

Pushing the boat out at Piddinghoe Pond



By Michelle Collier – Business Support Manager, Active Sussex

‘Would you like to go in the safety boat Michelle?’ asked Andy from Plumpton College.

‘I’m not sure’ said I, ‘I’ll be quite happy watching from the edge of the lake’.

Andy went on to state that ‘You’ll get some good close up photos’, to which I replied ‘okay then’.

After a quick bite to eat and a slightly reluctant start, I took my place on the emergency boat with Edward – a year 2 student, out through injury. He was a lovely young guy, who offered good company for the 1.5 hours on the water.

Four sailing boats were fully prepared and rigged up by the four recently qualified year 1 Plumpton students: Leah, Ed, Sam, Connor & Danny. Active Sussex staff got kitted out with wet suits, cagoule and life jackets.

After which some hilarious snaps were taken – including Ed in his swimming hat, Anthony applying his face cream and Jo S buoyancy aid-pumping whoever would play.

It was a sunny afternoon, but the cross winds made for very tricky conditions, especially for beginners!

Everybody set sail on the water, but it wasn’t long before the first capsized, (credited to Anthony and Ed) closely followed by Sally & Gina.

The fun & games continued, with a frequent need for Edward and I to haul boats out of the reeds, help turn them the right way up, pass the bucket around for water removal and give advice to the less inexperienced sailors.

To add a little bit of competition towards the end of the session, Andy introduced the idea of races from one buoy to another.

Sam (RYA South East) was on hand throughout and ended up getting chance to sail himself and Gina to victory on multiple occasions. She enjoyed herself so much that she even enquired about provision in the Hastings area.

A lovely first exposure to sailing was rounded off by a well-earned cup of tea and the remainder of the picnic lunch.