

CANOE FOCUS

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with RNLI**

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Welcome

Welcome to the Spring edition of Canoe Focus!

Hopefully wherever you are reading this, the signs of spring are beginning to burst out all around you. The sight of the snowdrops and daffodils are a sure fire sign that warmer, sunnier weather is just over the horizon - and for fairweather paddlers like myself, it is time to dust off the kayak, pump up the board, squeeze back into dry trousers and get back out on the water!

Spring is such a magical time of year as nature wakes up from winter hibernation. But it is important to remember that this is a really sensitive time for wildlife. Our birds are busily building nests, not just high up in the trees, but along our watersides, in our hedgerows and on grasslands. Many types of fish choose to spawn in spring, especially those such as salmon who migrate up our rivers to lay their eggs. There is also plenty of plantlife, emerging from the ground, often hard to spot, but easy to damage.

So while it is an absolute joy to be out on the water at this time of year, let us all remember how important it is to follow the guidance in our Paddlers' Code - protect, respect, enjoy!

There is lots more to be excited about this spring with two huge Clear Access, Clear Waters events coming up in the next couple of months. Between May 27th and 11th June we have our 'Big Paddle Clean Up', where we are hoping our community will get out and give our rivers a really good spring clean!

Demand for our Big Paddle Clean Up kits has been overwhelming. Thank you to everyone who has opted to 'Go Green' on their British Canoeing membership; it is because of you that we have been able to provide even more kits to the paddling community. We just can't wait to see how much rubbish we can collect, as well as hear about all the unusual objects found in our waters!

In June British Canoeing is returning to Westminster, to the Houses of Parliament for an event to promote our Clear Access, Clear Waters Campaign. We will be launching our latest Charter, which will set out our priorities for Government.

This is a key time for our campaign. Next year the country will head to the polls to choose a new Government, so it is crucial that we get our aspiration for fair, shared, sustainable access to healthy waters firmly on the radar of political parties!

We are really pleased to have cross party support for our event on the 7th June. Hopefully you will all support us by writing to your MP to encourage them to join us at our reception....and while you are at it, why not invite them along to help with your river clean up!?

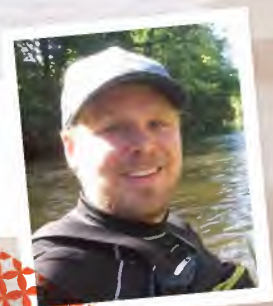
This edition of the Canoe Focus is packed with inspiration to get you out on the water this Spring. As if you needed more reasons to go paddling, this month we explore why blue spaces are just so good for our mental and physical well being. And if wellbeing is your thing, then you should certainly check out our SUP Yoga story!

I personally find it really hard not to feel optimistic at this time of year. While the issues that threaten the places we paddle sometimes feel overwhelming and our aspirations for cleaner, more accessible waters unattainable, I really do believe that it is in our hands what we make of the opportunities we have ahead of us.

Without doubt, through the collective energy and enthusiasm of all who care for and enjoy water, we can and will make progress on the issues that I know you all feel so passionately about.


So I hope you are all feeling the new energy that springtime brings! I hope to see you out on the water soon, enjoying the sunshine!!

Ben Seal
Head of Access &
Environment




STORIES that are making a SPLASH

Check out the stories that are currently making a splash within the paddling community.

For regular updates on stories like these, straight to your inbox,  become a British Canoeing member

44-year record broken at Devizes to Westminster canoe race over Easter weekend

Keith Moule from Chelmsford Canoe Club and Tom Sharpe from Richmond Canoe Club made history over Easter weekend back in April by breaking the 44-year-old record for fastest senior double crew to complete the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race. The ultra marathon canoe race takes place every Easter weekend and is the longest non-stop canoe race in the world. You can find out more about Keith and Tom's record breaking paddle below.

 **Find out more:** www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/44-year-record-broken-at-devizes-to-westminster-canoe-race-over-easter-weekend




#ShePaddles Ambassador applications open soon

Applications to be a 2023/24 **#ShePaddles** Ambassador open soon! Do you have a great story to share about your journey into paddlesport? Do you feel you can be a role model for other women? Then we'd love to hear from you! Keep an eye on our website and social media channels to see when you can apply.



First #ShePaddles Networking Meet-Up held in Lincoln

The first #ShePaddles Networking Meet-Up was held at Lincoln Canoe Club back in April. Organised by #ShePaddles Club Champion, Claire Lambert, the aim of the event was to create a supportive network for women in paddling clubs to discuss topics such as coaching and leadership and to provide informal mentoring opportunities. We hope to see more events like this across the UK in the coming months so keep an eye out.

 **Find out more:** www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/first-shepaddles-networking-meet-up-held-in-lincoln



Stronger Together Fund awards over £200,000 to help paddling communities in England



British Canoeing is delighted to announce that 48 paddling projects across England will receive a funding boost of over £200,000, thanks to the Stronger Together Fund.

The Stronger Together Fund closed in mid-February after receiving almost 140 high quality applications from England-based paddling clubs, organisation and charities*.

British Canoeing is distributing funding to benefit paddling communities in England over the next three years, thanks to an exponential growth in membership.

Grants of up to £10,000 were open to not-for-profit delivery partners, clubs, groups and charities whose mission is to get more people paddling more often.

British Canoeing launched Stronger Together 2022-2026 in March 2022, which set out the vision and ambitions of the organisation for the next four years.

