

CANOE FOCUS

**Reflections
on a year as a
#ShePaddles
ambassador**

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Olympic and
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Welcome

Wow. What a summer we have had. As restrictions have lifted across the UK more and more people have taken to the water to engage in paddlesport and the excitement of returning to club sessions and competitions has really made paddling on the water the place to be this summer.

As of the end of August, we now have 87,900 members of British Canoeing. I recall only five years ago having less than half this number, and it's positive to see a change in the membership profile with 38% of members now being female. That's an 11% increase in just 12 months. Whilst it's good to see a positive change, there is still more to learn in order for us all to ensure paddlesport is made as truly inclusive as possible.

There have been many tangible and positive changes over the past year and as we look to set the strategy for the next four years, I do hope that everyone has taken the opportunity to engage in this process through the online questionnaires and consultations. There has even been an opportunity for those who aren't yet British Canoeing members to engage too, which is a great way for us to understand and gain insight on what non-members think British Canoeing needs to provide.

With many more people enjoying staycations this year, it's amazing to speak to others sharing their stories of paddling here in the UK. Whether revisiting old favourites or discovering new places, the **Paddlepoints website** has been a great resource for people to both share information but also to seek new places to paddle when on their holidays in the UK too.

In recent weeks, I've been able to engage with some of our competition paddlers and had the honour of presenting prizes at the British Canoe Polo Club Championships in Nottingham. A few adjustments were made to ensure they were Covid secure, but otherwise it was back to normal with some great close games over the weekend. A new event format too, in a similar style to Rugby 7's, ensured every team had some great games. After the long break, it was a real pleasure to be there to share it with everyone.

One of the other things I have noticed is a real desire for clubs and local groups to work together to improve links and create more opportunities locally. Working together, recognising skills and sharing information is not only great for our clubs, it's also beneficial for the other people we share the water with.

Support and engagement of our Clear Access Clear Waters campaign has continued. In the last three months there have been 125 river cleans registered (I'm sure there have been more, don't forget to register your river cleans on the **CACW website**). This has included 176 volunteers, who have removed 113 sack/bags of plastic pollution and litter from our waterways. On behalf of our paddling community I thank you all and hope that more are inspired to get involved. Please do share your activity with the rest of us on the new Clear Access, Clear Waters Facebook group **www.facebook.com/groups/clearaccessclearwaters**

If like me, you have been closely following and supporting our paddlers at the Olympics and Paralympics, you'll be joining me in sending a huge congratulations to our athletes, coaches and support team plus family and friends for all their commitment and support.

With so much going on, I hope you enjoy reading this month's Canoe Focus and catching up on just a few of the highlights from the past couple of months.

Dee Paterson
British Canoeing President





NEWS

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members.britishcanoeing.org.uk

www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news

British Canoeing updates guidance on SUP Safety leashes:

Your leash is a key source of safety when out on your paddleboard, keeping you and your paddleboard together when things don't go to plan. Choosing the correct leash for the environment and conditions you are paddling in is essential. Read British Canoeing's updated guidance on safety leashes

[Click here](#) to read the Latest News.



<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2021/stand-up-paddleboard-sup-safety-choosing-the-right-leash>

Paul Ratcliffe to step down as Performance Director of British Canoeing

British Canoeing has announced that Paul Ratcliffe will be stepping down as performance director of the Olympic and Paralympic programmes. Paul has been in the post of performance director since March 2017 and during the last four years has overseen continued medal success across the performance programmes.



Paracanoe Programme seek paddlers for talent identification pathway

British Canoeing has launched *Paddle, Perform, Podium*, an initiative looking for individuals with the belief and desire to join the Paracanoe Talent Pathway. Whether you are currently a paddler or not, **Paddle, Perform, Podium** is looking to help develop the next generation of Paracanoe athletes and encourage more people with disabilities to take to the water. For more information [click here](#).



<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2021/paracanoe-programme-seek-paddlers-for-talent-identification-pathway>

Nominate your heroes for the British Canoeing 2021 Annual Awards

Do you know someone who goes above and beyond for your club? Or maybe someone who has been instrumental in inspiring others to give paddling go?

Whether they're a paddler, coach, leader, or volunteer, we want to hear about the special people in your paddling community who exemplify the British Canoeing values so we can recognise them with a British Canoeing Award. Find out more [here](#).



<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2021/nominate-your-heroes-for-the-british-canoeing-2021-annual-awards>

England Talent Programme announce two Nottingham University partnerships

The England Talent Programme is pleased to announce two new exciting partnerships with local Nottingham Universities. The partnership will develop and support talented student-athletes in their student-athlete dual career, with a goal of helping them to achieve their performance potential at British University College Sport (BUCS) events, GB U23 Selection events and World/ European age range championships. Read more [click here](#).



<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2021/england-talent-programme-announce-two-nottingham-university-partnerships>



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MEMORIES AND MEDALS: TOKYO 2020 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES



The Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games may have been delayed a year, but it was worth the wait as our paddlers selected to represent Team GB and ParalympicsGB took to the waters at the Sea Forest Waterway and Kasai Canoe Slalom Centre .

SLALOM

Stunning silver medal for Mallory Franklin

Mallory Franklin won a historic Olympic silver medal in a thrilling women's C1 final on day five of the slalom competition

After recording the two fastest times in the heats on the demanding Kasai Canoe Slalom course, Mallory qualified for the final in sixth place with a time of 117.75 in the semi-final.

With an incredible run in the final, including just one touch on gate 15, Mallory was on top of the leaderboard, with a time of 108.68.

Still in the gold medal position with one paddler to go, Mallory was denied gold by Jessica Fox, who went clear in a time of 105.04 with Mallory taking a stunning silver medal.

Mallory, coached by Craig Morris, was one of 22 athletes competing in the inaugural women's C1 event at an Olympic Games.

