

CANOE FOCUS

**It's a big year for
the Clear Access,
Clear Waters
campaign**

Read more on
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**Kayak Cross
explained**

Read more on
page 22

**#WePaddle
Together - British
Canoeing's new
EDI strategy**

Read more on
page 16

This photo was taken by Christy Hobart,
our November 2022 winner of the Go Paddling photo competition.

Christy Hobart  @christyhobart

Winter 2023



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Welcome

Welcome to the January edition of Canoe Focus.

I hope that everyone had an enjoyable and active festive season and year end. I trust also that your New Year resolutions were to follow the lead from British Canoeing's new plan to 'paddle better, paddle more and paddle safer'. Let's make it a brilliant year for paddlers.

I am always struck by both the breadth of our paddling community on the one hand (so many disciplines, styles, boats, groups, contexts etc.) and the coherence and common values on the other. We are united by our love of the outdoors and our respect for the environment. This edition demonstrates this perfectly.

The breadth of our community could not be better illustrated than in the features this month. Our #ShePaddles ambassador Saira Is-Haq gives an eloquent expression of what paddling means to her and the freedom it brings. Our feature on Will Behenna and his development of SIP (Seated Inclusive Paddleboarding) shows the determination to overcome adversity driven by the love of, and desire to be on, the water. As we prepare to host the World Championships in Slalom at Lee Valley in September, which are also the Olympic qualifying event for Paris 2024 we explore the world of elite paddling. These are but three of the many brilliant examples of our community in action.

The next year will be a big year for our campaigns. So let us also make a resolution to press home even more firmly our desire for Clear Access and Clear Waters. We have a right to be able to paddle in more places and to expect the water quality and environments that we enjoy to be clean and safe.

We shall be stepping up our activity this year to get the message across. A key event is going to be held in parliament in June 2023 when we shall be encouraging the political parties to put commitment to supporting our aims in their manifestos. More places to paddle, cleaner water to paddle in and sustainable environments should be a right. It's not much to ask for. The photos from our 2022 competitions reviewed here illustrate perfectly just how awesome and diverse those environments are.

We have recently launched our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and I want to take this opportunity to encourage all of you to work with us to ensure that we provide the most welcoming and inclusive environment into which we welcome new paddlers.

We have begun 2023 on the front foot with record membership numbers, a full plan to serve our community of paddlers and a degree of financial robustness in these tough times that will permit us to continue to invest in areas that are valued by our members and the community we serve. The Stronger Together Fund is one illustration of the way we are seeking to invest in our collective future. The support from our sponsors and from our members is putting us in a great place and despite the inflationary pressure we are facing we remain committed to ensuring that your support to us is affordable.

I hope that 2023 brings some great paddling for you.

John Coyne

Professor John Coyne CBE
Chair, British Canoeing





NEWS

Receive regular updates plus exclusive discounts for our partner products with a British Canoeing membership.

members.britishcanoeing.org.uk

www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news

Laura Sugar MBE wins Women's Sports Alliance Award

Congratulations to Laura Sugar MBE who was announced as Para-Athlete of the Year at the 2022 Women's Sports Alliance Awards. Laura had an incredible 2021, where she became Paralympic Champion in Tokyo, as well as women's KL3 World Champion just two weeks later, Laura Sugar MBE continued her dominant form into 2022, achieving the 'Grand Slam' of titles. Find out more here:



www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2022/laura-sugar-mbe-wins-womens-sports-alliance-award



British Canoeing launch the Paddler Spotlight

To support our ongoing commitment to improving the diversity and representation of our imagery, stories and sport, we are introducing a new initiative across our media channels - the Paddler Spotlight. Find out more about our monthly commitment to showcase stories from our members below.



www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/share-your-stories-for-the-paddler-spotlight

Membership as a gift

Have you got a paddling pal with a birthday coming up? You can now give the gift of a British Canoeing membership. You'll be gifting access to explore some of our finest waterways across the country and support the development of resources and projects that benefit the whole paddling community. If you buy now, the recipient will have 12 months to activate their membership. Find out how to purchase here:



members.britishcanoeing.org.uk/give-the-gift-of-membership/

Start planning your 2023 paddling adventures

It's time to start planning your paddling adventures for 2023. Is there a location you've always wanted to paddle or a paddling distance you've always wanted to achieve?

