

CANOE FOCUS

**Record breaking
medal haul for GB
at 2023 ICF Canoe
Slalom World
Championships**

Read more on
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**Why Blue
Space Matters**

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**National
Inclusion Week
2023**

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Welcome

Welcome to the late summer edition of Canoe Focus!

We hope you've enjoyed time on the water over the summer months, even if the weather has been a little wetter and cooler than we might like. The late summer burst of sunshine this month certainly encouraged more people to get on the water and paddle, and British Canoeing was pleased to welcome a number of new members. Whatever the weather, paddling remains a wonderful way to connect with the great outdoors, friends and family!

It has been fantastic to see so much hard work across the paddling community come to fruition over the summer, most recently, the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships at the Lee Valley White Water Centre. The Great Britain slalom team achieved record breaking results, winning eight medals, including: five gold, two silver and a bronze. In doing so, the team also secured the critically important Paris 2024 Olympic quota places. You will find our reflections on an inspiring week of racing on page 6.

We were incredibly proud to host the championships. So much time and expertise is invested into hosting major events, by so many different people. In particular, British Canoeing is so fortunate to have an army of volunteers who dedicate their time to ensuring events are a success. The successes of last week, both on and off the water, are attributable to everyone who played a role and gave up their time. Thank you.

In addition to a focus upon racing, British Canoeing used the World Championships to drive positive social and environmental change, locally, nationally and internationally, across the paddling community and wider. GB athletes are frequent contributors to our campaigns, including canoe sprint athlete, Beth Gill, who supports alongside her training. Beth attended our sustainability conference, held during the Slalom

World Championships, to speak about the importance of protecting the places we paddle, and how we can build a more sustainable future for our waterways. Beth has also featured in one of our 'Why Blue Spaces Matter' short films, created to help support the re-launch of our Clear Access, Clear Waters Charter. Find out more on page 18.

Last month, we also celebrated huge success at the Paracanoe 2023 World Championships in Duisburg, Germany. The GB paracanoe team remains world-leading, and athletes won seven medals, including: four gold and three silver. Similarly to the slalom team, paracanoe athletes secured seven quota spots for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games too. It has been a brilliant summer across all the GB teams and disciplines, and we are incredibly proud of every GB athlete, coach and support team as they continue to compete so successfully on the international stage.

Looking ahead, as the crisp mornings of October arrive, we hope that you continue to do what you love on the water. The autumn months bring the opportunity for beautiful experiences, as a kaleidoscope of colours emerge across the British waterways.

It has been a phenomenally busy and successful period for British Canoeing and we couldn't do it without you! Your continued support is very much appreciated and reflected in our success.


Enjoy the collection of round-ups, stories and more in this edition of Canoe Focus.

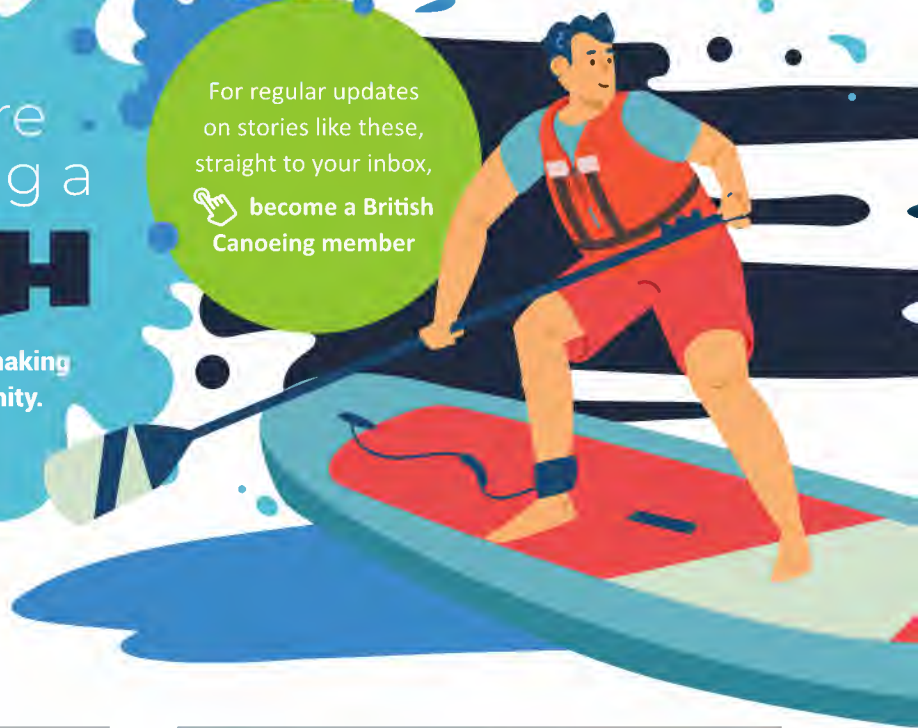
Keir Worth
Director of
Paddlesport



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



British Canoeing recently commissioned research into the use of quick release leash systems in a white water environment

As the National Governing Body for Stand Up Paddleboarding in the UK, informed by recent research and insight into the inherent danger of using leashes and pending further research, British Canoeing strongly recommend that SUP paddlers DO NOT use any leash system while paddling on white water.