Mallory became only the second British woman to win a medal in Olympic canoe slalom, after Helen Reeves who won the bronze medal in the women's K1 at the Athens 2004 Games.

Speaking after the race Mallory said:

"For us to come here and produce that kind of final just shows how much the C1 women's event has just grown and developed. To be part of that and to be able to stay up the top is really cool."



Olympic finals achieved by slalom team on debut

All four slalom athletes representing Team GB were making their Olympic debuts in Tokyo.

First to take on the course was **Adam Burgess** in men's C1. In the heats Adam posted a clean and quick first run time of 99.82 to put him in fourth place, before delivering an even quicker time 99.64 in his second delivery, despite a touch on gate seven.

In the semi-finals, Adam put down a strong performance to qualify for the final in eighth place and followed it with a fantastic run in his first Olympic Games final with a clean time of 103.86.

Despite being in contention Adam, coached by Craig Morris, narrowly missed out on a place on the podium, finishing in fourth place, just 0.16 seconds behind Sideris Tasiadis who was third.

Attention then turned to **Kimberley Woods** in the women's K1. Kimberley, also coached by Craig Morris, looked impressive on day one of competition finishing ninth in the heats to establish her place in semi-finals.



Kimberley delivered an excellent and composed semi-final performance to post her first clean run of the season in a time of 109.00.

However the penalties in her final run meant she finished tenth in her first ever Olympic final, an achievement she can be incredibly proud of.



Bradley Forbes-Cryans made a strong start to his Olympic Games debut after finishing in 13th place during the heats for the men's K1.



Coached by two-time Olympic medallist Richard Hounslow, Bradley finished in sixth place in the final. Bradley looked strong off the back of a successful semi-final performance and blazed through the first gates.

But lost time in between gates 4 and 5, as well as a penalty awarded late after his run, meant he put himself in top three with four boats to go, eventually finishing in sixth place.

SPRINT

Fourth Olympic medal for Liam Heath with bronze in K1 200m



Liam Heath became Britain's most decorated Olympic canoeist, after clinching the bronze medal in the men's K1 200m.

Coached by Eric Farrell, Liam broke the Olympic record for the 200m event in the quarter-finals and secured a top three finish in the semi-finals to ensure his progression to the final.

In a tightly contested final, Liam's time of 35.202 secured the bronze medal and a place on the podium.



Liam, who started paddling at Wey Kayak Club when he was 10, was cheered on all the way in the early hours of the morning by friends and family at a watch party held at the club

After taking the K1 200m gold in Rio, alongside K2 200m silver and bronze medals with Jon Schofield in Rio and London, Liam's bronze in Tokyo added a record fourth medal to further secure his status as an Olympic legend.

Speaking after securing his fourth Olympic medal Liam said: ***"I am happy with where I've landed today. The race could have gone a little bit better for me but I am really happy with the medal round my neck."***

Successful Olympic debuts for sprint team

In her first Olympic Games, **Deborah Kerr**, made a big impact with a series of impressive performances during the competition and qualified for the A final in the women's K1 200m.



In the semi-final, Deborah showed the form she'd been producing all season to get back amongst the leading pack during the final 100m to power across the line in first with a time of 42.742.

A fine performance in her first Olympic final saw Deborah claim eighth place in an improved time of 40.409.

The paddler from Strathclyde, coached by Kristina Medovcikova, also finished seventh in her semi-final of the women's K1 500m to round off a brilliant Olympic debut.

Emily Lewis also made a fine Olympic debut, reaching the quarter-finals of both the women's K1 200m and 500m events.



In an extremely tight race for one of two spots available to the semi-finals of the K1 200m, Emily used her trademark speed out of the blocks to gain an early lead. But just 0.005 seconds separated the Worcester CC athlete from a semi-final berth.

In the women's K1 500m, Emily, coached by Eric Farrell, was seventh in the heats, followed by an improved performance in the quarter-finals.

Katie Reid (Forth) made history by taking part in the inaugural Olympic women's C1 200m event, with some strong performances in the heats and quarter finals.

The Forth paddler put down a strong time of 47.876 to finish in fourth place in the heats. In the quarter-finals, with only the top two progressing, Katie was once again in fourth place, in a slightly quicker time of 47.821.

Katie, coached by James Train, first joined canoeing through the Girls4Gold programme in 2014, a campaign set up through UK Sport and EIS to uncover talented female athletes.



TABLE TOPPING GB PARACANOE TEAM WIN SEVEN MEDALS IN TOKYO



Great Britain's paracanoe team delivered its best ever Paralympic performance at the Tokyo 2020 Games with three golds, a silver and three bronze medals, finishing on top of the paracanoe medal table with seven medals overall.



Emma Wiggs becomes the most decorated Paralympic female paracanoe athlete

It was a history-making Games for **Emma Wiggs**, who became the first ever Paralympic Champion in the new women's Va'a VL2 event in a Paralympic Best time of 57.028 and Great Britain's first canoeing double Paralympic Champion.

The following day Emma was back in action to defend her women's KL2 Paralympic title from Rio 2016. In another brilliant performance Emma claimed the silver medal, less than a second behind Charlotte Henshaw in a time of 51.409 to win her third Paralympic medal.

Coached by Matt Lawrence, **Emma was cheered on by a huge group of family and friends** who have supported her every step of the way.

Emma transferred to paracanoe for the Rio cycle after competing in sitting volleyball at the London 2012 Games.

In two Paralympic Games, Emma has become the most decorated female paracanoe athlete with three medals and is the only female athlete to be a Paralympic Champion in the kayak and va'a events.



Super Saturday for Charlotte Henshaw and Laura Sugar

The women's KL2 was a thrilling race as **Charlotte Henshaw** clocked up a Paralympic Best time of 50.760 to take the gold medal, with team mate Emma Wiggs picking up silver to make it a GB 1-2.

Charlotte, who has Paralympic silver and bronze medals in the swimming pool from the last two Games, completed the medal set in style with her first gold thanks to a sensational performance.

