

CANOE

FOCUS

**Team GB announce
the slalom athletes
selected for the Paris
2024 Olympic Games**

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pages 6-7

**Winter
Paddling Tips**

Read more on
pages 14-15

**Meet the
new 2023/24
#ShePaddles
Ambassadors**

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Welcome

It is a real pleasure to be able to introduce this November edition after an enormously busy and successful period for the paddling community and as we head into the Christmas Break. Yes, I know, Christmas thoughts seem to get earlier every year.

September and October were both extremely busy on the competitive front and exceptionally successful. We hosted the ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships at Lee Valley, on the Olympic course and topped the medal table with some outstanding individual and team successes. It was doubly important in the pre-Olympic year as the World Championships are a key event in qualifying places for the Olympics and we were able to secure our full quota for Slalom in Paris 2024. The British Championships and selection races for 2024 followed in October with yet more outstanding competitive paddling. You can read about our Olympic athletes' selection in the feature in this edition. They now have time to plan and prepare.

We have also seen pleasing success in Canoe Polo of late with outstanding performances in the European Championships and in the European Club Championships.

There are many opportunities for members to translate their paddling experience into competition across our wide range of disciplines – so how about a New Year resolution to give it a go?

We also feature two wonderfully linked stories; the first in introducing our new #ShePaddles Ambassadors and the role they play in encouraging more women and girls to start paddling whilst the second covers an inspiring story from York of the contribution that Ian Puckrin has made and particularly his support for a new paddler from a culturally different background in Saira Is Haq. As she says herself it wasn't always easy to fit in 'as an Asian Muslim female, who didn't go to the pub after a river trip'. It is a key aim of our current strategy to ensure that our paddling community reflects the widest demography of our population, and these features illustrate why.

Our campaigning for enhanced access to water does not diminish. It has been a period of mixed fortunes. We report here on the success in getting extra waterways added to the system with an agreement for the 'Middle Levels' in the fens of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. However, we must also note that in what may be a crucial pre-election period we struggle to pin down the major parties to a commitment to extend access to blue spaces. We shall not diminish our focus to serve our members through enhanced access. Perhaps you can help by challenging your local MP and prospective candidates in your area?

You can also enjoy a feature on the Birmingham Community Paddle Sport hubs that are being supported through British Canoeing's Stronger Together Fund. An innovation driven by Olympic canoeist Andy Train and supported by British Canoeing in partnership with StreetGames and the Canal & River Trust. It is a wonderful story that highlights our determination to channel investment into projects that will enhance the access, enjoyment and wellbeing of paddlers.


As we go into winter paddling mode and look forward to the festive season, it is time to ensure that you make yourselves aware of the advice to keep safe. And as we go into Christmas check out the paddling gift ideas – not least membership to British Canoeing and donation to the Canoe Foundation. So spread the word and help us to help you and the growing community of paddlers.

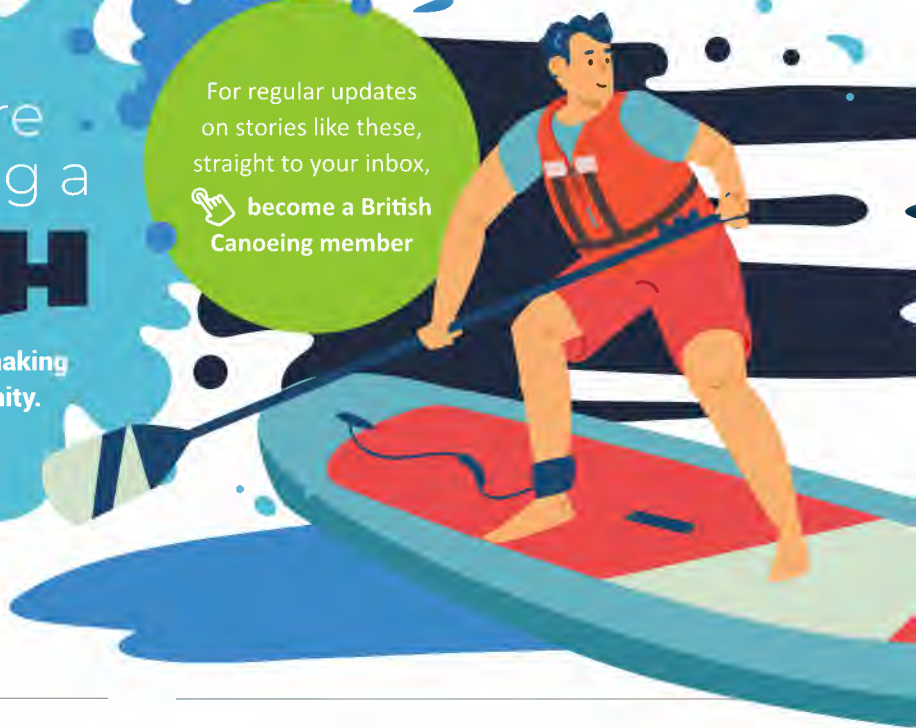
John Coyne CBE
Chair, British Canoeing



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




Canoe Foundation Funding Window now OPEN

The Canoe Foundation's new funding window is now open! Canoe Foundation, the official charity partner of British Canoeing, is pleased to announce that applications for our latest round of grant funding is open from 1 November 2023 to 31 January 2024.

