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Welcome to the April Canoe Focus

Welcome to the April Canoe Focus. Spring is in the air! And I'm sure you're all looking forward to lighter nights and lots more paddling time on the water, I know I am!

With this in mind then, this month's issue features a collection of some of the best Open Canoeing trips around the country, all you need to know about Kayak Surfing & What Gear you'll need for a brilliant family day out on the water!

I'd also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone that has contributed to this issue and those of you that continue to send in your stories and article ideas, please keep them coming!

Looking ahead then, we have an exciting couple of months to look forward to with our GB Canoe Slalom Selection Trials (27-28 April), National Go Canoeing Week (18-26th May) and the Canoe Slalom World Cup in Cardiff (21-23 June). Tickets are available for both of the Canoe Slalom events and I hope to see many of you there, cheering on our athletes.

Before I sign off, I'd just like to thank those of you that attended the BCU's AGM on the 2nd March. Minutes from the meeting will be available on the BCU's Website as soon as they have been finalised.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of Canoe Focus. Thank you for your continued support.

Happy Paddling.

Paul

Paul Owen, Chief Executive.

"Spring is in the air! And I'm sure you're all looking forward to lighter nights and lots more paddling time on the water, I know I am!"



HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

We are very keen to receive contributions from our readers. We'd love to see articles and ideas flooding in and these should be submitted via canoeingnews@bcu.org.uk.

Even if it's just an idea – drop us a line and we'll give you some advice.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Please also use this e-mail address as a way to submit feedback on how we're doing. We are really committed to reflecting the views of our members, so we welcome all of your comments. You can also use the Canoe England Facebook page - www.facebook.com/canoengland

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH CANOE UNION

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ISSN: 0953 010X

canoe
focus

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES: UK inland: £24.00. Free to BCU members. Overseas subscriptions enquires to info@bcu.org.uk

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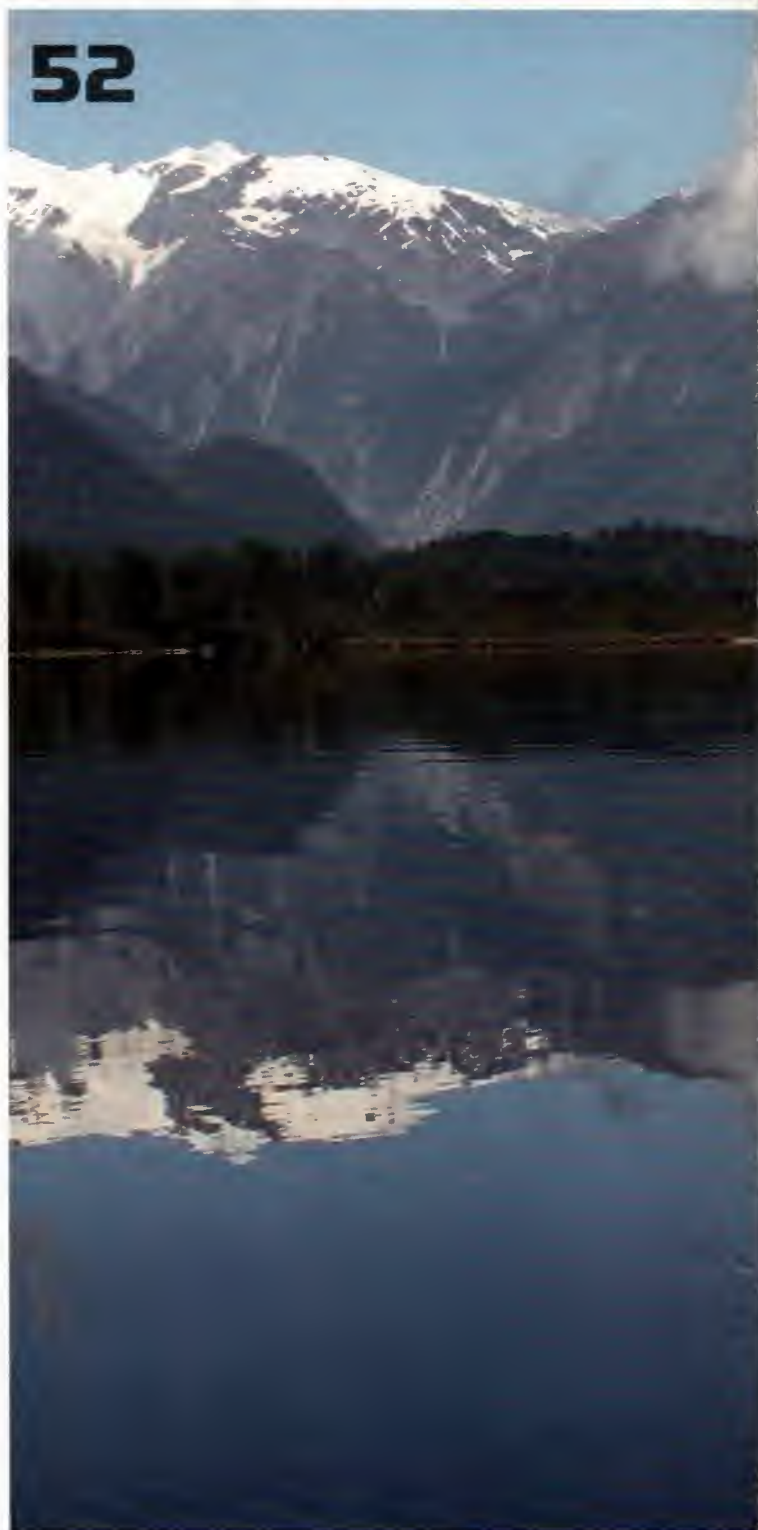
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Canoes & kayaks can take you to some amazing places.
Image by Pete Surtees





AE Photos

GET ON THE WATER AT THE 2013 CANOE SLALOM SELECTION EVENT

The 2013 Canoe Slalom Selection event is a great opportunity to check out some of the country's best slalom paddlers as they battle it out for a place in this year's GB Canoe Slalom Team. As well as watching some fiercely competitive paddling action, the event will also provide you with the chance to get on the water yourself, whatever your level of ability. The Go Canoeing team will be running Starter Sessions throughout the two-day event. The 20-minute Starter Sessions are a perfect introduction to the sport and are suitable for all ages, from eight to 80. More experienced paddlers will be able to take part in a fun Slalom Challenge through the venue's flat-water gates while those wanting to stay firmly on dry land can put their paddling skills to the test in our canoe simulator challenge.

The 2013 Canoe Slalom Selection event takes place at Lee Valley White Water Centre in Hertfordshire on Saturday 27th April and Sunday 28th April 2013. Tickets to the event start from £7 for adults and £14 for a family ticket and all Go Canoeing activities are included in the cost of a ticket. Canoe England Members get discounted tickets prices too, just log on to the Members Area of the Canoe England website at www.canoe-england.org.uk and follow the Ticketmaster link.

For more information about the 2013 Canoe Slalom Selection event visit
<http://bit.ly/X3cDJA>

To book a place on a Starter Session, visit
www.gocanoeing.org.uk

PADDLESPORT MAKING OLYMPIC LEGACY WAVES

Canoeing and kayaking are the UK's most popular water sport with over 1.2million adults taking part in the activity each year. After last year's amazing year of sport, the public's imagination was captured by unforgettable moments including gold medal winning performances in canoe slalom and kayak sprint, inspiring even more people to take to the water with a paddle.

Paddling is a fun, unique family activity that everyone can enjoy, from budding future Olympians to those who simply want to take advantage of the best that Britain's waterways and coastline have to offer.

As you'll already be aware the BCU and Canoe England is focused on growing the number of people who regularly take part in our sport and 'Go Canoeing' was launched last spring with the aim of increasing participation, with great success. The programme was also awarded the coveted London 2012 Inspiremark.

As part of the legacy programme, canoeing and kayaking was delivered at the specially created live site events prior to the start of the Olympics in eleven cities across England, as well as at the School Games. The Canoe England participation team also ran organised opportunities for the general public to try canoeing and kayaking every day of the Olympic competition at Eton Dorney, Lee Valley and at Weymouth (at a Go Canoeing event site).

As a direct result of the London 2012 Olympic Games and the BCU and Canoe England's activities, the following was achieved; 35,000 new people were introduced to paddling in the lead up to and during games time. 22,000 people searched for a canoe club on the Canoe England website, a four times increase in numbers of people searching for local canoe clubs and a five times increase in website traffic (compared with non Olympic traffic). 60,000 spectators attended Lee Valley White Water Centre over five days. 100,000 spectators attended Eton Dorney for the canoe sprint over five days. 2.9 million people tuned in to watch the 200m finals, 4.5 million viewers for canoe slalom repeat of C2 final runs. Since the games there has also been a progression of plans for a new Olympic legacy canoe club to be built on the Canoe Slalom Olympic venue, the Lee Valley White Water Centre.

The BCU and Canoe England are committed to building on these achievements to deliver with commitment and focus; increased, regular participation and Olympic and Paralympic medal success at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

To help us on that journey, we continue to regularly undertake research and analyse customer insight, which in turn will be invaluable and equip us to respond to changing market and customer needs effectively.

Forthcoming international events to be hosted by the BCU include: The ICF 2013 Canoe Slalom World Cup at Cardiff International White Water Centre and the ICF 2015 Canoe Slalom World Championships at Lee Valley White Water Centre.



AE Photos

SUE BROOKS 1955 - 2013

It is with great sadness and regret that we inform the paddling community of the loss of Sue Brooks. Many of you will know Sue by the use of her name in Sue's Canoes of Watton in Norfolk, too many others as the better half of the tandem open canoe crew with husband Tony on their many trips around the country with the Camping Club, and lastly as mother to Richard and Caroline Brooks.

Sue sadly lost her four year battle against cancer on the 22nd January, and typically she gave instructions that no black should be worn at the funeral, bright colours only, and any car with a roof rack on MUST be carrying a kayak or canoe. Needless to say there were one or two funny looks from the public with the car park overflowing with canoes and kayaks of all

descriptions proudly on display, and of course the blow up bright green crocodile! Bet that gave Sue a little chuckle.



NORTHWEST AND CENTRAL CANOE POLO COMMITTEE

A new regional canoe polo committee is currently being formed around the NWC Canoe Polo Leagues, which were set up by Manchester Wildcatz Canoe Polo Club last year. The intention is that this committee will take ownership and manage these leagues before expanding its mandate to a wider regional development role, similar to CE Regional Development teams but focusing exclusively on Canoe Polo.

If your club falls within the catchment area for the league and you are interested in volunteering and having a real impact on the growth and development of canoe polo in your region then please contact Niall at club@manchesterwildcatz.co.uk

YOUTH CHANNEL

Maia Wallace-Loizou, 13, from Enfield has become the youngest girl ever to kayak across the English Channel.

Together with Dylan Barber-May, 15, from Hackney, the pair paddled 20-miles in 4-hours and 15-minutes. They undertook the challenge to raise money for Leaside, a youth charity in Hackney, which they both attend. After coming ashore in France after their impressive journey Dylan said: "I'm feeling good. It was challenging, but more mentally than physically and I enjoyed it. We did it!"

Maia gave a similarly modest response as she finished her record-breaking paddle, "It was alright up until near the end, but we kept going and luckily the sea was nice and still for us."

Here at Canoe FOCUS we think that Maia and Dylan are inspirational and a real example to other young people. If you'd like to show them your support visit www.justgiving.com/channelcrossing13



YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS

News From Your Region

SOUTH

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SEES HUNSTON CC RETURN TO THE WATER

Last October Hunston Canoe Club, based in Chichester, suffered a break in with all of their club's equipment being stolen. Owing to the fact that this small club is focused on engaging with young people within the local community, they received fantastic support and the response from the community was incredible.

In order to get the club paddling again the community raised funds in a variety of ways. This included a couple of local bands operating a fund raising gig in the village hall (a kind of Hunston Canoe Club Live Aid!), the village

shop running a raffle, a couple of local charities who were aware about the activities the club run gave some quite big donations, along with the police and various other private donations making up the rest.

This has enabled the club to purchase their new equipment, delivered in February, just in time for the club's pool sessions at the Regis School, Bognor, in March! The boathouse has also been repaired fitted out with further security measures to prevent this ever happening again.

Hunston CC is very grateful to every one for all of the support they have received.

THE BIG BEACH CLEAN

As part of this years Go Canoeing week Wadebridge Canoe Club in association with Clean Cornwall is planning a beach clean. Wadebridge CC is hoping, weather permitting, to clean one of the inaccessible beaches close to home on the North Cornwall Coast. Sue Gordon who is organising the event told FOCUS, "We have carried out clean ups twice yearly in spring and autumn on local estuaries and rivers, but fancied something a bit different this year, during our paddles we have come across inaccessible beaches, which could definitely do with a clean-up. We thought, let's do

something about it and so was hatched the idea of a beach clean, which we are going to do during the Go Canoeing week in May. We are talking to the RNLI and National Trust and developing a relationship with them, which has to be good for the sport".

If you are a club or group and would like to get involved in organising your own clean up then please do get in touch with Sue and the guys and gals at Wadebridge CC and they will be happy help point you in the right direction, just email chair@wadebridgecanoeclub.org

4 KAYAKS CHARITY CHALLENGE

Chris Brown-Martin, Matt Retter, Chris Lake and Steve Carter are planning a fundraising paddling challenge with a difference this August. When the four paddlers will cover 300miles in two weeks to raise money for four Charities. The challenge will finish with a mass paddle along the Exeter Canal on the Bank Holiday Saturday, on the 24th August.

The charities in question are the Devon Air Ambulance Trust, Cornwall Air Ambulance Trust, Surf Life Saving GB and Alpha1 Awareness UK.

So here's a little background on the four intrepid kayakers involved. Chris Brown-Martin would be the first to say that life is for living and he always lives life to the full, more often than not doing so at a fast and furious pace! Yet in 2008 a devastating fire changed things for Chris and he either had to make changes in his own life or face worsening health, and potential disability. Chris says that the George Hotel burning to the ground 'saved' his life. Having always thought he was asthmatic the smoke inhalation caused more problems than expected, and a subsequent blood test confirmed that Chris has Alpha1 Antitrypsin

Deficiency, a genetic condition potentially causing lung and liver conditions. A chest X-ray showed up the start of emphysemic changes.

So, at the age of 26 Chris was faced with life changing news, he was almost certainly facing deteriorating lung and liver function, disability

and, potentially, premature death. So Chris chose life! Taking on board the diagnosis, which cannot be cured, he now looks after his health, his lungs, his liver, and at the same time is still able to enjoy life to the full, and still at that fast and furious pace at times! Because Chris's feels e was 'saved' by that fateful fire he wants to help save others, this year for the four chosen charities, which he feels are vital to the local communities in Devon and Cornwall.

Matt Retter loves any sport, any challenge, and as a close friend of Chris is joining him in this charity challenge.

For Chris Lake this is a challenge that he has really wanted to be a part for some time, for many years Chris was an outdoor pursuits instructor, with kayaking being his preferred activity. Unfortunately this career was ended early in 2002 after a car crash left him with muscle damage to the lower and middle part of his back, being sat in a kayak for more than 20-minutes would cause a huge amount of discomfort, but Chris's determination will see him back in a kayak for the challenge ahead.

And finally to the final member of the team Steve Carter. Steve loves adventure but has spent the last decade raising young children, so has had limited chance to indulge his passion! He now feels that with the children being older there is more time available, so at the tender age of 41 he wants to spend time pushing his limits on this beautiful earth whilst giving something back.