Since swapping the pool for the regatta lake at the National Water Sport Centre in Nottingham, Charlotte can now add the title of women's KL2 Paralympic Champion to her three world titles.

Laura Sugar firmly landed on the world paracanoe stage by dominating the women's KL3 final to claim the gold medal in another Paralympic Best time for the British team of 49.582.

After competing in athletics in Rio 2016, Laura has made an incredible transition from occasional recreational kayaker to Paralympic Champion.

Charlotte and Laura are both coached by Colin Radmore, who was interviewed by the Times about the benefits of the programme for talented athletes transferring to paracanoe from other sports.



Emotional bronze medals for Rob Oliver and Stuart Wood

Rob Oliver won a superb bronze medal, made all the more emotional as he was the only member of the team not to make it on to the podium in Rio, where he just missed out in the men's KL3.

It's been far from a smooth ride to Tokyo for Rob. He contracted Covid five weeks ago, delaying his flight out to Japan. Despite his numerous set-backs, he put himself in contention for medals in a thrilling men's KL3 final.

In an incredibly tight finish, Rob, coached by Colin Radmore, claimed a brilliant bronze and his first Paralympic medal in a time of 41.268, with just .012 of a second separating third and fourth.

The seventh medal for the paracanoe team was won in the new men's VL3 event by debutant **Stuart Wood** who was roared on by his family at home in a specially decorated 'Paralympic Den'.

After claiming a Paralympic Best time in the semi-finals, the final race was a nail-biter with Stuart winning an incredible bronze as he crossed the line in a tight finish, in a time of 52.760.

Legendary status secured for Jeanette Chippington

Jeanette Chippington further cemented her Paralympic legend status with a bronze medal in the new women's VL2 event, alongside Emma Wiggs who claimed gold.

It was Jeanette's 14th Paralympic medal and her second medal in paracanoe, after winning gold in the women's KL1 at the Rio 2016 Games.

Bronze also ensured that Jeanette had medalled in her seventh consecutive Games, having first competed as a swimmer at Seoul in 1988.

Coached by John Griffiths, Jeanette's bronze was ParalympicsGB's 100th medal of the Tokyo 2020 Games and she was ParalympicsGB oldest medallist at 51-years-old.



A finals secured for Ian Marsden and Dave Phillipson

After transferring from wheelchair tennis, **Dave Phillipson** was competing in his first Games for paracanoe. After strong performances in the heat and semi-finals Dave battled hard in the men's KL2 final, where he finished seventh in a time of 43.348.

Speaking after the final Dave said: "I've put my heart and soul into this over the last five years, moving from tennis after three games without a medal, I saw my chance in Paracanoe and I gave it my all out there."

In the men's KL1, Rio 2016 bronze medallist **Ian Marsden** threw everything into the race and finished eighth in a time of 52.848.

Afterward he reflected: "It's been good to get out there and pick up more experience and Paris really isn't that far away. Thanks so much to everyone at home for supporting me and staying up at all hours."

Ian and Dave are coached by Matt Lawrence and both athletes have had Paralympic Games campaigns that they can be proud of.

Reflecting on a successful campaign Head Coach Scott Simon said:

"What a competition! To come away with seven medals, I knew it was possible but to get it done was everything we've dreamed about. It's amazing what the athletes have done, but it's not without the support of everybody back home pushing us and the Tokyo team of staff that were out there as well."

A shout out to our technical coaches Colin Radmore, Matt Lawrence, and John Griffiths, who have worked hard to support athletes chase their goals. It couldn't have been done without the team of Jonathan Smith, Charlotte Wade, Matthew Thompson and Steve Train putting it all together for us!"

Congratulations to all of our Olympic and Paralympic athletes, their coaching teams and the support staff who worked tirelessly and overcame the adversities of the pandemic to put on some incredible performances in Tokyo.

Full details of our Olympic and Paralympic athletes, results, schedules and news can be found on our Paddle to Tokyo website.

A BUSY SUMMER FOR BRITISH CANOEING EVENTS



For any support or advice on planning an event or taking part, please contact:

events@
britishcanoeing.
org.uk

AFTER A CHALLENGING 2020, IT'S GREAT TO SEE EVENTS MAKING A RETURN, PROVIDING A FUN AND COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR PADDLERS TO DO WHAT THEY DO BEST. A HUGE WELL DONE TO ALL THE EVENT ORGANISERS WHO HAVE NOT ONLY JUGGLED EVENT LOGISTICS, BUT DEALT WITH THE EVER CHANGING COVID MITIGATIONS REQUIRED TO HOST SECURE EVENTS DURING THESE TIMES.

HERE'S A ROUND UP OF SOME OF THE RECENT EVENTS ACROSS OUR DISCIPLINES.

Since April our **Canoe Sprint** discipline has enjoyed a number of events including; Sprint and Paracanoe selections in April, a Sprint Regatta in June, and the National Championships in July. All three events were held at Holme Pierrepont in Nottingham, with live streaming in place to provide those unable to attend due to Covid, the opportunity to remain abreast of the action. Everyone involved in the events showed support and consideration for the safety of others around the venue and the action didn't disappoint. A number of athletes secured selection for the international events this summer and various national championship titles were claimed. The events were a great display of the high standards in paddling across all age groups.

Canoe Marathon has seen a number of Hasler events return this year. In July, Reading Canoe Club held the National Championships on the River Thames. Despite a weekend of mixed weather conditions, the spirits of the organisers and paddlers remained high. Over 50 national titles were claimed over the course of the weekend across the age groups which ranged from Under 12s to Over 69s. As well as national titles and medals, the Senior, Under 23 and Under 18 races also provided an opportunity for paddlers to seek selection for the Marathon World Championships taking place in Romania later this year. A huge congratulations to the team who created a safe environment demonstrating great consideration for both the competitors and general public on site. A great atmosphere was created with a festival-like feel.