Let us help you reach your paddling goals. Discover new places to paddle using PaddlePoints and our selection paddling route articles or set yourself a new challenge and complete one of our Go Paddling challenges. Check out our paddling routes here:



gopaddling.info/tag/paddling-routes/

and our Go Paddling challenges here:
gopaddling.info/gopaddlingchallenges/

British Canoeing Members can get FREE National Outdoor Expo Tickets

Join British Canoeing at the National Outdoor Expo, 18-19 March 2023 for FREE. We'll be exhibiting and talking about safety, how our Go Paddling brand benefits paddlers and why you should look for our British Canoeing Delivery Partner logo. As a special offer members can get free admission. 850 of our members took up this offer last year, so why not join like minded individuals in Birmingham next March. Find out more about this offer here:



members.britishcanoeing.org.uk/?mh_cpt_voucher_code=national-outdoor-expo





#PaddleToTheMoon

2nd Jan - 30th Jun 2023



Want To Paddle To The Moon?

Start 2023 with a challenge that's out of this world and join our mission to paddle board to the Moon. We are calling all paddle board lovers to get together and reach the target of 384.4 million metres (the distance from Earth to the Moon) by the end of June 2023. Sounds far...but, if we all paddle together, we can do it!

We will also be giving away a monthly prize to the top paddler of the month and all entries will be entered into a prize draw to win a free paddle board at the end of the mission.

JOIN THE MISSION

WWW.AQUAPLANETSPORTS.COM/PADDLE-TO-THE-MOON

Go Paddling Photo Competition 2022 Round Up


Over the past year the paddling community have been sharing their best paddling pics using the #GoPaddling hashtag and taking part in the Go Paddling photo competition.

Each month of 2022 we chose our favourite photo to share with our social media followers. Check out the photos from all our monthly winners in 2022. Whether they inspire you to start taking your own paddling pics or encourage you to paddle somewhere new, we hope that these photos will motivate you to Go Paddling in 2023.



January

Leon Warrington


 @sup_sunrise_leon

How epic does this SUP sunrise paddle look? Taken on a winter morning by Leon at Christchurch, Dorset.



February

Andy

 @paddleupnorth

What an epic view! Paddling allows us to visit unique places that we can't reach on foot. Our February photo of the month was taken by Andy in a cave at North Landing, Flamborough.



March

Karen Pflug

 @karen.pflug

This lovely photo was taken by Karen on the River Wey on the first day of spring! Just look at those clear blue skies and reflections!



April

Claire Lambert


 @thepenandpaddle

Spring in a photo. We wish we could be there right now among the willow trees, how relaxing! Taken by Claire in Sudbury, Suffolk.



May

Dunk B


 @mrbwalks

Taken by Dunk B on the River Nene on the sunny Jubilee weekend.

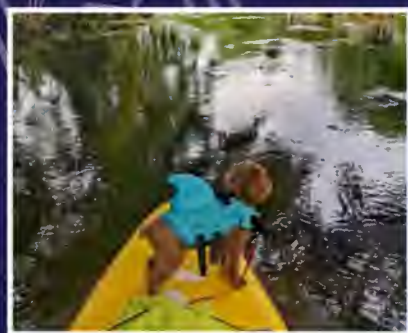


June

Lesley


 @lesley_suplife

Here's to more time on the water and summer adventures. Taken by Lesley on the Great River Ouse, it looks like a scene straight out of a movie!



July

Paddy the caddy

 @paddy_on_exploring

Heading into August in style. Our fantastic July photo of the month was taken of Bruce the SUP pup.



August

Kathy Revell

 @kathy.revell

Exploring the Macclesfield Canal by SUP. Taken by Kathy looking towards Clarence Mill. Stretching for 26 miles, the Macclesfield Canal connects the Peak Forest Canal to the Trent & Mersey Canal. Add it to your list of places to paddle this year!

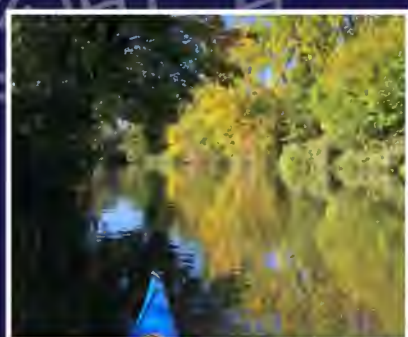


September

Sarah


 @paddle_n_wander

The trees put on a colourful show this year. Taken by Sarah just as the trees were starting to change to shades of amber at Normanton on Soar. Imagine the reflections here in winter!



October

View from my boat

 @viewfrommyboat

There's nothing like paddling among the gorgeous scenery of autumn. Taken on the River Medway.



November

Christy Hobart


 @christyhobart

Our wonderful November photo of the month was taken by Christy on a lovely sunny day on the River Frome in Wareham, Dorset.



December

Neil Wragg

 @theneilwragg

A frosty morning on the River Thames at Marlow Lock.

The Go Paddling photo competition will continue into 2023 so there is still time to take part and be in with a chance of winning some fab prizes.