Find out more here

 www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/guidance-for-quick-release-leash-systems-in-a-white-water-environment

British Canoeing supports the End Sewage Pollution manifesto

British Canoeing is part of a coalition united by the ambition to End Sewage Pollution and recover the UK's rivers, lakes and seas. The **End Sewage Pollution Coalition has launched a manifesto** calling for a UK where our rivers, lakes and seas are healthy and teeming with life. Nature needs to be valued and protected. People should be able to use the water free from the fear of becoming ill.

Find out more here


 www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/british-canoeing-supports-end-sewage-pollution-manifesto-2023



John Willis completes 108 mile paddle challenge across the River Thames

Disability charity founder John Willis completed his biggest-ever challenge - paddling 108 miles across the River Thames to raise vital funds for **Power2Inspire**. John paddled for eight days across five counties, from Cricklade to Eton Dorney – all in the name of raising vital funds for the cause.


Find out more here

 www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/disability-charity-founder-john-willis-completes-his-biggest-ever-challenge-paddling-108-miles-across-the-river-thames

TV presenter Steve Backshall reflects on paddling world record

Steve Backshall, a BBC presenter, naturalist and British Canoeing member, has been reflecting on his world record for paddling the length of the River Thames in the fastest time. The record, achieved in a double kayak with partner Tom McGibbon, concluded after 20 hours and 29 minutes and involved navigating the river throughout the day and the night.

Find out more here

 www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/tv-presenter-steve-backshall-reflects-on-paddling-world-record



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Record breaking medal haul for GB at 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships



Lee Valley White Water Centre has seen incredible drama, excitement and some electrifying performances during the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships.

The home crowd saw a double gold medal for Britain's Joe Clarke, individual golds apiece for Mallory Franklin and Kimberley Woods, and another gold for the Women's Canoe team.

Woods also took a sensational silver medal in the C1, ahead of Australia's Jessica Fox.

The five golds, two silver and one bronze for women's kayak team, marks the greatest medal haul ever for Great Britain at a World Championships.

So much has happened, but let's start from the beginning.

A colourful and vibrant opening ceremony saw residents line the parade route through to Waltham Abbey Gardens.

Over 50 nations watched speeches from Thomas Konietzko, President of the ICF and Professor John Coyne CBE, Chair of British Canoeing.

But back to the water...



For full reports from each day of racing head over to the British Canoeing website: <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/olympic-paralympic/olympic-paralympic-slalom-news/>



Day 1

Great Britain kickstarted their campaign at the World Championships with an impressive three medals from the first four events.

Mallory Franklin, Kimberley Woods and late call up Ellis Miller, stormed to gold in the women's canoe team competition.

Franklin and Woods were back on the water an hour later to claim bronze in the women's kayak team event with World Championship debutant Phoebe Spicer.

Adam Burgess, Ryan Westley and James Kettle took an impressive silver in the men's canoe team in between the women's medals.

Day 2

Day two was all about qualification for the semi-finals of the individual women's and men's canoe events.

Four British athletes - Mallory Franklin, Kimberley Woods, Adam Burgess and Ryan Westley all progressed, while Ellis Miller and James Kettle missed out in their first World Championships.

Away from the course, Dame Katherine Grainger and sports minister Stuart Andrew, joined British Canoeing's Ben Seal, Head of Access and Environment, for a paddling session on the lake.

Dame Katherine spoke passionately about the value of sport, but also discussed the ongoing issue surrounding pollution in our rivers and how it affects athletes.

Katherine and Ben were both interviewed by BBC News during the World Championships.

Meanwhile, children were trying paddling for the first time on the lake. By the end of the week about a 1,000 youngsters had been out in the water.





Day 3

Day three saw athletes and delegates discuss the same issues at the ICF's sustainability conference.

British Canoeing used the event to show how it is using the World Championships to create positive social and environmental change.

On the water all six British athletes qualified for the semi-finals of the K1 events.

Kimberley Woods and debutant Phoebe Spicer advanced from heat one while Mallory Franklin successfully navigated the second heat to progress.

Chris Bowers led the way with Joe Clarke before the day ended with Jonny Dickson taking the tenth and final qualifying spot from heat two to complete the clean sweep.