Canoe Slalom has seen the return of divisional racing across the country with a number of events taking place. In May, two days of action at Holme Pierrepont saw Junior and Under 23 athletes earn selection for the 2021 international season. A huge well done to the organisers from Stafford and Stone Canoe Club for organising a smooth event, with athletes providing stellar competition across all age groups.

On 7 and 8 August, Lee Valley White Water Centre played host to another selection event. Over 80 athletes who qualified to compete for senior selection faced fierce competition as the likes of the recently crowned Olympic Games Silver medalist, Mallory Franklin, took to the water. The wet and rainy conditions didn't dampen the spirits of the athletes and we witnessed some fantastic paddling throughout the course of the two days.

Over the same weekend, the **Canoe Polo** community were reunited at Holme Pierrepont in Nottingham for the National Championships. With over 40 teams taking part, it was a fantastic battle for medals in the Women's and Youth events as well as the Open Cup, Plate, Bowl and Shield competitions. Whilst perhaps the most positive aspect of the weekend was the community being together again, credit should go to Kingston who became double National Champions claiming both the Open and Women's titles.

In recent months, **Wild Water Racing** has seen the return of the Ironbridge event on the River Severn, and the British Open. Electric racing took place in scorching temperatures as selection for the World Championships and World Cup were up for grabs. The top three athletes in each class and age group were awarded their British Open Championship medals and those selected will go on to compete in the World Championships in Bratislava and World Cup in Treginac. Good luck to all!

We are absolutely thrilled to see the return of our much anticipated events. A huge thank you to everyone involved in getting them back up and running, showing a real sense of #StrongerTogether. We look forward to the return of even more live events in the near future.

BRITISH CANOEING TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL INCLUSION WEEK

National
Inclusion Week
2021 27 September –
3 October

National Inclusion Week 2021 runs from 27 September to 3 October and aims to celebrate, share and inspire inclusion in society, something British Canoeing is proud to support.

Over the past year we have sought to share the stories and raise the voices of different communities within the paddling community to highlight a range of topics including female representation, paddleability, LGBTQ and inclusion of ethnic diversities.

It's been fantastic to hear stories of clubs in the paddling community going above and beyond to invite new participants into the paddling community.

Falcon Canoe Club in Oxford have been working with their local communities to get more people active out on the water. The club have worked with a wide range of schools, special needs organisations and ethnic groups to share their love of life on the water.

In July the club volunteers welcomed a group from Oxfordshire Association for the Blind to experience open canoeing. Visually impaired young people were paired up with confident canoeists and were able to explore the canoes by touch to get a feel for size/orientation and stability. They were given lots of verbal explanations on how to hold the paddle and shouts between boats along the route provided a sense of distance and speed.

The club also arranged an event with local ethnically diverse communities inviting them to enjoy taster paddling sessions and good food which they hope will encourage people from the wider community to take up paddlesports and join the club.

At the end of June, British Canoeing announced the launch of a brand new Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG). Comprised of individuals from the paddling community and the wider sports sphere, the group will advise on topics of inclusion and anti-discrimination within paddlesport.

By working together, British Canoeing and the IAG hope that those participating, volunteering or watching paddlesports, will begin to reflect the diversity of the nation's communities.

As we look ahead to how we can open the doors further to welcome people from all walks of life onto the water, we thought we'd share some resources we enjoyed diving into, to further our understanding of inclusion.

READ. WATCH. LISTEN

READ: Eat, Sweat, Play: How Sport Can Change Our Lives by Anna Kessel

Society has led us to believe that women and sport don't mix. But why? What happens to the young girls who dare to climb trees and cartwheel across playgrounds? In her exploration of major taboos, sports journalist Anna Kessel discovers how sport and exercise should play an integral role in every sphere of our modern lives; from sex to the gender pay gap.



Available from all major book retailers.

WATCH: Rising Phoenix:

Elite athletes and insiders reflect on the Paralympic Games and examine how they impact a global understanding of disability, diversity and excellence.



Available on Netflix.

LISTEN: Talking inclusion with... The Inclusive Employer's Podcast

This podcast brought to you by Inclusive Employers covers a broad spectrum of inclusion topics, including LGBTQ+, race and social mobility, inclusion in sport, disability and wellbeing and mental health.



Available on Apple, Spotify and Google Podcasts.

Paddlers join Go Paddling Month with Gill in their thousands

Thousands of you took to the water during July to be part of our Go Paddling Month with Gill - British Canoeing's biggest festival of paddling yet! It was great to see so many register your paddles on the Go Paddling Month website and hear your stories of being out on the water. Here's a snapshot of what you got up to.

Name: Jason Hill-Upperton

Craft type: SUP

Place paddled: Fell Foot Park

"I've wanted to try paddle boarding for the last two years but wasn't brave enough, but whilst on holiday in the Lake District, I decided just to go for it. I did four sessions and absolutely loved it! My two kids aged four and six then got involved. Now they want me to take them out whenever I go paddleboarding - it's a family affair!"

Name: Ioanne Taylor

Craft type: SUP

Place paddled: River Stour

"It was my first time paddling, at 51 it's something I'd wanted to try for a while. I was nervous as I'm not keen on deep water, but once I got on the board (I knelt) I was off! I loved the freedom, spotting the fish and dragonflies around me, the peacefulness and the calming sense of just 'being'. I even managed to stand for a bit! I loved every minute."



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Name: Whitewater Action Medway Canoe Club

Craft type: Kayaks

Place paddled: Medway River

"We're a bunch of good friends aged 60 and over - some of us are over 70! We meet up on Wednesdays to keep fit by paddling, enjoy the waterways, retirement and picnic together. During Go Paddling Month, we met and paddled up and down the river at Yalding on the River Medway. Up stream at Paddock Wood we enjoyed shooting the canoe chute, and recent rain rewarded us with a fun surf wave on the weir, enabling us to have a go at a few 360's and some fun surfing. This was then followed by our customary rolling practice, a bit of back dipping under the bridge and arches before a picnic and a good old chat!"