If you have a project that will provide more access opportunities for paddlers* and are in need of funding of up to £10,000, the Canoe Foundation wants to hear from you.

Find out more here


 <https://www.canoe-foundation.org.uk/the-canoe-foundations-new-funding-window-opening-1-november-2023/>



Watch our new 'How To Stay Safe When Paddling' video

Stand up paddleboarding, canoeing and kayaking are continuing to rise in popularity and at British Canoeing we want to ensure everyone has a safe and enjoyable time on the water, no matter where you paddle. We've created this new safety guidance video with five key top tips to keep you safe! Watch it now and share with your paddling pals!

Watch it here


 <https://youtu.be/RHOH2aXG1qI?si=RT04DHjVSN5qc-zo>



British Canoeing nominees recognised at Sunday Times Sportswomen of the Year Awards!

Paralympian and reigning paracanoe World Champion Emma Wiggs MBE and #ShePaddles Ambassador Lisa Dickinson were runners up in their respective categories at the Sunday Times Sportswoman of the Year awards. It was great to see two nominees from paddlesport recognised for their achievements at the prestigious awards ceremony in London.

Find out more here

 <https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/british-canoeing-nominees-recognised-at-sunday-times-sportswomen-of-the-year-awards>



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TEAM GB

announces slalom
athletes selected for the

PARIS 2024 OLYMPIC GAMES



PARIS 2024



Olympic medallists Joe Clarke MBE and Mallory Franklin, alongside 2023 World Champion Kimberley Woods and Tokyo 2020 Olympian Adam Burgess, are the first canoeing athletes selected by the British Olympic Association (BOA) for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.



Rio 2016 Olympic gold medallist and four-time World Champion Joe Clarke returns to Team GB and will contest the men's kayak single (K1), the event in which he won gold seven years ago. He will also be competing in the thrilling new Olympic event kayak cross, which is set to make its Games debut in Paris next year.

Joe heads into next year's Games as World Champion in both events, after culminating his most successful ever season with double gold in front of a home crowd at the 2023 World Championships, achieving eight medals across the season in total.

"I can't wait for Paris and I'm delighted to be selected for the Games. I won the Olympics once, I really want to go out next year and do the double this time round with two opportunities to win medals."

"It's special heading as reigning World Champion. It adds a target to my back, but I have high expectations of myself so very excited."

The squad also boasts 2023 C1 World Champion Mallory Franklin who made history in Tokyo, as she prepares to race the women's canoe single (C1) and women's kayak cross.

Great Britain's most successful canoeist, Mallory became an Olympic silver medallist in the inaugural women's canoe event on her Games debut, and has continued to shine on the international stage since Tokyo, winning a total of 11 medals in 2022 and a further seven during 2023, including her second women's canoe World Championship title won at Lee Valley in September.

"I'm delighted to be selected to TeamGB for the second time. I knew I was in a strong position coming into the year. To be going again in C1 as World Champion and the opportunity to win another medal is really exciting."

"Medalling in every World Championships since Tokyo gives me some added confidence ahead of Paris. I really want to enjoy the experience."

Tokyo Olympian and 2023 Kayak Cross World Champion Woods will be doubling up in Paris, contesting both the women's kayak single (K1) and the kayak cross. Kimberley won eight medals during the 2023 season, including four at the home World Championships at the London 2012 Olympic venue. The 28-year-old became World Champion for the first time as she powered to kayak cross gold in front of a roaring crowd, as well as winning women's canoe silver at the same event.

"I'm really excited to be a part of Team GB again for Paris 2024. Some people don't get to go to one Olympics so I feel very fortunate to be going to my second Games."

"Being World Champion and world number one has never happened to me before. I really want to build on that leading into Paris."

Completing the team will be Tokyo 2020 finalist and C1 team world silver medallist Burgess who is returning for his second consecutive Games in the men's canoe single (C1)

Burgess competed in his first Olympic Games in Tokyo, where he just missed out on a medal, finishing just 0.16 seconds away in fourth place. Great Britain's first ever C1 U23 World Champion in 2015, Burgess won bronze at the 2022 World Cup in Krakow and showed fantastic consistency to make the men's C1 final on seven consecutive occasions in 2023.

"I'm so excited to be racing in Paris next year. It's one thing making it to the Olympics once, but to be a two-time Olympian is fantastic."