Day 4

The home crowd witnessed something incredible on day four as Mallory Franklin and Kimberley Woods produced a spectacular gold and silver in the women's C1.

"It's my second world title in C1 and that means a lot," said Mallory.

"I tend to do it at some point in an Olympic cycle so that is cool to have done it.

"Being at home adds another level to it. Having the crowd and being able to have some of my family here.

"It adds pressure but also adds that feeling that when you do it, it means so much more."

Kimberley, who was a close second, said: "I am someone who shows a lot of emotion on my face and I am crying because I am so happy.

"I was in the start blocks and I had a thought to myself that 'this is the World Championships, this is what it all means'."

In the men's C1 Adam Burgess was fifth in the final.





Day 5

The crowd was at its busiest on Saturday, day five, as a group of inspirational women gathered for the She Paddles conference.

British Canoeing's chief executive Ashley Metcalfe told the attendees that the She Paddles project was "absolutely phenomenal" and "so important".

On the water, about 3,000 people were in for an absolute treat.

Jonny Dickson made his first World Championship final, in the K1, after dramatically qualifying in the last place available.

Joe Clarke later claimed gold with a truly breathtaking run.

Clarke, the last to go, was ahead on every single split in the medal showdown. He finished almost two seconds ahead of Czech Jiri Prskavec.

The 30-year-old said: "It doesn't get much more special than [winning in front of his family]."

"Having the home support - I had about 50 friends and family come down from all over the country - and to be world champion in front of them is the icing on the cake."

In the women's K1 Mallory Franklin qualified for the final, taking eighth place.



Day 6

The final day perhaps saw the greatest drama as both Joe Clarke and Kimberley Woods were crowned World Champions in the Kayak Cross event.

Woods said: "Wow - I can't believe I can call myself a world champion. It took me a little while [to get going]."

"After the time trial, it was like 'OK let's build through round and round'. It was really tough for the first couple of rounds and the final, again, it was 'don't come last'.

"To be coming out of the start pool in second, I believed in myself a lot. It is my super strength - being adaptable and instinctive and not trying to anticipate what other people are doing."

Clarke said: "It is hard to put into words really - it's like a dream weekend. I got my first title in the K1 and this is the third time I have done it in the kayak cross. I am a triple world champion in kayak cross - 2021, 2022 and 2023 - it's fantastic.

"There was only one more medal up for grabs and that was the team event.

"We gave that a good shot and I feel like on another occasion we would have got a medal in that as well. For me - it's been perfect."

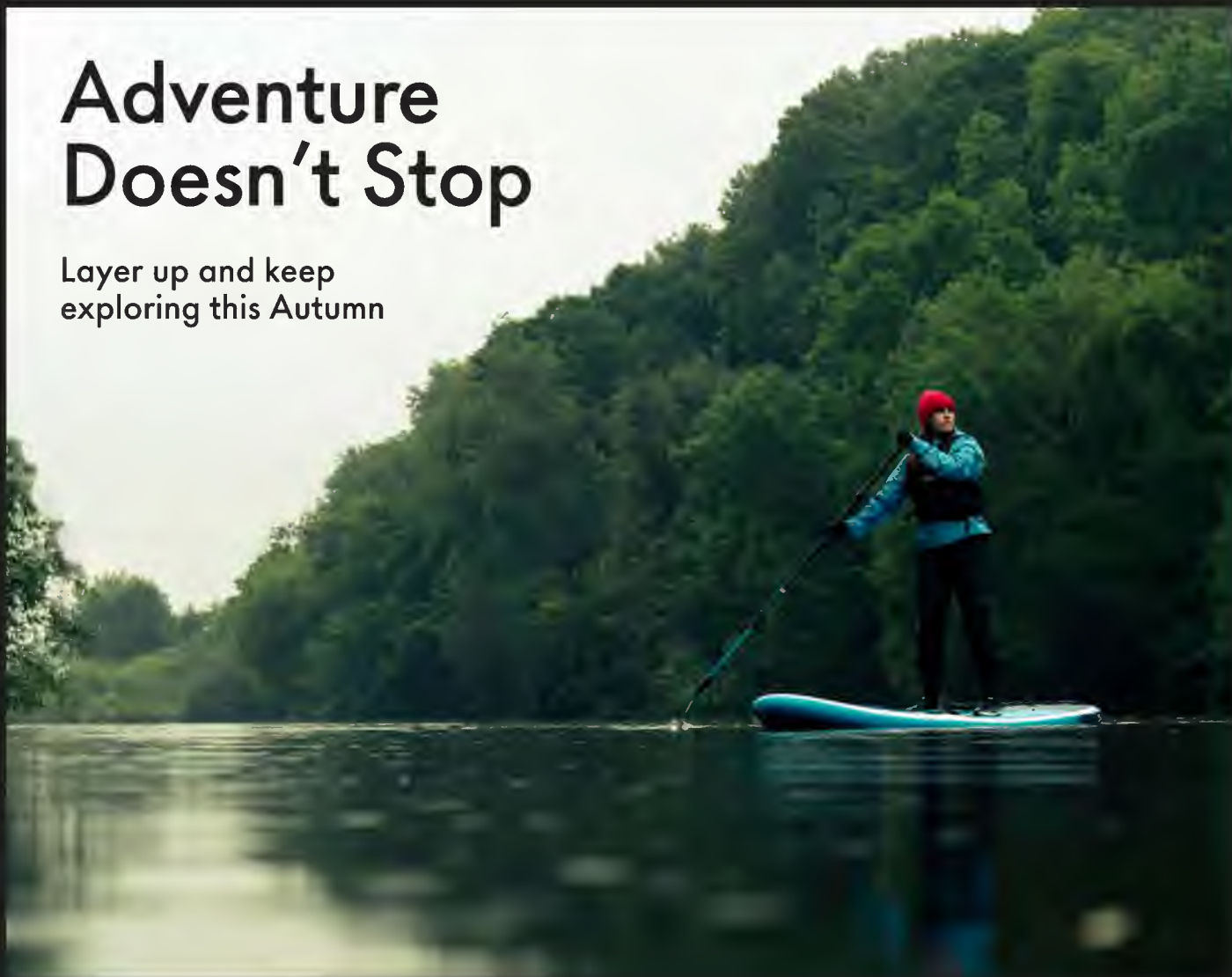
Kayak Cross makes its debut at the Paris Olympics 2024 and Britain will go into the Games with the Men and Women's World Champions.