Name: **Elspeth Adams**

Craft type: **Kayak / canoe / SUP**

Place paddled:

The Derwent/ River Hull/ Pocklington Canal

"I finally finished my 100 mile goal! I did 26 trips totalling 110.47 miles. It was tiring going out nearly every day and fitting paddles around work but I feel really proud of myself for completing my goal!"



Name: **Sharon Curd**

Craft type: **Stand Up Paddleboard**

Place paddle: **Sussex**

"I regularly paddle on the Arun and at Ardingly but Derwent Water and Basingstoke Canal were new paddle venues for me. I love this sport and covered 39 kilometers on four different waterways in three different counties. I loved every minute in stunning surroundings."

Name: **Aber Kayakers Club**

Craft type: **Kayak, canoe and SUP**

Place paddled: **Wales**

"We ran a number of sessions throughout Go Paddling Month covering a range of paddling skills including a rescue refresher day where we recapped the skills found on the FSRT course, a SUP session to encourage more people to give paddling a go and a club session which involved sea kayakers, river kayakers, canoers and SUPing. It has been fantastic to see so many new people interested in joining the club. We now have a waiting list!"



Name: **12th Winchester Green Jackets**

Craft type: **Open canoe**

Place paddled: **Brownsea Island**

"19 Scouts and five Leaders paddled seven kilometres around Brownsea Island in two open canoes as part of our centenary summer camp on the island. It was an awesome experience as we paddled against each other."



Name: **Alexander Campbell and Shelly Wright**

Craft paddled: **Wenonah canoe**

Place paddled: **River Avon**

"We joined over 300 participants who completed the 18 Mile "Doggy Paddle" from Royal Leamington Spa to Stratford Upon Avon. This was our first distance canoe trip together, and we managed to combat our arthritic difficulties as a team with almost zero bickering, but lots of laughter."

Name: **Claire Down**

Craft paddled: **Sit on top**

Place paddled: **River Ouse, Cambridgeshire**

"We absolutely love paddling...the adventures, the wildlife, the serenity and flow feeds the body, mind and soul."



Gill

#SHEPADDLES AMBASSADOR

Over the past twelve months, our ten **#ShePaddles** Ambassadors have been doing an amazing job banging the drum for female participation in paddlesport and introducing more women to life on the water. As we prepare to welcome the next cohort of **#ShePaddles** Ambassadors to the British Canoeing fold, we hear the reflections of some of our 2020 Ambassadors.

Kirstie Macmillan

"It has been a real privilege to be a British Canoeing **#ShePaddles** Ambassador in what has been a very challenging year.

"I've been inspired and enlightened by the stories and achievements of so many female paddlers; from absolute beginners to Olympic champions.

"My own journey continues in the pursuit of becoming a sea kayak leader: developing skills, encountering incredible wildlife and being humbled by the challenging nature of the ocean environment.

"I would say that whatever your aspirations are, go for it and if you need help, support and inspiration, the paddling community is there to support you! "

Photo Credit: Mark Lampard, Cumbria Canoeists



Photo Credit: Martin Harrell



Julie Vigor

"You might think that, at 57, I may be planning my retirement. Actually I'm planning a new career move! This year has been a revelation, an amazing wake-up call that has made me realise what I really want in life.

"Although I had qualified as a Paddlesport Instructor, I was always rather reluctant to take a lead role.

Becoming a British Canoeing **#ShePaddles** Ambassador and meeting an incredible group of amazing women, I've been inspired to explore the possibility of becoming a British Canoeing Coach.

"In the past 12 months I have concentrated on my education in paddlesports. I've attended over 20 courses, qualified as a Sheltered Water SUP Coach and I'm working towards becoming a White Water Coach in both SUP and Open Canoe.

"I will soon launch my own coaching business, *Phoenix Paddlesport* where the emphasis will be on 'wellbeing through watersport' and helping people to find their passion through paddlesport.

"Prior to becoming a **#ShePaddles** Ambassador, I didn't have a lot of self confidence, but over the past 12 months, this has changed. My passion for paddlesport continues to grow and life just gets better and better."

India Pearson

"During a year of uncertainty, taking on the role as a British Canoeing #ShePaddles Ambassador has given me purpose and pride.

"I have had some incredible opportunities and worked with the most inspiring people. Highlights have included speaking about women in paddlesports on podcasts including Jo Moseley's *The Joy of SUP* and British Canoeing's *Paddlecaster*.

I've also shared knowledge from my experience as a SUP yoga teacher, my story on how I discovered paddleboarding, as well as the positive impact it has had on my mind and body in magazines such as SUP Magazine and Canoe Focus.

"In June 2020, I took on a challenge to paddleboard 28 miles along the Royal Military Canal between Sussex and Kent solo. I litter-picked as I went to raise money for the 2 Minute Foundation and edited a (very basic and low budget) film about the trip to raise awareness of plastic pollution on our waterways and the work Clear Access Clear Waters does to tackle the issue.

Clare Rutter

"The last year spent as a #ShePaddles Ambassador has been nothing short of an incredible whirlwind. My feet have barely touched the ground.

"Being in a position to inspire other females has been such an honour. My idea to start our own #ShePaddlesCymru Facebook group and to go 'on tour' taking paddlesport taster sessions around Wales, has given so many new and beginner females new experiences, passions and a renewed sense of purpose and belonging.

"We now have over 2,000 members in our online group, a fully booked bigger and better 2021 tour and so many women and girls becoming new members of Canoe Wales. It's quite simply been huge!

"I've paddled some beautiful waters, met some amazing ladies, written weekly discussion posts; #ShePaddlesSaturday, written articles for newsletters, magazines, blogs and websites, appeared live on TV and online and even recorded a podcast.