If you want to know more then check out the web site www.southwestkayakcharitychallenge.co.uk/ and like the team's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/SouthWestKayakCharityChallenge and of course they'd like see you on the Exeter Ship Canal on the 24th August!



WOKINGHAM CANOE CLUB BID FAREWELL TO A RETIRING COACH

Wokingham Canoe Club have recently said good bye and thank you to one of their much loved coaches, Brian Kelly, who has very reluctantly decided to retire as a coach and from paddlesport. Brian has made numerous friends in our sport and has certainly enjoyed his active kayaking life, coaching young people and seeing them progress well, of which was evident on Sunday 17th February. Brian's friends, family and club colleagues, young and old, gathered to present him with a variety of gifts as a thank you for his support and enthusiasm as a coach and friend. Brian was also awarded a 'Services to Paddlesport' Award and Pin Badge for his years of service as a coach and



volunteer, as well as being the first ever Wokingham Canoe Club member to be given an Honorary Life Membership. Canoe England would also like to thank Brian for his services and wish him well for the future.

CENTRAL

CAMPING, CARAVANNING AND CANOEING!

Visitors to the spring Camping and Caravan show at the NEC in Birmingham were offered the chance to try their hand at kayaking on a special giant indoor paddling pool! Run by the Leamington

Spa & Warwick based Canoe and Kayak Trader, around 120 people a day got their chance to take to the water in a kayak as well as in giant inflatable hamster wheels! The activity proved to be hugely popular with young and old alike, showing that canoeing really is a family sport.

BCU-UKCC Qualifications



Just a selection of the many BCU-UKCC Courses on offer at Plas y Brenin in 2013

BCU-UKCC Performance & Leadership Award Courses

White Water Kayak

- 3 Star Training & Assessment 11-15 Mar, 15-19 Apr, 3-7 Jun, 19-23 Aug,
30 Sep-4 Oct, 11-15 Nov £460
- 4 Star Training 05-06 Oct, 16-17 Nov £240
- 4 Star Assessment 07-08 Sep £240

Sea Kayak

- 4 Star Training (inc. Nav & Tidal) 05-07 Jul, 06-08 Sep £360
- 4 Star Assessment 07-08 Sep, 26-27 Oct £240

Canoe

- 4 Star Training 31 Aug-01 Sep, 21-22 Sep £240
- 4 Star Assessment 17-18 Aug, 26-27 Oct £240

BCU-UKCC Paddlesport Coach Courses

- Level 1 Coach 01-05 Apr, 27-31 May, 01-05 Jul, 19-23 Aug, 23-27 Sep £510
- Level 2 Coach Training 22-26 Apr, 13-17 May, 08-12 Jul, 16-20 Sep, 04-08 Nov £510
- Level 2 Coach Assessment 03 May, 14 Jun, 27 Sep £105
- Level 3 Coach Generic Core 25 Feb-01 Mar, 18-22 Mar, 9-13 Sep £450
- Level 3 Coach Training WW Kayak 09-10 May, 15-16 Jun £325
- Level 3 Coach Assessment WW Kayak... 28 Oct, 09 Nov £185
- Level 3 Coach Training Sea Kayak 27-28 Apr, 24-25 Aug £325
- Level 3 Coach Assessment Sea Kayak... 11 May £185
- Level 3 Coach Training Canoe 06-07 May, 10-11 Aug £325
- Level 3 Coach Assessment Canoe 10 May, 9 Nov £185

Further dates and courses are available on our website.

For more information on any of these courses, drop us an email or give us a call



PLAS Y BRENNIN

www.pyb.co.uk/bcu

Why not consider a complete package for your four star. Over five days complete your training plus any other mandatory elements such as BCU White Water Safety & Rescue or BCU Coastal Navigation & Tidal Planning Module plus you'll get to consolidate your skills, gain further feedback from our experienced instructors so you'll leave with an action plan towards assessment. These courses are £505 including accommodation, meals, boat and equipment hire.

These packages are also available for five star again at £505 including accommodation, meals, boat and equipment hire.

Also, Foundation and Intermediate Coaching Modules, Level 2 Transfer Training, Level 2 Moderate Water plus a full range of safety courses including Rescue 3.



BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS RACE TO TRY CANOEING

Schools from all over Birmingham attended School Games events at venues across the city at the Winter School Games event. At the Futsal Arena pupils got the chance to try out canoeing, for many of them it was their first time.

Around 150 young people attempted a 20m challenge, with some fast scores being recorded and plenty of talent on show for the future!

POTTERIES PADDLERS PERFECT POOL SLALOM EVENT

In early February, Potteries Paddlers based in Stoke held their first indoors slalom event at Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre. Organiser and club paddler Mike Fennall used his initiative to devise gates from his canoeing equipment, using canoe poles in half sections, some twine, a weight and a bit of foam pipe insulation!

The club thoroughly enjoyed the event and are already planning their next! There are lots of fun ways to try slalom at your club and use it to add interest to your club sessions. Canoe England's Cross Stream Challenge resource is just one way to help spark your imagination!

CHESHIRE RING

Now in its 36th year, the 2013 Cheshire Ring Race will be held over the weekend of 29/30th of June 2013. The route follows canals north from near Poynton in rural Cheshire, through the centre of Manchester, passing both the Manchester City and Manchester United grounds, before heading south to Kids Grove in Staffordshire, and then returning north to Poynton.

If you have done the training for other events such as Devizes to Westminster why not put all those hours to use by taking on this challenge? Described by Stuart West, the K1 all the way record holder (15h 27m, set in 2011), as "possibly the hardest K1 race in the UK", the event covers 96-miles, takes in 92 locks,

WINTER COUNTY SCHOOL GAMES & SHROPSHIRE PADDLESPOUT CLUB

2012 Club of the Year runners up Shropshire Paddlesport recently gave hundreds of young people the opportunity to try canoeing in an RAF hanger in Shropshire as part of Winter School Games event. Organized by Energize Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin County Sport Partnership, the two days were attended by over 1400 pupils from secondary and primary schools across the county.

The two days of competition were opened by 2012 Olympic athlete, Kelly Edwards (Judo) and six-time Olympic archer, Alison Williamson MBE. Representing Shropshire Paddlesport was club secretary Bob Batts and coach Adam Bowles. Equipped with four ergo paddling machines they challenged the young people to record the fastest time over 100m.

Over the two days, around 450 children had a go on the ergos and it was no surprise that the

CHILTERN CANOE CLUB SET TO GROW

Chiltern Canoe Club are proud to announce that they have been awarded a Sport England grant, which has enabled them to grow the club and offer far more for local paddlers.

After an excellent first year, setting up the children's classes and having the huge boost of winning Best Newcomers Club by Herts Sports Partnership, the children's classes were progressing nicely, but we could only cater for adults with their own equipment. Part of the grant was used to buy adult sized kayaks, paddles and buoyancy aids to attract adults into the sport, and classes quickly filled when advertised locally.

The grant also enabled the club to invest in a box trailer that will allow us to take members out and about to a variety of paddling locations. Imminent trips include taking a group to our local slalom Div 4 competition, monthly river paddles and a trip to the coast to try out some sea kayaking. There's a good contingent of volunteer helpers in the club, with most of them wanting to progress to become BCU trained coaches. The final aspect of the grant was to fund the coaching of these individuals, which will enable the club to offer more courses and be more sustainable.

If anyone is interested in joining the Chiltern Canoe Club as it expands into its second year please contact Cathy Court at chilterncanoeclub@gmail.com

and portages three tunnels. The K2 all the way record set by Peter and Lee Howson (17 h 13m) in 2009 provides an alternative challenge. Past competitors have included Macclesfield swimming club, who taught themselves to paddle an Ardeche tourer in order to take part, so people don't need to feel they have to be a whizz in a racing boat.

Details are available from the Macclesfield and District CC website - madcc.btck.co.uk/Entries are possible in a wide range of classes as all the way attempts or as relay teams in K1, K2, open canoes or touring kayaks. We look forward to seeing some new faces at this year's race and the setting of some new records.

canoeing challenge came top in a survey of the most popular activities! Despite being exhausted by the end, Bob was pleased with how it all went saying, "It was a long hard day, but at the same time really enjoyable to see the pupils enjoying the challenge in a sport that most had never taken part in. The pupils were queuing up around the hall waiting to have a go!"

Adam also saw the event as a hugely positive experience "This was a great way for us to introduce the pupils to paddle sport and it allowed us to talk directly with the teachers all under one roof".

School Games are a fantastic way to introduce young people to paddlesport and create links with schools from your local area. If your club or centre wants to be involved in your local School Games then contact your Regional Development Officer / Engagement Officer for more information

BOXING DAY PADDLE 2012

The Durham to Finchale Boxing Day paddle on the River Wear is a mass participation event, comprising a seven mile race and cruise with a history going back over 50 years. It's an impressive sight to see the masses charge off together, which is well received by the passing general public.

Fifty-one paddlers raced with many more following for a tour down the river. Nicky Cresser of Tees Tigers was first boat home for the second year in succession. Other notable performances came from 13-year old Connor Turner and 14-year old Ben Teasdale who have been putting in lots of hard training under Nicky's guidance. Peter Jackson and Ian Simon made a fine pairing to be the lead Canadian Double just ahead of the first lady Hannah Bailey.

Mike Mason has been taking part in this event for a couple of decades - it's one of his essential 'festive period' traditions that he hopes will always continue. The event raised £235 for St Cuthbert's Hospice, an incredibly worthwhile cause that makes it doubly appreciative how lucky we are, to be able to do such a fabulous activity.

Thanks to all that attended and the volunteers. Get the date in your diary for an even bigger and better anniversary event next year and the annual Conex Canoe Race on May Day Bank Holiday 6th May.



PARTICIPATION THROUGH CANOE POLO

Wigan Canoe Group based at Scotsmans Flash, Wigan, Greater Manchester, have recently put together a polo team consisting of some of the younger members of the club and through meeting Dave Cook the Canoe England North West Paddlesport Development Officer who signposted them to the organiser of the North West and Central league they now happily play in that. Below is a brief summary of the day, which was written by one of the young people who attend the event.

Canoe Polo by Maya-ray Cross – 11-years old

I went to a Polo Training day at Scotsmans Flash where Wigan Canoe Group meets up. It started at 10 o'clock in the classroom where it was nice and warm. Dave brought with him an Ergo machine, I was a bit nervous about going on it at first but after everyone had a try I went on too, even some of the parents had a try. Dave explained to us the benefit of sitting up straight when paddling.

We then had races and tried to beat our own best times. I improved by about 3-seconds on my second go.

Dave had his laptop wired up to the white board and he went through the polo rules, hand signals, what's illegal and what's not. We watched a clip of a polo game and talked about what the referees were doing right and wrong. He also talked about different jobs people had at polo matches. We went on to do lots about tactics and boat positions in the pool. We then had dinner!

We went back to the classroom to do some more on defence, I was desperate to get on to the water, to have a play and practice our defence. We had to wait ages because people kept asking questions. We learned a lot though!

Finally we got on the water and practiced defending and shooting, we tried hard to give the formations a go. We would have liked to have been on the water a bit longer but really enjoyed what we did.

NORFOLK CLUBS SWAP DISCIPLINES FOR A DAY

Part of Clubmark encourages clubs to develop links with other clubs in a way that is mutually beneficial to both. Tim Scott, on hearing that several young paddlers from Dereham Canoe Group were interested in trying racing kayaks invited them over for a session on Little Whitlingham Broad, at Norwich Canoe Club. The DCG members had a brilliant time and really liked having a go in these craft, which were very different from what they were used to. No one fell in, and there were smiles all-round.

To reciprocate, Dereham offered the opportunity for some of the younger Norwich paddlers, to paddle the white water at Swanton Morley. The river has been running very high all winter, and could be a little intimidating for anyone not use to moving water. Not the lads and lass from Norwich, they got stuck in and were soon surfing the wave like they did it every weekend. Unfortunately, this did not remain a dry session, as two of them found out about edging when crossing the flow the hard way, there should have been a third, but Oli pushed

the Pyranha Karnali to the limits of its secondary stability, surviving a lean upstream in a most impressive fashion.

Both clubs have benefited from the swapping of their core specialist skills, taking their paddlers outside of their normal comfort zones, having fun, and giving them the appreciation that it does not matter what type of kayak you chose to paddle, many of the skills are transferable across the disciplines.



NEW PADDLING ADVENTURES ON WINDERMERE

There is nowhere better in Britain for paddling than the Lake District, Cumbria. It all boils down to a number of things, stunningly beautiful mountainous landscapes and a good amount of rainfall, which means that the lakes, rivers and coastline have something to offer all year round, whether it's challenging white water paddling or simply enjoying the peace and tranquillity of the area there is something for every ability.

The potential in the Lake District for anyone wanting to take to the water in either a canoe or a kayak is immense. Those in the know have been enjoying the area's flat and moving water for many years, but for those new to paddle sports then the range of possibilities can be as daunting as they are inspiring.

The Adventure Capital Team have worked with staff from the Lake District National Park Authority and Canoe England to devise a selection of easy and challenging routes around England's longest lake, Windermere.

There are four different routes that can be followed. Three of these are in the northern half of the lake, and

start from Brockhole, The Lake District Visitor Centre, Red Nab on the western shore of Windermere and Ferry Nab near Bowness on Windermere. There is also an opportunity to go south from Fell Foot Park towards Newby Bridge.

Windermere, England's longest lake, offers a whole host of paddling opportunities no matter how experienced you are. Sara Spicer, Park Management Ranger for the Lake District National Park Authority told FOCUS, "our new leaflet is designed to give you a taste of what you can expect when you take to this beautiful body of water, and is a good way for both beginners and those with experience to explore Windermere from a different view point." Gareth Field from Canoe England added "The routes give opportunities for paddlers of all ability to get involved and Go Canoeing. We hope this will increase opportunities for canoeing for locals and tourists on Windermere".

For further information about paddle sports in the Lake District, Cumbria please visit www.golakes.co.uk/adventure-capital/on-water.aspx

M.A.D. PADDLERS

2012 saw the formation of a brand new canoe club based in South Yorkshire. M.A.D. Paddlers. The name reflects the fact that the majority of members are from the former mining area of Maltby and Dearne. The club

established a base at Hemsworth Water Park with the help of Hemsworth Council and hosted training sessions every Tuesday evening before the nights drew in when they moved the sessions to Sunday mornings followed by Sunday lunch at the cafe on site. Numerous fun

events have been organised by the club including a 'Water Olympics' where chocolate medals were awarded to the winning athletes.

The club runs trips on Saturdays exploring the local rivers and canals as well as the occasional trip further a field for the more adventurous members. The club has now recently affiliated to Canoe England and has just agreed plans with the council to expand the number of sessions at Hemsworth to two per week during the summer months of 2013.

For more information contact: madpaddlers@yahoo.co.uk



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GB Canoeing Canoe Slalom Selection Trials 2013

Lee Valley White
Water Centre

Saturday 27 and
Sunday 28 April 2013

You saw them at the London 2012 Games and now the best British athletes will be racing at the Olympic Canoe Slalom Venue for their place on the 2013 GB Canoeing Team. Two days of racing will be held at the state of the art Olympic Canoe Slalom venue at Lee Valley White Water Centre in Hertfordshire Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th April 2013.

