

Lower Liffey Canoe Marathon

With the International Liffey Descent Canoe Race postponed until October 8th due to a 35 year low in river levels, the organisers moved to host the “Lower Liffey Marathon” on the original date, September 10th. Therefore last Saturday around 200 canoeists made their way to Leixlip in Co. Kildare. This was the starting point for Saturday’s race, from where competitors made their way down-river to the finish in Islandbridge, a mere 10 miles away. Along the course racers had to negotiate 7 big weirs and also a 500metre run, with kayak, around Leixlip Dam.

A relatively small group from the Thomastown Paddlers Canoe Club attended Saturday’s race, but certainly made their presence shown. Both Kieran Varley and Alex Broderick competed in the General Purpose classes, with both taking top spots in the Senior Men’s and Boy’s U-16 categories.

Fresh from a summer of international duty, Anthony Forristal had a day to remember on the River Liffey when he finished fourth in the top racing class in Ireland, the Open K1 Division 1 group. This class is for the fastest senior and junior athletes in Ireland. Forristal was the first junior paddler across the finish line and this result certainly bodes well for the Liffey Descent proper in October.

Dermot Forristal and David MacCormack also warmed up for the Liffey Descent last Saturday when they powered home to finish in fourth place in the Open K2/T2 class. Cáit Broderick and Eamon Forristal competed in the Division 4 grouping and both had fine performances on the Liffey last Saturday, while David Comerford and Stuart McMahon avoided a capsize at any of the weirs when competing in the Open Canadian class. The Thomastown trio of Senan Forristal, Troy Walsh and Aaron Varley all took part in the 2km “fun race” and showed they have a great future in the kayaking world.

With the dark evenings now taking hold, week day kayaking sessions with the club have ceased. We will re-commence our “Beginner, Level 2 skills” course’s next April. Finally the club will hold a Table Quiz on Friday September 23rd, in the Salmon Pool lounge. A table of 4 is €20 and all proceeds will go towards the club. For full details of this or to simply keep up with the clubs events see www.thomastownpaddlers.com