"More recently I have started working with Gill Marine to help the brand develop their range of women's paddling kit, testing products and giving feedback to help the brand produce practical paddle gear for women that also makes you feel good when you wear it!

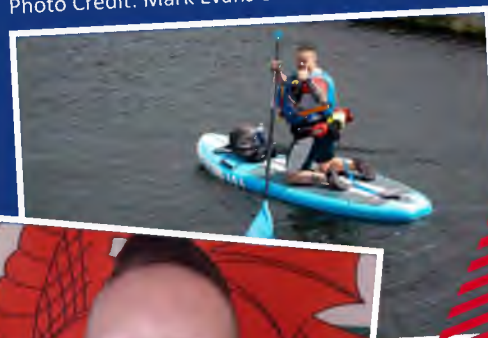
"Amongst all of this however, I am most proud of delivering a #ShePaddles event in my local area. The event sold out in just a few days and saw 16 women try kayaking and SUP yoga for the first time at Seapoint Canoe Centre in Hythe. The smiles that beamed from these women throughout the afternoon were incredible and highlighted just how important the #ShePaddles movement is for bringing like minded female souls together on the water."



"From fitness to friendship, the '#ShePaddles' effect, as I like to call it has also had an immeasurable impact on the Welsh women's paddling scene. And it's not slowing down any time yet.

"Being a #ShePaddles Ambassador has been such an amazing journey and it's one I will certainly never forget. Overall, I've achieved what I set out and promised to do and it even led to me being awarded the Canoe Wales Volunteer of the Year Award!"

Photo Credit: Mark Evans & Marie Jones





The rise and rise of SUP!

Well it's safe to say that paddlesports have had a phenomenal rise in popularity over the last year. Participation in paddlesports has risen 143% from 2.3m in 2019 to 5.6m in 2020, and it's not hard to see why.

Yes, the global pandemic has meant that people have had to find sports and activities they can do in isolation, but additional benefits such as being great for your physical and mental health and increased accessibility have really catapulted paddlesports in popularity over the last year.

One particular form of paddling which has seen a huge spike in participation is stand up paddling (or SUP!). With so many boards on the market and places to paddle, it's now easier than ever to give SUP a try. Someone whose been a fan of SUP for a number of years now is India Pearson. India is a Go Paddling and Gill ambassador. Find out how she first got into SUP and why SUPYoga is a new craze we all need to try!



HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INTO SUP?

My first experience on a SUP was after signing up to a SUPYoga class. I had seen SUPYoga featured in a magazine and knew I had to try it, so found a class on a lake about an hour from where I lived – I was immediately hooked!

ANY ADVICE FOR ANYONE WHO HASN'T TRIED SUP AND THINKING ABOUT HAVING A GO?

I would recommend starting in closed water, like a lake or canal and go out with an experienced friend or even better book a lesson! Go out on a calm, dry day and pace yourself. There is no shame in starting out on your knees, let your mind and body get used to being on the water first and then only if you feel comfortable slowly make your way up to standing.



WHAT MADE YOU TRAIN TO BECOME A SUPYOGA INSTRUCTOR?

It combines my two favourite hobbies – yoga and paddle boarding! It feels like dancing on water as your SUP becomes a floating yoga mat and there is no other experience quite like it. I wanted to share this unique experience with other people and feel so lucky that I get to now do this as my job!

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT SUPYOGA?

Whether you're a seasoned paddle boarder or experienced yogi, SUPYoga gives a whole new experience on the water as it's a fun way to keep fit, maintain a healthy mind and connect with nature. I have many people attend my SUPYoga classes who have never done yoga or paddle boarding before. I tell them we are all beginners once, this sport is for everyone. I also believe paddle boarding can have a huge positive impact on the mind and body.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE ESSENTIAL KIT ITEMS YOU NEED FOR SUP?

Other than the obvious being a paddle board and paddle, it is important to think about safety items like a leash and buoyancy aid. If I am paddling on the sea I like to wear a wetsuit as it keeps me warmer if I fall in. If it is winter I will be in my 5/6mm winter wetsuit, Gill Edge boots, and Neoprene Winter Gloves. In the summer I like to wear my Gill Women's Dynamic Long Jane wetsuit. It's sleeveless and only 3mm in thickness making it really comfortable to move in.



WHAT PIECE OF KIT CAN'T YOU LIVE WITHOUT?

I am a big fan of my Gill 25L Dry Cylinder Bag as it means I can bring all my essential items with me on my board whilst keeping them safe and dry. It's important to always go out with water, a first aid kit, sun cream if it's hot day,

a snack and your phone for safety reasons. This bag keeps everything super dry and easily clips onto the front of my board.

For more information on SUP or to find a SUPYoga class near you, visit www.gopaddling.info

India's top picks:



Neoprene Winter Gloves – £45

Warm and durable, with an exceptional grip thanks to the texture of a Sharkskin palm, the Neoprene Winter Gloves deliver everything you need for keeping warm on the water in the colder months. The insulating, water resistant finish of double-lined neoprene makes them comfortable and malleable so your dexterity isn't affected while performing tasks.



Dry Cylinder Bag 25L – £25

Keep your gear and valuables safe and dry in this 25-litre upright holdall, constructed with PVC tarpaulin for full waterproofing. A practical, fold-down, watertight seal means that no water will come into contact with the items you want to keep dry and protected.



Women's Dynamic Long Jane – £75

The Dynamic Long Jane is a versatile, adaptable and insulating suit designed and engineered to perform with you in the water. Using a 4-way stretch fabric and a front zip for easy access and comfort, the 3mm Neoprene offers a protective skin-tight fit.



Pursuit Buoyancy Aid – Adult £65, Junior £55

The Pursuit Buoyancy Aid has adjustable shoulders with Neoprene padding for a secure fit. Practical, with a self-draining zippered front pocket and reflective detailing front and back for visibility – the lightweight, minimum bulk design allows full freedom of movement. Available in Orange and Black colour options and in both adult and junior sizes.



