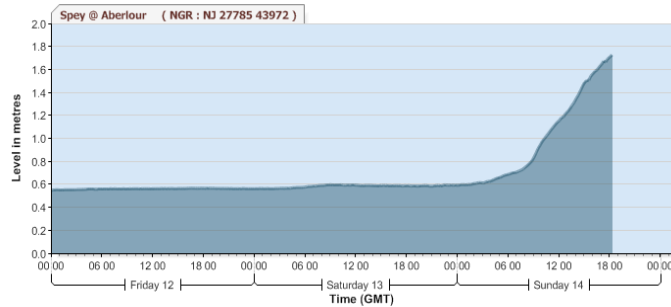


Spey Snow Melt Swimmers

1st Highland Series Spey Marathon, Sunday 14th April 2014

Dawn on Sunday 14th April brought warm winds over the Cairngorm Mountain range raising river levels on the Spey to exciting levels for the 37 competitors. Relatively benign eddy line whirlpools suddenly turned into bow swamping maelstroms without warning. The fresh warm breeze further added to fast decent times and further snow melt. The drive there and back through the Lecht ski center by car saw many tributary rivers with burst banks flooding surrounding fields.



Data courtesy of: http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_levels/river_level_data.aspx?sd=t&lc=234150

On the long course, the 1st rapid, washing machine, was inspected from the cottages 1.5 miles downstream of the start and was seen to be clear and fluffy, straight down the middle. The 2nd major rapid at Knockandu was also clear with fastest, safest passages down the right hand side.

Calumn Urquhart was 1st paddler over the long course finish line in 59 minutes in his WWK1 despite an earlier un-intentional ramming incident which I won't talk about (I must fix that K2 rudder). His son Ross was 2nd Junior in the short course in 42.49 whilst wife & daughter cruised through in the Canadian. Adrian Shaw was 1st Sea kayaker in the super fast new NESKY Inuk. He paused briefly during the race to help Beatriz & myself in the K2 fix a wire rudder wheel problem, which allowed us to finish 3 minutes ahead of him later. It's a friendly race on the Spey but 2nd place was hotly contested with Jeff Hooley from Glasgow, Jim Fairley and Michael Surmon of Nairn CC, all up there from time to time. Fastest lady was again Mags Duncan in 109.18. The Nigel Dennis Triton double sea kayak made a fine spectacle paddling through the knockandu rapid with Debra & Gordon paddling.

In the short Course 1st Junior was Alistair Ramsey in 42.23 breaking the record again this year, Eilan Van De Pol finished in 49 minutes and 8 seconds, in the open canoes came Jamie Walker & Sean Henderson in 1hour 1.17.45, complete with Horses head and Saltire flag onboard. Callum Openshaw was first in the General Purpose class.

The blinding sunshine and the intoxicating smell of the mash from the whiskey distilleries must have had a wobbling effect on the "Two old Blokes" from Kircauld CC who were seen to be emptying out on the lower section in their K2. As per the race plan, they did the sensible thing and walked to the nearest parallel road and basked in the sunshine where they were later picked up safely by Doctors Urquhart. I shall not name the "Snow Melt Swimmers" as we all know who they are. Our thanks go to the timekeepers Jill Henderson & Sylvia Hadley and Hamlyns of Scotland for their continued support of the event.

See you for some more swimming fun at the next Highland series Race, River Ness Sunday 7th July 2013

