



## Trip Report

# River Dee, Llangollen

## 12 September 2020

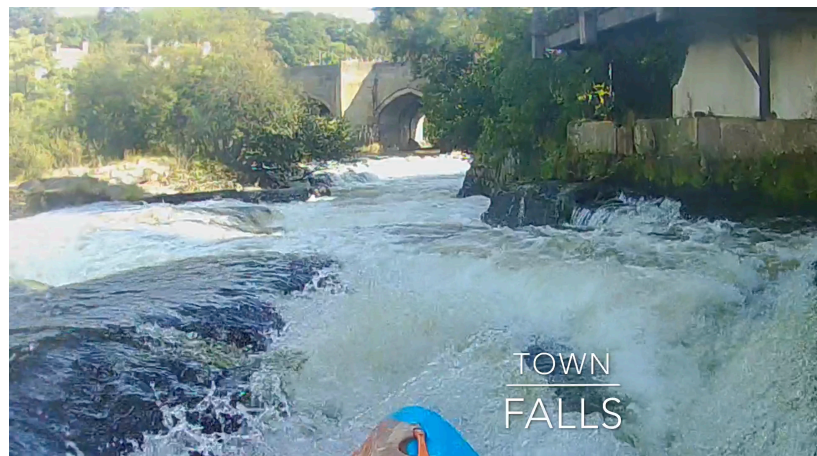
**A**fter enduring months of lockdown and having exhausted local playspots it was time to get back onto a real river, so in September six club members headed over to Llangollen for a socially distanced run of the much paddled River Dee.

We'd chosen the Dee for several reasons, it's reliably paddleable pretty much all year round at a variety of levels, but most importantly because using the adjacent Llangollen Canal we could complete a round trip without the need to shuttle.

The classic Dee run is to put on at Horseshoe Falls (a notorious weir 3 miles above the town which has a vicious tow back at anything above a medium level) and follow the river into Llangollen, ending at the Grade 4 Town Falls rapid. However, this would mean ending our trip with the long slog back up the canal, so instead we decided to put on at Mile End Mill and warm up on the gentle (grade 3) rapids at the Mill site before tackling the falls and heading back up to Horseshoe to complete our loop.

**W**e enjoyed a good hour eddy-hopping and surfing at the Mill site before heading into Llangollen to run the falls. After taking a recce from the bridge we got back on the water with a few faces starting to look nervous. Several of the group had not run the rapid for well over a decade and for others it was their first descent.

With plenty of punters watching from both the pub garden and the bridge Gerald headed down first with Grunt close behind. Dave decided that this would be a good time to practice his roll mid-rapid, which was working perfectly, whilst Pat, following on,



elected to test how good the seals on his dry suit were with a brief swim. Tim and Ryan completed their runs and Pat was quickly reunited with his boat before we all headed up the hill for a snack at Llangollen Wharf talking in the view of the horse-drawn canal boats.

Suitably refreshed we headed up the canal to Horseshoe Falls, a section which we are sure was the highlight of Ryan's day, given that he'd chosen to paddle



a playboat. Skipping the weir we headed for the wooden slide and, having had the river to ourselves so far, were surprised to be met with a queue of paddlers waiting to get on before making our way down a fun bouncy set of rapids and under the Chain Bridge to the grade 4 stretch at Serpent's Tail.

**W**hilst at the easier end of grade 4, Serpent' Tail remains worthy of respect so we duly inspected and set up safety from the bank. Here the river drops into a narrow channel in the stone gorge where you are met by a couple of conveniently placed stoppers and eventually the sting in the tail - an overhanging ledge which, depending on water levels, is ideally placed to knock your head off (as it was today).

Pat redeemed himself with an excellent line taking him perfectly into the middle eddy and the rest of the group, now well warmed up and looking confident, enjoyed multiple runs exploring



several different lines. Our thowbags stayed dry and we set off once again to complete the run back to Mile End Mill - a stretch with several enjoyable rapids, small drops and play waves.

Our day finished with a visit to the newly opened *Go Kayaking* shop now situated within the mill complex.