The two gold medals topped off an unbelievable week for the British team as well as the organisers, volunteers and spectators.



Adventure Doesn't Stop

Layer up and keep
exploring this Autumn



Summer may be behind us but that doesn't mean adventures on the water have to stop. Autumn can bring some of the most beautiful and calm conditions for paddling, especially during dawn and dusk. In addition to this we can't forget the stunning changes in your surroundings.

Most of the time temperatures don't start to drop until mid-late September so chances are you can carry on wearing your summer kit, with additional layers packed in your dry bag if needed. But if you are looking for some new kit to see you through the colder months the new collection from Gill offers a range of clothing and accessories which will keep you protected in any condition. From waterproof lightweight outer layers for those unpredictable British showers to insulating base layers and neoprene gloves and socks for when the temperatures really start to drop.

You can shop the new collection now at www.gb.gillmarine.com/NEW



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1. Womens Verso Drysuit - £650

The innovative design provides a unique entry system combined with a drop seat function for added convenience. Fitted to accommodate thermal layers and allowing unrestricted movement, the Drysuit is ideal for colder days on the water. Made using Gill's exclusive XPLORE+® 3-layer waterproof and breathable fabric, it has been enhanced with Gill's special plant based XPEL® water and stain resistant fabric finish, and the fully taped seams ensure a waterproof seal. (Available in sizes 8-18)

2. Verso Lite Trousers - £110

Tailored for both men and women, the high fit design, with the added benefit of key contact points being protected by reinforced panels, makes the Verso Lite Trousers an ideal lightweight solution for a multitude of water activities.

The adjustable stretch braces offer an improved fit, while abrasion resistant seat and knees protect against wear and tear. An elasticated waist enhances the fit and comfort, plus the adjustable ankle closures provide a further barrier against the elements. (Available in sizes Men's JXL, S-XXL / Women's 8-18)

3. Verso Lite Jacket - £130

Made with Gill's exclusive XPLORE® 2-layer waterproof and breathable fabric, and boasting fully taped seams for a waterproof seal, the Verso Lite Jacket features a grown-on-hood with 2-way adjustment and shockcord retaining loop for stowing away when not in use. The front YKK AquaGuard zip stops water from getting in and the adjustable outer cuffs provide additional wet weather protection. Finally, the singlehanded adjustable hem creates a customised fit and the large zippered front cargo pocket with side entry hand pockets can be used to pack away the jacket when not in use. (Available in Sizes XS-XXL)

4. Thermoshield Top - £120

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ANDY TRAIN HELPS BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITIES GET ON THE WATER

For our August paddler spotlight, we caught up with three Birmingham-based paddlers who embarked on their paddling journey with the support and guidance of Andy Train. Shahida, Mohammed and Ian are eager to shine a light on the positive impact that Andy has had within the Birmingham paddling hubs to make paddling accessible to their local community.

Supported by the Stronger Together Fund, Andy's role as Hub Coordinator has played a pivotal role in building confidence on the water and giving local communities the opportunity to explore the city's vast canal network.

