

Report on Paddle and Puddle 2007

DUFFIELD SCENE 2007

Last month Duffield Scene carried an article of local interest when it reported on the Paddle for Tanzania expedition. The 100 mile fundraising event has now been completed with the team of Martin and Philippa Grosvenor, Mark and Ben Simmons canoeing the River Wye over a three day period in June. The river was already flowing fast where we started at the foot of the Black Mountains on the Wales-England border. At first the river was shallow in places and the canoes had to be hauled over shingle banks when they grounded. The depth and flow increased as the river became swollen by the heavy rainfall we suffered in the afternoons. A heavy thunderstorm on the first day occurred as we negotiated our first rapids and by the end of it we needed to bail the water out. The torrential rain was repeated the following day but the weather was reasonable after that.

After taking advice from local guides we decided to finish before Chepstow, due to the high tidal flow which made the river dangerous. The Symonds Yat rapids were the most challenging and we measured an incredible speed of 16.5 km/hr as we ripped down the swollen river. The wildlife was fascinating with numerous herons, grebes, cormorants, swans (43 in one colony) and one huge salmon. Physically it was less tiring than we expected and, despite long days, we all felt that we were some way from our limits of endurance. Perhaps a more challenging trip will be run next year. Any takers?

Was it worth the effort? Certainly, and in so many ways, especially as the purpose of the expedition was to raise money for the Tuishime Nursery and Primary School in Arusha, Tanzania. Our target had been £2000 but we have now reached a fantastic £4000, thanks in no small part to the residents of Duffield. There are many calls on people's money but we have been delighted by the generosity of people, particularly as our appeal followed closely on the heels of Christian Aid week. Due to the low living costs in Tanzania, the amount raised will go a huge way to improving the quality of education at the school. We will also use some of the extra to make a donation to a medical doctor, linked with St Alkmunds Church, who works amongst HIV/AIDS patients.

Preparations are now underway for the visit to Tanzania in July and we look forward to meeting numerous people, including some from the Maasai tribe, and making many new friends. It will be exciting to meet children whose lives are changing through remaining in full time education. There will always be opportunities to support individual children in the school (only £10 per month) and play a part in enriching their lives. How about adopting this school as a long term project for the people of Duffield? Call Martin Grosvenor on 07748 593190 for more details.