"Fourth last time round is unfinished business for me. I'm really grateful I have an opportunity to do better. I felt a bit of pressure to make the Games again this time as my family weren't able to go last time and just excited for the opportunity for them too."

Mark Ratcliffe, Team GB Team Leader and Performance Director for Canoe Slalom said:

"We have an exceptionally strong team going to Paris next and it's really pleasing after a long journey to get to this point. We have medal potential in every event. There are more opportunities in Paris with kayak cross making its first Games appearance and we've selected four really strong boats for next year."

Mark England, Team GB's Chef de Mission for Paris 2024, said: **"I am delighted to welcome back to Team GB all four athletes selected today. They have shown they know how to medal on the world stage, and with addition of the new thrilling discipline of kayak cross, which we will compete in, there is much to look forward to next summer in Paris."**

THE SELECTED CANOEISTS ARE:



Mallery Franklin:

Canoe Slalom - Women's Canoe Single (C1) & Women's Kayak Cross



Kimberley Woods:

Canoe Slalom - Women's Kayak Single (K1) & Women's Kayak Cross



Adam Burgess:

Canoe Slalom - Men's Canoe Single (C1)



Joe Clarke:

Canoe Slalom - Men's Kayak Single (K1) & Men's Kayak Cross

8

99 miles



of new waterways for members to explore!

Adventure seekers and nature enthusiasts, grab your paddles! A further 99 miles (160km) of waterways are opening up for British Canoeing members.

British Canoeing and the The Middle Level Commissioners are unveiling new navigable waterways in The Fens of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.

The Middle Level Commissioners oversee a network of water routes that connect the River Nene and River Great Ouse navigations.

The great news for those of you with a British Canoeing membership is that it's your ticket to exploring these waterways that will provide unforgettable experiences for paddlers of all levels.

Exploring the Middle Levels by water provides a unique view of the surrounding area and access to the charming towns of Whittlesey, Ramsey, and March.

From long, straight, embanked, man-made drains that provide a challenge for the endurance paddler to the pretty Well Creek for a more leisurely paddling experience. It's also a chance to visit quaint villages like Benwick, Ramsey Forty Foot, Upwell, and Outwell.

Each of them offers a glimpse into the region's history and culture.

Ben Seal, Head of Access and Environment: "These waterways are a hidden gem for adventurers. The thrill of navigating these historic routes will be an experience like no other.

"Having Middle Level Navigations is a great benefit for British Canoeing members and we hope they will paddle and enjoy these waterways in time."

"These waterways are a hidden gem for adventurers. The thrill of navigating these historic routes will be an experience like no other."

– Ben Seal



Paul Burrows, Chief Executive, Middle Level Commissioners:

“As a newcomer to paddlesports myself, I’m delighted that we are now in a formal partnership with British Canoeing. It will enable people of all ages and abilities to access our somewhat unique navigable waterways with a British Canoeing waterways licence.

“We welcome responsible paddling on our network and aim that via this partnership we can improve access for paddlers over the coming years.”

Craig Duff, Paddle Trails & PaddlePoints content lead at British Canoeing:

“This is great for the paddling community, and I can’t wait to create a couple of trails to help people embark on their own adventures!

“If you’re ready to embark on your next paddling adventure, look no further. It’s a wonderful opportunity to promote eco-friendly tourism in the region. Explore these stunning waterways on PaddlePoints, a platform that makes planning your trip a breeze. Plus, you can contribute to the community by adding your own routes, sharing the joy of paddling with others.”

What are you waiting for? It’s time to grab your paddle, don your PFD, and get ready to go paddling through the waterways of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.

Head over to our PaddlePoints tool on the Go Paddling website to start planning your journey around the middle level navigation today! gopaddling.info/rivers/middle-level-navigation/

Your next epic adventure awaits!

Not a member?

British Canoeing’s On the Water membership is your gateway to the waterways. Giving paddlers instant access to the most comprehensive and best value waterway licence available. Plus insurance, top tips and a range of member discounts and offers. See you on the water soon

members.britishcanoeing.org.uk/on-the-water-membership/



MEET THE NEW 2023/24 #SHEPADDLES AMBASSADORS

British Canoeing is delighted to announce seventeen inspirational #ShePaddles Ambassadors for 2023/24. Our Ambassadors will be pivotal in promoting paddling and encouraging more women and girls to get on the water.

MEET THE ENGLISH AMBASSADORS

Lisa Walker

@walker_on_water_2023

Whilst part of the incredible Lincolnshire Scouts Water Activities team, I noticed a lack of opportunities for my Guide unit. I was chuffed to lead my Guides out on the water after completing Canoe and Stand Up Paddleboard Coach Awards in 2021. This is where I want to focus as a #ShePaddles Ambassador – helping other Girlguiding leaders provide opportunities for young members.