Tickets are now on sale and are limited - don't miss out on what promises to be an action packed weekend!

BUY your tickets now at www.gbcanoeing.org.uk
For information email events@bcu.org.uk



Family Paddling Trips

THE FOCUS GUIDE TO THE KIT NEEDED FOR SOME FANTASTIC FAMILY FUN ON THE WATER

Canoeing & kayaking are fantastic activities to do as a family. Whether it's playing at the beach or exploring inland water ways, it's fun and exciting.

BOATS

You can get afloat in any type of canoe or kayak but tandem Sit-On-Top kayaks (SOTs) and open canoes are particularly well suited for families, especially if you have smaller children with you. Both offer very stable platforms and user-friendly performance. If you're planning a paddle at the coast then an SOT is ideal for playing in the waves or exploring the coastline. On rivers and lakes a SOT is still great, but the carrying capacity of a canoe makes it a great choice. Load it up with kids, dog, and picnic and away you go.

BUOYANCY AIDS

Again basic models are fine, although a pocket or two on the adult's BA's can be useful for storing essential stuff like sun-cream, lip balm, tissues, Mars bars etc. The important thing is that the buoyancy aid should fit the wearer properly and not ride up in the event of a swim. Many child buoyancy aids have collars to make sure that the wearer floats face up if they fall in. For younger children models are available that also have under-the-leg straps to make sure it stays in place.

BASE LAYERS

A good thermal base layer will help keep you toasty when it's cold, and cooler when it's hot, it wicks moisture away from your skin through its material. These are usually made from manmade fibres or natural materials like wool. Avoid cotton as it stays wet, doesn't wick and will keep you cold if it gets wet. If it's really cold then a fleece layer will seal the deal and keep you toasty even on the chilliest of days.

DRY-BAG

A lightweight, mid-sized dry bag is great for stowing a few extra items of clothing in and for carrying the essential flask, juice and sarnies.

PADDLING TOP

A paddle-top or cag, as they are often known, is an outer shell that keeps the elements out. These are worn over the top of your thermal layers and wetsuit. Cags come in as many versions as there are paddling disciplines but a basic cag will usually be made of a waterproof and breathable material and will have neoprene cuffs and neck to keep the spray out.

HATS

It's always a good idea to have hat along on a paddling trip, especially for the nippers. A nice woolly hat is great if it's chilly and something with a brim or peak to protect your head from the sun if it's warm.





WETSUITS

When you're learning you're going to find yourself taking the occasional dip so a wetsuit, made from insulating neoprene rubber is a good idea. They can be good for kids, because, well they like to get extra wet! A long-john version, with no arms, is ideal for canoeing and kayaking as it gives more manoeuvrability. If you're paddling a SOT kayak on the sea though you may want to opt for a full version.

FOOTWEAR

There are some very good paddling shoes on the market and a good pair of neoprene booties is a good idea, but an old pair of trainers, or a decent pair of sports sandals will also do the job. You need something that will stay on your feet if you fall in, you can swim in and that you don't mind getting wet!

WHISTLE

For emergencies a lightweight plastic, pea-less version will do the trick. Usually carried in the buoyancy aid.

PADDLES

Basic paddles are fine and most modern designs are tough and durable. And for the smaller members of your crew there are also a number of smaller child specific kayak and canoe paddles available these days.



Peter Wells

Get Involved With National Go Canoeing Week 2013

National Go Canoeing Week 2012 was a great success and seeing so many happy, smiling faces involved in our wonderful sport has made us even more determined to make this year's event even bigger and better.

We want more boats on the water, more beginners having their first taste of canoeing and kayaking and more experienced paddlers doing what they love – getting out on the water and having fun!

Our fantastic festival of paddling will run from 18th-26th May and there are plenty of ways to get involved – the easiest is to visit our website, www.gocanoeing.org.uk, and find an activity or event happening near you.

The list of events and activities is growing by the week and we already have Starter Sessions running at clubs across the country, as well as larger mass-participation events organised in partnership with our friends at industry heavyweights Pyranha and Palm Equipment.

Even if none of our fabulous events or activities tickle your fancy, you can still get involved in National Go Canoeing Week. Let the week be your excuse to go paddling and just get out there and have fun!

It could be a family paddle on your local stretch of river, an organised tour around some of Britain's stunning coastline or an overnight, canoe camping

expedition with friends. Whatever it is you love about our fabulous sport, why not take some time out during National Go Canoeing Week and reignite your passion for paddling?

We also want as many canoe clubs and centres as possible to get involved and it doesn't matter what you organise – just as long as it gets bums in boats. Starter Sessions and open days are a great way to attract new members to your club or, for your existing members, you could put on a race day, a river clean up, a special club trip or maybe just a mass paddle to see how many boats you can get out on the water

GUIDED TOURS

With the winter months behind us and with spring now in full swing there is no better time to head off on a canoeing adventure. And whether you're an absolute beginner or an experienced paddler, Go Canoeing's Guided Tours offer you a great way to explore new places, meet like-minded people and escape the daily grind.

Our tours are led by specially trained Go Canoeing Tour Guides, who are passionate about sharing their love of canoeing and their knowledge of local sights, history and wildlife.



Peter Wells



Peter Wells

PHOTO COMPETITION WIN £100



Whatever you do to celebrate National Go Canoeing Week 2013, why not get snappy and take part in our fabulous photo competition? A trip in a canoe or kayak can give you a fresh or unexpected perspective on familiar scenery or provide you with the perfect opportunity to explore new places.

The Go Canoeing team would love to see your 'View from a Canoe' snaps and at the end of National Go Canoeing Week the image judged to be the best boat's-eye-view photo will win a £100 voucher for retailer Cotswold Outdoors.

We're also offering a handful of lucky paddlers the chance to get out on the water with an Olympic Athlete. To be in with a chance of winning a place on the session – or one of our other fabulous prizes – all you have to do is sign up the Go Canoeing mailing list between now and the end of May.

For more information visit www.gocanoeing.org.uk and head to our National Go Canoeing Week page. And don't forget to let us know what you've got planned for the week by emailing jonathan.schofield@gocanoeing.org.uk or visiting our Facebook page - www.facebook.com/GoCanoeing

Whether it's enjoying the calm waters of the Exeter Ship Canal or taking in the industrial history of Salford Quays, our tours are chock full of interesting things to see and will provide you with a great paddling experience.

Tours will be held at the following locations:

- York City Centre Tour, York – Saturday April 13th, Sunday May 5th
- Liverpool's Albert Dock Tour, Liverpool – Sunday April 21st
- Salford Quays Tour, Greater Manchester – Saturday April 20th, Saturday May 11th
- Exeter Canal Tour, Devon – Sunday April 14th, Saturday May 4th
- Windsor to Datchet Tour, Windsor – Saturday April 27th

“We want more boats on the water, more beginners having their first taste of canoeing and kayaking and more experienced paddlers doing what they love – getting out on the water and having fun!”



NGCW - Edale Starter Session

USEFUL INFO

New tour dates and venues will be added regularly so keep checking www.gocanoeing.org.uk for more information.



Nutrition plays a major role in reaching your full potential as a paddler. Image by Antony Edwards

Making the Most of Meals & Recovery

NUTRITION TIPS FROM THE TOP

The English Institute of Sport's (EIS) Head of Performance Nutrition, Dr Kevin Currell, shares some of the strategies that kayakers and canoeists might use in their nutrition planning and recovery. Dr Currell worked with the GB Canoeing squad for a number of years as part of the EIS's support team working with the BCU.

Nutrition around training is a key component of a paddler's day-to-day life. If you get your nutrition right it can enhance recovery, decrease the chances of illness or injury and ultimately enhance your performance. The right foods at the right time will enhance the adaptation to training by providing the right nutrients for the body to adapt.

WHAT SHOULD A PLATE OF FOOD LOOK LIKE?

A plate of food or a meal should contain all of the ingredients that are key to performance. A meal should consist of roughly the following.

- One Third Fuel Foods: for a paddler this should primarily be carbohydrate based foods, with some good fats included too
- One Third Function Foods: the major food contained in the function group is protein. Once again a good fat source is needed along with some quality fruit and vegetables.
- One Third Health Foods: fill up a third of the plate with vegetables and/or salad to make sure the appropriate nutrients are in place to support the paddlers' health. There should be a source of good fats throughout – these are not only a fuel but are key to your bodies' function and health.

COMMON MEAL MISTAKES

Meal	What is Good?	What is Missing?	How to improve the meal
Porridge & Milk	Good source of slow release carbohydrate	Increase protein, good fat and antioxidants	Add some chopped nuts and blueberries
Pasta with tomato sauce	Excellent carbohydrate source	Increase protein, food fat and antioxidants	Add vegetables to the sauce and grilled salmon
Wafer thin ham white bread sandwich	Ok carbohydrate source, with some protein	Increase protein, good fat and antioxidants	Change the ham to tuna and the white bread to wholemeal. Add some yoghurt with blueberries as a small dessert
Chicken Salad	Good protein and antioxidant source	Increase fat and carbohydrate	Add olives to the salad and include some cous-cous
Margherita Pizza	Good carbohydrate	Increase protein, good fat and antioxidants	Add chicken to the pizza along with some more vegetables. Have a side salad with an olive oil dressing

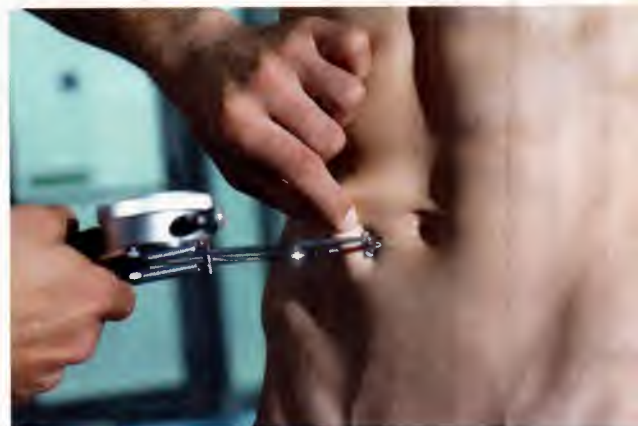
What does a day's diet look like and why should a paddler do this and what nutrients are key? The below table tried to answer this question and give you the basics...

Time	Key Process	Key Nutrients	Example
Breakfast	Fuel	Slow Release Carbohydrate Protein Good Fats Antioxidants	Porridge with ground almond, cinnamon and dark chocolate
After water session	Recover	Protein Carbohydrates Fluid Antioxidants	Glass of milk & berries
Lunch	Recover	Protein Antioxidants Slow Release Carbohydrates Good Fats	Tuna salad with olive oil dressing and wholemeal bread
Pre Gym	Adapt	Protein Antioxidants	Cottage Cheese, Blueberries & toast
Post Gym	Recover	Protein Carbohydrate	Glass of milk
Dinner	Recover	Protein Good Fats Slow Release Carbohydrates Antioxidants	Chicken with tomato and vegetable sauce, brown rice and olive oil
Pre Bed	Adapt	Protein	Yoghurt

How do I maximise recovery after a tough session or long paddle? Whilst the majority of us might not train as much as Britain's top competitive canoeists and kayakers, it's still important that quality food is taken in at the right time after paddling to maximise and speed up recovery where needed. This process is particularly useful after hard on water training sessions.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER TRAINING

Key Nutrients	Food Examples
Protein: helps to repair the muscle quickly and effectively. Proteins are the building blocks of the muscle	500m Science in Sport REGO 1 pint of milk
Antioxidants: helps the body to cope with the stress put on the body	500ml Science in Sport Build & a banana
Carbohydrate: Provide the fuel for the muscles to repair themselves	Peanut butter sandwiches & bottle of water



“A plate of food or a meal should contain all of the ingredients that are key to performance.”

FOOD WITHIN ONE HOUR

Key Nutrients	Food Examples
Protein: the second hit of key amino acids maximises recovery.	Handful of nuts & dried berries
Good Fats: continue to support the immune system in the recovery phase.	Build bar & handful of blueberries
Antioxidants: promote the bodies recovery from the stress of training	Small tub of olives & feta cheese Glass of cherry juice, berry yoghurt & nuts

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY FOODS

Avoid foods that cause inflammation immediately after training, choose anti-inflammatory foods.

Foods which cause inflammation	Anti-inflammatory foods
Foods high in saturated fats	Fish
Cakes & pastries	Fruit – especially berries
Crisps	Vegetables
Chocolate	Nuts & Seeds
Butter	Wholemeal pasta, bread & rice
Cream	Porridge
Sausages	Spices
Pies	Herbs
Sweets	Olive oil
Chips	Dark chocolate

USEFUL INFO

The English Institute of Sport (EIS) works across Olympic, Paralympic & Professional sports to deliver performance solutions in areas of sport science, medicine, technology and engineering to elite athletes. For more information, updates and recipes visit www.eis2win.co.uk





A PEMBROKESHIRE SEA KAYAKING ADVENTURE

A Journey to Smalls

Lighthouses feature greatly in sea kayakers lives; they provide a navigation light at night and impressive structures to photograph in the day. I had never seen a photograph of a sea kayak at the Smalls Lighthouse, not surprising really as it the most isolated of all the Trinity Lighthouses. Located on the farthest of the Pembrokeshire islands from the mainland, sea kayaking to the Smalls had been on my 'to do' list for a while. At twenty-one miles offshore and maybe only fifty square metres visible at high water, it was a small target to find. Getting there would involve navigating the infamous Bishops and Clerks as well as up to four knot tides around the Smalls themselves. Only Stuart Yendle volunteered to join me, he's been wanting to cross the Irish Sea by sea kayak so this was an ideal warm up trip for him.

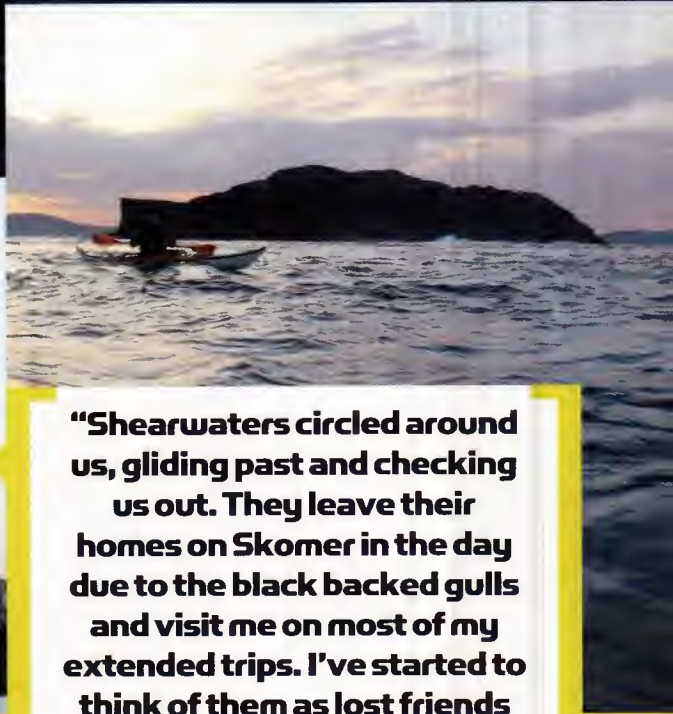


The plan was simple; we worked out the tides, distance and time we'd need to arrive. It was pretty much head west from Whitesands on the ebb tide to the Smalls to arrive a little before slack water. Wait for the tide to turn and then come back up on the flood by heading east again. The forecast suggested that we could expect force three to four easterly winds between 1000 and 1300, otherwise less than force three. The sea state was forecast to pick up to slight to moderate around the same time. We calculated around four each way, although this would be more for the journey back due to the headwind expected; also we were leaving at the start of the flood and by the time we would arrive at Ramsey the tide at St. David's Head would be getting ready to ebb again.