The Stronger Together Fund allows British Canoeing to support great projects to help deliver on those ambitions and ensure paddlers can achieve their sporting and recreational ambitions in safe, high quality and fun environments.

In March 2023, the first round of Stronger Together funding was awarded to 48 excellent paddling projects across England. The judging panel had a tough task in deciding where to allocate funds, as the volume and quality of applications was higher than anticipated. The amount of funding applied for was four times the amount that was available!

Projects that supported young people, women and girls, people from under-represented communities, and people with disabilities, to get paddling were considered a priority. Projects also needed to continue to provide support, access and opportunities after the Stronger Together Fund is spent.

Ashley Metcalfe, CEO of British Canoeing said: "British Canoeing is committed to offering increasing numbers of people from broader and more diverse communities greater opportunities to paddle in safe and enjoyable environments and we hope that by supporting so many new and existing projects, we will be positively encouraging greater access to paddling activities.

"Many of the projects will work with young people, women and girls, people from under-represented communities and people with disabilities. Importantly the projects are innovative and demonstrate real community value.

"We really welcome all our new and existing partners that we know will work phenomenally hard to offer local communities real mental and physical benefits associated with being more regularly active in our natural environments."

[Read the full article here](#)



* As a governing body, British Canoeing has both UK and English functions. For membership, our provision is primarily for paddlers who are based in England. This is why the Stronger Together Fund is aimed at organisations based in England. If you live in Scotland you can join the Scottish Canoe Association. If you live in Wales you can join Canoe Wales, and if you live in Northern Ireland you can join the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland.

New study boosts need for

better blue space access

A new university study has shown how our wellbeing is boosted when we visit healthy, nature-rich blue spaces like rivers and coastal areas.

The findings, by the University of Exeter, strengthen the calls by British Canoeing and other outside recreational bodies, for more access to our waterways.

The report concluded that positive wellbeing results from visits to blue spaces which are “high quality and safe”.

The visits have to be “several hours in duration” near to home and involve activities such as “walking, socialising, or playing with children”.

Anyone who has paddled, swam, or simply been beside a river or at a coastal area, will have felt better in some way and the study confirms this.

Researchers surveyed more than 18,000 people in 18 countries and identified what factors give the biggest wellbeing boost when visiting nature spots near water.

They found that wellbeing outcomes are better when blue environments are closer to home.

It follows government plans for everyone to live within 15 minutes’ walk of a green space or water.

This was part of its Environmental Improvement Plan, launched in January 2023.

Dr Jo Garrett, Research Fellow at The University of Exeter, said the government goal was “great news”, but making the most of these visits to get the best mental health benefits was crucial.

The research said the quality of experiences also plays a role, and the spaces have to be safe with good water quality.

Water quality remains a major issue and British Canoeing does not feel government targets, set out in the Environment Act 2021, are currently rigorous enough.

If a local river is polluted it will not have the required effect on wellbeing, Dr Garrett confirmed.

Dr Garrett said: “This study shows that not all visits are equal – the quality of time spent outdoors really does make a difference.

“The government definition of a green space doesn’t currently include any mention of quality, so we’d argue they could go a step further.

“After all, living close to inaccessible green space, or a polluted river, doesn’t offer much in the way of boosting wellbeing.”

The study found that activities that people engage in are important too, with the largest benefits to mental health linked to playing with children, socialising and walking.

With this in mind, paddling, whether that be in a canoe, kayak, or stand up paddleboard, is the perfect activity.





British Canoeing's Chief Executive Ashley Metcalfe welcomed the findings.

He said: "The study proves what paddlers have felt all along; healthy and clean rivers, rich with nature, have a positive effect on our mental health.

"We also hope the research bolsters the need for people to have more green and blue spaces near their homes.

"The findings also demonstrate how paddling can have the biggest benefits for wellbeing, especially for families and for socialising in general.

"Finally, British Canoeing agrees it is crucial that green and blue spaces are accessible and protected from pollution."

The research by the University of Exeter, was conducted as part of the BlueHealth project.

The BlueHealth paper, titled "Applying an ecosystem services framework on nature and mental health to recreational blue space visits across 18 countries" is published in Scientific Reports.



It's not long until the Big Paddle Cleanup returns and we all unite 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.

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

British Canoeing and its community of paddlers were recognised at the inaugural BBC Sport Green Awards for our efforts.

We want the Big Paddle Cleanup 2023 (27 May - 11 June) to be even bigger.

Chantelle Grundy said: "The Big Paddle Cleanup showed how much the paddling community cares about our waters and what they're prepared to do to protect them.

"Combining social action through the Big Paddle Cleanup, with physical activity, is a fantastic way of bringing people together and improving our local surroundings. Together, as a team, we will continue to protect our waterways to do what we love."

We are in a unique position as paddlers as we can collect plastic from places others are unable to access. By taking part in a paddle cleanup you'll be:

1. Helping to minimise pollution and improve the health of our waterways
2. Helping to protect wildlife
3. Connecting with nature
4. Enjoying the wellbeing benefits of being in blue spaces

You can show your support for our blue spaces by organising your own paddle cleanup. We will keep you posted with any future developments.



Big Paddle Cleanup 2023

27 May –
11 June 2023



Staying Safe this

SUMMER



Summer is a brilliant time of year. The water is warmer, the skies are bluer (at times!), and the days are longer. This is why many people head away for days out, weekends away, and holidays by the water.

