

Mayor's first trip in canoe turns into plain sailing

BAD weather did not deter Wootton Bassett's newly elected mayor Audrey Wannell from boarding a two-seater kayak to cruise the restored section of the Wilts and Berks Canal at Wootton Bassett, writes Stella Taylor.

Canoeing and kayaking was organised under the expert supervision of Highworth Canoe Club coaches, who escorted visitors of all ages in single and double kayaks and canoes on a round trip from Templars Firs slipway to a point beyond Nore Marsh Bridge.

After landing safely Mrs Wannell spoke enthusiastically of the experience.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my first ride in a kayak," she said.

"It was a pity the weather was so disappointing, as it put off some other people from joining in the Canal Day."

Jenny Stratton, who chairs the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust local branch, added interest when she tried out her new coracle for the first time.

She said: "It was great to see some families braving the weather to find out about canoeing.

"We are looking forward to restoring more stretches of the waterway between Wootton Bassett and Swindon, and on to Cricklade."



TAKING TO THE WATER Above, Wilts and Berks Canal Trust chairman Jenny Stratton in her coracle and left, Wootton Bassett Mayor Audrey Wannell tries her hand at canoeing