EARLY DOORS & LOST FRIENDS

We were up early Friday morning, needing to catch the tide from St. David's Head at 6am. The streetlights outside my house were still off when we left and the sun was still sleeping when we arrived at Whitesands Bay. The Bishops and Clerks were rising mysteriously from the misty waters on the horizon across and the light from South Bishop cast it's eye towards us every five seconds. It was a beautiful morning as we packed our sea kayaks and readied ourselves for this committing trip.

We confirmed our plans with the coastguard before we left the bay and headed off towards the Bishops, the sun rising behind us above St. David's Head a little while later. Shearwaters circled around us, gliding



“Shearwaters circled around us, gliding past and checking us out. They leave their homes on Skomer in the day due to the black backed gulls and visit me on most of my extended trips. I’ve started to think of them as lost friends keeping an eye out for me. It’s these moments that help me to realise why I love sea kayaking so much.”

Article & images by Mike Mayberry

Lighthouse

past and checking us out. They leave their homes on Skomer in the day due to the black backed gulls and visit me on most of my extended trips. I’ve started to think of them as lost friends keeping an eye out for me. It’s these moments that help me to realise why I love sea kayaking so much.

We reached South Bishop lighthouse before the hour; the three-knot tide helping us through the islands quickly and by the time of our first break St. David’s Head was a long way behind us. The sea was almost mirror smooth with no sign yet of the wind.

RICH HISTORY & A GRISLY TALE

By the time of our second break we were well out to sea and St. David’s Head was almost gone from view. The Smalls Lighthouse was only just visible on the horizon. We had a couple of dolphins pass us by but typically they didn’t resurface once we had our cameras ready. Porpoise also made a brief appearance during the trip out.

Another hour and we were now able to make out the colour of the lighthouse. We knew that we were going

to easily hit our target and were able to see how small the reef really was. It only took us another half hour to reach the lighthouse and we were able to get the photographs I’d talked about getting for so long.

The reef was covered in seals and gulls, none of whom seemed particularly bothered by our arrival. We didn’t want to land as this is their home and we are only guests; we discussed heading east on the last of the ebb tide to try and take in Grassholm as well but around the other side we found some steps and no seals so we took the opportunity to stretch our legs instead.

The original Smalls lighthouse consisted of an octagonal timber house supported by a top of nine pillars spaced around a central timber post. It was 66ft tall, was built at Solva and taken whole to the rock for assembly. Although it had been designed to allow the waves to pass through the structure it suffered considerable damage, underwent continual maintenance and was eventually replaced by the current tower in 1961. The remains of this original lighthouse built in 1776 are still there today. ▶

In 1801 there was an awful tragedy at the Smalls Lighthouse. At that time Tom Howells and Tom Griffiths were the keepers. They were known to dislike one another and arguments were common. Usually the keepers were changed after a month but due to bad weather and storms, no boats could reach them. They were together for four months on the lighthouse and one evening, following a row, Tom Griffiths collapsed and died of a head injury. Tom Howells, concerned that people would think he'd murdered him if he followed the traditional sea burial, made a make shift coffin and tied it to the railings of the balcony. Passing ships logged a 'strange object' but never raised an alarm.

Relief boats to the lighthouse were still being hampered by the weather and the coffin was smashed by the storms resulting in the corpse hanging across the balcony with an arm caught in the railings. By

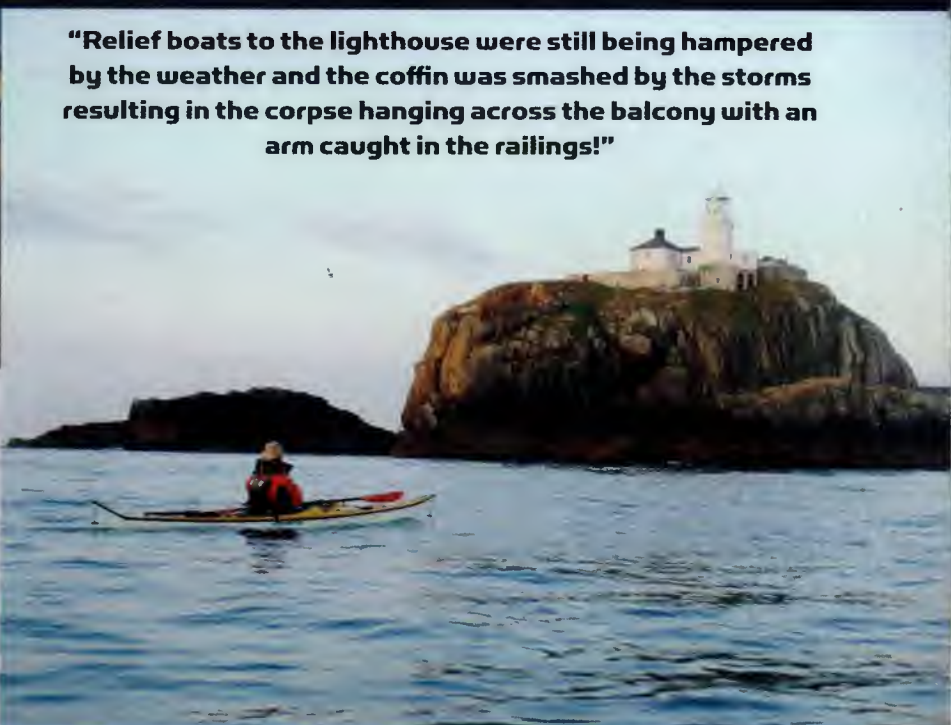
the time boats were able to reach the lighthouse Tom Howells had gone mad through loneliness and terror. It was following this incident that three keepers were assigned to every lighthouse until they were all automated in 1998.

THE RETURN

As we were getting ready to launch again we could hear a dive boat approaching. Once we were on the water someone was frantically waving so we went over. I think Stuart was surprised we had seen anybody this far offshore and even more so when it turned out to be someone I knew! It was Tom and Lou Luddington from the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group.

Heading back to the Pembrokeshire mainland was a little more tricky than getting out there. We were leaving at the start of the flood and by the

“Relief boats to the lighthouse were still being hampered by the weather and the coffin was smashed by the storms resulting in the corpse hanging across the balcony with an arm caught in the railings!”



time we would arrive at the Bishops and the Clerks we would be catching the last of the tide there. Add to this the easterly wind in our face now and progress was much slower.

It seemed to take an age for Ramsey Island to appear on the horizon, the wind costing us 25% of our usual progress. We hadn't decided which side of Ramsey Island we would pass. I hoped that we could make it across to pass through the sound, as a quick surf at the Bitches would have made a great end to the trip. The headwind eased again after two hours but it had already had enough of an effect on us to mean that we would be passing Ramsey to the west, once again travelling through the Bishops and Clerks, no great loss!

We arrived at South Bishop lighthouse an hour before the tide across to the mainland would turn against us

and had easy conditions to navigate our sea kayaks through the Bishops and Clerks waters.

Once back safely in Whitesands Bay we called in to the coastguard and looked out for Martyn Armstrong who said he'd meet us with a floating flotilla. He was nowhere to be seen but then we were an hour later than we'd told him. The wind cost us half an hour and Stuart's bladder (!) had cost us the same. He really was in great pain with it, something he's learned for his next crossing, hopefully.

We headed towards the beach, full of tourists that were utilising almost every inch of available beach space. To our right a creek boat's occupant was paddling hard and trying to attract our attention, it was Martyn. He'd heard us call in to the coastguard and launched to meet us, great timing, as he was able to get the only photos of the two of us together on the trip.

NO SMALL ACHIEVEMENT!

As we hobbled up the beach at the Whitesands with the sea kayaks, we felt very overdressed and attracted a few strange looks; none of them aware that we'd navigated some of the UK's strongest tides to arrive at a destination twenty-one miles away and made it back safely too.

The navionics track of our route paddled exactly matched our plan and showed that we had sea kayaked a distance of 69.4km, been gone for over 11 hours, average speed 6.2km/h and maximum speed 14.5km/h.

We've since heard that the first successful sea kayaking trip to the Smalls Lighthouse was in 1984, led by Nigel Foster. He says that in the years following there were a few unsuccessful attempts. As far as we know, we are only the second people to sea kayak to the Smalls.

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Volunteer & Recognition Awards

incorporating the Canoe England Club and Centre of the Year Awards

Canoe England would like to celebrate the contribution of volunteers across the country. Help us to recognise volunteers in your region! All regional winners will be nominated for the Canoe England National Awards 2013 which will be celebrated at the national awards dinner later this year.

To make a nomination visit www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers

Closing Date: Friday 28th June 2013

- › Club of the Year
- › Centre of the Year
- › Young Volunteer
- › Event Volunteer
- › Community Volunteer
- › Waterways & Environment Volunteer
- › Impact on Disability Canoeing
- › Coach of the Year
- › Paddlepower Award
- › Education Award
- › Performance Coach
- › Outstanding Contribution



BCU LIFEGUARDS



Training Course Dates - Spring 2013

The BCU Lifeguards are once again running a programme of Swim Event Safety Award (SESA) courses around the UK throughout Spring. This award is aimed at paddlers who are providing safety cover at open water swim & triathlon events.

Courses are taking place in the following locations:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| - Berkshire | - Hastings | - Ipswich |
| - Plymouth | - Lake District | - Falmouth |
| - Milton Keynes | - Windsor | - Hertfordshire |
| - North London | - Suffolk | - Bristol |
| - South Yorkshire | - Salford | |

For further info or to book visit: www.bculifeguards.org.uk/SESA



The Trustees of Shadwell Basin Outdoor Activity Centre wish to appoint a

Centre Director

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We are a small voluntary organisation offering outdoor activities in the heart of Tower Hamlets, London, based on Shadwell Basin with access to the River Thames and providing opportunities for kayaking, sailing, canoeing, climbing, high ropes and mountain biking.

You will be an inspirational, enthusiastic and experienced leader of outdoor activities working with young people and adults. You will have proven organisational skills, fundraising experience, and have managed a staff team.

Closing date: Midday on 17th April 2013

For an application pack please contact information@shadwell-basin.org.uk

or

Shadwell Basin Outdoor Activity Centre
3-4 Shadwell Pierhead, Glamis Road, London E1W 3TD

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How to Get Involved in...

Surf Kayaking

Article & images by John Watson

The waves are rolling in all around the UK, and with summer just around the corner, there's never been a better time to give surf kayaking a go.

Getting started can be as simple as taking your sit-on-top to the beach and catching some small waves back to shore. If you're already a proficient kayaker, your boat skills will transfer to the surf, and once you're hooked you'll be tackling large powerful waves breaking onto reefs, which can challenge even the most experienced paddler.

HAVE A GO!

Your first surf kayaking experiences should be fun! The easiest way to make them fun is to ensure you are able to surf within your abilities. Start in the whitewater and get used to how the boat behaves on the wave. Keep surfing here until you can confidently turn the boat both left and right and surf a wave all the way to the beach staying upright. As your skills begin to grow, move further out to where the waves are breaking. Everything happens much faster out here! Watch what others are doing, and concentrate on keeping your boat under control, by using some simple rudders to keep you pointing in the right direction.

Whilst watching others, the reality is that you'll also see lots of mistakes and total wipeouts! If you're trying things out, it's likely this will be your experience too, so be ready with a confident roll and a sense of humour.

There are plenty of kayaks you can get experience in first. Playboats and some river running kayaks have a flat mid-section to the hull and an edge, which can grip in the wave. They are enough for hours of fun and to learn the surf environment.

Have a go! It can be easy and fun for everyone. Or it can be a lifetime of searching for the perfect ride.

BE SAFE

Start easy. A wide, flat beach, waves gently rolling in, no wind, and preferably a lifeguard. Have a chat with the lifeguard, learn what the flags mean and choose a

quieter section of beach. In the early stages, you may not always be in full control of your kayak as it's swept to the beach. Have in mind that your kayak is a hard, heavy missile, and it's your responsibility to make sure it's not sweeping through swimmers playing in the surf.

As you learn the surf skills, you'll also need to learn about the coastal environment. Effects of wind and tides, rip currents, the shape of sandbanks which form the waves, swell pattern, swell period, and forecasts are all significant factors in choosing when and where is safe and most fun to go.

On the water, surf etiquette is all about making a safe environment for you and those around you. The surfer (whatever the surf craft) nearest the pocket of the wave has the right of way. If you're unsure, back off, there's another wave behind. When you're paddling out, be prepared to hit the white water rather than cut across someone surfing a wave. Learn how people surf and you'll see that the rules follow on from this. You can't really pick these up by trial and error, before you're at this stage, find and learn the etiquette.

Remember surf always looks ok from the shore, and bigger when you're out there!

Choose the places, conditions and times that suit you. Surf within your limits and you'll have lots of fun.

TRY A SURF KAYAK

Paddling a river, creek or play boat in the surf is like using the same boat in a sprint race, you'll be working hard, you'll have the boat at its limits, you'll make it from the break-line to the beach, but performance will be mediocre and you won't be flying!

What difference will a specialist surf kayak make? All the difference! Just look at the surfboards on the beach, sharp rails, thruster fins, gentle entry rocker, flat hull shape with no stern rocker, perhaps with a subtle v-section towards the tail - they were designed for the waves. So try a kayak designed for the waves! As you get used to it, you'll find you can move it around

more and really surf the wave. You'll catch waves you couldn't before, carving a deep bottom-turn, carrying your speed along the wave, cut-back, slash and carve in and around the power-pocket (where the wave breaks and releases its energy). Never mind the technical terms, what I mean is that by using a specialist surf kayak, you'll take a huge step up in increasing your awareness and skills. Increase your awareness and skills and it's a whole lot more fun – and that's what most of us paddlers are in it for! You too?

A word of caution for the early stages, don't be put off by the first surf kayak you try. Just like settling in to a slalom, sprint or polo boat for the first time, it does require a reasonable level of general boat skills to start with to get anywhere at all, and you may need a good roll or you'll find yourself unseated! The surf kayaks do vary too, so try several designs if you can. Generally, a longer boat with fins will be a little easier to surf and catch more waves (which really helps when surf conditions are poor), whilst a modern short boat will offer high performance and the most radical turns for those with the skills to match. It's not that one model is better than the other, find the one that suits and fits you best.

Most surf kayaks are composite construction, a combination of glassfibre, carbon and kevlar. This makes sense because they are lighter, stiffer and consequently faster and more responsive than anything in plastic. The price is not much different from many plastic boats too, so they are good value. Modern composite materials are very tough and the boats survive some hard use and abuse from the top paddlers, and you shouldn't be hitting rocks too often! Again, have a look at the surfboards on the beach, most are glass and just a few are foam or plastic for the occasional users.

The world's best surf kayaks are made here in the UK. More people ride Mega Surf Kayaks worldwide than any other make. Valley have a real heritage in surf kayaking too and have launched a new range in recent years. Future Kayaks is newer on the scene, building a reputation for quality custom products. Some manufacturers have the option of a plastic model too.