Working in partnership with the Canal & River Trust and Street Games' Bring it on Brum programme, the hubs have been provided with equipment, access support and storage facilities. There are now 7 hubs active across the city, offering access to paddlesports to local communities.

- > **Perry Barr:** Aspire and Succeed
- > **Castle Vale:** Community Environmental Trust
- > **Winson Green:** Newbigin
- > **Port Loop:** Saheli Hub
- > **Star City:** Nowka Bais
- > **Small Heath:** Green Lane Masjid
- > **Selly Oak:** South Birmingham Paddle Club (Ninja Warriors)

Shahida, Mohammed, and Ian share their experiences of learning to paddle with Andy, along with the positive impact it has had on themselves, their families, and their local community.

Words by **Shahida Raza**

I started my paddling journey with Andy in May 2022, it was my first time ever paddling. I'd never been in a canoe before I started with Andy. I initially started at Ackers Centre in Sparkbrook then I moved to the Port Loop hub. I would really like to commend Andy Train, he has been amazing, he works effortlessly to support all in his session, especially those who feel scared of water and find it difficult getting in and out. From the moment he arrives he is on the go to meet everyone's needs. He explains everything with great patience and care, he has time for everyone and he amazingly remembers everyone's names no matter how difficult they are.

Kayaking has been a lifeline for me since last May, it's helped me with my mental health while I went through a difficult time of my life. It gave me the space to be me. I have always put others first, never thought of my own time and pleasure and this was the first time I did something I enjoyed and felt at peace with. I loved the chance to just paddle and watch nature on the water.

I loved paddling in the centre of Birmingham through the Port Loop during Christmas, the early bustle of shoppers walking along the canal, the Santa race, everyone waving as you went past.

I have always been drawn to water and this gave me a chance to be on the water and to exercise at the same time. In the beginning I was so nervous and shaky but I got so much more confident through the reassurance from Andy, he looks after us all and we have an amazing time on the water. I have made some great friends and have recently started training to help others have a go on the water. I have helped at Great Barr hub and also with my scout group with Wolverhampton Canoe Club.



The diverse group I am a part of are welcomed and supported, Andy understands you may not have ever done anything like this so gives you support and encouragement and pushes you gently out of your comfort zone. The group has a really positive vibe because of Andy. We have more variety of people from a mixed community enjoying the water activities together and the community are all having a go which is really encouraging.

Keep up the good work Andy, this is an amazing way to get everyone involved from the communities we live in to enjoy a relaxing and fun experience to enjoy the Canal and make them accessible to all.



Words by **Mohammed Naveed**

Andy has enabled through sheer determination and dedication to the sport a massive contribution to allow groups from ethnic backgrounds to try out canoeing, kayaking and bellboating. He has volunteered his time and expertise to show us how to safely enjoy all the waterways in Birmingham and beyond. It has been a fantastic year for me and my family.

We all take part as a family and are in the process of setting up a community initiative with Andy to allow over 300 families to take part in kayaking and bellboating throughout inner city Birmingham. Andy's efforts will be forever cherished and extremely valuable.

If I could give any advice to the paddling community, it would be to be like Andy Train. Speak to him and ask him what he has been doing. It's been absolutely phenomenal and he has single handedly given a tremendous amount of guidance and training for us and our community. We are now avid kayaking enthusiasts and our son is really quite promising on his racing rudder kayak and he only just turned 6-years-old. I am also in the process of gaining my Paddlesport Instructor qualifications to hopefully take out groups on my own in the near future.

Words by **Ian Cook**

Andy is driving the initiative to get more people paddling around Birmingham and make paddling easily accessible for communities that otherwise wouldn't get the chance to.

Previous to being asked if I'd like to be trained up as a Paddlesport Instructor I had never been in a kayak on open water. I'm now part of Andy's and Canal & River Trust's initiative to get facilities near the canal. This year we had five taster sessions which all filled up really fast.

You may have that fear of going in for a swim but if you're in the right craft and use the instructions given wisely you'll love the experience. The simple fact is that you can find a different viewpoint and some tranquillity right in the heart of your city whilst exercising. Thanks to Shahida, Mohammed and Ian for sharing their experiences with us and helping highlight the great work Andy has been doing in the community.



We'd love to hear all about your paddling journey, experiences and the great work happening in the paddling community. You could be our next Paddler Spotlight feature!

Find out more about the initiative here: www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/share-your-stories-for-the-paddler-spotlight

**YOU COULD BE OUR NEXT
PADDLER SPOTLIGHT FEATURE!**

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formstack.com/forms/
paddler_spotlight_
submission_form](https://formstack.com/forms/paddler_spotlight_submission_form)**

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

National Inclusion Week

Take Action, Make Impact: Social Impact at the Canoe Slalom World Championships 2023

The theme for this year's National Inclusion Week is 'Take Action, Make Impact', so we're taking a closer look at social impact projects supported by the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships, and the impact on the local community around the Lee Valley White Water Centre.