The popularity of watersports has rocketed in the last few years, with paddleboarding leading the way. Part of having fun on the water is knowing you are safe doing it.

British Canoeing is the national governing body for paddlesports, including Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) and has been supporting major UK retailers to increase their provision of safety guidance for SUPs, purchased in store and online. Many major retailers are using this SUP safety sticker on packaging and point of sale in 2023.

The coastline offers some of the best paddling opportunities, but anyone venturing out to the coast or to inland waterways needs to understand the risks and paddle safely.

British Canoeing has been working with the RNLI to publish safety information that sets out the steps to take to stay safe on the water. It also provides valuable information to both novice and experienced paddlers.

SUP LEASHES



QUICK RELEASE BELT SYSTEM
For use on any moving or flowing water where there is a risk of snag/entrapment
COILED

CALF LEASH
For use on lakes/canals/sea/coastal bays/surf where there is NO risk of snag or entrapment
COILED = General SUP
STRAIGHT = Surf

ANKLE LEASH
For use on lakes/canals/sea/coastal bays/surf where there is NO risk of snag or entrapment
COILED = General SUP
STRAIGHT = Surf

Your Environment...

Where are you paddling? What are the conditions? Depending on where you're paddling and the conditions you face, you might need to wear your leash in a different place for safety and security. Take a look at the diagram to see which leash system suits the environment you paddle.

Coiled or Straight?

Leashes can be coiled/curly or straight. The type of leash is important depending on the environment you paddle.



Here are **FIVE** key messages

TO HELP STAY SAFE ON THE WATER THIS SUMMER

Wear a Personal Flotation Device



No matter how strong you think you are at swimming, wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD). Buoyancy aids come in all shapes and sizes, so you can easily find one that fits well, is fit for purpose and is done up securely. Check out our guide on **buying your first PFD**.

When you are on a paddle board you might think "I'm connected to a big inflatable, **do I need a PDF?**". The answer is YES! You're connected to the board now, but you may need to release yourself from it for some reason. It is also important to have the **right leash** on in this situation (see graphic on page 8).

Carry a means of communication on you.



Mobile phone, VHF radio, or anything else that you can call for help on. Stick it in a waterproof pouch and put it in your pocket or in your PFD. You should carry your means of communication on you, not just on your board or in your boat. If you get into difficulty call for assistance, 999 and ask for Fire & Rescue if inland, or the Coastguard if in tidal waters.

There are also lots of **useful apps** you can install on your mobile. From safety apps, weather tracking apps, and paddling routes, you can find them all.

Paddle within your ability



You should always stay within your ability and skill level. For example, if you have never been paddle boarding on moving water then think about taking some courses to help build you up to that. British Canoeing has a number of courses to help you with your skills and safety, **find a local provider near you**. Think about where you are going to be paddling. Do you have the experience, skills and kit to be paddling on that water? From having the **correct leash** for the environment, to knowing when you should be **wearing a helmet**, knowledge of safety is key.

If you remember these five key messages you are setting yourself up to have a good safe paddle. And if you see anyone who might not know these messages then pass them along. You might also want to **check your craft** before you head out onto the water. Check for any punctures or cracks that might give you that sinking feeling on the water. Get anything repaired before you hit the water, and carry an emergency repair kit with you.

If you want to find more safety information about paddling check out the safety articles **here**. For more safety at sea information check out the **RNLI website**.



Tell others of your plans



Give people FOMO and see if they want to come along. The more people on the water with you the safer! And if they don't fancy joining you, then tell them your plans so they can check you return safely. Making sure someone on land knows **when** you are going, **where** you are going, and when you'll be back is all part of staying safe.

Check the Weather



When making your paddling plans always check the weather and plan accordingly. Make sure you wear enough layers for the temperatures, have waterproofs, and extra layers for 'just in case'. Checking the weather will allow you **dress appropriately** for your paddle. This is both layers for the cold and for **protecting yourself from the sun**.

You can also spot any weather that is dangerous to paddle in! We highly advise that you avoid **paddling in a thunderstorm**. **Offshore winds** should be avoided too. These are winds that blow away from the shoreline and into deep water and trouble.

If the weather doesn't look good then think about changing your plans and paddle another day.

SUPPORT YOUR SAFETY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT WITH OUR NEW SAFETY COURSES!

Safety is an important consideration for us all, whether you've just started your paddling journey or have been paddling for years.

Having an understanding of paddling safely can support your development and ensure you have the skills if you get into difficulty on the water.

British Canoeing Awarding Body is pleased to share three new safety courses, to support your safety and rescue skills on the sea, surf or inland open water. These courses are suitable for all ages and are great for individuals, clubs and groups wanting to expand their safety practices. The safety and rescue techniques taught on these courses will support you and your fellow paddlers in your many trips and journeys on the water.

Sea Kayak Safety and Rescue


The new Sea Kayak Safety and Rescue course aims to provide paddlers with the key safety and rescue skills required to operate safely and be able to deal with common problems on the sea, in both sheltered and moderate conditions. During this one day practical course, you will explore a range of topics including safety frameworks, contact and towing rescues, self-rescues, dealing with equipment damage/failure, as well as assisting others.