LEARN THE SKILLS

Visit www.surfkayakskills.com - It's free, it's easily accessible on the web, it's written by BCU level 5 coach Glyn Brackenbury, and it's simply the clearest description of learning skills in the surf environment you'll find. If you like what you see, use it well, go and practice! The aim of the website is to offer a free resource to increase people's awareness and skills in the surf. If you want to, donate to help the England Team's competition expenses, but there's no obligation.

Two books, which lead the way are 'Surf Kayaking' by Simon Hammond and 'Kayak Surfing' by Bill Mattos, two different angles, each excellent in their own way.

Qualified coaches can introduce you to the surf and help build your confidence and skills. However, access to surf boats and the experience to make the most of them are few and far between. Glyn Brackenbury at Skern Lodge and Simon Hammond at Shoreline are two competition champions who offer surf coaching and a demo fleet too. ►





WHAT HAPPENS AT A COMPETITION?

We hope you'll find everyone friendly and welcoming, like happens at most kayaking events. Most of the riders you see screaming along the wave, slashing huge spray and busting aerials were newcomers not long ago too. They like to share their enthusiasm and knowledge, they like hanging out on the beach with people who enjoy their sport.

The competition is arranged in heats of four kayakers competing against each other. The heat lasts 15 or 20 minutes, you take 10 scoring waves maximum and your top 2 wave-scores count. Each surfer wears a different coloured bib so the judges can tell them apart. The judges score on quality of ride, including take-off, turns and positioning on the wave. Length of ride will mean more time to get turns in. The top two surfers proceed to the next round, but there should be Reps to ensure everyone gets another competitive heat and chance to progress.

There are two categories of boat. Short Boat is less than 2.75m in length, and can include fins, this category is often still called HP, or High Performance, and has developed without restriction to become the most dynamic form of modern-day surf kayaking. Long Boat is 3m or over, no fins allowed – this category has its roots in the original slalom and general purpose kayakers used in the early days, and is still sometimes called the International class.

In each boat category, there is a class for Open (or Men), for Ladies, Junior and Master. Juniors are 18 or under, Masters are over 40. At a competition, generally each person can enter a maximum of two classes for which they qualify – this is so the heats, timing and judging can run easily.

At local events, competitors often take turns to judge each other, with newcomers learning alongside the more experienced. This is a good way to see people surfing and develop your own awareness and skills. The bigger events employ judges, so surfers have more time for competition preparation and the beach social.

Entry is direct to the organiser in advance. A Thursday evening phone-in confirms the event is on and the meeting place, or to find out if it has been postponed. BCU membership gives you liability insurance, or be prepared to buy temporary membership on the day. How a competition day runs does depend on numbers entered and changing surf conditions, so things can change during the day. Keep in touch with what's going on, and appreciate the event organiser and helpers are volunteers and probably want to surf too!

WHY COMPETE?

To improve your surfing. The main benefit is getting together with like-minded people. You'll surf alongside some of the best in the world, and you'll spend time with people on the beach, seeing how surfers are riding and planning what you'll be trying next time out. You'll leave the weekend with plenty to work on and inspired to get better. Surfing better equals more fun, more often. And if you happen to like the competition element too, then that's a bonus.

ARE BRITISH SURF KAYAKERS ANY GOOD?

Both Ladies' World Champions are England riders – Tamsin Green in Short boat and Emma Wynter in Long boat. Men's World Champion Chris Hobson and Junior World Champion Andy McClelland are both from Northern Ireland. Paddlers from all the home nations regularly feature in finals at international events.

There's a team event at the World Championships too. England were World Champions in 2009, came 2nd in 2011 and will be aiming to retain their title in Australia this summer. Jersey were World Champions on the west coast USA in earlier years.

HOW IS SURF KAYAKING ORGANIZED?

It's organised by volunteers, and each of the home nations would welcome a few more! Perhaps it's because surfing isn't often arranged through clubs, or because you don't need to get a team together, or arrange shuttles along a riverbank, or perhaps it's because surfers are spread out along the coasts and simply go and surf. For whatever reason, you may find websites slow to update – but you don't need them to surf! We appreciate the people that bring the events together, and assure you an enjoyable day if you join an event.

AND HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

See the panel below with the website links.

But most of all - go out and surf! You'll learn something new each time - surf conditions change, you'll have good days and different days. One day, you'll have sunshine and blue skies, sharing perfect surf with friends before riding your last wave in at sunset.

Enjoy getting there! **CF**

Have a go! It can be easy and fun for everyone. Or it can be a lifetime of searching for the perfect ride.

USEFUL INFO

- Worldwide news: www.kayaksurf.net
- Free tips and coaching: www.surfkayakskills.com
- Surf forecast: www.magicseaweed.com
- Subscribe to England competition updates: john@skernlodge.co.uk

AROUND THE HOME NATIONS:

- www.englandsurfkayak.org.uk
- [welshsurfkayak.co.uk](http://www.welshsurfkayak.co.uk)
- www.nisurfkayak.com
- www.paddlesurf.ie
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www.aswatersports.co.uk

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www.mortonboats.co.uk

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01752 892672

www.canoe-shops.co.uk

TISO

01415 595454

www.tiso.com



8 Brilliant UK Canoe Trips

SOME GREAT IDEAS FOR PLACES TO PADDLE YOUR CANOE THIS SPRING AND SUMMER ...

Spring is finally with us and with its arrival comes the air of opportunity, to make use of the lengthening days and hopefully improving mood of Mother Nature to get out on the water in our canoes. Britain has some truly fantastic rivers and lakes, ideal for open canoeing adventures, so we've put together a Canoe FOCUS guide to eight of the best open canoe trips around, to help you spend less time planning and more time paddling your canoe!



1. RIVER COUQUET (NORTH EAST)

Starting at Amble Harbour, this trip offers a chance to picnic en-route (weather permitting) whilst enjoying the wonderful scenery that Northumberland has to offer.

From The Braid, the river takes you upstream for about a mile with Warkworth Castle (once a stronghold of the Percy's of Northumberland, including Shakespeare's Harry Hotspur) firmly in your sights. You paddle under two bridges – a beautiful old bridge complete with tollgate, and its modern replacement!

An access ramp can be used just after the ancient church and it's worth stopping off to visit the local Warkworth pubs, patisserie and cafes too.

Carrying on upstream, over a small weir and past the rowing boats and you'll find some steps leading to the Hermitage, carved out of the sandstone rock; a beautiful English Heritage property, which can be visited when the warden is present.

2. LAKE WINDERMERE (NORTH WEST)

Windermere, being England's longest lake, gives a great paddle for paddlers of all abilities.

The complete trip, 11.2 miles, of the lake is a great paddle, with great places to stop and explore.

The usual starting point is either at Newby Bridge with a paddle up the river, or start at Fell Foot Country Park where there is great parking and lake access. Explore up either coast, passing the Aquarium of the Lakes. Keep an eye open for the big ferries that cruise the lake. Rawlinson Nab is a great rest point as you go from the south basin into the northern basin. As you pass past the car ferry at Ferry Nab be aware of the cable that the ferry runs along. Bowness is another great stopping point, especially for ice cream! From here you have the choice of sides to explore up. Follow the west coast for more seclusion and solitude till you get to Wray Castle and then the great campsite there. Or follow the east coast, dreaming of owning one of the exclusive homes on the lakeshore or one of the 'Gin Palaces'. On the east coast Brockholes is a great stop for tea and cake, or a play on the playground there if you are paddling with your family.

Whichever side you head up, as you near the top of the lake aim for Waterhead where there is great lakeside parking and egress. Please be aware of the Ferries at Waterhead.

Details of shorter Windermere trips can be found on the Lake District National Park website – www.lakedistrict.gov.uk

“Kids, large and small, will love exploring this wonderful island which has a real ‘Swallows and Amazons’ feel to it.”

Enjoying some moving water sport on the Couquet. Pic by Phil Scowcroft

3. DERWENTWATER (NORTH)

Derwentwater is one of the prettiest lakes in England and deservedly popular for canoeing. It's 5km long, so just the right size to explore in a day. There are lots of beautiful bays and islands and it is surrounded by magnificent mountain scenery. No permits are needed and there is easy launching and parking at Kettlewell N.T. car park.

One of the best paddles is a circular trip from here. Set off north, following the shore to the split rock sculpture – the N.T. Centennial Stone. Then, from here, head across the lake to St Herbert's Island - Kids, large and small, will love exploring this wonderful island which has a real 'Swallows and Amazons' feel to it. Next head to Otterbiel Island and then follow the shore southwards to the N.T. 'Hands' sculpture, and then back to Kettlewell.

For full information and a super map buy the A3 size Derwentwater Canoeing Guide from www.bcushop.org.uk. (Bargain at just 20p!) Or download it at www.gocanoeing.org.uk

4. RIVER SEVERN (THE MIDLANDS)

A paddle in the Midlands is not complete without a trip through the Worcestershire countryside! This trip along the River Severn can be broken into two halves, if required.

Going from Areley, starting from the National Trust (home to the last water-powered ferry on the river!) you paddle along this wonderful unspoilt river, with just enough moving water to keep you busy. Best paddled in a dry spell, the river offers farmland and wooded hillside scenery throughout.

The second half is no less delightful. After a mile, you find the magnificent Victoria Bridge (try to time yourself so a steam train passes over it!) before reaching Eyemore Rapids, the last natural rapid on the river.

Afterwards, the river settles down to a slower pace, going under the classic Birmingham Waterworks Aqueduct and later, as you pass between the massive piers of the Old Dowles Bridge, you see the picturesque sights of Bewdley.

5. RIVER NENE (EAST)

The River Nene is a gentle touring river, flowing some 88 miles from Northampton to the Wash. It passes through Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, giving beautifully contrasting views of the east of England.

A journey along its length will take you through flood meadows, banked and wooded uplands, the industrial areas of Wellingborough and Irthlingborough and many picturesque stone villages. The river becomes tidal at Peterborough and is confined by embankments to protect the Fens.

Originally, the navigation was commercial but is now almost exclusively used for recreation, linking the Grand Union Canal via the Middle Level to the sea.

Not surprisingly, the canoeist will meet numerous canal boats but there are also many side weirs and relief channels which can be explored by the adventurous paddler. Access points to the river are frequent (some giving the opportunity for circular paddles) making the river also a joy for the touring kayak paddler as well as open canoeists. ▶

Heading out to explore Derwentwater.





“Paddle along this wonderful unspoilt river, with just enough moving water to keep you busy.”



6. RIVER THAMES; HAMPTON COURT TO RICHMOND BRIDGE (LONDON)

This is a beautiful trip along the River Thames, with lots to see en-route, from historic landmarks, a mixture of landscapes and activity on the water.

Beginning at Garrick's Ait in Hampton, almost immediately Garrick's Temple can be spotted from the bank. Passing through Taggs Island and Molesey Lock and you'll see the majestic towers of Hampton Court Palace emerge – a magnificent view, made all the better when seen from the water!

Round Hampton Court Park, under Kingston Bridge and through Teddington (look out for Royal Canoe Club – the world's oldest canoe club!) you pass by the Pope's Villa; built on the original site of the poet's mansion, his famous grotto is open to the public.

Finishing in Petersham in Richmond, you will just catch the landscape of Richmond Hill and the local Star and Garter Home, for disabled ex-service men and women, set behind Petersham Meadows.

7. RIVER CHELMER (SOUTH)

In today's fast paced society, escaping it all in a canoe can prove the perfect antidote to the stress of modern day living. And where better, than Essex?

Within a mile of leaving Chelmsford on the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation, you are surrounded by the peace and tranquillity of the Essex countryside; a place few people visit, unless they have access to the water.

You can go as far as Heybridge Basin, a challenging 14-mile paddle, with eleven locks, and then shuttle back to Chelmsford, or base your trip from either Paper Mill Lock or Hoe Mill Lock, and gently paddle out and back in either direction to soak in the peace, escaping the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

8. KENNET AND AVON CANAL (SOUTH WEST)

This canal trip passes through beautiful countryside and small villages, commencing at the highest point of the Kennet and Avon Canal, which crosses from Reading to Bristol.

The canal gives views of many narrow boats, locks, aqueducts and landscapes, with a level towpath to either walk or cycle along. Many paddlers know the stretch from Devizes to London, through taking part in the annual Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race, run every year since the 1960s.

The trip starts at the famous Crofton Beam Engine Pumping Station near to the canal and the villages of Great Bedwyn, Hungerford and Froxfeild all follow; each with an array of stunning scenery, flowers, birds and other wildlife.

Look out too for the historic 11th century Bedwyn Church, with embattlements around the tower and the Bedwyn Stone Museum, home to stone carvings, tombstones, statues and even a dinosaur footprint! **CF**





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USEFUL INFO

All these trips are Canoe England and Go Canoeing recommended Canoe Trails. For further information visit www.canoe-england.org.uk

Have you paddled one of these rivers? Why not share your photos on the Canoe England Facebook page? <http://on.fb.me/XL80Gu>



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Paddle For Good

HOW IT ALL STARTED



Who could have known that a light hearted conversation between two colleagues just over five years ago would lead to a considerable amount of cash being raised, by paddle, foot and wheel, for some very worthy charities?



No one is more surprised by the success of Paddle for Good (PFG) than the originator of the idea, treasurer and events organiser Mick Child. He recalls "I'd never thought about kayaking before, in fact, I fell into the trap of believing that a kayak was a canoe and vice versa. I was talking to a colleague about what sort of adventure would be suitable for a forty something and he came up with the idea of kayaking from Wales to Ireland." Ironically, this is one adventure that Mick hasn't yet realised.

Rowing had been part of Mick's life from a very early age with his dad being a keen oarsman. He started coxing at the age of seven and progressed to rowing when he was fourteen. At fifteen he learnt to windsurf so it's fair to say that water sports are very much in his blood. His better half Hayley has always enjoyed a challenge too, having been a gymnast, successful trampolinist and county netball player as well as having a degree in sports science. So whilst she had extreme reservations about a Wales to Ireland crossing, she was happy to join him in learning to kayak.

LEARNING THE BASICS

Living on the Cambridgeshire/Lincolnshire border in 2007, Mick and Hayley learnt of some classes being run at Bourne swimming pool. The beginners' class was full, but instructor Richard Maycock was good enough to allow them to join the seniors' session for a taster. It worked well for Mick and Hayley who were stretched and coached by the experienced paddlers and Richard agreed to let them attend this session every week.

In the summer of 2008 Mick and Hayley moved to Bedford and reluctantly left behind the friendly coaching in Bourne. They were more confident in their paddling having learnt many safety rescue techniques and could confidently control a boat on flat water. Their son George was now six years old and they were keen to include him in the sport. They owned a Dagger Approach and invested in a Perception Vista as a stable platform for Mick and George to get out on the water. They still own the latter, which they use for paddling with their two-year old-daughter Izzy.