Ayesha Choudhury

@ayesha_c23

From the very first moment I set foot on a kayak I was hooked! Having an amazing coach and a bunch of amazing women to paddle with also helps and I look forward to going out on the water every week. My dream is to be able to offer the joy of paddling that has given me and my daughter to other women and girls in my community.



Maddy Enoch
@maddys_sup_world

My paddleboarding journey started at a very difficult time in my life and it has helped me beyond measure. I'm looking forward to sharing both the physical and mental health benefits of paddling in nature; to inspire other women to experience the benefits too. As an Ambassador, I'm excited to show other women that no matter what your starting point - if you want to take part - you can!



Nicola Baird
@sup.at.islington

I adore paddleboarding on the Regent's Canal in Central London. It's so special being close to wildlife, chatting with people on the water and along the towpath as we journey. It's a big wellbeing boost too. For the past year I've wanted to empower more women to have a go. See you on the water soon!

Jessica Ashley

@mumventurer and @e.o.e.p.s

I've been paddleboarding since 2019 and do a bit of kayaking as well. I am one of the admins for a Facebook group called 'East of England Paddlesports' with 13k members and we are the first online group to be affiliated with British Canoeing! I want to encourage and inspire women and girls of all shapes, sizes, backgrounds, ages to get out on the water.



Charlotte Fife
@charlotte_fife_ and @durhamuniversitycanoe

I've been an avid paddler for six years now, but my love of white water really started when I joined Durham University Canoe Club. I want to provide a platform for women in leadership, to share experiences and advice and aim to increase the number of women in leadership within the white water community in my area.



Eleanor Addison
 @eladdison and @swanseanicc



I am looking forward to encouraging as many women and girls as possible to take up paddling. Whilst at university I am very keen to help more women take up kayaking and motivate women to become more confident and comfortable paddlers. I am also looking forward to sharing and reflecting on my journey with paddling.

Hester Hearn
 @HesterHearn



Sport and physical activity have been a huge part of both my personal and professional life, but I love paddling in particular because of the community, the challenge and the simple beauty of being out on the water. I'll be working closely with organisations within Hertfordshire, where I live, to use paddling as a means to engage with local communities and encourage more people to be more active.

Aoise Haran
 @aoiseharan



I've been kayaking since I was 19 and I absolutely love it! I quickly found that being outdoors, and especially

being on the water was my favourite way to experience life. So many elements of kayaking and canoeing can be scary and I want to make sure that the girls feel comfortable enough to try something new and go away feeling more confident in themselves.

Kathy King
 @wildwonderandwisdom



Being an Ambassador for #ShePaddles will add value to what we already offer as Wild Wonder and Wisdom CIC. It's

awesome to be working with other inspiring women across the country doing similar things and I look forward to collaborating on ways to get more women outdoors and active together on the water.

MEET THE SCOTTISH AMBASSADORS

The Scottish Canoe Association announced their four #ShePaddles Ambassadors for 2023/24. We'd like to welcome Niamh, Hannah, Julie and Jade.

Niamh Lee
 @niamh_lee



I took up paddleboarding over lockdown as I found it was the perfect socially distanced activity. I instantly felt a boost to my mental health and wellbeing, and this helped forge an unrivalled connection with the sport.

Hannah Moore



I love meeting new people and hearing about their adventures, as paddling can be exciting, sociable and relaxing. I started paddling with my local club ten years ago and I have since seen many amazing places on rivers and at sea, but there are many more places I would love to explore. I hope to help more women and girls start and continue paddling.



#SHEPADDLES
 SPREAD THE LOVE!

Julie Partridge

📷 @fit_sup_scotland

My heart lies on the coast and SUP surf and coastal excursions give me the biggest smiles. I love the variety that paddling brings to my enjoyment of the outdoors.

There's a craft and environment for every occasion and the inclusion opportunities this offers is something I am so keen to utilise to help get more LGBTQ women and non-binary people out on the water. I also want to share my knowledge and experience on the coast to help empower women to undertake their own journeys safely and confidently.



Jade Anderson

I'm 25, a mum to a seven year old boy and during one of the lockdowns I was reintroduced to paddlesports after taking part in a personal development programme run by the wonderful Venture Scotland. The water became my safe space again after so many years. It's where I can take the mask off and just be myself. My end goal would be to have my own charity where I can offer subsidised or free sessions, to be all inclusive and to promote women and girls in the sport.



MEET THE WELSH AMBASSADORS

Canoe Wales also welcomed their three Ambassadors earlier this month. Meet Meg, Megan and Hannah.

Meg Eynon

📷 @megeynon

I love paddling! I am an active member of Cardiff Canoe Club and sit on their committee as the safeguarding officer and social secretary. I paddle weekly with the club, be it on rivers in the summer or helping out at pool sessions throughout the winter. I want to share my enthusiasm and encourage as many women and girls as possible to get and stay on the water.