Why not check out our top five tips for taking great paddling photos online here:

 gopaddling.info/top-5-tips-for-taking-paddling-pics/

The Winter Go Paddling photo competition is in full swing. Perhaps you have paddled in a winter wonderland or enjoyed a serene paddle down the canal, we want to see it!

To take part, all you need to do is use the hashtag **#GoPaddling** on your Instagram photos.

We will choose our favourite photo each month and share it with our followers.

This winter
you'll be in with a
chance of winning a
**£250 Gill
voucher!**

**GO
Paddling!**

#SHEPADDLES

AMBASSADOR SAIRA'S TIPS FOR PADDLING IN WINTER

Paddling through autumn and winter with #ShePaddles Ambassador, Saira Is-Haq.

As the nights draw in and the weather starts to turn there's no need to stop paddling or getting outdoors before it gets dark. It can be so rewarding to paddle through autumn and winter, you get to see a kaleidoscope of colour, see migrating birds and enjoy the crisp air. #ShePaddles Ambassador, Saira Is-Haq, shares with us her favourite memories and benefits of keeping active throughout the colder months.

Saira took up paddling seventeen years ago, starting her journey at York Canoe Club. She soon fell in love with kayaking and quickly progressed from a novice paddler to racing in K1 and K2s.

Saira's passion for paddling led her to explore an array of paddling disciplines from white water, to sea kayaking and canoeing. But her love for the outdoors doesn't just stop there. Saira also loves fell running, cycle touring and wild swimming and is an advocate for getting outdoors even during the colder months.

"I'm a female Muslim, with Indian and Pakistani parents, so water sports aren't something people from Asian origins usually enjoy and our parents certainly don't understand the passion for it. The expectations of Muslim Indian/Pakistani women don't ever have to be jeopardised because we love this sport, this was the same for my fell racing and mountain biking passions."

"I paddled twice a day every day, being on the water was the only place I wanted to be."

– Saira Is-Haq



Saira

Visit the Go Paddling website to find out more about paddling safely in winter
<https://gopaddling.info/>

HOW SAIRA PADDLES THROUGHOUT AUTUMN AND WINTER

Like most outdoor enthusiasts, the desire to be close to the river smell, or the fresh air has meant me and my family have the desire to be outdoors. We often kayak and canoe as a family on my local river. I've been kayaking for many years, so I have a long list of my most treasured moments on the water, but to name a few, my biggest achievement was kayaking with my daughter when I was pregnant. I couldn't resist the water but safety was paramount. I'd ask my friend to take me out in the canoe but it was never the same, so getting in a boat with her felt positive in that my love for kayaking could be shared this way.

Some of my favourite memories on the water are encounters with wildlife. On a sea kayaking adventure in the Farne Islands we were heading home and as we paddled around the corner along came puffins flying above and seals playing and jumping alongside us. That was fantastic. We also camped and canoed on Lake Windermere which was amazing, here we watched the last flight of the Vulcan fly over us.

I'm a strong believer that you can enjoy paddling all year round. A common phrase in our house is "We don't stop for the rain or cold". We have to get out and there's a beauty in seeing the seasons change the river dynamics. Throughout autumn and winter, I'd like to encourage everyone to get out on the water in the bright mornings. But if you're not an early bird, why not embrace the crisp afternoons? By adapting your kit to suit the conditions, wearing more layers and bringing snacks and flasks of hot drinks along you can have just as much fun on the water.

Keeping up the exercise is a great way to remain active throughout winter and means you're ready to explore even more places when the warmer weather comes around.

Before heading out on the water in autumn and winter, you need to consider a few more things. Here are my top tips for paddling through these seasons:

- > Paddle in a pair or group and make sure you carry a means of communication with you
- > Make sure your equipment and kit are appropriate for the conditions you'll be paddling in. Take a look [here](#) at what to wear when paddling in autumn and winter
- > Before you get on the water, make sure to warm up. This will help prevent injury and mentally prepare you for your paddle. Find top tips [here](#)
- > Plan your trip in advance before heading out on the water. Check the weather forecast, tides and water levels beforehand too. Take a look at British Canoeing's top tips [here](#)
- > River levels fluctuate throughout autumn and winter, see how they can affect your plans [here](#)
- > Enjoy our waterways responsibly by following [the Paddlers' Code](#) - respect, protect and enjoy
- > Plan to finish your paddle before dusk. Give yourself enough time to get there and back

I'm hoping to encourage myself and you all to paddle as many times as you can throughout the colder months and create memorable moments with your friends and family. Let me know where you've been exploring!

You can follow Saira on Instagram [@sairapaddles](#) here and keep up to date with her paddling adventures and her time as a #ShePaddles Ambassador. If you're looking for places to paddle, take a look at PaddlePoints for inspiration.

