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### **11/12/06 The Aberglaslyn Gorge**

Following a lovely morning trip down the Llugwy on the North Wales weekend, Chris Scullion and myself met up with some of his friends from Leeds Canoe Club to run the Aberglaslyn Gorge. I had never been there before but had seen reports rating it as one of the nicest stretches of white water around so I was looking forward to it. My anticipation only tempered by tales from some of the group of having run it the day before.

Apparently one of them had gone off the main drop backwards and after a minute or two had left his boat in a vertical pin and swam for it, they hadn't been able to get the boat out and went back at 6.30am the next morning to find it washed out in an eddy downstream,

luckily. Once we shoehorned all the cars into the tiny lay-by at the top we kitted up and got ready, unfortunately at this point about 4 members of the group decided to run down the entire length and have a look at the gorge, which is about 1km. While we were waiting at the top the other paddlers basically talked it up [the word gnarly was definitely used], mentioning how it had come up on yesterday, the guy who got pinned wasn't getting on, etc etc, all making me distinctly nervous. We



opted to take the recommended option of running the lead in and eddying out to inspect the gorge further down. The lead in was really nice grade 3, incredibly clear water and sure enough there was a big eddy to pull into and inspect the top of the gorge from river left. Inspection isn't my strong point, as anyone who's seen my lines on rivers may know, I tend to remember a few generalities such as stay right/left, miss those rocks, don't drop into there whatever happens, that kind of thing, and hope for the best. Basically the section was continuous grade 4[+], drop after drop with little opportunity for catching eddies. One of the reasons for the grade is that a swim at the top would be long and uncomfortable but thankfully those not paddling set up as bank support. I tried to work out a line, picked a few markers to indicate the way and headed up to the top.

Whilst I was walking back I was cheered by the site of some lunatic descending solo in a creek boat with hand paddles, he had rolled twice before getting to the main drop but it didn't seem to bother him unduly. I got on the water and hung around a bit until enough people had headed off to probe it and then followed suit. It turned out my inspection technique stood me in good stead as once you went down the first drop everything blurred and it was basically read and run. Every now and again I'd catch up with Chris in an eddy and get a breather as he disappeared over another horizon line, soon to be followed by myself. It was a great paddle, an adrenalin filled couple of minutes before

you hit the big fall, where a reasonable boof took me cleanly through all the mess and into the eddy [for once]. We hung around a bit for everyone to regroup then ran the last couple of hundred metres which was a bit more relaxed, boulder garden stuff, picking quick lines all the way down to the bottom and under the bridge where everything eases off a couple of grades and before you know it it's all over. It is a very short section and as such multiple runs would be the order of the day, unless you teamed it up with other rivers [or it was dark when you got off as in our case]. It is incredibly consistent great quality white water all the way down and it isn't very often you get a section that continuous in this country. It's not too far from the other North Wales stuff and definitely worth a visit. [Nick L](#) [Photos.....](#)