

Tring Summit

On a bright Sunday morning, Sam and I arrived at the site after a slightly scenic route around Tring. The rafts arrived shortly after, which was fascinating for me as I had only a scout raft in mind with big plastic barrels, wooden logs and shoddy knots. This was going to be a real raft race with bolts, nuts, scaffolding poles and even a rudder!

Going up to the start proved to be a bit of a mission due to the sheer distance and a slight technical problem; the handle on my paddle broke off half way up to the start but luckily there was salvation in the form of a lady with a spare paddle strapped to her bike.

On the word GO we started off powerfully to set us up for the rest of the race. We kept going strongly, with the occasional overtake by male crews, facilitated by some expert steering over to the canal side by Clair, maintaining our power and leaving the bank to its own devices.

There was lots of support from the side especially from Roy who could often be found jogging along beside us.

We passed the pub not seeing any crews on the way back yet and for me, being the junior of the crew, the age old question popped into my head..... are we nearly there yet? Encouragement from Pam kept us paddling steadily as she said that we would see the turn just around the corner.....or was it the next!?

Once we got to the turning point we managed an impressive 3-point turn without the benefit of power steering! I know that if I had to do a turn with a contraption of that size in a small canal, the turn would have ended up with many more points to it!!

We all kept it strong along the back straight, with the reappearance of Roy. Then we saw the finish and did one last push to the line. We ended up a fraction of a second ahead of another team – a 2 hour race to end in fractions of a second difference – a close one!

Thanks to Alan for providing me with this opportunity and to Pam, Clair and Caroline for such a good race.