#SHEPADDLES
SPREAD THE LOVE!



It's a big year for the

Clear Access, Clear Waters campaign...

Last year we achieved so much together, but we know there's plenty of work to do in 2023.

British Canoeing will be pushing, more than ever, for fair, shared, sustainable access to healthy waters.

Our waterways are under great pressure from sewage pollution, chemicals, urbanisation, intensive agriculture, invasive species and sadly, at times, indifference.

This could be changed by giving people more opportunities to access, enjoy and understand precious blue spaces.

Millions of people are paddling every year. It is one of the fastest growing sports and recreational activities.

With more people there has to be better access to the majority of waterways, otherwise, there'll be too much pressure on spots that have no restrictions.

We want the government to establish a clear right in law for everyone to enjoy and protect our inland waters.

With this freedom would come lots of responsibility, to our environment, to each other and to the local communities who live alongside water.

Therefore we will also call for the government to do more to educate and inform all users about responsible behaviour on and off the water.

It would be great if you could tell your MP how you feel about your local rivers and why you would like greater access to other waterways.



The Big Paddle Cleanup

The Big Paddle Cleanup is returning for two weeks of action to continue the mission to improve our precious blue places.

In 2022, an amazing 1,200 paddlers took part in a bid to clear their local waterways of junk and plastic pollution, while raising more public awareness of the issue.

The response was incredible. About 700 huge sacks were filled containing 2,123 single-use plastic bottles, 1,476 cans, 831 glass bottles and 3,296 food wrappers.

This phenomenal achievement did not go unnoticed. British Canoeing and its community of paddlers were recognised at the inaugural **BBC Sport Green Awards** for our efforts.

We were one of the runners-up for the teamwork award, which was for sporting organisations (professional, community-level or grassroots) that actively educated or engaged participants, fans, citizens or society at large on climate action.

We want the Big Paddle Cleanup 2023 to be even bigger. These are the dates you need to save:

2023



Big Paddle Cleanup 2023

27 May – 11 June 2023





Paddlers' Code

In 2022, British Canoeing also produced the Paddlers' Code to share guidance on how to enjoy our beautiful waterways responsibly.

The Code was developed with Natural England and reflects their work with the Countryside Code.

It has been well received by paddlers and other organisations. The Paddlers' Code shows, as a community, how serious we are about protecting our waters, but why we should respect other waterway users, while enjoying ourselves at the same time.

The Paddlers' Code belongs to everyone and we'll be pushing its messages as we enter springtime and more people get back on the water.



The
**Paddlers'
Code**

Respect · Protect · Enjoy

Floating Pennywort

We had success in the battle to rid some of our waters of the invasive floating pennywort.

In case you didn't know, the non-native plant grows quickly and can clog up whole waterways, preventing people from paddling, while damaging wildlife.

We held events for volunteers at the River Wey, Shropshire Union Canal and River Weaver and cleared as much floating pennywort as possible.

British Canoeing and the Angling Trust were delighted so many people came out to help.

Our event on the River Wey, near Guildford, was well attended and huge amounts of floating pennywort was cleared by paddlers, anglers and other volunteers.

Invasive Species Week 2023 will be held between 15 and 21 May to raise more awareness. But events will be held across the year. If you're interested in helping please look out on Facebook for updates.

However, one very important way you can help is by keeping any boats, clothing, footwear and equipment used in water free of invasive non-native species. Remember to Check Clean Dry.

Above all, we know how important access and the environment is to British Canoeing members and paddlers in general.

Our dedicated team is working hard on both fronts and we are so grateful for your help and support. We believe that together we can make a difference and achieve our goals.





Gill

GO
Paddling!

Gill

Stay Dry.

Out in your kayak, on your paddleboard, or doing any water activity where you could use a little extra protection? Dry suits are an excellent choice.

Like the new Verso Drysuit from Gill, surface dry suits are often made with breathable fabrics as wearers who spend much of their time on the surface often get overheated and/or dehydrated.

Along with being breathable, dry suits are waterproof and watertight and insulate against heat transfer to the surrounding environment. Aiding in keeping water out, the neck and wrists often incorporate soft rubber (like latex) or Neoprene seals and purge valves to evacuate any water that may creep in.

Made with Gill's exclusive XPLORE+® 3-layer waterproof and breathable fabric and plant-based XPEL® water and stain repellent fabric finish, the Verso Drysuit is the ultimate protective dry suit.