FIRST CHARITY EXPERIENCE

In July 2009 Mick and Hayley joined a group of people who were paddling the River Nene between Northampton and Peterborough in aid of prostate cancer. "Hayley and I had been regularly paddling between 7 and 10 miles with our son and fancied a challenge. The charity event, under the banner Paddle 4 Shaw, gave the opportunity to enter a shorter 22-mile section between Oundle and Peterborough and this suited us just fine. We paddled our Vista over the distance in about seven hours. I remember looking at some of the other boats participating; a wafer thin patched up racing canoe paddled by a husband and wife in their sixties, playboats, fibreglass canoes that belonged in a museum and one guy even completed the 22-miles in a huge inflatable canoe. I remember his paddle being way too small and the wind kept spinning him in circles. This guy never gave up and finished in about eight hours; he could hardly walk - an inspiration!" ▶



CATCHING THE CHARITY BUG

Soon after their first taste of charity paddling Mick and Hayley started to plan a non-stop event of their own. In aid of Help for Heroes they intended to paddle their Vista the full distance between Northampton and Peterborough, a distance of 57-miles. To take place in June 2010, Mick soon found himself looking for another partner due to Hayley falling pregnant. Whilst she paddled right up until the birth of their daughter, 20 hours in a boat and the portaging of 36 locks was not the most advisable pursuit for someone seven months gone. So Mick approached Thomas Fitzgerald, now landlord of the Bedford Arms in Bedford who had given Mick the inspiration to kayak with his Wales to Ireland idea. Tom jumped at the chance and they soon started training together. They were joined by Michael Prosperino and Dan Jenkin and completed the distance in just over 20 hours.

VIKING KAYAK CLUB

With Mick and Hayley's son George now seven years old and rapidly catching the paddling bug they approached Viking Kayak Club in March 2010 with a view to him getting on the Paddle Power programme. They joined the club as family members and in April George started the course. Within an hour on the water, despite being far too small for the club's Dagger Dynamo, coach Colin Parlett had him paddling in a straight line.

The members of Viking Kayak Club have always been very supportive of the charity work that Mick undertakes and have helped with additional safety tips and knowledge. It was too late to include VKC members in the Northampton to Peterborough event, however VKC Chairman Rob Bates was keen for the club to be involved. With 2011 approaching VKC was about to celebrate its 50th Anniversary.

Mick, Rob and a few others got their heads together and agreed that a Bedford to Ely charity event would be appropriate to mark this special year. Mick was keen to formalise the fundraising efforts to help maximise their financial potential, and started looking for a suitable name. At first the 'Stream Team' was a favourite, however this was used by many IT companies and a website wasn't possible, so Paddle for Good it became. A website was established and a fundraising organisation set up with Mick acting as Treasurer and Events Organiser, Hayley as Secretary, and colleague and paddling friend Michael Prosperino taking on the role of Chairman. All of their time is provided on a 100% voluntary basis.

Bedford to Ely 2011 proved very successful with the team raising lots of money for RNLI and Cancer Research UK. A presentation was held with RNLI at the Horton and Port Eynon station.



“Paddle for Good is not about individuals, it is about teamwork and giving something back to the community whilst demonstrating to the wider world that paddlers are considerate and care about the environment within which they compete, relax and generally enjoy themselves.”

“This sense of achievability means that those who have children, work long hours and suffer from expanding waist bands, can brush the dust off their paddles, remove the spiders from their upside down boat at the bottom of the garden, and do their bit to raise money for charity while pushing themselves towards a sporting goal.”



GIVING IT A REST

2012 brought with it PFG's Wedding Dress Ball at Bedford Rugby Club in February, and this event proved so time consuming and stressful that Mick promised Hayley that he would not organise any further events in 2012. "Then came spring and friends Steve Corrin, Will Flaherty and Gary Hall were to trek Kilimanjaro", Mick recalls. "I suggested to Hayley that perhaps if I could get a company interested in donating £2,000 to our supported charity," 2012 saw PFG supporting the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. "Then it would be worth my while paddling 60-miles on a circuit in Bedford town centre." She agreed that this might be a good idea. "I drummed up some interest at work," Mick smiles, "then as usual it all got a bit out of control and before we knew where we were I had a team walking three mountains in Wales, another cycling 105-miles at St Albans and a group of us paddling 60-miles in Bedford!"

Mick's aspiration of raising £2,000 was far exceeded and to celebrate, in December PFG organised a presentation at Rushmoor School, Bedford. Olympic canoe slalom gold medallist Etienne Stott handed a cheque on behalf of PFG to the Cystic Fibrosis Trust for the value of £8,258, and a further cheque from Network Rail in recognition of the event for £1,200 to Action for Children.

WALES TO THE WASH 2013

So looking to the summer this year, on the weekend of 28th June to 1st July PFG will be staging their most ambitious project to date. Wales to the Wash is a relay that will include kayaking and canoeing at its core, but will also include mountain bikes, road racing cycles, marathon running, a children's walk and a 38-mile trek. The kayaking aspect will include whitewater (Tryweryn), touring (Warwick to Milton Keynes) and racing kayaks from Hermitage Lock to Kings Lynn in Norfolk. Fundraising will be in support of the British Lung Foundation and Cavernoma Alliance UK.

£23,000 SO FAR

Paddle for Good continues to be run by this small group of volunteers helped by a growing number of further volunteers that participate and assist with each event. They have embraced our sport and used it as a platform to raise more than £23,000 for good causes since 2010. This sense of achievability means that those who have children, work long hours and suffer from expanding waist bands, can brush the dust off their paddles, remove the spiders from their upside down boat at the bottom of the garden, and do their bit to raise money for charity while pushing themselves towards a sporting goal.

Paddle for Good is not about individuals, it is about teamwork and giving something back to the community whilst demonstrating to the wider world that paddlers are considerate and care about the environment within which they compete, relax and generally enjoy themselves. **CF**



Report by Sam Barry,
Photos by Glenn Summerbell

CANOE POLO

YOUTH OF TODAY - TEAM GB OF TOMORROW

With a fantastic year of sport behind us it is more important than ever to look forward to the future of canoeing at all levels of participation.

Canoe Polo is one of the fastest growing water sports in the world today. The BCU Canoe Polo Committee is trying to increase participation in Canoe Polo at the very youngest level. Over the last two years we have seen a decline in youth players taking part in National League. We believe that this could be for two reasons. Firstly, the introduction of some excellent local leagues around the country and secondly, teams not realising that National League Youth Polo is there for all teams of any ability.

The first step we took was to run a Youth National League fixture in November 2012. This was well attended with 40 aspirational U18 players being coached by experienced coaches including Team GB players; at the end of the coaching sessions games were played to allow the players to try out some of

the new skills that they had learnt. This successful youth polo event received positive feedback from players, coaches and parents alike with the chance to 'interact with others' and 'opportunity to develop skills with experts' being the most common remarks.

This season the focus is on Youth Polo with the hope that we can attract enough interest to develop a two-tier Youth League in the following seasons. After the success of the November event, the BCU Canoe Polo Committee is keen to hold more events using a similar format. An outdoor venue has also been suggested to host a youth development day in 2013.

As a paddling community it is important for us to focus on younger paddlers as they are the Team GB of tomorrow or, in the case of our U21 squads, the Team GB of today. As you may have seen in October's issue of Canoe Focus our Under 21 men's team won silver at the 2012 Canoe Polo World Championships with



2016 CANOE POLO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

As you may have read in previous issues the BCU has won the bid to host the Canoe Polo World Championships in 2016 on the Serpentine in Hyde Park for event details see

www.canoepololondon2016.com/ or follow us on Twitter @FundraisingCPWC for our updates.

many of the team having participated in the youth league for many years. It is vital to remember that the canoe polo youth league can be a natural progression for paddlers into the GB squads with the chance to meet players of similar ages and abilities. By the same token there are many youth players who simply enjoy playing Canoe Polo at a lesser level and are content not to take that step up to GB. There is a place for all levels of youth players in National League.

Just as this year's GB podium team have risen up the ranks from youth league we can look forward to 2016 with the thought that this years youth players could be standing on the podium in 2016. Just take a moment to imagine that.

Any player or team interested in attending one of the forthcoming youth fixtures please email: Sam Barry sam.barry@canoepolo.org.uk or Jane Borrett treasurer@canoepolo.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE FOR EVENT ORGANISERS AND CLUBS IN ENGLAND

A reminder to all event organisers, for events where individual Canoe England (or CW, SCA, CANI) membership is required, for participants who are not members that a day/event ticket must be given and that the details of the individual purchasing it must be recorded and sent to the Canoe England office along with the correct payment (£5 per person per event). If there is a claim after the event the individual is not insured unless their details have been logged with Canoe England.

In addition for those intending to race on a day/event ticket where a licence for the waterway is required, the individual would need to also provide proof of a navigation licence for the waterway, or waterways, in question, as a day/event ticket does not include any canal/river licence. Scottish Canoe Association members are not part of the licensing agreement that Canoe England and Canoe Wales are part of; so for events in England, SCA members will need to purchase the appropriate licences from the navigation authority for that particular waterway this includes when taking part in races south of the border.

We have been informed by the Canal and River Trust and the EA, that in future they will be conducting more frequent checks on river licences – failure to have a current licence would result in a large fine. Any competitor competing on a day/event ticket is not entitled to any national ranking points/entitlements – only participation in that event. A competitor may not use a day ticket/event licence to participate in more than three races per year.

The forms to be used for the Canoe England day ticket/event ticket can be found at www.canoe-england.org.uk/about/policies-resources-and-information/ For further information please contact events@bcu.org.uk

VOLUNTEERS

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

The Canoe England Long Service Award can be submitted throughout the year and recognises the long standing contribution of volunteers who have committed 25 years or more to Paddlesport regardless of their role - from coaches and committee members to those behind the scenes making the tea or repairing equipment.

Nominations will be accepted from the volunteer themselves or from someone on their behalf and will be considered against their contribution to the sport and the frequency of their volunteering over the 25 years. All volunteers receiving this award will join the roll of honour and be presented with their Long Service lapel pin badge. Download an application form from the Volunteer section at the Canoe England website.

CANOE ENGLAND VOLUNTEER & RECOGNITION AWARDS

After the Regional Volunteer Awards and the hugely successful Canoe England National Volunteer and Recognition Awards 2012, nominations are now open for consideration in the Regional Awards 2013. Winners of a regional award automatically get considered for a national award so download a nomination form from the volunteer section of the Canoe England website and get nominating your favourite Canoe England volunteers.

PADDLESPTS REWARDS SCHEME

The Paddlesport Reward Scheme has had a makeover! It has a new look log book and new rewards. The scheme recognises the hours that dedicated volunteers of all ages across the country are giving to our sport and recognises when 25 hours (bronze), 50 hours (silver) and 100 hours (gold) are reached. Download the registration form from the Volunteers section of the Canoe England website to register and start working towards receiving your free gifts and certificates.

[RIVERS ACCESS CAMPAIGN]

THE TRIENNIAL REVIEW IN TO THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AND NATURAL ENGLAND

The Triennial review has concluded its first stage. The review has been designed to provide an opportunity to look at what functions the Environment Agency and Natural England (NE) carry out and how they do it. Its aim is to ensure that Defra has 'sufficiently strong and resilient delivery bodies to meet their environmental ambitions. It will also be used to explore innovative options for improvements in service delivery and efficiency.'

Canoe England completed the response form but has grave concerns about the process and the outcomes; nowhere was the issue of access and recreation covered either on land or water, and indeed nothing was highlighted about navigation. At the time of going to print, we are meeting Defra in March along with the RYA and BMF as water based bodies to further highlight our shared concerns.

Have Defra forgotten that millions of us use land and water for recreation, education and sporting activities? The government talks a lot about the need to get people active and that the legacy of the 2012 Olympics should be to 'inspire a generation' to take up sport and active pursuits... so how do people do it?

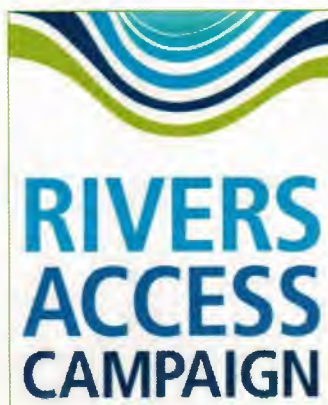
The recreational function of promoting the use of the outdoors on land and water (although set in statute for the EA) seems to have already significantly diminished in both of these organisations. It appears to have so diminished that recreation does not feature strongly in each organisation through staffing levels or indeed the information provided. This has been highlighted since the Countryside and Recreation Commission was absorbed in to NE some five or so years ago. The provision for recreation to take place in the natural environment should be a key function within the EA and NE or indeed the SEB, (Single Environmental Body) if one is set up.

There are several areas of overlap between NE and EA, which could benefit from some review. Occasionally the requirement of one organisation does contradict with the other and then the resolution of the information and advice can again be confused as to which organisation's duties take precedent, let alone how the obligations of both organisations can be met when this situation occurs. To reconcile this there need to be internal understanding of the issues and indeed the expertise to provide a clear definitive response.

As a sports governing body with a national remit our main area of concern is that of the functionality of EA and NE in terms of ensuring the recreational remit remains. The targets for participation, health benefits, social integration for example for CE are set by other government departments who have their own departmental targets to meet and these sometimes contradict with each other and cause confusion. In fact, the recreational remit within the Triennial Review for the organisations appears to only consider land (to a very small extent) and water-based or waterside recreation seems to have slid off the agenda.

The opportunity for the waterways and the possible uses of it must not be underestimated in terms of how they make a place and certainly shape the community and to provide rural growth. The opening up of a water-sports centre, waterways, museum or even waterside shop/cafe can bring significant benefits to any community. The waterways can provide the glue in communities and with careful planning can reinvigorate a community to not only get involved in keeping the waterways clean through volunteering, but as a wonderful and healthy place for recreation and sport.

Stage 1 completed and next activity is that DEFRA should publish the completed responses and later in the spring, we should know what the summary is and the potential outcomes are. Watch this space in future issues for more information.

**FEMALE FOCUS****5 MINUTES WITH...
Sprint & Marathon Racer
Leanne Brown**

I first got into canoeing... when I was 8-years old at Mayesbrook Park in Barking. I quickly progressed to racing and joined Barking and Dagenham Canoe Club and have carried on from there.

A typical day, for me, is... up at 5.45am for work, finish roughly at 2pm, train at 2.30pm till about 4pm and then train again at 6.30pm till about 8pm.

My best kayaking moment ever... there's a few, but being selected for the Junior Sprint World Championships in Hungary 2005 is probably the best closely followed by winning the European Cup in Milan with Louisa Sawers in K2.

My real guilty pleasure is... shopping I love buying clothes.

I'm scared of... spiders.

My ultimate goal in life is... to compete for Team GB in the Olympic Games!

This year I'm most looking forward to... competing and seeing how well I am going against the other GB girls and I hope to try and get selected for internationals.

To keep up to date with Leanne's paddling & racing follow Leanne Brown on Twitter @Leannekayak

Buy your tickets now
www.canoecardiff2013.com

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Cardiff International White Water

Olympic athletes
in action
in Cardiff



250 competitors, 38 Nations,
12 tonnes of water per second &
1 goal... to be world number one!

You saw them at the London Games,
now see the world's best athletes
compete to be world number one.

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www.canoecardiff2013.com 21-23 June 2013





GRANT DISTRIBUTION 2003 TO 2013

Between October 2003 and January 2013 the Canoe Foundation (CF) awarded £194,500 in grants to more than 150 projects throughout the UK and overseas as we continue to work towards our mission of 'positively changing lives through canoeing'.

Overall these projects have benefited some 35,000 individuals, but the Canoe Foundation wanted to go further than these headline figures and analyse the data collected from applications forms to assess the distribution and impact across each of the home nations and English regions as well as the types of organisations and projects benefiting from CF funding.