Hannah Vineer

📷 @han.in.the.wild

Hannah was also an Ambassador last year, so you may already know a bit about her. She has been a fantastic Ambassador and delighted to have her back for another year.



The entire team created such a supportive environment which has kept me paddling regularly despite chronic neurological disease, and the belonging I've found in our community really helped me to keep hold of my identity when I became a mum. The fact that I benefited so much individually while also being trusted to represent female paddlers as a #ShePaddles Cymru Ambassador has meant the world to me.



Megan Hamer-Evans

📷 @megan.hamer

After taking a step back from competing competitively in Canoe Slalom, I have started

Canoe Polo. I play for Rhondda Rhinos, a new team with great potential! I volunteer at my local kayak club and help coach the Welsh Canoe Slalom team at various training camps. I love seeing girls smiling and having fun when paddling and I want to see as many girls as possible out on the water enjoying themselves.

WE HOPE YOU JOIN US IN WELCOMING OUR 17 FANTASTIC AMBASSADORS!

Over the coming weeks and months we will be bringing you lots more of their paddling stories. To find out more about each of our 2023/24 #ShePaddles Ambassador visit our website here:

www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/2023-24-shepaddles-ambassadors-announced

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT and further training opportunities with British Canoeing Awarding Body

At British Canoeing Awarding Body we offer a full suite of qualifications and awards in all disciplines and in a variety of environments including sheltered, moderate and advanced waters.

There are also other opportunities to develop understanding and knowledge through a variety of eLearning resources.

Safer Recruitment

The two-hour, six-module, Safer Recruitment eLearning is for employers or deployers such as paddlesports clubs and organisations, providing services to children and/or Adults at Risk. Safer Recruitment is a set of essential practices to ensure paid staff, contractors and volunteers joining your organisation are suitable to work with vulnerable groups.



Introduction to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Everyone should be able to access and enjoy paddling regardless of their identity, background or circumstances. This Introduction to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion eLearning is for anyone wanting to make a positive change and make their paddling environment more inclusive. It includes ideas, tools and resources to help you

Risk Management and Risk assessment



This one-hour, three-module British Canoeing Awarding Body eLearning is a great resource for instructors, coaches, leaders, providers, deployers and activity providers who are looking to further develop an understanding of the responsibilities of

managing risk, as well as identifying risk and writing risk assessments

Manual Handling

This 45-minute, single-module British Canoeing Awarding Body eLearning is for all paddlers who are new to the topic of manual handling. It covers different paddlesport manual handling situations, a model for considering and managing risk, and steps to take to better protect our bodies

Equipment Management and Safety

Designed for paddlers wanting to improve their equipment management knowledge, the 3-module Equipment Management and Safety eLearning takes around an hour to complete. For clubs and commercial activity providers it's essential to understand how good practice contributes to safety, helps maintain the life expectancy of equipment, and the legal requirements of equipment management



As the winter sets in and the daylight hours get shorter, why not visit the [British Canoeing Awarding Body website](#) and [eLearning store](#) to access a whole range of learning resources.

British Canoeing Awarding Body is the only regulated and recognised awarding organisation for paddlesport. Our work and compliance with Ofqual, Qualification Wales and the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment ensures the highest standards of quality assurance and standardisation, providing assurances to both participant and deployer.

Our qualifications are also mapped to the professional standards of the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) aligned to coaching national standards.

Winter PADDLING:

TIPS AND SAFETY ADVICE FOR PADDLING DURING WINTER

Winter paddling can look uninviting to say the least. Cold weather, rain, snow, early nights and limited daylight in general. We're not selling it to you right... But paddling through winter can be absolutely beautiful and very rewarding.

You just need to consider a few more things before you head out. To help you keep paddling through winter, we've put together our top tips and things to think about before you brave the cold and head out on that paddling session.

OUR WINTER PADDLING TOP TIPS



LET'S START WITH WHAT YOU WEAR.

In winter, you might want to think about places you lose a lot of heat. Consider wearing a hat, investing in some pogies and/or gloves, and wear some thicker wet boots. A BA (Buoyancy aid) is also always an important piece of kit in winter. It will help keep you warm and also keep you afloat, plus it can prevent you from getting into difficulties with cold water shock.



WARM UP BEFORE YOU GO FOR YOUR PADDLE!

You can do your warm up either on or off the water. Get the blood pumping and the muscles warm. It will help prevent injury and also make the paddle a little more pleasant all round!



PLAN AHEAD.

Pack some energy foods, fruit and/or nuts. You might also want to pack a flask for a warm drink too. Think about taking a set of dry clothes and coat if necessary (especially if you're getting off the water for a while) and take some extra layers too. A changing mat is also a brilliant piece of kit if there is no changing area where you are going. It keeps your feet warm while you change and stops heat escaping from your feet.



CHECK THE WEATHER BEFORE YOU HEAD OUT.

