

# A day out on the Teigdale

By Josh Neilson

Over the past few years I have been lucky to experience the travelling kayaker lifestyle and have paddled some amazing and remote places. Often there are cool rivers, but now and then I come across one that fits in the 'Top 5'. There is no formula to rank the 'Top 5', but you know, when you find one, it's worth writing about! The Teigdale in the waterfall rich lands of Norway is one that joins Tree Trunk Gorge and the Aratiatia Rapids.

From our base in Voss it's only a 20 minute drive to the take out. Coming round a corner, right in front of you is 'double drop', possibly the best way to end a day's kayaking! Here you can gauge the river level and head for the put in. The road is flat for about a kilometre then it suddenly heads for the sky! At the top you go through an old tunnel emerging into an alpine world. There's an old wooden bridge over a small rocky creek which doesn't look promising but is apparently 'good to go'.

After paddling for a few minutes of tight bumpy sieved out mank the walls are more solid and the drops become waterfalls!

The first main drop is a small boof onto a pillow which throws you left and into a wall-ride, then off a nice 30 footer into the pool below! From here you are committed to a big slide down stream! The run has more clean drops until you come to one that you'll need to scout. The line looks sweet but the lip of the drop is wide and shallow. It is likely to cause bottoming out and going over the handlebars.

I was last to run and could not see the others' lines. I hit the lip, went over and landed headfirst in very green water! At the pool I found there had been similar crashes!

Making our way down river someone would get out, scout a fall and relay the best line back to the others. We then paddled it, unsighted, and kept the ball rolling. Paddling with a crew you know well, you trust

your mate's line and enjoy the drop without seeing it. This makes for fun times! After several drops we came to Notter Drop, one of the most infamous in the Norwegian Guide book. It is named after Andy Notter, the first to run it. He was badly injured. Since then Mike Abbott is the only paddler to run it cleanly.

On this day Sam Sutton decided to fire it up and styled it. It was cool to watch! 90% of the water drops about 7 metres onto a rock, the other 10% lands on water. After a tough 40 metres entry your kayak has to be in that 10% to make it out!

Below Notter Drop the river flattens out and you enter the last gorge with a blind 7 metre ramp down to the right or a boof off to the left. It's a crazy feeling paddling up to something with such a big horizon having not seen what it looks like! All good though! This is the entry to the gorge that ends in 'Double Drop'. Although you are running these big drops part of your mind is thinking about the really big one! Ever since I thought about kayaking in Norway, I have longed to paddle 'Double Drop'! In 2008 the water level was too low. But now, a year later, standing at the lip was such a sweet feeling! You have an 8 metre drop into a 4 metre long pool before a 12 metre drop into the take out pool. The thought of boofing as hard as I can, and landing as flat as I can, off an 8 metre drop made my back cringe a little.

Sitting in the eddy at the top I was so excited! Finally here! I moved into the current and headed for the lateral wave at the lip which lined me up perfectly for the boof. And what a boof it was! Seeing the bottom pool but not the middle pool, I was 'flying' until I felt a soft cushion under my boat! Not what I expected but all good! There was a lot of spray and not much time to react for the next lip. Through the mist I lined my boat up, rolled off, tucked forward and dived into the pool! Pushed out from

the falls I was stoked with soft landings on both falls , the amazing sight looking back, and hearing the rest of the crew yelling!

A beautiful day, a solid crew of mates, good flow and sick waterfalls help to put rivers in the 'Top 5'. With out a doubt the Teigdale made the cut and will be in the list for years to come! Cheers to Sam & Jamie Sutton, Dylan Thomson, Bradley Lauder, Will Clark, the crew on the river that day. It was amazing!

You can check out some of the other sweet rivers we have been lucky enough to paddle on [www.whitewater-koa.blogspot.com](http://www.whitewater-koa.blogspot.com)





*And this is how it's done - Josh Neilson in the Double Drop sequence - Photo by Sam Sutton*

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