The course is great for anyone wanting to expand their safety practices on the sea. Suitable crafts include sea kayaks, sea specific sit on tops and closed cockpit kayaks. The Sea Kayak Safety and Rescue course has been available since 2 May 2023, to find out more and book your upcoming course today go to -

 paddlesuptraining.com/courses/sea-kayak-safety-and-rescue/

Inland Open Water Safety and Rescue

The new Inland Open Water Safety and Rescue course supports your development of simple strategies and safe skills that can provide the tools to solve common paddling issues in a moderate inland open water environment. Throughout your day on the water, you will explore a range of topics including safety frameworks, clothing and equipment, providing assistance, self rescues, as well as different rescue scenarios.

If you're looking to develop your skills on moderate inland open water, this is the course for you! The NEW Inland Open Water Safety and Rescue course will be available from 1 June 2023. Visit the Paddles Up Training website  paddlesuptraining.com/british-canoeing-awarding-body-announces-new-inland-open-water-safety-and-rescue/

Surf Kayak Safety and Rescue

The new Surf Kayak Safety and Rescue course is great for clubs and individuals, visiting a surf location and wants to keep safe and deal with common problems in a moderate surf environment. This one day practical course will support your understanding of how to be able to deal with common problems when surf kayaking. This practical course will cover planning, surf based rescues, self-rescues, deep water rescues, safety frameworks and beach management.

The Surf Kayak Safety and Rescue course will be available soon, with further details on the British Canoeing Awarding Body website.



NEW TO PADDLING? OR PADDLE ON SHELTERED WATER?

Don't forget, we have a range of training courses already available to support your development, depending on your existing experience and the craft you regularly use. These courses are great as we head into the summer and the water gets warmer, to support the development of your safety skills, or they can be used as a refresher if you haven't been paddling over the winter season. These courses are open to all ages and for individuals, families and groups wanting to expand their safety practices.

Go Paddling Paddle Safer Course

The Paddle Safer award does exactly what it says on the tin. This practical course is aimed at new or novice paddlers and gives you top tips and considerations to support you to paddle safer.

Over two hours, you will develop a better understanding of how to be safe when taking to the water. Your instructor will work with you to develop your knowledge around equipment and environmental factors, as well as practical rescues. Open to all craft, typical crafts would include kayaks, canoes, stand up paddleboards, sit on tops and inflatables.

Visit the Go Paddling website to find a Delivery Partner, club or coach and find a  **course near you.**

SUP Safer Course


Just like Paddle Safer, SUP Safer is a practical course that gives you top tips and considerations to support you to stand up paddleboard safely. This four hour course will support you to consider safe practices, explore and learn to appreciate the potential hazards you might encounter and be prepared to avoid or deal with them. You will explore how to choose the appropriate equipment and develop an understanding of the factors which affect your paddling, such as the environment and weather.

Visit the Paddles Up Training website to find a  **course near you.**


Paddlesport Safety and Rescue Course

This six hour course is all about keeping you safe on your craft in sheltered water venues and aims to provide peace of mind when venturing out onto the water. You will explore and practice simple strategies and safe skills that provide you with the tools to solve common paddling issues.

It doesn't matter about your age or whether you have a limited paddling experience, this course supports your knowledge and raises your awareness of your personal safety. The course will cover clothing and equipment, contact and towing rescues, self-rescues, as well as deep water rescues.

Visit the Paddles Up Training website to find a  **course near you.**

Supportive videos and resources

If you're looking to watch examples of sheltered water rescues, we've got a whole host of videos showing bank based rescues, SUP rescues, mixed craft rescues, open canoe rescues and kayak rescue. You can  **check them out** on the British Canoeing Awarding Body Digital Library.







Adventure. Exploration. Travel.

The Gill bag range covers all bases.

Any paddler, beginner or advanced, will benefit from a waterproof bag to carry those essentials needed for a trip out on the water. It's always worthwhile to pack an extra layer of clothing in case the weather changes, as well as food and water as a precautionary measure. As we enter the warmer months it is also advisable to carry sunscreen so you can top up while on the water for extra protection.

The Voyager Dry Cylinder collection is ideal for securing to your paddleboard or kayak or stowing away in your canoe and comes in a range of sizes and colours, from

a large 50L all the way to a smaller 5L for storing and transporting essentials. Features include a roll top closure with side release fastenings for a watertight seal and a wide opening making it easy to access and locate kit. The semi translucent window also allows you to see exactly what's inside and where it is without having to open. The 50L version comes with 2 padded shoulder straps allowing to wear as a backpack in transit, while the 25L and 10L versions come with a single shoulder strap.

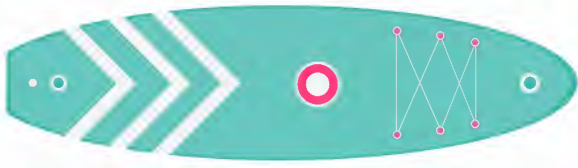
To view the full collection visit www.gb.gillmarine.com

Don't forget you receive
15% off Gill with your British
Canoeing membership



STORIES FROM THE WATER:

TARA SUTTHOFF CRIST



ON

SUP YOGA

I returned to the UK after 14 years abroad, as a single parent of two young girls ready to restart life and build up my yoga students all over again. Joining the local canoe club was not only affordable but it was my saving grace.

Once I found a babysitter I joined the evening club sessions, and I would be back for bedtime with so much energy and enthusiasm my girls would beg me to go out more often! It was my social, my fitness and opportunity to be outside and recharge.