Winter can be notoriously unpredictable (as can most months in the UK). Checking the forecast can help stop you getting into avoidable trouble. The wind can make a huge difference when paddling on lakes and the sea. Look at wind speeds and direction to help plan your paddle. It's also worth checking river levels too. Heavy rainfall through autumn and winter can change rivers quickly and dramatically. Always check the flow before heading out on a river.



THINK ABOUT THE LENGTH OF YOUR SESSION.

Do you need a super long session while it's a -10 wind chill on the water? Be sensible about the session length and your abilities.



ALWAYS CARRY A MEANS TO CALL FOR HELP.

Important for every paddle, a phone in a dry pouch will do the job. But if you plan on going further afield, a VHF radio may be a worthy investment. Make sure you know who to call if you do have an emergency, 999 and ask for the coastguard when at sea or on the Thames, and Fire & Rescue when inland.



REMEMBER HOW MUCH DAYLIGHT WE GET...

the days can be shorter than you think especially if the weather is already overcast. Planning is key.



TAKE A DRYBAG WITH YOU.

This should be a given all year round. A dry bag helps keep things well, dry. It's a great place to store keys and your phone, but also snacks for the paddle and a spare thermal, just incase!



PADDLE WITHIN YOUR ABILITY.

Take your skill level into account when planning a paddle. If you have never been paddle boarding on moving water then think about taking some courses to help build you up to that. You should always stay within your ability and skill level. British Canoeing has a number of courses to help you level up your skills and safety, so find your local provider and enjoy a course.



TELL OTHERS OF YOUR PLANS.

Give people FOMO, make them jealous of your plans, 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 they know your plans and can check that you return safely. Making sure someone on land knows when you are going, where you are going, and when you will be back is all part of staying safe.



The Go Paddling website has a wealth of tips and information to help keep you safe when you are paddling.
Head over and explore



THE BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY PADDLE SPORTS PROJECT

The Birmingham Community Paddle Sport hubs are an innovation driven by Olympic canoeist Andy Train and supported by British Canoeing in partnership with StreetGames and the Canal & River Trust.

Supported by British Canoeing's **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.

The project attempts to reach into the most under-served communities, increase access and encourage participation in paddlesport across Birmingham's canal network.

Amongst the 1.1 million population of Birmingham, a small proportion of residents have historically taken part in paddlesport activities based on the city's extensive canal network. The reasons are complex but include concerns for personal safety and fear of criminal activity in the inner city in particular.

But more significantly, a lack of role models, ownership and sense of belonging that local people are entitled to

use those green and blue spaces has resulted in limited access and an underrepresentation in paddlesport on Birmingham's canals.

This collaboration, or system change approach, has enabled the rapid development of seven community organisations to build capacity and add paddlesport to their local youth, community and family offerings.

CHECK OUT THE 7 NEW PADDLING HUBS

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)





By taking this approach, paddlesport is now reaching deep into local communities with a wide range of ethnic and social diversity.

People who otherwise would not be accessing the water are now taking up paddling for the first time and being coached, helmed and organised by local people in locally trusted organisations within their own community. **This article is an example of the impact of paddle sport on the doorstep.**

Easter Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) introduced Bell Boating as an enrichment activity by way of **'Into the Green and Blue: Testing the waters – Bring it on Brum!'**. Together with the summer programme, 30 HAF providers have now introduced over 1,000 young people to the sport across the seven hubs in more than 50 Bell Boat paddle sessions.

The **research** findings from the summer start to tell the story of impact and reach this new and exciting approach to create access to paddle sport across the most underserved communities in Birmingham.

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

"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." - **Shahida Raza, Port Loop hub**

"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." - **Mohammed Naveed, community hub participant**

"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." - **Ian Cook, community hub participant**



**PEOPLE WHO OTHERWISE
WOULD NOT BE ACCESSING
THE WATER ARE NOW
TAKING UP PADDLING FOR
THE FIRST TIME**

HOW IAN AND PHIL PUCKRIN'S LEGACY CONTINUES TO INSPIRE PADDLERS IN YORK

For October's Paddler Spotlight, we were thrilled to catch up with 2022/23 #ShePaddles Ambassador Saira Is-Haq and delve into her journey into paddlesport.

Saira believes that the people we encounter in life mould us into the individuals we become as adults. Her supportive mother and enthusiastic friends Ian and Phil, have all played significant roles in making her feel welcome in a sport where she initially felt different due to her cultural background.

Saira's venture into competitive kayaking began with a gentle nudge from her work colleague. However, it wasn't just her colleague who played a significant role in her paddling journey, Saira's mother, Ian Puckrin and Phil Puckrin have all made crucial contributions. Saira has always looked up to the Puckrin family and felt honoured to spend time with them to develop her own paddlesport career.