The Canoe Slalom World Championships took place in Lee Valley between the 19th and 24th September, and had a vast programme of initiatives and projects taking place alongside the event, aiming to benefit the local community, get more people involved in paddling, bring paddling to a more diverse audience, and help improve the environment.

Ahead of the event, the University of Hertfordshire became the Official Social Impact Partner to the World Championships, which enabled over £30,000 worth of investment in social impact projects in and around the event itself - you can find out more here. Let's take a closer look at some of the projects delivered as part of the Championships.

Women and Girls Festival

Providing accessible opportunities to try out paddling is key for widespread community engagement. Broxbourne Council partnered with British Canoeing, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Better Leisure and Lee Valley Paddlesports Club to deliver a festival aimed at increasing the number of women and girls engaged in long-term paddling activity. The festival aimed to reach up to 1,000 women and girls local to Lee Valley White Water Centre, and with the Championships taking place at the very same venue, the ambition was to also increase the number of women and girls spectating at the event.

This project wasn't just about those engaging with paddling - it's also about those involved in delivering paddling opportunities. Funding from British Canoeing supported the training of six women from the local area to become Paddlesport Instructors, improving the representation of women in the coaching body.

Former #ShePaddles Ambassador and paddlesport instructor, Lisa Dickinson, has been working with the newly qualified instructors around the Championships, and said "I spend a lot of time as part of the #ShePaddles programme supporting women and building their confidence on the water and especially white water". Lisa felt the festival had been an "amazing opportunity" to promote paddlesports to women and girls in the Lee Valley area.

The newly upskilled instructors have been involved in running more paddling activity at Lee Valley White Water Centre and Lee Valley Paddlesports club post-event, helping the Centre and Club engage with more women from the local community.



#ShePaddles Conference

As British Canoeing's long-standing initiative to improve the representation of women and girls in paddling, #ShePaddles has supported an increase in the representation of women and girls in the paddling community. The Championships played host to a new #ShePaddles Conference, where #ShePaddles Ambassadors, club champions, staff and athletes came together to share best practice, insights and inspire women and girls to grow their confidence, shift their perspectives, overcome barriers or challenges and showcase the power of being out on the water.

Rebecca Edwards, 2022/23 #ShePaddles Ambassador ran a session about doing something for the first time. Everyone stood up and they could only sit down when they got the question right. The last one was told they were going to sing a song. But to everyone's relief it didn't happen. The activity was designed to show how anxious, or embarrassed, a person might feel doing something for the first time.

"All those mixed emotions are exactly how you feel, especially as a woman, when you walk into a place for the first time. I run a boating lake and the women who come are so scared of getting on the water. It's really important for me to learn those feelings and cut them out. That's how you get women and young girls into sport."

The conference facilitated the sharing of learnings and reflections on how everyone can make paddling a more welcoming and inclusive space for all women and girls, and aimed to provide attendees with role models and journeys that more accurately reflect their lived experience.



Trails and Environment

British Canoeing's campaign work around access and the environment is a cornerstone of our organisational commitments, and the Championships has provided a key opportunity to continue to embed this work. British Canoeing has been working to create more accessible blue spaces in the waterways around the Lee Valley White Water Centre, via the development of the new River Lee Navigation Trail, and engaging with a new cohort of volunteers to support with river clean ups and tackling Invasive Non Native Species (INNS).

British Canoeing's project aimed to engage with a minimum of four clubs active along the River Lee, equipping them with river clean up equipment, and running events focussing on tackling INNS such as Floating Pennywort. These events aimed to engage with new volunteers who are members of the local community surrounding the River Lee, and create a sustainable commitment to maintaining local blue spaces into the future. All of these efforts will ensure that the River Lee Navigation Trail remains free of litter and INNS, so that more people from the community can access and benefit from the blue space that is local to them.



WHY BLUE SPACE MATTERS...

Ahead of the relaunch of **British Canoeing Access & Environment Charter** at an event in Westminster, we asked the same question to five different people...

Why does blue space matter so much to you?

We made five personal films. One featured The One Show reporter Miranda Krestovnikoff, who loves to paddle on the River Avon, near Bath.

Miranda, who is the vice president of The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), explained in her film:

“The incredible thing about being on the water and paddling is you’re so unobtrusive, you can stop paddling and you can just use the flow and motion of the water to take you forwards.

“THE VALUE OF BLUE SPACES TO ME IS JUST IMMEASURABLE. WHEN I’M ON WATER I FEEL CALMER, MY HEAD’S CLEARER, I FEEL SO MUCH MORE RELAXED.