Longridge Canoe Club near Marlow became my club and early on I was encouraged to race in the K1 & K2 canoe marathon 'Hasler' series. This gave me a wonderful opportunity to explore the rivers and canals in the South East and really have something to look forward to that was not parenting or work.



Like all growing clubs there was a need for volunteers, so I completed the British Canoeing paddlesports instructor course. We often started our club sessions with some yoga, and I started to introduce others to the wonderful world of paddling. This includes the Chippington family, starting Jeanette's journey to becoming one of the first Paralympic medallists for Paddlesports. She still paddles for Great Britain 12 years later!

Even my future husband, Phil, was taken kayaking on our second date. After a few years Phil made the switch to the SUP after his back issues worsened by the

impact of too many hours sitting; car, office, and long paddles. Within minutes of my first lesson, I declared my love for paddleboarding. It felt like home, being aboard a floating yoga mat! I was able to take the extra module as a SUP instructor and our two boards quickly multiplied to six. Now I have at least 30, and a flourishing Paddleboard School and SUP Club based in and around waterways of Maidenhead.

I CAN STILL REMEMBER THAT FEELING OF IMMENSE JOY AND INNER PEACE WHEN I FIRST PADDLED THE THAMES BACK IN 2009 AND HAVE SINCE BEEN A GREAT ADVOCATE FOR PADDLESPTS.

Over the years my husband and I have both worked up to become paddleboard coaches. One of the most rewarding aspects of having a paddleboard business is the training and employment of our junior assistant paddleboard instructors. It has also created 2nd careers for some adult paddlers. Last year got even more interesting when I started to facilitate the training for yoga teachers to become confident safety conscious certified SUP yoga teachers.



For me, yoga on the water feels like the most natural thing to do; it is the first and last thing I do when I clamber onto a board, and often my go-to mid paddles too. We love a good stretch out, like most animals waking up from being stationary we have an innate need to unravel, lengthen, and fire up our bodies in all directions. One of the beauties of paddleboards is the space for a good roll around. From being on your front, back, sides, all fours and then the grand finale is standing up to go paddling. Even the step back and turns can feel very yoga-ish.

I think the reason yoga on a board is so special is that often the ground or space outdoors is not as appetising as relaxing on board in water. We find the most heavenly spots to practise SUP yoga. You can change the tree we are moored up to or floating under depending on the time of day or conditions.

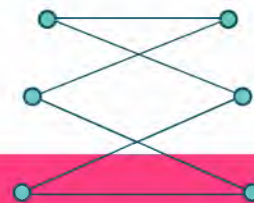
SUP yoga can be strong and powerful moves but as I get older (and wiser), I much prefer the slow mindful moves, breathing, and relaxation aspects all being magnified by the elements of nature surrounding us. It is truly magical to catch the rays from a sunset or through the branches of the trees. And whether we are using yoga to calm our nervous system or tone our bodies it will always make a difference to the 'whole' of us. For many fitness lovers, relaxation is often the missing link to a healthy wholesome body and mind. That is why this year we are introducing more SUP yoga paddles for those recovering from an illness or trauma, as we know just being in and around water is cathartic.

The weather does not always play ball, but it is worth it when it does. It is one of the reasons our SUP yoga teacher training is so intensive. Good judgement calls and assessing risks are always needed before a SUP yoga class. One of my SUP yoga teachers from Loch Lomond finds weather more challenging, but when all the conditions are suitable then it is a magnificent experience.

Look out for SUP Yoga classes sprinkled throughout the UK and hopefully more will follow as paddleboarding continues to flourish.

FIND A CLUB NEAR YOU:

 gopaddling.info/find-paddling-clubs/



FUN FACT:

SUP Yoga for some people is easier than paddleboarding itself and certainly can be the way to start for those who do not think they will ever stand up.



Think SUP Yoga might be for you? Check out our article on the basics of SUP Yoga to get you started:

gopaddling.info/sup-yoga-the-basics/

A Coniston Weekend



Coniston water is the third largest lake in the Lake District, and is surrounded by lots of the beauties of the national park.

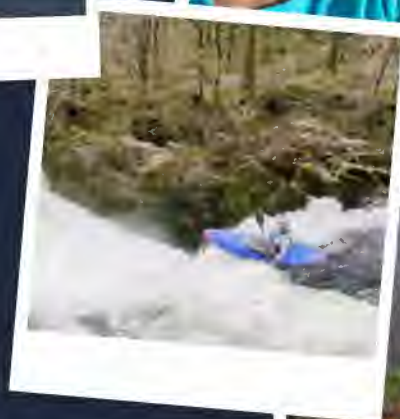
So Myself, Kerry, David, and Tamsyn decided to take advantage of the Experience Freedom glamping site situated next to the lake for a weekend getaway. We opted for the glamping cabin, offering a little more space and luxury.

When we arrived on Friday afternoon we decided it was the perfect opportunity to go for a walk from the site. It was a short walk down to the waterfront where you could see the full length of the lake. The gusty wind meant there were some meaty waves breaking on the bank, not a day for SUPing on there. We continued along the shoreline taking in the beauty of the water and hilly landscape. On our side of the lake was one of the national park's highest fells, The Old Man of Coniston. Sitting at over 2633 ft high, the fell overlooks the village of Coniston and its waters. Once the cobwebs had been blown away we retreated to the cabin for a cosy night of lasagna and uno!