While Saira's mother, although initially puzzled by her daughter's passion for paddling, she never hesitated to offer her support. Even the sight of Saira heading out for a paddling session in chilly and rainy weather couldn't deter her enthusiasm. Her mother's unwavering encouragement became a symbol of her love and support.

"My mum was brought up near the sea in South India, where kayaking was more of a necessity to get from one village to the next. The last time I visited India, the kayaks used to paddle around her city were made from

tree trunks with hand dug out holes in the middle, and mostly used to take food to the market. I could always see the curiosity in her eyes as I drove off for my long day of paddling. She's amongst the special people in this world that have encouraged my paddlesport development, even in an environment where I felt quite different as an Asian Muslim female, who didn't go to the pub after a river trip."

Saira tried her hand at white water paddling but found she mostly didn't enjoy the rapids. While she possessed the skills to navigate them, she felt uneasy among some of the other paddlers who often celebrated challenging waters with post-paddle beers. It was during this time that she met Ian Puckrin, a dedicated kayaker and athlete who introduced her to kayak racing.

"Wednesday evening paddles on the local river was enough for me but I started to feel like I needed more from kayaking. I came across a keen kayaker and athlete, Ian Puckrin, who introduced me to kayak racing. In wobbly boats, we paddled the K2 in all weathers and in the dark too."

Together, Saira and Ian navigated the waters in wobbly boats, even in the most challenging conditions. It was through Ian's mentorship and encouragement that Saira found herself paddling on the river three times a week, fueled by the desire to tackle the legendary Devizes to Westminster race.

Saira said: "I'm a true believer that the people we meet help shape who we become as adults and much like my supportive mum and my enthusiastic friend, Ian made me feel that although I may have been the only Asian girl in the club at the time, with cultural difference, I could still paddle and be invested into paddlesport."



Much like his dad, Phil Puckrin, who is now 79, has been a beacon of support and encouragement to Saira and many others in the paddling community. His dedication to paddling, from his incredible rolling skills to exceptional organisational abilities, has inspired Saira to keep paddling. Phil founded the York Canoe Race in 2006 and still helps organise events such as York's Festival of the Rivers Canoe Race today.

As the event grew, Phil extended his warm welcome to participants of all levels, from top UK K1 representatives to paddlers with additional needs from his hometown of Sunderland. After passing the event to a dedicated committee, Phil ventured into a new discipline, combining canoeing with orienteering, showcasing his enduring enthusiasm for the sport.



"I started getting to know Phil at the pool sessions. He could roll and I couldn't, so watching his sheer determination to roll every time made me believe I could do it. I got to know him more off the water when I was the secretary at the York Canoe Race and with the CanoeO event. The more I got to know him the more I was astonished at his organisational skills and paddle stamina, I started to wonder what drove him to be so committed to this sport and asked him this question several times. His humble response is always with a smile and 'You just have to keep going...you know'."

Oliver Chamings, Phil's friend, shares with us the impact he has had on the club. He said:

"Phil is a permanent source of motivation to every athlete who comes across him, dedicated to only positive words and finding reasons to be on the water.

When I met Phil for the first time he was in an old red sea kayak. Phil himself was retired at the time. This is the boat he still paddles in today, most days of the week on the River Ouse, south of York. He has paddled Canadians, white water kayaks, K1s and K2s. Through years of racing (and winning several) inland and saltwater courses and other events at York, Durham, Amble and across the Lake District. Only flat water races ever halted Phil's advance, slower times over shorter distances debarred competition as his stamina favoured longer distances.

His paddling continues year-round, warming up first on the riverbank for up to 45 minutes. Adverse weather doesn't deter him, come sun, wind, rain, flood and even 4 inches of snow, he paddles on. In the cold years of 2009 and 2010, he merrily brushed inches of snow off the pontoon prior to discovering the bow waves were slowing down as the water reached its freezing point. Abandonment occurred only when his fibreglass hull became an ice breaker."

Saira is keen for clubs to encourage people of colour into their clubs and hope others like Phil will continue to support this.

"The hurdles I've struggled with in getting the Asian community involved in kayaking have been mainly surrounding the cost of the sport, not being able to swim and them feeling like they wouldn't fit in. Looking at the sport from the outside they may feel like it was something they couldn't afford, or they might not be accepted."

In her role as a #ShePaddles Ambassador, Saira has been working closely with the York Mosque Scouts Group to make the kit accessible to her community and help Scouts work towards their paddlesport badge. They now have an active Watersports Muslim Scouts team with equipment to borrow. See how you can get involved over on their website.

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!**

Share your stories and photos with us via our form here:
britishcanoeing.formstack.com/forms/paddler_spotlight_submission_form

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



CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

for Paddlers

With Christmas fast approaching we've pulled together some Christmas gift ideas to help you treat the paddlers in your life. We thought it would be a good idea to look at the less expensive side of our sport so if you're looking for crafts and paddles then you won't find them here. However there are plenty of things paddlers need that won't cost the earth.