BREAKDOWN OF GRANTS AWARDED BY HOME NATION AND OVERSEAS

Although the overwhelming majority of grants (88%) to date have been awarded to projects from England (137 projects / £157,550.16), the Canoe Foundation distribute grants throughout the UK and overseas. In recent years there has been a steady increase in the number of applications received from organisations based in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as overseas. These figures also reflect our support of UK-wide projects, which despite representing less than 5% of all projects have received almost 14% of CF total funding. One such example of this is the Paracanoe Programme, which was recently awarded a grant of £20,000.

BREAKDOWN OF GRANT FUNDING BY ORGANISATION OR PROJECT TYPE

As you would imagine the majority of projects supported by the Canoe Foundation relate to canoe clubs, which account for 47 out of 156 projects, benefiting some 8,500

individuals. The remainder of our funding has distributed amongst other paddlesport facilitators, which include the Scouts and Guides; not-for-profit centres; and Sea Scouts/Cadets (each accounting for 12% of projects) as well as schools and colleges (10%); while CF are also seeing an increased demand from Youth Associations (8%) and Charities (5%).

Expeditions have, to date, received the lowest amount of funding. Although as these now come under the guise of the Canoe Foundation, supported by the BCU Expeditions Committee, it is anticipated this figure will rise further in the coming years.

BREAKDOWN OF GRANT FUNDING BY CANOE ENGLAND/ PORT ENGLAND REGION

As previously mentioned 88% of grants awarded in the past decade have gone to applicants based in England: 137 projects, totalling £157,550.16 and benefiting some 33,424 individuals. Although the distribution of our funding across England is relatively even, the south has seen slightly more projects supported (56 projects / 40.9%). The projects supported in the south have also seen the biggest impact in terms of the number of individuals benefiting (17,217 or 51.5%); which is mainly due to the scale of some of the projects in the London region and the South West.

A further breakdown within the regions, shows that the Southern region, North West region and the East Midlands have seen the largest number of projects supported, with 19, 18 and 17 projects respectively. Overall the East Midlands have received a total of £26,406.22 to support these projects, equating to 52.1% of funding for the Central region and 16.8% of the national total.





	Total Grants / Projects	Funding	Individuals Benefiting
Northern region	43	£46,001.63	9,824
Central region	38	£50,678.40	6,383
Southern region	56	£60,870.13	17,217
Totals	137	£157,550.16	33,424

BREAKING THE £200,000 MARK

At the time of going to press the outcomes and statistics from the February 2013 Small Grants Panel meeting were not available. However, it is envisaged that this will take the total sum of funding awarded by the Canoe Foundation in the past decade to in excess of £200,000!

Until next time
happy paddling!



USEFUL INFO

Further details about applying for a Canoe Foundation grant, case studies from some of the projects supported by the charity and all the latest news can be found at www.canoefoundation.org.uk and through CF's social media accounts; on both Facebook - www.facebook.com/canoefoundation - and Twitter - [@CanoeFoundation](https://twitter.com/CanoeFoundation)

FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

We rely on your fundraising activities and generous donations to enable us to support additional projects and continue our work 'positively changing lives through canoeing'. Last year we had a number of people raising money for the Canoe Foundation through various sporting, and non-sporting, methods, such as Devizes to Westminster, half marathons, and DVD sales, so why not challenge yourself and raise some money for a good cause at the same time!

GET IN TOUCH

Should you have any questions or comments then please do not hesitate to contact the Canoe Foundation, either by e-mail: info@canoefoundation.org.uk phone: 0845 370 9547 or postal address: Canoe Foundation, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottinghamshire, NG13 8AP.

TWENTY WAYS TO GREEN

KEY

1. Waste and recycling bins clearly labelled
2. Secure waste compound
3. Separate bins provided for each type of hazardous waste
4. Compost bin for kitchen scraps
5. Oil stored in a bunded area
6. Low energy light bulbs fitted
7. Renewable energy microgeneration, Solar PV, Wind turbine and Groundsource heat pump
8. Energy monitor to measure usage and renewable energy generation
9. Automatic motion sensors for lights
10. Loft insulation
11. Double glazed windows and doors
12. Flow restrictors on taps and water saving shower heads
13. Dual flushing toilet cistern or displacement devices in cisterns
14. Water butts for rainwater harvesting
15. Trigger nozzles on outside taps and hoses
16. Wash down and dry off dinghies and RIBs to prevent the spread of non native invasive species
17. Oil and fuel spill kit
18. Drains and covers painted blue (surface water) and red (foul sewers)
19. Interceptor in surface water drain
20. Wild area to encourage biodiversity

In association with:



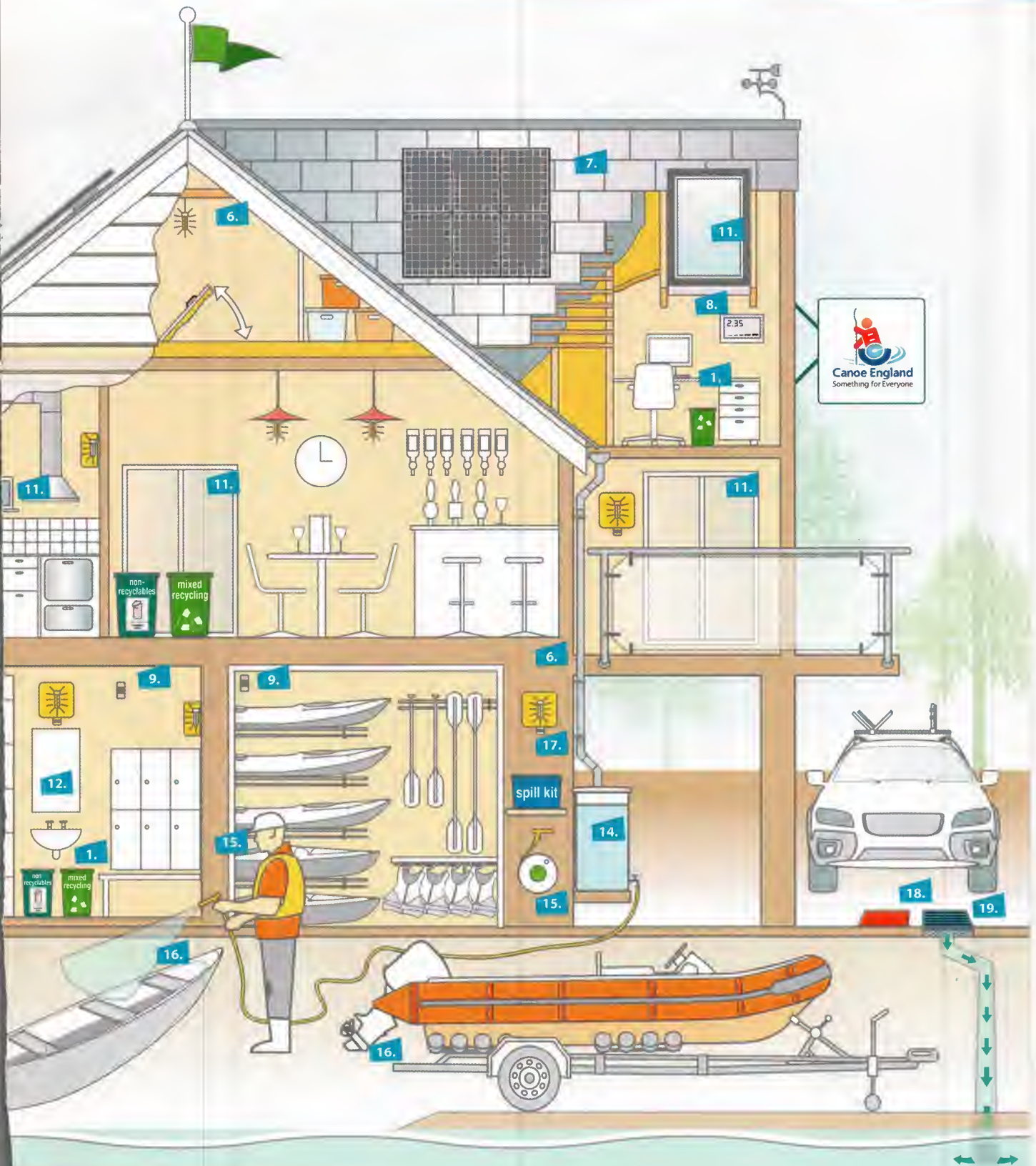
A joint BMF and RYA initiative



OPEN YOUR CLUB



Canoe England
Something for Everyone



WATERWAYS & ENVIRONMENT

DOING YOUR BIT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT - GREENING YOUR CANOE CLUB

Whether you have an old or new clubhouse or even a plan to redevelop then there are many things you can do to save your club money as well as assisting the environment.

GOING GREEN CAN

- Save money – saving energy and water, and recycling more can save hundreds, even thousands of pounds a year. Money that could be better spent on boats and equipment! All it requires is for you to look at what can be done to lower the bills. The starting point must be to encourage members and visitors to turn off the unwanted lights/heating etc How often does your club look like Blackpool illuminations with everything lit up??
- Help you to comply with environmental legislation – keeps your club on the right side of the law. Eg Environment Act 1995 All clubs produce waste which needs to be stored properly and then taken away and disposed of properly.
- Protect our environment – we want to enjoy our surroundings when we go out on the water so we all need to play our part in preventing pollution or damage. We all like to canoe and kayak on clean seas, lakes and rivers, and so it's in all our interests to do what we can to minimise our impact on the environment.

Canoe England, in conjunction with The Green Blue (www.thegreenblue.org.uk/), has begun to develop posters and materials to help us go green and support environmental work. The one within this magazine is Greening Your Canoe Club.

Whilst we do not all have the same style buildings or even the same environmental issues locally there are still things, often very simple ones, we can do.

- For example
- Clearly labelled waste and recycling bins... This will help prevent waste being disposed of inappropriately and a clearly labelled recycling bin will help not only reduce your waste but help save the environment.
 - Use low energy light bulbs ... as the light bulbs need replacing why not look at changing them to low energy ones... and even consider automatic motion sensors for lights in areas where this type of sensor would be suitable... changing rooms, toilet areas etc. Do check to see if there are grants available to help you to do this.
 - Install dual flushing toilet cistern or displacement devices in cisterns and flow restrictors on taps and water saving shower heads – This is one of the areas where it is easier to save water. Despite the recent wet weather the UK has less available water per person than most other European countries. Each person in the UK uses about 150 litres of water a day but this consumption level is not sustainable in the long-term. Our increasing population, as well as climate change, mean that the UK will face increased water stress in the future.

Reducing water use will also help you save money. Remember that water is paid for twice; firstly for supply and secondly for waste water treatment.

These are just an example but do have a look at the Greening Cane Clubs posters and see the other areas that can help too. We would like to know what you have done or are planning to do. There may be many more areas we have not considered so do include them too. access@canoe-england.org.uk

MEMBERS MEET

On Saturday 9th March, the Waterways and Environment team hosted the 2nd Members Meeting at Manvers Waterfront Boat Club in South Yorkshire. The day consisted of a number of presentations by the Waterways and Environment Team to promote their work on hydropower, canoe trails, working with other organisations, River Access Campaign, their environmental role and the CE's position on access to and along waterways. David Gent, Chair of Canoe England and Vice president of BCU chaired the meeting. The presentations generated plenty of discussion and the day allowed Members to ask questions and express their views and issues to the team. However, the team was very disappointed to see so few CE Members from the Northern Regions attend the event.

MEETING POSTPONED

Unfortunately, due to the very low numbers of CE Members wishing to attend the Central Region Waterways and Environment Meeting on 16th March, the team have decided to postpone the meeting for another day.

Discussions for a new date are ongoing & more information will be released when a date has been agreed upon. If you have any queries, please email access@canoe-england.org.uk



NEW YOUNGUNS 2013 FREESTYLE TOUR

The Younguns Freestyle Tour is an exciting new series of events and is open to any paddlers who are aged 18 and under on January 1st 2013. The tour consists of five dates throughout the spring and summer at venues spread across the UK to encourage new paddlers to try their hand at freestyle kayaking. The only thing you need is a reasonable white water roll and a lot of energy and enthusiasm!

Due to the unique way in which this tour is run, paddlers and their parents are encouraged to come along and experience this event. The aim is to encourage new paddlers in to the sport in a safe and friendly environment. Furthermore parents are free to join their children on the water throughout the day (and of course the parent needs to be in sight and sound of their children throughout the event). The day typically consists of a free practice session in the morning and then a competition event in the afternoon. The 2013 Tour is supported by a number of great people, including Canoe England, GB Freestyle, Square Rock, Pyranha, Dagger and Palm, Without their kind support this event would not be possible and we are very grateful for the help they provide.

Younguns Freestyle dates are as follows:

- **Llangollen 21st April**
- **Nene 26th May**
- **Lee Valley 16th June**
- **Boulters Lock 14th July**
- **Nottingham 14th Sept**



SCHOOL CHALLENGE

Canoe England and Lincoln Canoe Club provided an exciting 50m ergo challenge for around 100 school and college students as part of the Sainsbury's winter School Games.

The overall winning time of 10.4s was tied between Will Goddard (Trent Valley College) and Robert Winn (Bishop Grosseteste). The fastest female was Grace John (Bishop Grosseteste) in a fantastic time of 13s. Special congratulations go to Imogen Capewell of St Hughs School, Lincoln, as she was the fastest Primary School paddler!

There were some fantastic efforts from all the young people and hopefully they will visit the Go Canoeing website to find out where they can take to the water in Lincolnshire!

CONTOUR ERGO

...its whats inside that counts

Play Seat

Creeker Seat



Available in:

Jitsu, Nomad, Mamba, Axiom and GT models.



Tube



search **Dagger Contour**



Lee Valley

WHITE WATER CENTRE OLYMPIC LEGACY PROJECT UNDERWAY

Work is underway on a £6.3 million development project at Lee Valley White Water Centre, which will expand and improve facilities for paddlers.

The arena where Team GB won gold and silver medals in the Canoe Slalom event will remain open for canoeing, kayaking and rafting throughout the duration of the improvements, scheduled to be completed by early 2014.

THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT WILL INCLUDE BUILDING:

- First class facilities for athletes with a state of the art gym and physiotherapy suite housed in an extension to the existing centre. This extension will also include meeting rooms and offices for the BCU.



- A new outdoor classroom, more catering provision and extra space to find shade, shelter and seating in a stylish new pavilion overlooking the Olympic Standard Competition Course.
- More changing rooms, which will increase the capacity for rafting and paddling at peak times.

- Additional car parking and toilets to better accommodate a very busy and popular sports venue/visitor attraction and landscaping work to create viewing mounds.

FUTURE GENERATIONS

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority Chief Executive Shaun Dawson believes future generations of paddlers will benefit from the development work.

He said: "We have listened to feedback from customers and the improvement work will enhance the experience for visitors to this world class venue.

"Many people have been inspired by Team GB's success at Lee Valley White Water Centre to get involved in paddlesport and this development work will give even more people the chance to participate, cementing the Olympic legacy of this venue.

"The expansion of facilities and the addition of an outdoor classroom will increase the accessibility of the venue for local communities, participants and sports clubs and provide even more opportunities for the next generation of athletes."

Funding for the development work will come from a variety of organisations including Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and British Canoe Union.

Canoe Slalom Programme Manager at GB Canoeing, Andy Maddock said: "This development starting is the final stage of a long held ambition for a white water centre in the south east. This will allow the legacy of the Games to have a long term impact and inspire the next generation of athletes."

