

Round Jersey by Kayak

By Tamara Nance



The weather was pretty windy when we set off at a later start time of 8.20am from Green Island. There were 8 of us but one paddler decided not to do it. So then there were 7.

We set off heading east towards La Rocque and at that point were quite protected by the rocks and natural gullies. We headed into the main bay of Gorey and felt a lot more exposed so hugged the shore line.

Just off Gorey Castle on our way towards St Catherine's we were joined by a large single bottle-nose dolphin who came over to check out our strange little boats; a beautiful sight, not for the dolphin I would suspect though!



The birds were also in abundance along the south east coast all huddling from the wind. We saw Egret and Heron, Oyster Catchers and lots of Dunlin and other delightful sand birds. There were no other craft out as we headed east in

the rain, it was very wintery and I began to doubt what I had let myself in for. My arms were already aching and as the norm my back was feeling stiff and sore.

The wind picked up and squalls hit us from the North West so we were totally exposed along the stretch of the North coast. I really didn't think that we were going to go for the whole island at this point as it was looking quite bleak out there. However, when we pulled into Egypt at 11.30am I knew that we were not turning back. We lost one of the team at Bonne Nuit, he had a special kit boat and was finding the going very slow, we were also waiting for him and this was frustrating him more than us. We carried on out into the strong winds and rain, even so the stretch of the North coast was beautiful and so un-spoilt. We saw 2 fishing boats for the entire run, clad in waterproofs the fishermen looked at us as if we were a sandwich short of a picnic.

Greve De Lecq was no longer such a great idea for a lunch stop as the tide turn was imminent and we didn't want to get caught paddling into the flow. We decided to make a stop at Plemont. Oh boy and did that seem a long way from Greve! We had a surf landing which for one of the team ended in a washing machine cycle up the beach, he was fine but a bit knocked out by the force of the shore break. We stopped for 20 minutes and had a stretch and bite to eat and waited for the tide to turn in our favour to start heading south.

I had never paddled further than Plemont and I understand why now! It was very RUFF! Waves were bouncing off the cliff walls which were the most incredible colour and formation. Hissing, sucking swells had us bobbing around like corks and it was hard to find the direction you wanted to take as the boats seemed to have their own free will. I actually felt sea sick and wished that I had skied around the island at this point! We found our way past Pinnacle rock and the back side of L'Etacq, the bird life was amazing here too, which surprised me. Lots of Cormorants and Oyster Catchers. Pinnacle from the sea looks quite short and stocky I hadn't imagined it to look like that at all. The colours of the cliffs were amazing against the blue of the sea. We turned in to the bay...Hurray.... the wind started to drop off BUT the swell picked up.

We crossed St Ouens bay at about 3.30pm and it took less time than I had imagined for such a stretch of water, the swell was about 10 ft out there and we kept losing site of each other and the land. Pretty cool though too! I felt like I was in Hawaii 5 O at that point. We could hear the waves crashing on to the beach so imaged that there were a few surfers having fun inshore.



We stopped for a wait off Corbiere, OH BOY! The swell was huge! One paddler went outside the lighthouse island and we ventured through the straights and landed on the rapidly submerging cause way. That was hairy trying to get back on board, I lost my paddle and got turned out of my boat, and was quite frightened by the force of a foot of water. Mark, one of my fellow paddlers got me back into the boat and Howard retrieved my paddle, so great team work for a damsel in distress....

This is when I started to hurt!

The cliffs were beautiful and the light fabulous as the day broke open with the most heavenly light. The swell and wind were behind us but my boat decided to crab its way home like a super market trolley, so I was exhausted and didn't have the strength to keep it on track. I trailed



back with another paddler and tried to keep the boat on course but really struggled. I kept on going but wanted to just stop, cry and feel sorry for myself, I was exhausted and needed to have a rest. The problem with being at the back is that the forward paddlers will wait for you but as soon as you get close they start again! Now I know how the last snow skier feels in a group....I will be more considerate from now on....remind me when ever I'm not!

Just off Noirmont Point we watched the shipping lane with awe as 2 large vessels came along side. We waited and then paddled across St Aubin to the harbour in slack water, a killer as you appear to go backwards. We stayed together as a group to cross the lane, the harbour was pretty hectic with lots of ferries and small craft coming and going. You have a sense of being very tiny in a Kayak and therefore you wait until you really have got time to get across. It was at the harbour wall that the realization of what we had done hit us. What an experience we were having. Apparently we are now one of less than 50 people who have circumnavigated the island in this way before.

We could see Green Island ahead of us and it was the first time I have ever been pleased to look upon the "sore thumbs" as I call them or the flats at Le Squez. Dave, one of our coaches, really pepped me up here and I found some inner strength to just get myself back to the start. I was shattered with blistered hands, a sore back, elbows on fire and a head that was swimming with the confusion of the swell. He helped correct the crabbing action of the boat and the last stretch was that much easier as a result.

I couldn't believe it.....I was there, Green Island was looming ahead of me, and slowly but surely I paddled closer and finally landed on the beach.....I cried from exhaustion, exhilaration and achievement but most of all I thought about all of you who had helped me when I was out there, knowing that you had all backed me to raise some money for Hospice Care, I understand now why people get sponsored you just cant quit!

The grand total as I write this is a staggering: £1,500, with a few more sponsors coming in. My final total will be in the region of £1600.00 which will enable Hospice Care to run for 8 hours, 2 hours short of my time on the water. That is a mind blowing thought!

Thank you to all of you! And for those of you who may not have read this in time I would like to make it to 10 hours of running time for Hospice, so if you have a pound to spare please donate it, God willing none of us will need their help and care but for those who do, it is an incredible place and without sponsorship and our donations would not be there.

Taking part:
Will Lakeman,
Mark Harris,
Dave Priddis,
Howard Phillips
Tamara Nance.
Derek Hairon.



Please can you send me your very kind donations as cheques made payable to Jersey Hospice Care
If you would like to make a donation to hospice please send donations to Tamara at the address below.

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