Easy to use, with a dependable, heavyweight rear-entry zip design, step into the suit and zip yourself in. Every feature has been thought out with the user in mind. Inner Neoprene Dryseals at the neck and wrist prevent cold water flush and adjustable cuffs improve fit, whilst adding additional weather protection. The packable rollaway hood design allows you to stow the hood safely away when not in use and the soft fleece inner chin guard has laser-cut ventilation holes to increase comfort. There is also a pocket on the sleeve that's accessible while wearing a PFD.

The Verso Drysuit comes in Graphite and Bluejay colourways.



Your member discount gives you 15% off all of Gill's full priced product, shop now at: gb.gillmarine.com

Combine with



Hydrophobe Thermal Top –
Adult £55, Junior £40

The new Hydrophobe Thermal Top is ideal for all water-based activities. Ideal for wearing in colder weather under a wetsuit or drysuit. The fleece lining is comfortable against the skin and traps warm air, whilst the thermal protection fabric protects the skin from UV 50+ sun rays.



Aqua Parka, Dark Navy/Bluejay – £145

Change wherever, whenever with welded seams that stretch and move with you as you change, and a long length and generous fit which gives full coverage. Keep warm and dry inside with a high loft fleece lining to keep you warm even when wet. Also available in Graphite and Eggshell.



Voyager Dry Bag, Sulphur –
£45 (50L), £25 (25L), £20 (10L), £18 (5L)

The Voyager Dry Bag is made from puncture resistant, waterproof PVC tarpaulin fabric and is constructed using stitch-free, high frequency welded seams, making it completely waterproof. Roll down the wide opening (we recommend rolling down three times) and fasten the side release clips to create a watertight seal. The semi translucent window allows you to see inside the bag without having to open it up in wet conditions. The multiple D-ring attachment points make it easy to secure down in transit on and off the water. Also available in Black and Bluejay.



Meet Fitzroy.

The new Fitzroy jacket, made from recycled synthetic insulation to provide warmth even when wet!

Available now at gb.gillmarine.com

Don't forget:
British Canoeing members
get 15% OFF Gill products.

GO
Paddling!

Gill



BECOME A STAND UP PADDLEBOARD INSTRUCTOR

The NEW SUP Instructor supports you to run SUP taster/starter sessions, games and short journeys for those new to paddleboarding.

The two day course helps to prepare you for your first SUP instructing role, to deliver safe and enjoyable sessions in a very sheltered water environment, within the safety management systems of your club, centre or organisation.

You will be supported with practical skills such as kitting up a group and getting afloat, initial familiarisation activities, as well as how to use games and mini journeys to support learning, inspire adventure and exploration.

The course is suitable for those over 14 years of age and the only prerequisites are National Association membership and personal paddling and rescue competence.

Visit the Paddles Up Training website to find out more and to book your upcoming course today.



paddlesuptraining.com/courses/stand-up-paddleboard-instructor

IMPROVE YOUR SAFETY SKILLS WITH NEW PADDLESPORT SAFETY AND RESCUE COURSE

- Are you looking to develop your safety skills?
- Do you want to learn practical solutions if you get into difficulty?
- Do you want the tools to solve common paddling issues in a sheltered water environment?

Then the NEW Paddlesport Safety and Rescue course is for you! The 6 hour course is aimed at **anyone** looking to develop the key safety and rescue skills required to operate safely and to be able to deal with common problems in a sheltered water environment.

You will explore and practice simple strategies and safe skills that provide you with the tools if you and others get into difficulty. The course covers topics such as clothing and equipment, safety frameworks, and a range of rescues including assisting others, self-rescues and deep water rescues.

The course is aimed at paddlers of all ages, in any craft, including canoes, kayaks, sit on tops and stand up paddleboards.

Visit the Paddles Up Training website to find out more and to book your upcoming course today.



paddlesuptraining.com/courses/paddlesport-safety-and-rescue

NEW SAFETY RESOURCES

The British Canoeing Awarding Body is pleased to share a range of safety and rescue resources to support paddlers and coaches in their safety practices.

Rescue videos

The new rescue videos include a whole host of rescue demonstrations on sheltered water, including bank based rescues, open canoe rescues, kayak rescues, mixed craft rescues, SUP rescues and racing craft rescues.

Guidance documents

We are pleased to share a range of guidance documents including 'Using Throwlines' and Safety and rescue in a sheltered water environment'.

There is also a range of coaching from the bank guidance documents, to support those coaching from a bike, the beach, the bank or for pool sessions, to name a few.

Visit the British Canoeing Awarding Body website to explore the resources.



www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/safety-resources/

#WePaddle Together

A Strategy for **Equality, Diversity** and **Inclusion**

British Canoeing is delighted to publish its first **strategy for equality, diversity and inclusion**. This strategy is a reflection of our commitment to our inclusion agenda throughout Stronger Together 2022-26, and this commitment is a golden thread throughout the organisation.

