

Athy Marathon Canoe Race

Last Sunday a group from the Thomastown Paddlers Canoe Club attended a kayak marathon race in Athy, Co. Kildare. The race was held on a section of the River Barrow and was organised by the Kilcullen Canoe Club. The race course began and finished at Athy Rowing club. There were three courses at Sunday's race. These included an 18km long course, the shorter 9km course and a 2km fun course for those new to the sport.

Tackling the 18km course on Sunday from the Thomastown Club were Donnacha Brennan and Anthony Forristal. Donnacha raced in the single racing kayak category (K1). He placed 2nd after a tight finish with a paddler from the Salmon Leap Canoe Club, which is based in Leixlip. Forristal raced in the two-man racing kayak category (K2). For this he teamed up with Mark Hartnett from the Celbridge Paddlers Canoe Club. This junior pair performed very well for their first ever outing together and finished a credited fourth place following the 18km.

The rest of the Thomastown team competed over the 9km course. There were fine performances in the K1 Division 4 class from both Kieran Varley and up and coming junior Alex Broderick. Both finished in the top half of this section.

Cáit Broderick had a race to remember in the Girl's General Purpose (GP) class. She stormed to victory and would have been placed fourth over-all, including the seniors. Dermot Forristal also competed in the Men's GP category. Result of the day came from David Sutton in the Boy's GP section. David only started kayaking one week ago when he completed a level 2 skills course with the club. He completed his first marathon race in Athy on Sunday and finished in second place taking home a silver medal.

On the 2km course, young members Aaron Varley and Charlie Dwan took a full part. Both were in contention coming towards the finish line, with the pair finishing 3rd and 4th respectively.

Next for the Thomastown Paddlers is the Junior Liffey Descent which takes place this coming Saturday May 28th. This is a chance for the junior canoeists of Ireland to take on a 7 mile stretch of the River Liffey, where they will have to negotiate a 500metre run section around Leixlip Dam and then take on four big weirs including the notorious "Wren's Nest" weir, which has cost many a kayaker a capsized or two. Vantage points for anyone travelling to the event include Lucan and the before mentioned Wren's Nest weir.

Anyone interested in trying out the sport of canoeing and joining this very busy and exciting kayak club can find full details about Beginner courses etc on www.thomastownpaddlers.com or by calling Dave on 086-3391549