



## [Other Major Trip Reports....](#)

### **20/06/09 For the benefit of the British Heart Foundation – 100 Miles along the Leeds to Liverpool Canal**



I had this vague idea about a sponsored kayak trip from Skipton to Liverpool, 100 miles along the Leeds-Liverpool canal. "We're up for that," said my friends (Matty and Andy) and my niece (Gemma). So the idea quickly became a reality.

My family had an old 'fazaplaz' fibreglass canoe, and I last set foot in it when I was about 12 years old.

While lacking in kayak experience - I was fairly sure that I had enough know-how to

sort out the other aspects of the trip, having run Cub Scout camps for more than 20 years. Matty and Andy have a good kayaking background through Scouting and MYCT, but like myself Gemma was also lacking in experience.

Pre-trip practice sessions included a couple of jaunts over distance trying out different types of kayak for suitability and 'fit'. As a result we would like to sincerely thank BROOKBANK canoes and kayaks, and MERSEYSIDE YOUTH CHALLENGE TRUST training centre for the loan of sea kayaks (undoubtedly best for the job), paddles, spray decks and other equipment, also KIDSWHEELS for the loan of a back-up minibus - ably crewed by our friends Penny and Andrew.

Gemma and I are also grateful to the instructors at LIVERPOOL CANOE CLUB for their training tips and hints prior to our 'adventure'.

We planned to do the route in daily 20-mile chunks and started on the morning of Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June, just the other side of Skipton. At Skipton we had our first encounter with aggressive nesting SWANS! I had planned for most things, but not the swans - which we encountered at least 3 times a day - and they attacked us several times along the way - proving to be the biggest delay of the whole trip.



Taking a kayak  
For a walk!



Perhaps a bit of climbing training may also have been useful to help scale some of the canal walls in order to exit the kayak, on one occasion this was a scramble of more than a metre high! Oh, and weight training would have come in handy as we had to carry the kayaks around numerous obstacles, including a tunnel, various locks and the dreaded swans!

We stayed at various campsites along the way, each with cheerful and welcoming staff to encourage us on our way.

The weather was kind to us for the most part and we did achieve our 20 miles per day goal surprisingly blister-free thanks to inspired use of pipe-cladding and duck tape on the paddles. We also probably had fewer aching muscles and joints due to our use of garden 'truggs' as improvised trolleys on the 'trekking' parts of our journey, (one can be seen upturned on the kayak in the picture) they proved invaluable, though most of the wheels had split by the time we finished.

**Kim Fraser**