Our Vision

“We will ensure there is more equal access to paddling, ongoing championing of diversity in all paddling communities, and that we make a greater effort to better understand how we can collectively create inclusive and welcoming environments where everyone is able to enjoy paddling, regardless of their identity, background or circumstances.”





Equality, diversity
and inclusion (EDI)

**STRONGER
TOGETHER**



We recognise that in order to achieve the ambitions set out in this strategy, we all need to commit to creating a more equal, diverse and inclusive sport, activity and organisation.




We hope that our paddling community and stakeholders can see where their opportunities to support this work is, and will join us on this journey.






Building insight and knowledge

-  Gaining further insight into how communities access our sport, activities and programmes and how we can remove barriers for under-represented groups
-  Improving our knowledge on all aspects of EDI and cascading this within the paddling community
-  Listening to diverse, intersectional voices from our paddlesport community on a range of issues, to implement change and provide equitable services for all

Excellent governance and systems

-  Holding ourselves accountable by doing what we say we will do and reporting openly and honestly on progress made
-  Maintaining excellent governance frameworks and policy and ensuring compliance with sector standards for equality.
-  The Board and Senior Leadership Team leading by example, driving greater diversity, putting EDI at the heart of its decision making and holding the wider executive to account in delivery of this strategy.

Championing diversity

-  Delivering focused initiatives that address disparities in representation across the paddling community
-  Celebrating diverse role models and sharing examples of inclusive practice as learning opportunities
-  Engaging and supporting our people to be advocates for inclusion

For more information and to read the full strategy, visit the Stronger Together website:



strongertogether2.britishcanoeing.org.uk/

How Seated Inclusive Paddleboarding (SIP) could change lives

Despite the devastation of being unable to walk following a cycling accident, 35 year ago, Will Behenna was determined not to let it affect his love of the outdoors.

"I was always into outdoor stuff," said Dorset-based paddler Will Behenna. "So I just kind of carried on."

This conviction has served him well, leading him to the belief that 'why should Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) be just for non-disabled people?'

As a wheelchair user the only way Will can access a SUP is from a seated position.



Will in his seat

It has been his mission to modify a paddleboard to enable him to get on the water safely and independently.

Will hopes that more disabled and non-disabled people (who choose to paddleboard sitting down) can do so comfortably and safely.

"I call it SIP, Seated Inclusive Paddling," he said.

"SIP and SUP. It's just a bit of a play on words more than anything. Seated Paddleboarding makes it a bit more inclusive for lots of people.

"It's about promoting paddle boarding [but] sitting down just as a general thing.

"I think there's lots of people who get paddle boards and just sit on them and paddle with one blade, and you see them on the rivers and they're basically just wiggling around.

"[I am also] promoting it for people who aren't able to stand up and need more support, whether that's because of age or weight. Or just general ability."

Will has been working on several prototypes for a seat, first from wood, which was too heavy, and then from different types of foam.



Will's wooden prototype seat

He is also convinced that two blades are better as it is too difficult with one blade, for someone with limited lower limb function.

Getting a SUP out of the car rather than a kayak, is also easier, Will added.

He has also been working on modifications beneath the board. He can't have a fin attached as the SUP needs to be close to the shore or riverbank when he gets on it.

“Being out on the water is my happy place and it’s just that sense of absolute freedom.” – Will Behenna

He said without a fin the paddleboard functions like a kayak, but having one in place means paddling is more efficient. Therefore he has created a prototype fin that slides on to the back of the board once he gets into deeper water.



Prototype including the strapping, along with wheels to transport the board to the water

Will would love to establish a group who want to promote Seated Inclusive Paddleboarding. He believes it has changed his life and it could for other people too.

“I went out the other day and it was just breathtaking for me,” he said.

“Being out in the water is my happy place and it’s just that sense of absolute freedom.

“I feel so much safer on a paddle board than I do a kayak because you’ve literally got to grab hold of the board and start rocking it as hard as you can to go over.”



Will transferring on to his board

Will still has plenty of testing to do to make sure the board is safe to venture out solo.

“I’ve always dreamed of just being able to kind of go out on the water on my own,” he said.

“That would be the greatest day. It should be next year and it will be freaking awesome.”

Will has connected with **Ripple Rebels**, who are doing great work helping everyone experience the physical and mental health benefits of Stand Up Paddleboarding.

He said: “They’ve been really helpful, but I’m now at that point of wanting to start doing some promotion to look at making people more aware [of my prototypes].”

Will has also been in touch with **Access Adventures** who deliver life-changing adaptive sports and activities. However, despite their invaluable help, they haven’t got anything like what Will has been building.



