

## **Middle Nene Tackle The North Norfolk Broads** Spring Bank Holiday Weekend 2010

The date was agreed, the boats were booked and the deposits were paid. Middle Nene's volunteer teams of intrepid sailors were to embark on what has become a biannual attempt to tackle the northern reaches of the broads. Base camp was set up at a strategic site on the crab infested east coast. By Saturday the advanced party who numbered about twenty campers donned the essential pink protective clothing (Hence some were camper than others) and traveled from Happisburgh (Hazeburer To the phonetics speaker) to meet up with the day specialists at Martham Boats.

On arrival we were met with the stark reminder of the dangers that were to face us. The mass of paperwork fueled by health and safety policy became the first hurdle to deal with. Identifying a responsible adult for each of the hired craft was a major challenge for this motley crew. After some deliberation and soul searching five volunteers came forward and accepted the safety equipment. By 11 hundred hours, the five day boats were escorted by Sherpa Mike & Sherpa Dave and their crews to advance onto Horsey Mere meeting little challenge en route. Tide & wind were favourable to enable some exhilarating sailing encouraged by the essential drinking of Champagne. Some sailors had to be reminded that 'It wasn't a race' but several laps of the expansive mere were accomplished before the flotilla changed direction and headed for the final destination of Hickling Broad spurred on by the knowledge that the pub 'The Pleasure Boat Inn' had reopened. While sheltering from the downpour, everyone took advantage of the opportunity to take on board fuel and water – local ale & wholesome pub fayre. We were rewarded by financial contributions to the pink bucket raising funds for 'Breast Cancer Research Charity'. Casting off proved to be a test of skill and sobriety, despite this, all craft managed to battle the opposing tide successfully. The Commodore's boat almost paddled their way out but showed the way. The homeward leg was against wind, tide and mild precipitation but skillful sailing resulted in all boats returning safely and on time. Fortunately, we were shown where NOT to sail by Dave who went aground to test the depth of water having damaged his tabernacle earlier in the day. Mike and Bob were already ashore to give a helping hand to the tired but exhilarated group. Thanks to Richard Borley for organizing the event and also to the 36 members who took part. We raised in excess of £160.00 for charity and a thoroughly great time.

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