigation Course. Eleven members of Wansbeck Paddle Sports Club and 4 paddlers from 3 other clubs took part in the week.

From a club perspective the week was hugely successful, some members passed awards, some didn't but all had a terrific learning experience. Some members of the club gained qualifications that they needed in order to go on to jobs in the paddlesport industry. Some people who attended didn't even want to get the certificates that they could claim - they were happy to have learnt some more about paddling. People from other clubs hadn't paddled the coastline from Newbiggin and whilst the trip won't replace the Farnes in people's affections it has different charms.

The club took the decision to subsidise the event on the grounds that we operate a cascade principle, skills gained by club members are passed on to others. Engaging other clubs with this simply made the week more cost effective and built bridges with others. A hope is that other clubs will do events and invite our members along.

The organisation of the week was relatively simple, Rachel Derry and Diane Bedford at Canoe England were a delight to work with organizing the paperwork. Nigel Dennis of Sea Kayaking UK was, as ever, hugely supportive of our efforts. Peter Jones and Phil Clegg came to do the things that we couldn't do ourselves, their kindness was even deeper than their knowledge, their sympathy even broader than their skills and their enthusiasm even more magnificent than their experience.

WANSBECK PADDLE SPORTS CLUB

Phil Clegg commented "'Well done to all those that took part in the on the water or 'in the water' activities in the less than tropical conditions.'

Roswithna said "Thank you for organising that week, I enjoyed the coastal navigation day"

Björn commented: "A shame that I could take part in only 2 sessions and the navigation course. It was well organized, educational, great fun and even the weather was good! Getting my 3* sea was an additional bonus."