Will in his Seating inclusive paddleboarding prototype seat

He wants to develop the products further so they can be more accessible to more people and needs help in producing guidelines for safety.

If you can help Will in any way mentioned in the article, you can get in touch through his website: **The Seated Inclusive Paddling Project**.

Funding opportunities!

If you've got a fantastic paddling project that needs some financial help, then take a look at the two funding opportunities we have available.



Stronger Together Fund

Not-for-profit clubs and organisations with projects to get more people paddling can apply for up to £10,000 from British Canoeing's new Stronger Together Fund.



Thanks to the huge growth in our membership, we're planning to distribute funding to benefit paddling communities based in England over the next three years.

Projects that support young people, women and girls, people from under-represented communities and differently-abled people to get paddling are considered a priority. Projects should also continue to provide support, access and opportunities after the Stronger Together Fund donation is spent.

The closing date for the first round of applications for the Stronger Together Fund is **14 February 2023**.

Find out more and how to apply here: www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2022/stronger-together

Happy New Year from Canoe Foundation!

We're looking forward to supporting lots of great new paddling projects across the UK once our new funding window opens on **15 February 2023**.

While we're waiting, we've taken the opportunity to look back at some of the fantastic projects we supported in 2022 which can now be enjoyed by paddlers of all abilities. Projects that were completed in the last year were supported by over £65,000 of Canoe Foundation awards; with a further £100,000 of grants awarded and still to be claimed as projects are completed.

With your help, we can support more projects!

We've had hundreds of enquiries in the past couple of years and while we've been able to provide funding to many projects, we'd love to support more. With your help, we'll be able to get more projects off the ground across the UK. No amount is too small so please consider making a one-off donation, setting up a regular direct debit or even leaving us a legacy in your Will. You can donate online at canoefoundation.enthuse.com/donate

New Pontoon Access installed by Cardiff International White Water Centre

CIWWC was awarded a grant in February 2021 to reach more diverse communities and engage homeless people through paddlesports.

The grant enabled the Centre to expand their offering into flat water paddling and helped access hard to reach communities through outriggers and SUPs. The new pontoon is an excellent opportunity for people to safely access the water in a key location. It expands the canoe trail access to Cardiff Bay and the Rivers Tay and Ely, and is helping to engage diverse communities.

Amount awarded: £10,000



New Landing Stage & Floating Pontoons on River Thames at Elmbridge Canoe Club, Surrey

Amount awarded: £6,000

Scott Hynds of the club said “The new landing stage is a floating one rather than fixed, so this means we have a constant height all year round. This makes entry and exit easier and safer, and the two different levels mean it’s suitable for paddlers of all ages and stages. This wouldn’t have been feasible without help from the Canoe Foundation grant, so a big thanks from the whole club.”



Improved Landing Platform on the River Severn at Hampton Loade, Shropshire

Amount awarded: £5,000

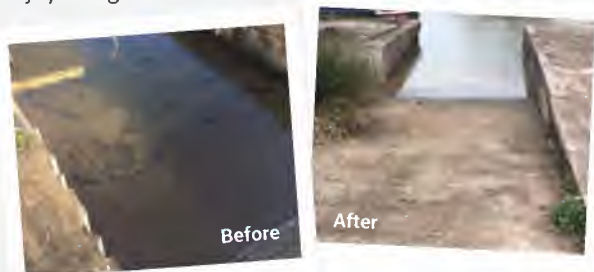
This grant helped install a replacement jetty on the River Severn at picturesque Hampton Loade in Shropshire. Pete Lambert, Land and Water Team Manager at Shropshire Wildlife Trust, said: “Since the installation of the improved landing platform, we’ve seen regular use and it’s helped make the Hampton Loade location become a popular stopping and starting point on the river. We hope the landing stage will continue to provide support for river exploration for years to come.”



New slipway at Ruby's Yard on historic Coventry Canal

Amount awarded: £5,000

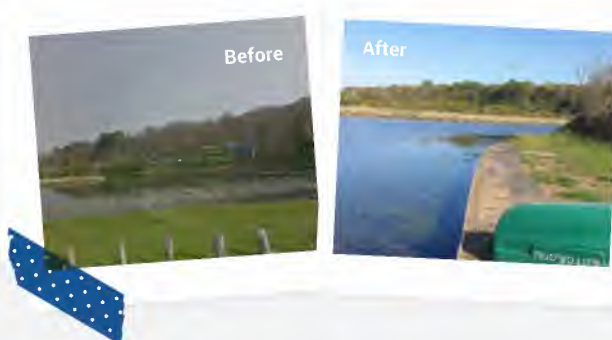
Director Jacky Gordon said, “The grant enabled us to restore the old eroded concrete slipway and provide a new access and destination point for recreational paddling. New paddlers can experience the fun of paddling and try out short and easy trails along a lovely lock-free rural stretch of the canal. It provides a secure, private place where clubs and families can socialise. The grant helped us establish Ruby’s Yard as a base for volunteering and environmental education so we can all enjoy this green corridor.”



