

CRAZY HORSE

Following on from his excellent midwinter session at Dinas Dinnle (documented in BOARDS March 2006), **Russ 'Crazy Horse' Tetlow** decided to visit again, on March 12. Yes, that day when half the country was snow-bound. But hey, it was windy!

truegrit

It wasn't the most auspicious start to a windsurfing session... My windscreen wipers were seriously clogged with snow and ice and the visibility was getting ever worse – Richard's old Ford Transit was down to about 5-10mph. I was driving because at the start of the day I had reversed into Richard's thumb whilst trying to simultaneously park and close his garage door with his thumb in the way. Nasty...

Travelling at about 7mph, I took my foot off the accelerator prior to coming to a set of traffic lights. The van immediately went into a sideways slide as though the rear was attempting to overtake the front! I had an articulated lorry right on my tail and he was

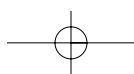
getting ever closer. I righted the van, but just 50 yards later on it started the old sideways slide again. Nail-biting stuff... Then, just to add to the fun, the lorry decided to overtake!

The problem in situations like this is you can't stop. If you stop, chances are, you won't get started again. Not without a push, and it would take more than one of the two of us to get this thing rolling through the slush and snow.

A couple of miles further on at the start of an incline the same articulated lorry was now blocking the same lane as we were driving in. We had no choice but to go around the outside – we couldn't slow down, and we certainly didn't

dare apply the brakes! But somehow we managed to get the van onto the white outer lane, around the lorry, and then back into the slow lane again, it was spooky.

Cars were strewn all over the place, some abandoned, others trying to get going again with the hapless passengers out in the road pushing, mostly with very little luck. What with sliding sideways at the merest hint of a move with any of my foot pedals I was forced to weave my way through them and pray I didn't hit anyone. Quite an adventure, but one best read and not endured, I can assure you. Ironically, I had some perfectly good snowchains at home but hadn't bothered packing them. Next time... →





Eventually the roads cleared – in fact by the time we arrived at the rendezvous in Caernarfon (McDonald's) there wasn't a hint of the calamity we had left behind. We filled up with coffee and were soon back on our journey.

As if we hadn't quite yet had enough travelling excitement, about two miles from our destination, Richard, who had been poring over his 15-year old OS map, decided it would be a good idea to take a wee short cut he had found. Long story short, it wasn't (either a short cut, or a good idea!) After several miles of going in the

myself to suggest a second helping of the OS map! There was indeed a track on the map that led down towards the beach further upwind. It was worth having a look at, well at least I thought it was, so we abandoned Dave on the beach again and off we went. Hey, what are mates for?

The track wasn't a public road, it went through a farm. The farm complex appeared to be deserted, but by now I was on a mission. Leaving Richard with the van at the foot of a long muddy driveway, muttering "Oh bloody hell Russ, just

failed vulcan attempt. It was so weird, the word vulcan coming out the mouth of a bloke who lived in the middle of nowhere on a farm surrounded by mud and more mud. It sure is a small world and sometimes, just occasionally, a very refreshing one....

And there's more. This bloke only knows the best place in the area to sail, that has a nice reef, that kicks up a usable wave!!! I tell you, I was thinking, dude this is awesome. I got on the blower and told every one to hang fire whilst we checked out this SECRET SPOT.

To get to it you had to go to another farm. Speak to a woman whom we shall call Mrs Y, tell her you had been sent by X from shall we say 'Cowdung Farm,' and ask her permission to access the road down to the beach, which, incidentally isn't on the map! So off we went to speak to Mrs Y. She was very happy for us to visit her private beach. Problem was, to get there you had to go through a stretch of track that was "a little muddy" (understatement of the century.) Oh, and there was also a bull. A bull with serious, serious (that's doubly-serious for those not paying attention) attitude. Known to charge tractor wheels. Yep, that sounds like a serious bull. But I figured what the hell, it wasn't my van...

Now Mrs Y didn't want to send us off empty-handed, what with there being this problematic bull and all, so she gave us Bob (name changed as before) to guide us to the right place, or at least to where the track / road started. Now Bob wasn't quite the sharpest tool in the box, he had one eye facing east, the other faced west, but

“Err hello, I'm here at Dinas to do a spot of windsurfing with a couple of friends...”

wrong direction (i.e; away from the sea) Richard decided it was best to come clean and head back to the start of the 'short' cut.

Finally, we arrived at Dinas. Our point-man Dangerous Dave had already rigged his 5m and was almost raring to go – almost, but without his wetsuit on, not quite. The sea state wasn't looking as exciting as it might have been, so we took a walk down to the water's edge to weigh up our options.