Save 15% off Gill's full priced range with a British Canoeing membership. Visit www.gb.gillmarine.com

AUTUMNAL PADDLES



In Autumn, the different weather and water conditions make for an entirely new paddling experience than that of the calmer spring and summer months. As we wave goodbye to the summer sunshine and look ahead to beautiful autumnal paddles, here's our guide on where to paddle to make the most of the stunning autumn scenery.

West Midlands

There are hundreds of miles of waterways weaving their way across the richly vibrant and diverse landscapes of the West Midlands. Many of these waterways were once at the heart of the industrial revolution meaning there is a wealth of history and heritage to explore.

Top Pick: Birmingham and The Black Country trails

Explore the heart of the country by discovering the various paddling trails through flickering gold and red trees lining the routes through 46 miles of history and industrial heritage, from Brownhills in the north to Lapworth at the southern end. Trails for the Black Country and Birmingham can be found on our Go Paddling website: gopaddling.info/autumn-paddle-adventures-top-5-scenic-places-to-paddle/

We recommend the following trails:

Birmingham Canals Route 1; Brownhills To Sneyd
Birmingham Canals Route 3; Bentley Bridge To Dudley Crt
Birmingham Canals Route 5; Cambrian Wharf To Shirley
Drawbridge

Don't forget, to access one of these trails in Birmingham & the Black Country you will require a Canal & River Trust waterways licence. With a **British Canoeing membership** you will be covered to access these waterways.

South West

The South West is home to many beautiful beaches, coves and estuaries, providing the perfect playground for paddlers of all abilities.

Top Pick: Tor Bay, South Devon

Tor Bay with its largely calm waters offers paddlers a great place to learn and build confidence along a stunning piece of coastline. You'll also have the chance to encounter plenty of wildlife around the Bay too.

Paddlers can launch from any beach but you are strongly advised to avoid harbour slipways in the interest of public safety.

Cumbria & North West

The Lancaster Canal is an engineering masterpiece offering 41 miles of lock free paddling – the longest stretch in the country. The canal links Preston to Kendal and treats paddlers to the delights of Lancashire's Silverdale Coast, and Forest of Bowland not to mention the quaint market towns you'll weave through along the way. It's one of the only coastal canal routes in the UK, so if you're looking for a gentle paddle, no portages and beautiful scenery and views, the Lancaster Canal should be high on your hit list.

We recommend the following routes:

Tewitfield To Canal Turn (Carnforth)
Garstang to Glasson Branch (No.1 Lodge Hill Lock Bridge)
Treales To Cartforth.

 All our trails mentioned above can be found on the Go Paddling website:
www.gopaddling.info/find-paddling-trails/

So, now you know where to go, it's time to head out and enjoy the autumnal views. But before you do, check out our guide on what to wear and be prepared for the cooler months on the water: gopaddling.info/what-to-wear-if-youre-paddling-in-winter/

Bridgewater Canal

WELCOMES PADDLE BOARDERS TO THE WATERWAY TO MARK ITS 260TH ANNIVERSARY

British Canoeing and the Bridgewater Canal Trust are pleased to announce that stand up paddleboarding on the canal is now permitted with a British Canoeing On The Water membership.

For the first time in its 260-year history, stand up paddleboarding has arrived on the Bridgewater Canal.

Before now, paddling along this stretch of water was limited to canoes and kayaks, but after a recent survey highlighted public demand for the activity, Peel L&P's Bridgewater Canal Company has worked with British Canoeing to approve the waterway for stand up paddleboarding (SUP).

Built by the Duke of Bridgewater, the Bridgewater Canal, stretches from Runcorn to Leigh and is thought to be England's first canal. It was used to transport coal to the Duke's mine at Worsley and today is a popular leisure attraction and a home for canal boat residents.

Paddlers wishing to SUP along Bridgewater Canal must be a member of British Canoeing. The Bridgewater Canal Company recommends paddleboarders wear high visibility clothing and a buoyancy aid whilst paddling this stretch of water.



Director of the Bridgewater Canal, part of Peel L&P **Peter Parkinson** said:

Our recent survey showed us how invaluable the canal is to people's health and wellbeing and we've looked after the waterway for many years now to bring continuous investment and improvements including towpath works for cyclists and walkers.

We're pleased to be working with British Canoeing to meet public demand for stand up paddle boarding on the canal and offer another recreational activity on the waterway that we're sure will be enjoyed by many.



British Canoeing Places to Paddle manager **Ben Seal**, said:

We have seen an explosion in SUP activity in the last 12 months. Equipment is now more accessible than ever and more and more people have started to discover the waterways that are on their doorstep through paddleboarding. I am sure this news will be welcomed by paddlers in the North West and anyone who loves getting out on our historic canal network.

In December 2020, the Bridgewater Canal Company carried out a survey into the health and wellbeing benefits of the canal during the Covid-19 lockdowns and SUP was a popular request for additional recreational activities along the stretch of water.

Of 335 people surveyed, 284 said using the canal had positively impacted their mental health and wellbeing by an average of 84%. More than 40% also said the canal made them feel either 'relaxed' or 'happy'.



Photography courtesy of Mark Waught

From buying your first SUP to safety tips, British Canoeing's Go Paddling website offers a whole range of tips and advice on getting out on the water safely.

gopaddling.info

COACHING CORNER

WITH IMOGEN COLLINS

Imogen Collins is British Canoeing's Female England National Talent Squad Coach and from a young age, has been engrossed in the sport. Here she discusses her journey from messing about on the water, to attending Olympic training camps and becoming a coach for talented young people hoping to reach Olympic podiums.



WHAT AGE DID YOU START CANOEING?

"I first got into paddling when I was 10 years old. I attended a come and try session at Reading Canoe Club that involved playing around in plastic boats. Pretty quickly my whole family got hooked on the sport, and we've had a family membership to British Canoeing ever since.