Buzz Active (East Sussex County Council) – River Bank and Access Improvements

Amount awarded: £5,000

This grant was awarded for river bank access improvements at the beautiful Meanders in Seven Sisters Country Park. The work is to prevent erosion and ensure the public have good access to the water.



New hoist at Calvert Trust, Exmoor

Amount awarded: £4,000

The Dipper Hoist was fitted on a small pontoon used by this North Devon charity and will help to ensure differently abled guests can enjoy canoeing and other adventurous experiences. Nick Austin, Head Instructor says: “Having this fantastic donation from the Canoe Foundation means we can invest in new adaptive equipment like the Dipper Hoist; and open up possibilities for people with a varying range of needs to get out on the water.”



Looking forward to 2023

With our new funding window opening on 15 February, we’re looking forward to helping out a wide range of paddling projects across the UK. If you have a project that you think we could help with, we’d love to hear from you!

✉ enquiries@canoefoundation.org.uk
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KAYAK CROSS EXPLAINED

Find out more about the latest paddling discipline set to make a splash at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Formerly known as Extreme Slalom, the discipline has recently had a name change to Kayak Cross and is now featured across the ICF World Cup and World Championship circuit. The fast paced race between four athletes will also make its debut at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games as announced in December 2020.

So what is Kayak Cross?

Kayak Cross is an exciting discipline which sees four paddlers battle it out against each other on a white water course all at the same time. Unlike the traditional canoe slalom, athletes plunge into the course off a ramp more than two metres above the water and whoever crosses the finish line first wins.

Sounds simple? There's more to it than that... there's still gates to navigate, but also a 'roll zone'.

The gates for Kayak Cross are different to regular slalom in that they are inflatable buoys. There will be a maximum of six downstream (green) gates and two upstream (red) gates on the course. Each upstream gate will actually have two buoys, one on each side of the course, and paddlers can choose which to navigate, which is where tactics come into play.

The course also contains a roll zone where paddlers must complete a roll under the water. Any gate missed means disqualification. Not executing a roll in the roll zone, capsizing before the finish or not complying with safety measures also means you're out!

All athletes take part in an individual time trial in which they seek to complete the course as quickly as possible whilst navigating the gates. The top 32 paddlers then qualify through to the heats and are seeded based on their time trial time. Four paddlers take part in each heat, with the first two across the line who have successfully completed the course progressing through to the next round. The rounds then progress through to a final where the top four compete for three medals.



Britain amongst the medals

Since its introduction to the ICF Programme eight years ago, Britain's slalom athletes have had a huge amount of success in the discipline across the age ranges. As recently as the 2022 World Championships in Augsburg, Rio's Canoe Slalom Olympic Champion Joe Clarke MBE applied his trademark power and speed to the sport to claim back to back World Championship titles in the men's event. Nikita Setchell is another British athlete who has back to back World titles, as she triumphed in both Tacen and Ivrea at the 2021 and 2022 U23 World Championships respectively, establishing herself as a force in the discipline. Tokyo 2020 Olympian Kimberley Woods won an impressive silver at the 2022 World Championships in Augsburg this year also. It doesn't stop there, with Mallory Franklin and Chris Bowers winning gold at various World Cups across the season, as well as Etienne Chappell, Arina Kontchakov and Ed McDonald also on the podium in U23 & Junior Championships.



Watch it live at Lee Valley White Water Centre later this year!

Wondering where you can come and watch the best compete for the titles?

The 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships will see around 300 of the world's top athletes head to the **Lee Valley White Water Centre** to battle it out across a week of high octane competition at one of the best venues in the world.

This will be the perfect opportunity to see the top Kayak Cross paddlers from across the globe battle it out for the coveted World Championship title.

Sunday 24 September is the day to catch all the action with the time-trials happening in the morning before heads to heads go on throughout the rest of the day.

Keep your eyes peeled for a ticket **FLASH SALE** at the end of January, before they go on general sale this spring.

[britishcanoeingevents.org.uk/
slalom2023/international-events-
newsletter/?utm_source=Widget&utm_
medium=EventsNewsletterCTA&utm_
campaign=PriorityTickets](https://britishcanoeingevents.org.uk/slalom2023/international-events-newsletter/?utm_source=Widget&utm_medium=EventsNewsletterCTA&utm_campaign=PriorityTickets)



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