The next day the wind had relented a little so it was time to explore some water! Recent rains had meant that the rivers were full! This left us with an abundance of rivers to choose from for our paddle. Just a 20 minute drive away was the River Duddon, offering a good few miles of grade 2 to 4 water. We started on the lower section, stretching 3.5 miles and cutting through some stunning scenery. This stretch of river provided lots of playful waves and eddylines and made for a brilliant paddle. Once at the bottom we considered our next move. Do we go run the upper section, head to the River Leven, or check out nearby Skelwith Force falls?

We decided it was perfect conditions to run Skelwith Force, so drove back past the glamping site and 15 minutes the opposite direction. The falls are an easy park and play rapid with a public car park right by them. A public footpath walks you along the river and right past it, and a bridge even runs over it just upstream a little. As we scouted the falls we began to draw a crowd, interested to see three kayakers running it. While two ran safety below, one ran the falls. We rotated this so we all had a chance to enjoy the water. Once all down we had some quick fun in the play hole below before jumping off and walking back up to the cars, and back to the cabin.





That evening we took a short walk to the local pub for some food. It was great to stretch the legs and sample a few local beers! The view of the stars we got on our walk back was amazing too. It was a clear night, and being in the middle of the Lake District, there was next to no light pollution allowing the stars to shine.

The clocks sprung forward that night, and Sunday morning was bright and sunny. The perfect weather to hit Coniston water with the SUP's. We took advantage of Coniston Boating Centre's car park and cafe, launching from their beached area. Paddling straight out onto open waters it was idyllic. From the middle of the lake you could see for miles around. Surrounded by fells, mountains, and forests. It was amazing to get out on the water, bask in the sun and take in the beauty of the Lake District. Then afterwards we enjoyed a quick coffee and cream scone at the cafe before starting the drive home.

The Experience Freedom glamping site was a brilliant base for a whitewater paddling, SUPing, and walking weekend. Only a short drive from perfect spots for it all. The Lake District is a real playground for the outdoors, with more hills and mountains to walk, more miles of lakes to explore, and more rivers to tame than you could manage in one holiday. We will definitely be back!

“ ”

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ERDINGER

ALKOHOLFREI



Is ERDINGER Alcoholfrei one of your rituals?

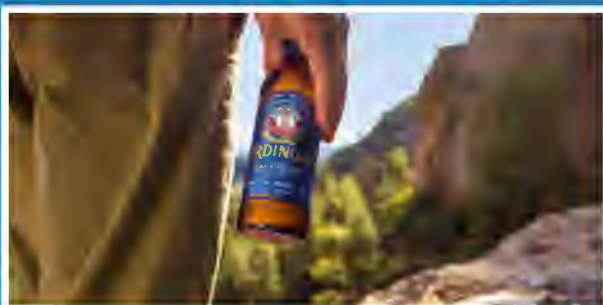
Have you noticed that whenever you do something regularly you get into certain habits? Sometimes it's because they make things quicker and easier, at other times it's because you think they will improve your performance and occasionally, well, you've just always done it that way.

Preparing for leisure or competitive sport can make rituals take on additional meaning and importance, as getting them right can put you in the right frame of mind and may give you a winning edge. But have you ever stopped to think about what your rituals are before going on the water or are you focused and on autopilot during your preparations?

Laying out all your gear to make sure you have everything is a given, as is making sure you eat the right food so you have the energy you need to complete the course. But what other preparations have become a habit?

Maybe it's putting on one water shoe before the other, kissing a good luck charm, or listening to an inspiring podcast or some favourite music. It could be wearing a 'lucky' garment or completing a choreographed set of stretching exercises – each one will develop over time and will be personal to every individual.

The team at ERDINGER Alcoholfrei noticed that these routines were part of an active lifestyle yet, for everything that people do before they climb into their boat, put on their running shoes, or jump on their bike, they also noticed that there was a common ritual at the end of exercise or activity.



Reaching for a cold ERDINGER Alcoholfrei as you recover after physical exertion has become an essential part of a training or competition routine and has now become the focus for the latest ERDINGER Alcoholfrei advertising campaign.

Originally launched in Germany, 'Your Ritual After Sport' has struck a chord with professional athletes and enthusiastic leisure sports participants alike. It profiles the many rituals people have before taking part in sport and celebrates post exercise relaxation with an ERDINGER Alcoholfrei, your ritual after sport. Watch the video [Your Ritual After Sport: ERDINGER Alcoholfrei - YouTube](#).

As the campaign starts in the UK, more people will be introduced to ERDINGER Alcoholfrei and its position as an isotonic recovery drink after sport. The isotonic properties of this sporty thirst quencher mean it can be absorbed into the body quickly and efficiently, quenching thirst and replacing lost fluids. ERDINGER Alcoholfrei also contains valuable nutrients including the essential vitamins folic acid (B9) and B12 which contribute to the normal function of the immune system.


Be prepared and end your day with a refreshing ERDINGER Alcoholfrei, your ritual after sport. And if you didn't think you had a ritual before sport, remember to check next time and see if there are certain things you incorporate into your routine that you just hadn't realised you were doing.


