

Autumn 1999

The bores started to get bigger again through Autumn with some 10m+ tides.

However September was affected greatly by some heavy rainfall and the river was washing up the banks at Over!

Sunday 26th and Monday 27th, September

The high river levels obviously dissuaded people this month and as far as we know the only surfer out on the river was Dave! Tomo and Danny were away at the time catching some epic long lefts at Lahinch, County Clare.

Dave headed straight for Secrets assuming that most of the river would be flooded out. Not expecting much, Dave was surprised as a wave jacked up past the bend and broke half way across the river! By the time the wave got to him it was peeling off at 4' plus, lovely and glassy, and of course no-one else out.

Perfect! Dave rode it the regular distance around the next bend of 1/2 mile +. The next day the same thing happened though the wave was slightly more choppy due to a stronger SW wind.

This truly shows that even in flood conditions a wave can be found in the right location and Dave was totally stoked!

Monday 25th to Thursday 28th, October

On Monday morning the only guys out were Danny and Tomo back from the Irish surf and Guinness! Oversleeping meant we missed the early start at Boatyards and arrived at Newnham just as the wave was coming around the corner! This did mean we could watch it through Newnham and Jaqui's Reef. The lagoon on the far side has got even larger and pushed further up the main sandbank. Hence as the wave passed the nab, it and all its main energy disappeared over to the far bank of the river and there was not a lot left to form a wave through Newnham. The shoulder that peeled up the sandbank must have been only 1/2'! The wave appeared to reform a bit at The White Hart but was still fairly small.

At Secrets we hoped for more success. Danny was testing out his newly acquired 'Guts' mal while Tomo was surfing with only two fins following an encounter with the Irish reefs!

Similar to Dave's experiences in September, a decent wall of white water powered up the straight and reached us with a 4' shoulder. Tomo got caught on the inside section and his board promptly collapsed to one side when he popped up (must be those fins!?). Danny got his furthest ride to date of about 400m and was pretty stoked.

Over was pretty poor and although a surge came up the straight, it never jacked up enough to allow us to

catch it. Interestingly the mud banks along the left bank (downriver) have subsided and the water is over chest depth all the way along. So this spot will really need very big tides to start working well again!

Tuesday morning Danny and Tomo finally made it to Boatyards in time and at the last minute Dave turned up (actually still paddling down as the wave approached!). The wind was virtually non-existent and the river was lovely and glassy. As we watched a 3' wave approach it disappeared on the point of the bend in a little lagoon. Hoping for the usual wave to form, Tomo paddled out across the river expecting a face to jack up. This is exactly what it did and Tomo landed himself on the shoulder of a 4' face with a lovely drop in and cutback! The wave broke right back across to the sandbank so Danny was forced to surf prone in a fairly powerful whitewater. Dave joined Tomo on the face which didn't close out for a good 300 metres. The wave reformed just before the rapids and sadly got broken up by them. However we had had a good 1/4 mile ride on a decent face.

At Secrets all three of us rode a lovely 4' face for 1/2 mile just chatting and laughing with Dave Lawson in his boat alongside trying to find a way onto the wave. We decided to give Over a miss where not a lot happened again!

Wednesday was much the same though a slightly stronger southerly wind chopped up the river a bit. Danny had headed back to Kent and Dave decided to film with work restrictions limiting his time. This left the river to Tomo and Matt. We had a fairly identical wave at Boatyards. Then we were kinda surprised to pull in at Secrets and find two other guys from Birmingham waiting on the bank. (Apparantly they found the spot through our site - Good work guys!)

All four of us picked up the wave and rode it 800 metres around the bend to the boulders. The visitors seemed pretty stoked with the wave and we were actually surprised there was enough room for four surfers although one of them had a bumpy ride on the inside section.

Finally on Thursday the river was left to Matt and Tomo. Boatyards was similar but just smaller. Secrets was also considerably smaller and when Tomo pearled his board on the unexpected steep face, Matt was left to cruise upto the bend where the wave just washed away.

Well it was good to finally have some decent sized waves again after such a long Summer, and we hope to get more of the same in Winter! Not many people out on the river. On the main day Tuesday, we saw a lot of surfboards on cars but not many people in the water. But I suppose with the main locations (Newnham/Minster/Over) not working at that well people were probably put off. We did see one guy (poss Phil from Bristol??) end up on the far side of the bank at Newnham - over a 200 yd paddle back across with a very strong current! He appeared to make it eventually. Apparantly some spectators on the bank said he got in at the last minute and just missed a small 1 to 1 1/2 foot face and got washed over to the other side! Shows the dangers of bore surfing if you are not prepared!