Gill Beanie Range From £23 (+15% discount for British Canoeing members)

Ideal for any adventure on or around the water, the cosy Seafarer Beanie is constructed with a chunky knit, ensuring your head and ears stay warm on the coldest of days.

Get yours online at Gill:
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Looking for more gift ideas? Check out our full **gifting guide for paddlers on the Go Paddling website**
gopaddling.info/20-gifts-for-paddlers-under-20
stocking-fillers-for-paddlers



Give the Gift of a British Canoeing Membership this Christmas

A British Canoeing On the Water membership is an ideal gift for a paddler in your life giving access to explore some of our finest waterways across the country. You'll also be supporting the development of resources and projects that benefits the whole paddling community. Buy now ready for Christmas and the membership can be activated at any point within 12 months of it being purchased!

The Benefits

British Canoeing membership gives a whole range of benefits and opportunities. We're here to help support paddlers get the most out of their time on the water!



Waterway licence: The most comprehensive licence available



Public Liability Insurance: £10 million civil liability cover for all your paddling



Bespoke Communications: Regular members news, advice, top tips & inspirational ideas.



Discounts and Rewards: Exclusive offers to help you make savings



Part of a Community: Sharing experiences and a passion for paddling



Campaigning & Lobbying: Supporting the Clear Access, Clear Waters campaign



For more information and to purchase British Canoeing membership as a gift please **call our membership department on 0300 0119 500**

Stay warm to keep paddling through winter

As we head into the Winter months it's essential you have the right kit to keep you warm and dry while out on the water. To help get you started, here's a head to toe guide highlighting some of the most useful pieces of clothing and accessories to keep you paddling through the coldest and wettest of days.



1.



Seafarer Beanie - £23

2.



Neoprene Gloves - £52

3.



Women's Hydrophobe Top - £60

4.



Hydrophobe Trousers - £58

5.



Edge Boots - £75

6.



Thermal Hot Socks - £19

HEADWEAR

Keeping your head warm is essential to maintaining your concentration and motivation whilst out paddling. By letting your head get cold you can quickly feel tired, disorientated and weary. Luckily, there are many options available to you. Gill's Seafarer Beanie is constructed with a chunky knit and available in 3 different colourways. Another popular choice for activities on or around the water is the Gill Floating Knit Beanie which (as the name suggests!) floats in water, giving you the reassurance that it won't get lost even if you manage to drop it in the water.

GLOVES

Your hands are one of the first parts of your body to feel the chill. If the water doesn't get your hands cold then the wintry breeze will soon make you wish that you had a good pair of paddling gloves on.

Gill has a wide range of gloves suitable for kayaking, canoeing and stand up paddle boarding. A great transitional glove that takes you from Summer into Autumn and Winter is the 3 Seasons Gloves. The extended cuff length makes it easy to tuck underneath neoprene layers or spray tops and the lightweight neoprene construction offers warmth even when wet. Another popular choice is the Neoprene Gloves

which are water resistant and feature a durable Sharkskin palm which provides superb grip in wet conditions.

LAYERS

A layering system will help with temperature regulation throughout the year. By wearing multiple layers, you can easily adjust your clothing to maintain a comfortable body temperature by layering up or down when faced with unpredictable weather conditions.

In extremely wet conditions, a layered clothing system allows you to manage moisture effectively. Next-to-skin baselayers such as the Gill Hydrophobe Top and Trousers will wick sweat away from your body, keeping you dry, while durable outer layers guarantee waterproof protection against rain and spray.

Finally, there is a safety benefit to wearing the right clothing for the right conditions. An unexpected immersion in cold water or even long hours exposed to wet conditions can rapidly sap energy and body strength. Wet clothing can lose its insulating properties - a layering system either prevents this from happening in the first place or allows you to remove any wet layers before it's too late. A Drysuit is a sound investment if you want to continue paddling during the Winter months, or a slightly more cost effective option would be the Gill Verso Lite Jacket and Trousers.

FOOTWEAR

As we enter the colder months it's important to have a good pair of paddling shoes that offer warmth and grip. Neoprene footwear, like Gill's selection of neoprene boots and shoes, work like a wetsuit, warming the water when it enters and creating a layer of insulation. We would recommend sizing up so you have room to wear a pair of thermal paddling socks.

SOCKS

Make your feet even warmer by wearing a pair of neoprene socks. A good pair of neoprene socks will offer warmth as well as moisture wicking capability to ensure your feet don't get sweaty. Gill recommends their Thermal Hot Socks or Neoprene Socks.

So there you have it, a quick guide to some fantastic pieces of paddling clothing and accessories to help keep you dry and warm throughout the colder months ahead.

Don't forget British Canoeing members receive 15% off all the items mentioned above as well as Gill's entire product range.

Shop now at gb.gillmarine.com



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