<https://uk.erdinger.de/>

MARCH PADDLER SPOTLIGHT

Words by **Caragh McMurtry**

FORMER OLYMPIC ROWER AND FOUNDER OF NEURODIVERSE SPORT SHARES HER EXPERIENCE OF JOINING A PADDLING CLUB



For our March Paddler Spotlight, we caught up with Caragh McMurtry, a former Olympic rower and founder of  Neurodiverse Sport. In this article, Caragh shares with us her journey of taking up paddling with Kingfisher Canoe Club, a volunteer led club located in Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. Caragh also highlights the great efforts and initiatives undertaken by the club.

I don't consider myself disabled, but I have high-functioning autism. This is not something I tell people unless they ask, but even without knowing this information, I felt so included, supported, and encouraged from my first session. The volunteers who run the sessions at  **Kingfisher Canoe Club** are incredibly knowledgeable and proficient, yet personable - which is sometimes a difficult combination to find!

The community culture at the club is great, and I think that comes from everyone having invested interest in making the club work - because without the members and volunteers, it just wouldn't exist.

The club has brought people from all walks of life, ages and abilities together and has an ethos of safety, enjoyment, and travelling at the pace of the slowest person. If someone is struggling to keep up, whoever is leading the session will drop in some group exercises to allow them to catch up or have a rest. This allows everyone to get something out of each session and to feel good whilst achieving! It also encourages an inclusive atmosphere where people just want to help and support each other. In other words, the key or lead volunteers at the club do a great job of setting a positive example for others to follow.

Having leaders who set a positive example is key to fostering a positive and inclusive environment overall, and as evidenced by Kingfisher Canoe Club, there's always a way to be inclusive - no matter the range of abilities you have in a session.

Thanks to Caragh for highlighting the great work her club does. You can find a paddling club near you  **here**. If you've been inspired by Caragh's story to develop your skills or become a coach or leader, see what qualifications are available to you  **here**.



Listen Here

Caragh recently shared her experience of neurodiversity in sport, her sporting achievements, and how it has affected her sporting life on the BCAB Coaching Podcast. It's a must-listen for anyone who wants to develop their understanding of neurodivergence or start/continue a conversation with a coach or athlete about this.



APRIL PADDLER SPOTLIGHT

Words by **Bob Clark**

FOR OUR APRIL PADDLERS SPOTLIGHT WE SPOKE TO BOB CLARK, MIDLAND CANOE CLUB'S DISABILITY ACCESS OFFICER.

I came to paddling as a 68 year old with a lower left leg amputee, a replacement knee in my right leg, arthritic hips, balance issues and I thought it was a great idea.

My best friend of 60 years talked me into it. I borrowed his spare kayak and followed him to the River Witham. We unloaded the boats he showed me at length on how to launch. I couldn't launch the way he showed me as I do not have enough knee bend. Being stubborn I said I would sort it, so I waded down the slip with the kayak between my legs till it was deep enough to float with me sitting on the back of it. I slid my legs in, not graceful but it worked. After 6 hours on the water on that sunny summer's day, I was hooked.

So I set out to buy myself a used kayak and found two Kiwis. I love how stable they are and the big cockpit opening is awesome for anyone with mobility issues. However I discovered I cannot lay my foot flatter on my prosthetic leg and my foot was jamming in the kayak as I tried to straighten my left leg. The solution was simple in my mind, I had an old leg in my garage which I removed all the cosmetic elements off. Hey presto, a smaller foot that fits down inside the kayak and it still walks fine.

Now that I have my own kit, we explore different rivers in our area. I love the River Idle near Bawtry and the Chesterfield Canal at Drakeholes tunnel. I still struggled to get in and out of my kayak on muddy river banks though, so I bought a used canoe and mastered the J stroke.

I visited Midland Canoe Club at Darley Abbey to see if their coaches could help me. I booked a taster session and was shown the floating pontoon with an EZ Kayak Launch attached to it. It's a dream to use if you have mobility or access issues. It was so easy to launch and I loved it on the River Derwent that night.

I joined the club a few days later and have been a member there for four years. With their support I am totally independent on the water now and I have started to help others gain their confidence too. I work out how to get disabled people into a craft and onto the water by trying my best to

simulate what their restrictions are. The club then asked me if I wanted to look into this as an official club role, so I became their Disability Access Officer. I then set out to see where I could gain more information for disabled paddlers and found Norwich Canoe Club who train paracanoe paddlers, I contacted them and I was put in touch with Tim Scott who is their para coach. Their facilities are amazing and Tim was so helpful and suggested we went for a paddle on their stretch of water. As we did this, one of their para guys came past us in his paracanoe with an outrigger at such speed that it was fascinating to watch.

Since then we have been contacted by quite a few individuals with a variety of disabilities and with varying degrees of success we have managed to get them onto the water. To see their big grins makes it all worthwhile. I have now been gifted a seat that is for para paddlers that supports their upper body more and this year's project is to see how we can adapt and fit it to a sit on top kayak, a canoe and a stand up paddle board for a paddler to sit on.

So as I head to my 71st birthday this year I hope to be back on my local rivers soon absorbing what Mother Nature provides for us all, so if you see this creaky paddler out and about please come and say hello.



YOU COULD BE OUR NEXT
PADDLER SPOTLIGHT FEATURE!



Share your stories and photos with us via our form here:

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Or if you prefer drop us an email at mediaenquiries@britishcanoeing.org.uk

Canoe Slalom & Kayak Cross GB teams announced for 2023 international season

After three days of hotly contested racing at Lee Valley White Water Centre over Easter weekend, the teams that will be representing Great Britain for the 2023 season have been confirmed.