"My sister and I soon progressed from plastic boats, to paddling in longer skinnier boats such as the Lightnings. I competed in marathon and sprint but after competing in my first Sprint Regatta, I became hooked on canoe sprint and from the age of 16, began focusing solely on canoe sprint."

WHAT LEVEL DID YOU GET TO WITHIN YOUR PADDLING CAREER?

"During my time as a junior I was part of the junior training group, which was led by a number of different people over the years including Claudia Le Roux and Mark Hoile. I competed internationally at the Junior Development Regatta and at the Olympic Hopes Regatta. My event was then removed from the competition, meaning I missed out on the junior team, but this motivated me to get into coaching."

WHO WERE YOUR MOST INFLUENTIAL COACHES AS A JUNIOR?

"There were two people; firstly Dave Coulson, at the time he was the Lead Junior Coach and I was coached by him at Reading Canoe Club. He always believed in me and could see that I had talent I hadn't quite found yet. He never said much, but when he did, the words he spoke were very powerful. The other would be Brian Greenham, as a coach I don't know how he tolerated me but he was very motivational and I still talk to him regularly."

HOW DID YOU GET INTO COACHING?

"I was fortunate enough to be offered the chance to work with British Canoeing as a female chaperone at junior training camps through Brendon Stead. Brendon very quickly realised that I could also add value to some of the coaching elements at these camps. This was the start of my coaching development in the pathway. I love working with the younger talent and my aspirations are to give as many young people as many opportunities as possible."

YOU ARE PART OF BRITISH CANOEING'S FEMALE DEVELOPMENT GROUP. CAN YOU TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT IT?

"The Female Development Group aims to expand the knowledge and experiences of female paddlers and those that support them.

"Every Friday we run a #FemaleFriday feature on British Canoeing's social channels to highlight subject areas that impact female training or day to day life.

"Our Female champions across sprint, slalom and paracanoe also help us to promote our messaging across the disciplines and we're hoping to create sanitary boxes for clubs to support female paddlers attending clubs too."

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT COACHING?

"Seeing an athlete achieve what they set out to do, whether that be in a training session or a race. Seeing an athlete achieve their goal is phenomenal!"

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT ABOUT THE SPORT AS A COACH?

"I wish I understood the benefits that being stronger would have had on my paddling ability. I don't think I ever took the time to really amalgamate how improvements in the gym would bring about improvements on the water, be that technically or powerfully."

WHAT WOULD YOUR ADVICE BE TO ANY FEMALES WHO MIGHT BE CONSIDERING GETTING INTO COACHING?

"Don't ever believe you can't! I doubted myself during the first couple of years, but I believed in my strengths as a coach and overtime I've been able to see these come out in myself, which has furthered my confidence.

"If you care about others and have compassion which are probably classed as 'female attributes' then don't be scared of having and showing them. They are great attributes to have and should be seen as a strength in coaching."



Which qualification is right for me?

The British Canoeing Awarding Body Instructor, Coaching and Leadership qualification suite has undergone a comprehensive review and design phase.

The new suite considers current thinking and research, and aligns with British Canoeing's educational philosophy to give individualised pathways, direct access to assessment, and provides participants with choice.

So, whether you're a member of a club supporting a local community or want to provide paddlesport activities in a commercial setting, the new approach recognises the individual and gives a range of opportunities for you to gain your paddlesport qualification.

Benefits of Direct Entry

Everyone brings a different set of skills and experiences to their training courses. Direct entry options enable you to select the best route for your qualification journey and allows you the choice and ability to shape your own individualised journey. Paddlers who already have the necessary skills no longer need to spend time and money on courses they are already confident with the content of. Instead paddlers can start from the entry point relevant to their progression.

Whether you're looking to take your first step into instructing, coaching or leading, find the best direct entry award to suit you and begin your journey into paddlesport qualifications...

Paddlesport Leader

Launched: April 2017

Aimed at: Paddlers leading on sheltered water environments, running safe and enjoyable trips based on their group's needs and aspirations.

Age: 16+

Craft: The Paddlesport Leader can lead any craft, from any craft

Prerequisites: One day First Aid, safeguarding training and a British Canoeing membership

Training: Optional training is available. Candidates can cross check their requirements, using the **skills checklist** or **self-analysis tool**. Candidates can opt for bespoke training opportunities, for example, in-house training at a club or working alongside/shadowing other leaders at your centre

Assessment: One day assessment

Examples: In a recreational club, the Paddlesport Leader could be leading journeys, providing a safety framework for multiple craft or in a racing club, could provide a safety overview on a training session, chaperoning other paddlers





Paddlesport Instructor

Launched: January 2019

Aimed at: Paddlers whose main focus is to deliver paddlesport taster/starter sessions and short journeys in very sheltered water environments, within the safety management systems of clubs/centres or other organisations

Age: 14+

Craft: Stable craft typically used for taster/starter sessions (including kayak, open canoe, sit-on-top and SUP)

Prerequisites: Foundation safety and rescue training and a membership of British Canoeing

Training & Assessment: Two days combined

Examples: Organisations running introductory sessions for those who have never tried paddling or clubs playing games to progress their new paddler's paddlesport skills

Clubs, centres and organisations are able to select a variety of instructors, coaches and leaders to suit their needs.

Coach Award

Launched: January 2018

Aimed at: Paddlers who wish to coach those who want to gain/improve paddlesport skills within a chosen discipline. This will include coaching beginners new to the sport or paddlers looking to develop their skills in the given discipline/environment.

Age: 16+ at the time of assessment, or aged 18 for advanced water options

Craft: 22 options available covering all of our main disciplines and environments, including SUP

Prerequisites: A British Canoeing membership is the only prerequisite of Core Coach Training

Training: Two day Core Coach Training (online or practical), two day discipline specific training

Assessment: One day assessment

Examples: A Polo club looking to develop their athlete's skills or a club coaching sea kayaking sessions in a moderate or advanced water environment



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