There appeared to be a little more wave action further upwind – nothing new there then; why does it *always* look better upwind? I took it upon

leave it," I went on to survey the premises. I worked my way further and further from the van through courtyards thick with mud until I came upon the front door of the farmhouse. I bet these folk don't get a lot of visitors!

The door was answered by a man of about my age, "Err hello, I'm here at Dinas to do a spot of windsurfing with a couple of friends..." expecting the bloke to think I was completely off my rocker (especially considering the weather), but guess what? He was a windsurfer too! Moreover, he was a windsurfer who had put himself out of action earlier in the year with a



we'd have been in trouble without him because the track to the beach went through the middle of the labyrinthine farm complex, and was a case of turn right, open a gate, head 75° to the left across a yard thick with wet mud to the next gate, open the gate, close it after you but be quick on your feet because this is the field with the bull in (to be honest it didn't look that bad but maybe it was a bit dulled by the cold weather today), etc, etc, etc... It was going to be a little tricky to relay this info over the phone to Dave and Steve Thorp, who had subsequently turned up at Dinas!

Unfortunately though, the mud eventually got just too much and we had to admit defeat, so the pursuit of the 'Secret Spot' will have to wait for another time when there isn't quite so much mud around, or we can turn up in a tractor (with bull-proof wheels of course!) So it was back off to Dinas to see what the other two were up to.

Dangerous Dave and Steve Thorp (who was looking so much like 'Dwayne Dibley' it was unreal) were both sat in the 'Surfer' café. Amazing how far these guys will travel for a nice hot cup of Welsh tea! I was still full from my McCoffee and now eager to get out on the water. I took my first run out on a 4.5 which was immediately obviously too big as the wind had now kicked in proper, especially the closer you got to the water. First ramp, nice forward, but getting air was a bit of a suicide mission so after two runs I came in to change down. 4.0 or 3.7? Whilst I was standing there sheltering from the wind and making my decision, Dave started walking down the beach. It was funny how, when Dave first got hit with the wind, his carrying style disintegrated from windsurf dude to windsurf novice, so much for looking like you know what you're doing. But it was bloody windy and the wind totally hit you by surprise.

I couldn't resist following him back out. Didn't want to be too hasty about changing down – maybe it had been just a squall? No, it really was seriously windy, especially when you were in the air. I went for a loop on the first run and it went terribly wrong – I don't know what happened exactly, but the end result was that I landed on my kit, on my head. I thought I'd broken something in my neck, not good.

Steve gave up after a few hours as there were no serious waves, in fact there were no proper waves at all, although he sat and waited and waited and waited for them to come in, but they never showed. Before coming in after his first session Steve had himself a proper case of the hot aches, bless him, and I figure he decided it just wasn't worth the pain when there was nothing decent to get excited about. So out of boredom he very kindly sat and took a couple of photos, but nothing much was going down.

Richy was doing well just to be out, not that he could feel his thumb anymore, what with the water being a little chilly, but he had a lot of trouble getting into his wetsuit. Richard is still working on getting his fin on film, but no joy as yet Rich old bean.

It was photo-snapping time, but try as we may, getting the wind early enough to catch the good ramps was proving a little tough, and that was with 50 to 60mph winds. We hunted and hunted for anything resembling a wave, but I reckon Dinas is best taken on at high tide, because the waves just weren't making an appearance. The swell forecast was by our reckoning very good, but it didn't transfer itself into anything worth all the effort we had gone to.

We had fun though, we looped, tabletopped and



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attempted one or two vulcans so it wasn't a complete waste of a day, and it was good to be out in the fresh air. Not too sure we would be rushing to repeat the whole experience in a hurry though. The weather had given us exactly what theyr.net had predicted, we plotted the snow, the cloud cover and the temperatures to perfection. Maybe next time we'll do a little better plotting the swell. If we had hit it like the last time we had sailed this spot, it would have been a little more worthwhile.

The air temperature was showing 4-6°C, with the windchill I imagine that made it pretty darn cold, but again I escaped the 'hots', I wore a winter suit, boots, a cut down hood and palm-less mitts which I only put over my hands when I carried my kit on my head. I was never that cold, it just goes to show how good these suits are. A few years ago I would have had under-clothes on and several layers of rubber, with socks under my boots, but things have certainly improved.

Sail together though, as close to one another as you can, I wouldn't like to have to swim after my kit for any length of time in these conditions. Just as well I'm indestructible ... not!

We finished the day at about 5pm, de-rigged and grabbed some chips from the Surfer, which incidentally are first rate. My spine was really not happy, but still – only a four hour drive home, and I'm sure the roads will have cleared by now!

Take care, till next time. ©

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