To catch up with all the action from the Easter selection series **you can follow here**

The pinnacle of the season for the 12 selected athletes will be the eagerly anticipated 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships at Lee Valley White Water Centre in September, the first time the London 2012 venue has hosted a World Championships since 2015.

Alongside this, there will be a five-race ICF World Cup series which concludes at the Paris 2024 Olympic venue and the athletes will also have the opportunity (subject to selection ratification) to represent Team GB at the European Games in Krakow for the first time.

Joe Clarke MBE (Stafford & Stone) leads the way once again in the **Men's K1 (MK1)**, after scoring maximum points over the weekend. The Rio 2016 Olympic Champion will also double up in the men's kayak cross (MX1), getting the opportunity to become a World Champion for the third consecutive time, having retained his title in Augsburg last year.

He will be joined on both startlines by club-mate **Chris Bowers** (Stafford & Stone), who too had a strong selection weekend. Chris showed fantastic form in 2022, and won his first gold in the Kayak Cross World Cup in Krakow.

Making his senior team debut, CR Cats' **Jonny Dickson** completes the men's K1 line-up. The 2022 U23 bronze world medallist had a storming weekend at Lee Valley his performances also mean Jonny will be the top U23 boat for the next year.

The trio will also compete in the **Kayak Cross** alongside **Etienne Chappell** (Seren Dwr) who secured his place on the senior team for the first time. The Welsh athlete has a strong pedigree in the event, winning his first medal at the ICF World Cup in Lee Valley four years ago, as well as U23 World Championships silver last season.

An impressive weekend saw Tokyo Olympian **Kimberley Woods** (Rugby) comfortably secure her place on the team in all three classes. She trebled up in **Women's C1, K1** and **Kayak Cross** finishing at the top of all three events - with **Mallory Franklin** pre-selected in the **Women's C1** following her World Championship medal winning performance last year.

Kimberley won a number of kayak cross medals on the international circuit last year, including silver at the World Championships, and is looking forward to taking her good form into the season ahead.

Tokyo Olympic silver medallist **Mallory Franklin** (Windsor & District) will also compete in all three disciplines again. Mallory had an incredible 2022 season, winning a total of 11 medals across all classes.

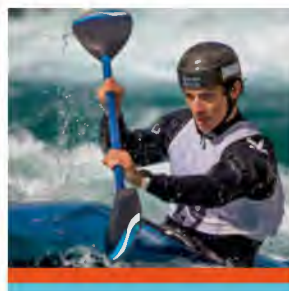
Her bronze at the World Championships in Augsburg meant she was pre-selected in **C1**, but a solid **K1** campaign over Easter weekend saw her retain her place once again.



Joe Clarke MBE



Chris Bowers



Jonny Dickson



Etienne Chappell



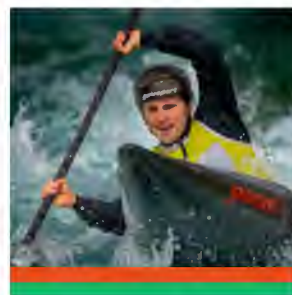
Kimberley Woods



Mallory Franklin



Sophie Ogilvie



Phoebe Spicer



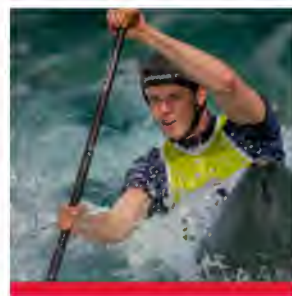
Nikita Setchell



Ryan Westley



Adam Burgess



James Kettle

Sophie Ogilvie (CR Cats) will make up the **Women's C1** trio after pushing Kimberley all the way over the weekend, securing two race wins out of five. This will be Sophie's fourth consecutive year on the senior team, and she narrowly missed out on a medal in the U23 World Championships last year.

Also making her full senior team debut alongside Jonny, **Phoebe Spicer** (Lee Valley) joins Kimberley and Mallory on the **K1 Women's** and **Kayak Cross** startline. Having been inspired by the sport after the London 2012 Olympic Games, Phoebe will have the opportunity to compete at a home World Championships in September a stone's throw from where she grew up.

Her performances over the weekend also earned her top U23 boat, as well as a spot on the U23 C1 team.

With a wealth of experience in the **Kayak Cross**, **Nikita Setchell** (Holme Pierrepont) will feature on the senior team for a second time in the discipline.

The Nottingham paddler is a World Champion at U23 level, having claimed gold in Ivrea last year, and will be hoping to make an impact on the senior circuit this season.

Three race victories and maximum points over the weekend sees **Ryan Westley** (Lower Wharfe) lead the charge in the **Men's C1** team. The 2018 European Champion made a number of finals last year, off the back of a significant injury, and will take confidence heading into the upcoming year.

Tokyo 2020 Olympian **Adam Burgess** (Stafford & Stone) secured two race wins during his selection campaign. Adam won bronze at the World Cup in Krakow, as well as consistently finishing and will be hoping to add more accolades to his collection this season.

Completing the team and entering his first season as a senior team athlete, **James Kettle** (Lee Valley) will be the third athlete in the **Men's C1**. He raced one senior World Cup last year as well as the U23 circuit, and like Phoebe, will line up on a home World Championships start-line, where he first discovered canoe slalom at London 2012.



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