

Theme - Place (including Matt Grace study) Windermere, Cumbria & South Lakes, Low Wood, The mountains/hills, Water.



Matt, PhD Candidate from the University of Exeter, captures the broadest of experiences of breast cancer dragon boat paddling through a collaborative writing project, involving Paddlers for Life. Making links between attractive nature, the desire for group exercise, the healing qualities of 'place' and survivorship, Matt has written a few words about his extraordinary visit to Edinburgh.

I chatted to a fellow passenger at Dalmeny station. "Are you going Sailing", he says? "No," I reply, "Dragon Boating!" I walk under the huge bridges, imposing, and into Port Edgar. I meet Andrina in the hut, and she gives me a history of the Paddlers presence there, the connections and networks that have been forged. And then we go down to the water's edge. Many from Windermere are there, some having travelled up with the boats the day before, some that day. All are here to support the many people who have arrived to turn their hand to paddling, some for the first time. We paddle in the shelter of the marina, as the wind is up, and there are white horses on the waves further out into the firth. But the water here is great, salty and buoyant, and the boat flies! The history of the place adds to the panoramic views. The small island of Inchgarvie nestles under the modern bridges. It has been a leper colony and prisoner of war camp over the years, and apparently puffins dive and swim around it. After a 'paddler's lunch' of soup and sandwiches, we time-trialed, Team B winning by just a few seconds. We cheered and sang, "Hey Edinburgh!", but the real celebration was for the presence of dragons on the Forth today. Many congratulations to Andrina and all her team, a great day!

Matt, PhD Candidate, University of Exeter

Nick remembers travelling up to Port Edgar at South Queensferry near Edinburgh. A breast cancer dragon boat team was being established and many paddlers traveled up to the location under the Forth Bridge. There were many prospective paddlers eager to get their first experience of paddling and they were not disappointed. Paddlers for Life members had this wonderful opportunity to paddle in this inspiring location as the new Forth Road Bridge crossing was being constructed. Interesting to paddle in a tidal estuary and experience the vagaries of tide and wind in salt water! The welcome from the new team was heartwarming.

Louisa thinks it was this visit, on the Sunday, when a piper played his bagpipes, while walking to and fro, along the entire length of the Forth Bridge. It was such a Scottish occasion! I loved the added sense of ceremony to a very special day. Paddling beneath the bridges was truly spectacular. The boats felt so different in salt water rather than Windermere's fresh water. Fulfilling Andrina and Emma's visit plans, who were working hard together to establish Paddlers for Life Port Edgar, relied heavily on being able to transport our boats Artemis Diana and Lucy at Low Wood, from Windermere. Nick mentions that it was the first trip out for our dragons, confidently and competently towed on their new trailer by Paul. My memory goes back to a couple of other features. One is my sincere thanks for the efforts of Shelley Barlow from Staveley, who funded the purchase of our 42' dragon boat trailer. Shelley took on a grueling cycling challenge to become the first female off-roader to cross the entire length of the Pyrenees from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. An oar some achievement! Enthusiasm during the visit was high as Andrina and Emma, with their supporters, anticipated the arrival of their own dragon boat from our suppliers in Gdansk,

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Poland. I remember paddling out to take a look at a small island along the estuary, called Isla Mae. Our Port Edgar friends revealed that this was to be the name of their pink boat when she arrived.

I too remember this day clearly and Nick you and Maggie kindly gave us (Mags and I ) a lift in your car there .We had a lovely warm welcome from the Port Edgar and it was great to see Andrina again first met at Durham with The Three River Serpents Team (Keni our coach team )

Andrina had never ever been in a Dragon Boat but was determined to have one on her home water in Scotland she had such energy and inspiration for a life following Breast Cancer and I think of her often another beautiful lady lost to us but never forgotten.

I had never paddled in salt water before and it was so different but a beautiful and exhilarating paddle but I was not prepared for the washing of everything afterwards and the salt stains on everything it made me think how lucky we were to paddle on Lake Windermere.

The paddling experiences I have had with PFL have healed and restored me to be physically and emotionally stronger. June





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**Janie**



Missing this Place! – Jane

Look at all those beautiful faces x **Niks**

Everyone looks so happy in that photo **Jeannette**

Do you have a special place that means a lot to you somewhere that is your go to place somewhere that gives you peace, restores you, and makes you smile .

I love the sea, sunsets and the hills my go to places are Venus and Cupid Sculpture at Morecambe and our sunsets 🌅 are beautiful as anywhere in the world also Scotland it's scenery restores me and love the passion of Italy it's people food and wine and also swimming in the warm seas of the Greek Islands heaven on earth 🌍 🤔 xx – **June**

**Sandra H**



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A hot & sticky walk up Loughrigg today, reminded me of drinking pink champagne up there with Paddlers to celebrate Pfl's ??10th year??

**Louisa**



I think of Pfl's logo & what it represents when I think of 'place'. Designed by Jane, Sue's daughter, when she really was only a nipper! This is a 1<sup>st</sup> edition pin badge. On a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, spot the difference ... **Louisa**



Emma's clock that cuckooed so beautifully and unexpectedly during our first Zoom general meeting. Picture this. It was hilarious identifying from the gallery view of paddlers who it belonged to and so, where it was coming from. There was lots of laughter encouraging a lull in proceedings and an usual 'comfort break.' Thank you, Emma, an invaluable supporter from Barrow. You'll have to remind us of the story of your clock, please.



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27/06/2020

Wow, what a lovely crowd to meet with on a Saturday morning. Jelly babies at the ready to share amongst Port Edgar Dragons, Manchester Dragoneers & Pfl Windermere. A fabulous warm up & virtual paddle capturing the essence of our much loved dragon boating, all from a stool perched in my loft!! Xx - Louisa