“Rivers, lakes are incredible habitats for wildlife and the margins, the edges are wonderful places for nesting birds.

“Imagine if we’re denied access to that valuable resource? Imagine how much poorer our lives will be if we have no connection with these wild, beautiful, wet spaces.”

Another of the films featured, not a paddler but, an open water swimmer named Suzie Wheway.

It is not only paddlers who would like increased access to water in England and Wales.

Outdoor swimmers have the same issues and are at risk of confrontation whenever they take to our rivers.

Suzie got into outdoor swimming following a bout of post-natal depression and became “completely and utterly hooked”.

Suzie, who runs Peak Swims, said: “When I’m having a really bad day, going and getting in some cold water, with greenery around me, with the nature, with the birds, the sound, the weather, it’s just like my perfect hug from nature.

“There’s nothing quite like being completely and utterly immersed, to lift your mood and wash away all of your troubles.”

However, she said not having free access to water is a “real problem”.

“I have to adjust my swims at the minute so that I know I’m not going to be confronted and have that horrible circumstance where I’m shouted at, given abuse, questioned, for doing something that I love and that enhances me so much.



“I’ve come away from water thankfully a handful of times only in tears because I’ve been shouted out and told off and it is the most hideous experience.”

It is clear that blue spaces have a positive impact on our health and wellbeing.

James Ibbotson, a freestyle kayaker who represents Great Britain, said having easy access to water has a “massive impact” on his life.

James said he’s had mental health problems for a long time and like many people he struggled during the lockdown periods.



“Whilst I was going through some of my worst times I would take unnecessary risks almost as a form of self-harm,” said James.

“The water is a big part of my life and I think how varied the water can be, almost reminds us how varied life can be.

“You can go out there one day and it can be clean, smooth sailing. Classy, easy. And there are times in life when it’s like that.

“The next day you might go out. The wind might be blowing, it might be choppy, blowing you about, getting wet in the face.

“But you’re still out there. You remember how beautiful it is, so you don’t mind.

“You know it’s going to return to that. How easy water can reflect our lives going from choppy to plain sailing. It’s just magical.”

Shilpa Rasaiah got into Stand Up Paddleboarding later in life and now she’s making up for lost time.

She said age shouldn’t be a barrier to adventure and exploring our waterways.

“THE CONNECTION TO WATER FOR EVERYONE IS LIKE FREEDOM,” SHE SAID.

“I would describe it as being in nature, being at one with nature. As humans we were all made for that and we seem to have lost it.

“So being in or on water is fabulous.”

In 2022, Shilpa decided to paddle the length (165 miles) of the Grand Union Canal near her home in Leicestershire.

“Without having access to this canal I couldn’t have done this amazing adventure and also the support I got,” she said.

“If that was taken away for any reason, I would be completely gutted.

“It’s not just exercise, it’s nature and spirituality. There’s something freeing and special and magical, you get from water, that you don’t get from anywhere else.

“I hope we go the other way where our waters become cleaner, clearer and more accessible for people to enjoy.”

Finally, on the theme of cleaner waters, Olympic hopeful Beth Gill made a film about how pollution and litter is affecting our rivers.



The five films were made as part of the Clear Access, Clear Waters campaign to highlight ‘Why Blue Space Matters’. You can watch them all on Youtube @BritishCanoeingTV

The C1 world marathon champion, who is studying environmental science at the University of Nottingham, said she sees pollution, plastic and litter, all the time on the water.

“I think most people look at rivers and think wow they’re so beautiful, but we don’t understand what’s going on inside them or above them,” said Beth.

“Currently over three quarters of our rivers are deemed unacceptable for health.

“Rivers and waterways are fundamental to both livelihoods and nature.

“We need to really understand the connection between both ourselves as humans and the rivers. If they suffer, we suffer.”

MEDALS AND QUOTA SPOTS SECURED AT 2023 SPRINT AND PARACANOE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Great Britain's world-leading paracanoe team won an incredible seven medals and secured seven boat quota spots for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games at the 2023 ICF Canoe Sprint & Paracanoe World Championships in Duisburg, Germany.

The medal haul started on day three of racing, as a hat trick of medals were won. Paralympic Champion Emma Wiggs MBE won an incredible 11th World title in the women's VL2, becoming triumphant once again, ten years on from her first World title won on the same course in 2013.

Hope Gordon won her maiden gold in a world's best time as well as securing Britain's boat quota spot for Paris 2024 in the women's VL3 as the new Paralympic event makes its debut next year.

Jonny Young powered to World Championship silver in the men's KL3 to continue his fine form for the season, having won gold at the World Cup in Szeged earlier in the season.