WHAT'S ON AT LEE VALLEY WHITE WATER CENTRE

GB Canoe Slalom Team Selection Event - Saturday 27 April to Sunday 28 April

08:30 - 16:00 / Adult £7, child £3

Come and see the country's best paddlers battle the rapids in this national competition. Tickets are now on sale for this event and going fast!

For more information and to book please visit gbcanoeing.org.uk

A TASTE OF PADDLESPORT

Whilst you're there, why not take to the flat water in the centres taster canoe sessions? Throughout the competition days a number of participation activities for visitors will be running to have a go and experience canoeing activities on land and on the flat-water lake.

Ergo Challenge - an opportunity to test your paddling skills on the land using a Kayak Ergo.

Go Canoeing **Starter Sessions** - try canoeing on the flat water lake. Suitable for those aged 8 - 80, sessions will provide a fun way to experience the sport

Slalom Challenge - If you have some canoeing experience take part in a fun canoe slalom competition on the flat water gates.

There will be no additional charges for these sessions and visitors may wish to bring a change/suitable clothing to participate in the water-based activities. For further information relating to the Go Canoeing initiatives please visit www.gocanoeing.org.uk

Free Parking is available on the Showground site, within River Lee Country Park and adjacent to Lee Valley White Water Centre.

There are no grandstands provided for this event. Spectators are welcome to bring chairs or blankets to view the course from the adjacent pathways.

PADDLING CONTINUES

Canoeists, kayakers and rafters will continue to have the opportunity to paddle in the wake of Team GB's gold medal winning throughout the duration of the work.

Participants can tackle the Olympic Standard Competition Course, which with 13,000 litres of water pummelling down per second is rated as the best course in the world for rafting, canoeing and kayaking.

White water paddlers will enjoy battling their way along the course which involves grade 4 rapids and a 5.5m descent as well as the 160m Legacy Loop, which features grade 3 rapids and a 1.6m descent, ideal for honing those white water skills on.

Competent paddlers can take a quick assessment to become a member and navigate either course. Alternatively if you're new to the sport you can practise on a flat-water lake and both canoes and kayaks are available for rental at the venue. **CF**

USEFUL INFO

For full information and to book visit:
www.gowhitewater.co.uk or call 08456 770 606

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- Cover for accidental loss or damage
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- Cover for all canoeing activities, including competitions

Price relates to Explorer level cover and craft value up to £750

Visit www.canoe-england.org.uk/insurance or call **0845 370 9500**

CHECK OUT THE BEST CANOEING & KAYAKING IMAGES FROM THE JANUARY AND FEBRUARY ENTRIES IN TO OUR REGULAR PHOTO-COMPETITION...

Photo Competition

We're constantly amazed at the amazing photos that you submit each month, from the inspiring images that flood in to the FOCUS office and inbox it's pretty clear that, not only are you paddling in some fantastic locations, but you have a great eye for capturing the spirit of our brilliant sport.



Have You Got a Cracking canoeing or kayaking Shot? that might be a winner in 2013?

Send us your best canoeing or kayaking photo and Senior entrants could win a Cotswold Outdoor voucher while Junior winners receive a WHSmith gift card. There is a prize for the winner of the year selected from all the winning monthly entries.

To enter simply send a large photo (at least 5

megapixels) on a CD along with your contact details and a few words about the photo to Jo McEnaney, British Canoe Union, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottingham, NG1 8AP or you can email your entry to josephine.mcenaney@bcu.org.uk

Please note we can only allow one entry per person per month.



Alastair Wilson



Stuart Phillips



Iain Linn



Wayne Morgan



Phillip Carr



Tom Dean



Tom Coney



Colin Pyrah



Tim Harlow



Julie Elworthy



Katie Buckley



Darran Williams



Daniel James



Rodney Casbierd



Dean Henderson



Adam Walker



Mike McPeak

Darren East



Neil Platten



Neil Ara



Paul Buckley



Lee Taylor



Pauline Marsh



Stuart Dalziel



Neil Johnson



Andy Kettlewell



James Earnshaw



Thomas Cowland



James Earnshaw



Greg Farrow



Nick Wright



Canoes & kayaks can take you to some amazing places. Image by Pete Surtees



Jo Nosworthy



Jaak Joris



Eoin Carroll



Richy Mardell



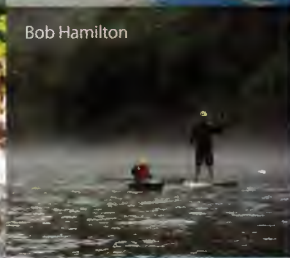
Joe Gynes



Emma Witherby



Upper Kison, Swale



Bob Hamilton





Article and images by Simon Hammond

Kayak Surfing

SURFING ALL YEAR ROUND

Gone are the days when you only ever kayak surfed in the summer time. With current kit there is no need to stop just because the temperature gets a little colder. In fact it's a good job that clothing and equipment has improved with the wet and wild summers we've been having. So with improvements in the quality and range of kit on the market you can comfortably surf all year round...

But why would you want to? Well the simple answer is time and space. In the winter and early spring you'll avoid the crowds and have the time and space to develop your skills. Sure the locals will still be getting out on the good days but even then maximum numbers are far lower than in the summer months. As there are less surfers in the water and more waves to go around you'll find everyone is a lot less stressed and much friendlier.

HAVE A PLAN

Conditions can be wild so come prepared. A surf trip in the winter, or early springtime needs some planning. Down here in Cornwall we've several different coastlines to choose from so selecting the right beach for the optimum swell and wind direction is usually possible even if it takes a bit of investigating and research. Maps, synoptic charts, web sites, tide tables and surfing guides will all help to pinpoint your best option. But keep checking the conditions as your trip approaches, as our weather is notoriously fickle, and even with the Met Office's best computer predictions I wouldn't be too confident until the night before departure.

CHOOSE YOUR WAVES

Make sure the predicted conditions match you and your paddling friends ability. You'll usually be able to find a sheltered coast on those days where the north coast is being pounded by twenty foot swell and storm force winds, but you'll also have to be able to admit defeat if the winds are just too much. Where as a 25 mph on-shore wind will keep you from making any progress off the beach the same strength wind offshore could be lethal in blowing you out to sea. Keep to sensible limits. On shore winds take the sharpness out of a breaking wave and won't spoil the surf until reaching 10 to 12 mph, offshore winds are great and can create the very best conditions but beware of anything over 15 mph especially on exposed low tide beaches. As for the swell size I would say the smaller the better; 1 to 2 foot of clean peeling surf is fun and safe for novices to experts, 3 to 4 foot is great but the novice paddlers will get the best from riding white water waves closer to the shore, 5 foot plus gets powerful and depending on the way it breaks and your ability can be quite scary! ▶



“There is nothing to be lost in starting with a plastic surf kayak as these boats have all the design features that will give you the speed and manoeuvrability to make the most of any wave and then as your skills develop and progress you’ll start to dream of that light weight epoxy composite boat that might get you airborne!”



Lone paddler launching on a classic cold but blue sky day

ESSENTIAL SURF GEAR

OK so the swell and weather look good now what do you need to bring? Of course there is the ideal kit for surfing but the beauty of this sport is also how normal paddling kit and boats adapt and perform reasonably well, especially when you are just starting off. I'd say to anyone surf kayaking for the first time that the best boat to surf in is the boat you feel most comfortable in. Once you've mastered some basic balance and side surfing techniques then you might want to progress to a boat with a bit of edge, most modern river kayaks will do. A boat with lowish volume, nice sharp edges or rails, a flat bottom and not too short will give you the chance to progress to surfing and carving across a clean wave face, just remember that length of boat equals speed so a really short play boat will have some limitations. And then when you've got the surfing bug jump into a surf kayak. There is nothing to be lost in

starting with a plastic surf kayak as these boats have all the design features that will give you the speed and manoeuvrability to make the most of any wave and then as your skills develop and progress you'll start to dream of that light weight epoxy composite boat that might get you airborne!

As for what you wear yet again comfort is the key but taking a swim whilst surf kayaking is more likely than in any other kayaking discipline. So even if you are one of those paddlers who hasn't taken a swim in years always be mindful that this could happen out in the surf. Big fleeces and semi-dry cags and trousers aren't brilliant; you need to wear something that you can actively swim in. Wetsuits are a good option, with a tight fitting neoprene deck and a snug fitting buoyancy jacket. Big and baggy is out sleek and streamlined is in.

Definitely no need for any kit in your boat. Usually all your extras; clothing, tools, repair kit, spare paddles etc



Winter kit and surf kayak on the beach

will be in your car in the conveniently placed beach car park with hot drinks being provided by that lovely warm Beach Cafe that you've found is open all year round (many will even serve you in your dripping paddling gear!). If it's a long walk to the waters edge then there's nothing to be lost in taking some spares, food, hot drinks and extra layers down to the waters edge in a dry bag. I've never had any problems with leaving a bag on the beach other than maybe a suspicious dog having a quick wee over it! You could even take down a survival shelter if its really cold - I've used these to extend a surf session and give friends a chance to warm up, have a warm drink and have a short break. All of this allows you to keep your boat as light as possible, but remember the chance of swimming and so best to fill every inch of your boat with airbags and buoyancy. Finally make sure you've tied on some lengths of tape to your boats handles once again just in case you take a swim. ▶



Circle of kayaks - all used in the surf environment

“As for the swell size I would say the smaller the better; 1 to 2 foot of clean peeling surf is fun and safe for novices to experts, 3 to 4 foot is great but the novice paddlers will get the best from riding white water waves closer to the shore.”



Cold off-season day in North Cornwall



Happy, well attired, paddler launching on a cold blue sky day



Group of paddlers in cold weather kit



TIPS

YOU'LL LEARN THE REST ONCE YOU GET GOING BUT IF YOU WANT A FEW MORE TIPS ...

- Never rush straight into the surf, give yourself some time to read the conditions and watch what others are doing.
- You can learn all the surfing techniques in the white water waves before going out too far.
- Life guarded beaches only operate between May and September so you'll be looking after yourselves off-season.
- Think about your long-term health; wear earplugs to prevent surfers ear developing.
- Avoid the High Brace - its responsible for many a dislocated shoulder in the surf environment.
- Learn your surfing etiquette if you want some respect from other surfers.
- Go to a surf kayak contest or join a course to learn a few more skills and techniques.

Good luck and have a go. Get a good day off-season and you're likely to get the best surf session of the year. **CF**

FOCUS ON SIMON HAMMOND

Simon, former World Surf Kayak Champion, BCU Level 5 Surf Kayak Coach and author of Surf Kayaking The Essential Guide, owns Shoreline Extreme Sports in Bude, North Cornwall which specialises in surf kayak coaching and event organisation. They run surf coaching courses throughout the year and together with Bude Canoe Club organise the Black Rock Surf Kayak Contest every Spring. For more information on surf kayaking contact him on info@shorelineactivities.co.uk

USEFUL INFO

To find out more about getting involved with kayak surfing visit www.bcu.org.uk/our-sport/surf/





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Article by Andrew Morton,
Images by Andrew Morton & Stephen Lawson

Old and New



I started 50 years ago, and hence felt it might be worth commenting on how my paddling has changed over that period of time. I can sense the youngsters amongst our readers stifling a yawn and moving on, but if they do, they will miss something, which I think is quite exciting and innovative, and is described shortly – the real reason for writing this piece...



Understern rudder stock

I kept a record of all my early paddles, and find looking back most interesting, because I can see how quick I was and what kinds of distances I was prepared to paddle. In brief, I paddled a canvas and wood kayak, with added lead weights for stability, and paddled all over Loch Lomond and round various lochs on the west coast at a steady 4mph. I was only 15 years old and my father was concerned I might capsize – hence the lead weights. I did capsize once, on Loch Fyne, surfing down big waves, and might have drowned were I not rescued by my father in his rowing boat.

To reach Loch Lomond from Alexandria, I cycled, with my kayak behind me on a trailer, and invariably paddled on my own. I rarely paddle otherwise – you only have yourself to cater for, and speed is never an issue.

RIVER RACING DAYS

Forty-seven years ago I bought my first river racer, a Mendesta Coursier. It was a brand new fibreglass boat and it cost me £47. Fibreglass was a new material

then, and the boat seemed very quick, strong and light, compared to my old canvas and wood Tyne Tourer. I fitted an over-stern rudder, which I used for touring, but took off for river racing. Since then, I have paddled all kinds of river racers, but never with a rudder. I suppose it was because I began to take river racing seriously that the added rudder was given up. Fourteen years ago I was writing about paddling round the Scilly Isles in my river racer, and commented that I really should have a rudder on my boat. But I did nothing about it till last year, when I finally got round to it, with time on my hands – an OAP at last!

RESURRECTING A FAVOURITE FRIEND

My river racer of choice for the past twenty-five years has been a Marlin, made by Nomad canoes in Llangollen. I've had two. The first one got smashed to pieces racing in Corsica, and then I bent it round a tree on a swollen river, the Devon; my closest call in 50 years. It's not easy to get out of a kayak when it has folded on its side, and has water piling over it.

I phoned Nomad, to discover the mould was 'mouldering' in a damp shed, with a large crack in it, ready to be consigned to the skip. They readily agreed to resurrect it, and made the two halves of the new kayak. I insisted that it had to be super-light



“The new boat far exceeded my expectations. I have now, I am sure, the fastest and most exciting boat you could possibly paddle on the sea”

and rigid, so the construction was of carbon and Kevlar, with a cork layer between. I drove down to Llangollen and stayed in a hotel for three nights, just two hundred yards from the factory. Each day, I joined the men and we put the Marlin together, with T-bar and understern K1 rudder. The seat and footrest were fitted to suit, and the finished machine weighed just 9kg. Nomad did a fabulous job!

On return to Scotland, the new boat far exceeded my expectations. I have now, I am sure, the fastest and most exciting boat you could possibly paddle on the sea: totally responsive and a snip to control in all kinds of conditions. It surfs down waves with ease and runs in any direction in wave and wind, without any steering strokes at all. As a K1 paddler of course, it seems very stable too, although I know that many sea paddlers would disagree.

For the technically minded, the K1 rudder has a K2 wheel on it and is set nearer the cockpit than normal to ensure it never leaves the water when I am surfing down waves. There are two neat, strong hatches, fore and aft, which allow access to the T-bar and the rudder stock. The T-bar system is a million miles better than any pedal system, because once the rudder is set it acts like a skeg and very rarely has to be adjusted. Only on big waves is one constantly steering, and then it's a dawdle.

DIFFERENT STROKES...

Why do I prefer this kind of boat to a sea kayak? Simple – it's buoyant, fairly stable, light and quick, and consequently, a delight to paddle. I have raced it in two sea races against 45 paddlers in each, won one and come a close second in another, and that's at the age of 65! Thirty years ago, I'm sure I'd have been miles ahead in both races, without any problem at all. I believe it's quicker than a racing surf-ski too, but that will be more difficult to prove.

CRUISING

Now I transport it on my 'other boat' and go sea cruising on the west coast. In my first year I have explored the west coast of Colonsay, the length of Lochs Sween and Tarbert (Jura), and paddled round both Kerrera and Seil Islands twice. My average speed on all these trips was over 6mph for two to three hours, which puts it a bit ahead of my first foray, fifty years ago, almost to the day! **CF**

“I have raced it in two sea races against 45 paddlers in each, won one and come a close second in another, and that's at the age of 65!”

Have you got a great story or point of view you'd like to put in an article? Send your ideas and contributions to us for consideration at canoeingnews@bcu.org.uk



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