The success just kept coming through as a magnificent 1-2 in the women's KL2 headlined day four of competition.

Paralympic Champion Charlotte Henshaw picked up her fifth KL2 gold, whilst Emma Wiggs won her second medal of the week with silver as the British pair continued to dominate the event.

Paralympic Champion Laura Sugar and Jack Evers wrapped up a wonderful week for the team with a further two medals, taking the British count to seven to see them top the medal table once again.

Laura made it a hat trick of KL3 titles as she dominated her final to justify coming into the race as firm favourite.

Meanwhile Jack Evers battled one of the most closely contested finals as he powered to silver in the men's VL2 final, with all nine lines going for the medals.



E. WIGGS


Paris World Cup

Boat quota places for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games came with the medals from the week, whilst Paracanoe legend Jeanette Chippington claimed Britain's seventh spot for the Games as she battled the women's KL1.

In the canoe sprint, the women's K4 500 crew of Deborah Kerr (Anker Valley), Emily Lewis (Worcester), Emma Russell (Chelmsford) and Rebii Simon (Elmbridge) battled their way to 11th place overall in the 500m after finishing second in the B Final.

Deborah and Emma then combined the next day to race the A Final of the K2W 500m, where they placed ninth as they went in search of an Olympic quota place.

Lewis Fletcher raced his first international canoe sprint A Final in the men's K1 200m, storming to fifth place and just missing out on a podium by 0.3 seconds, whilst Dan Johnson (Chelmsford) came fifth in the B Final of K1M 1000m and the C2W crew of Beth Gill (Chelmsford) and Katie Reid (Forth) came sixth in the 500m B Final.

 You can read more about the **full week of racing from the team here: <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/olympic-paralympic/olympic-paralympic-sprint-news/>**


Straight from the World Championships, a select canoe sprint and paracanoe team went onto Paris to race on the Olympic and Paralympic course for the first time as they raced World Cup 3 at the Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium.

There were a further eight medals for the paracanoe team as they battled all the elements and brought home a lot of learnings of the venue alongside the silverware looking ahead to next year.

Hope Gordon (VL3) and Emma Wiggs (VL2) won gold medals on the opening day of action, with Charlotte Henshaw (VL3) winning silver.

Charlotte and Emma were both back in action on day two as the duo won gold and silver respectively in the women's KL2, whilst Stuart Wood joined them on the podium with a victory in the men's VL3.

Laura Sugar and Jonny Young wrapped up the international season with gold and silver in their respective KL3 finals, taking the medal total to eight.

 Read all about the **Paris World Cup here: <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/olympic-paralympic/olympic-paralympic-sprint-news/>**



BRITISH CANOEING AWARDING BODY ARE LAUNCHING THREE NEW WHITE WATER SAFETY COURSES

The NEW White Water Safety courses aim to provide paddlers with the key safety and rescue skills required to operate safely and to be able to deal with common problems in a range of white water environments.

Each practical course has been designed to reflect the common situations that arise in the white water environment, with an emphasis on safe paddling and effective teamwork to reduce the chances of a complex rescue being required. Each course will explore common scenarios and situations relevant to the craft paddled and environment.

Paddlers can choose which course is suitable for their needs, depending on their experience and environment they wish to paddle. The courses are suitable for all ages and great for individuals, clubs and groups wanting to expand their safety practices in a white water environment.





Introduction to White Water Safety

This course is designed to support paddlers to become effective group members on grade 2 water. This one day course is suitable for anyone starting out on their white water paddling journey, wanting to explore the role of an effective group member and learn simple strategies and safe skills that can provide the tools to solve common paddling issues. Topics covered include clothing and equipment, the white water environment, preparing for the river trip, swimming techniques and many more. Paddlers will rescue from their preferred craft, which can include kayaks, canoes, and stand up paddleboards. **This course is NOW available!**

White Water Safety

Available soon, this two day course is aimed at those paddling as peers and covers a range of topics that include emergency planning & procedures, chase boating, equipment rescues and scenarios and much more. This course is designed to support paddlers to be independent participants on grade 2(3) white water rivers. Paddlers can access the course with their preferred craft which can include kayaks, canoes and stand up paddleboards.

Advanced White Water Safety

The Advanced White Water Safety course is designed to support kayakers and canoeists on grade 3 and 4 white water rivers. The two day course will cover casualty management, moving around steep environments, dealing with stuck craft and paddlers, in a more complex environment. This course will be available for paddlers winter 2023/2024

Please note, these courses will replace the existing White Water Safety and Rescue course (WWSR) and Advanced White Water Safety and Rescue (Ad.WWSR).

Further updates will be promoted via the British Canoeing Awarding Body website and the 'Catch up with Coaching' newsletter.



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