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Welcome to June's Canoe Focus

I hope you've all been enjoying the warmer weather and bank holidays, with lots of paddling of course!

With the summer holidays approaching, this month's issue showcases some of the UK's best destinations for coastal and sea paddling and we've also put together an essential 'What Gear' check-list of everything that you'll need for a great day out paddling on the sea.

Also in this issue, we look back on the iconic Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race as well as the recent GB Canoeing sprint and slalom team selection racing. The season is well underway now and I'd like to wish good luck to all our teams competing during the next few months.

If you'd like to support our athletes in-person, tickets are still available for the Canoe Slalom World Cup in Cardiff on 21st-23rd June. I hope to see you there, cheering on our teams and helping create a great atmosphere at Cardiff International White Water.

Our next generation of canoeing stars may also have taken to the water during the recent bank holiday weekend, as part of National Go Canoeing Week. This year's Go Canoeing Week saw a record number of people, of all ages and abilities, taking part in canoeing starter sessions and activities across England. Thank you to everyone who helped to run a session – you've helped to show even more people what great sports canoeing and kayaking really are!

That's all from me this month. As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of FOCUS and have an enjoyable summer, filled with lots of happy paddling.

Paul

Paul Owen, Chief Executive.



"This year's Go Canoeing Week saw a record number of people, of all ages and abilities, taking part in canoeing starter sessions and activities across England. Thank you to everyone who helped to run a session – you've helped to show even more people what great sports canoeing and kayaking really are!"

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

18 Market Place, Bingham, NG13 8AP

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ISBN: 0953 010X

canoe
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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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CANOEING UK'S TOP BOATING ACTIVITY

The eleventh annual Watersports and Leisure Participation Survey have established canoeing as the top boating activity in the UK*. The Watersports and Leisure Participation Survey, now in its 11th year surveyed a significant sample of 12,000 adults, which tracks trends in boating.

The report sees a substantial financial investment and is commissioned by a consortium of the Royal Yachting Association (RYA), British Marine Federation (BMF), Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), British Canoe Union (BCU) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). The consortium comes together each year to publish the results to promote the marine industry and boating trends to assist in strategy planning and development with external relations while educating the public and government.

KEY FINDINGS HAVE REVEALED:

- Canoeing participation has increased and stands at 1,214,000 participants.
- The survey also states that there is an increase in households owning a canoe/kayak – to 276,260 (1.05%). This links to Canoe England's vision of increasing the number of households that have a canoe/kayak to 300,000 by 2020.
- Canoeing trends indicate that over time the overall number of canoeists has remained relatively stable. There are now a larger proportion of female canoeists than in 2002 (32% in 2002 to 38% in 2012). There has also been a reduction in the proportion of under 34 canoeists (66% in 2002 to 55% in 2012), while the proportion of over 55 canoeists has doubled from 4% to 9%.
- 69% of canoeists participate in the UK.
- Overall, there are now a larger proportion of female canoeists than in 2002 – rising from 32% to 38%.

Canoe England Development Director Sue Hornby spoke to FOCUS about the results, "We are happy to see canoeing figures continuing to grow at a steady rate. Last year we introduced over 50,000 people to canoeing and we look forward to building on this success by supporting clubs and centres and via key initiatives such as Go Canoeing. Go Canoeing aims to increase regular participation through Taster Sessions, Guided Tours, Trails and Events, the emphasis is ease of getting involved and having fun."

CANOEIST TAKES ON CYCLING CHALLENGE

Paul Wycherley, international kayaker, world record holder, and winner of Godalming Sports Personality of the Year 2012, will put his paddles down in the first week of September and pick up a bike in order to cycle the length of Britain from Lands End to John O'Groats. Paul will be raising money for mental health charity, Mind.



The distance Paul will ride is over 930-miles and takes most cyclists ten to fourteen days. Paul will attempt to ride the route over nine days, averaging over 100-miles a day, winding his way through Britain's stunning countryside.

Starting at Land's End on the southwesterly tip of England, Paul will spend a couple of challenging days pedalling his way up hilly roads in Cornwall and Devon. He will continue over Dartmoor and north along the Welsh border, skirting the Lake District into Scotland, via lochs and mountains to the north coast and John O'Groats.

Paul told FOCUS, "Cycling has always been a passion of mine having discovered it after picking up an injury that prevented me from running. For a few years I've wanted to do an endurance challenge on the bike and they don't come much longer this. Plus I've never been to John O'Groats and it's cheaper than a train ticket!"

Paul is currently taking some time out of full-time training to focus on building his career in financial services as an Account Manager for Huntswood. Despite working Paul maintains a rigorous exercise routine. "I can only train for about 90 minutes a day Monday to Friday, and a bit more at weekends, so have to be smart with my training to ensure maximal gain from each session whilst fitting it around the day job. I've been competing internationally, in paddlesport, for over ten years and so it's probably about time that I invested some time into ensuring that I have a career after sport. GB Canoeing have been great with me. They know that I always give my all and am dedicated to Rio 2016. I am still training and will even race if asked to but am just shifting focus for this year so that I can allay any anxieties that my life will fall apart when I can no longer compete as a kayaker. I was gutted to narrowly miss out on the Olympics last year and dreaded my end of year appraisal but was reassured by GB Canoeing Performance Director, John Anderson, that he still believes in me and is keen to support me on the road to Rio."

Mind offers information and advice to people with mental health problems and lobbies government and local authorities on their behalf. Mind is helping to coordinate the Time to Change programme, England's most ambitious campaign to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people who experience mental health problems.

You can support Paul on his journey by visiting www.justgiving.com/paulwycherley and donating or text "PAWY86 £2" to 70070 to donate £2.

BATH PADDLER IN GB DRAGONBOAT SQUAD

Julia Clarke from Bath has been selected for the GB Dragonboat Premier Women's & Mixed Squad for the International Dragonboat Federation (IDBF) World Nations Championship, which takes place in Szeged, Hungary from 24-28th July. Julia has been Dragonboating since August 2011 and does her training at Bath Canoe Club. Her gruelling training programme includes indoor and outdoor paddling, gym work, boot camp, yoga and then Dragonboat training and racing at weekends giving an 18-hr schedule per week. The weekly paddling on the River Avon between Pulteney Bridge and Bathampton Weir or indoors on a BCU supplied ergo paddling machine when it was too cold outside enabled Julia to exceed the qualifying time over 500m and 1000metres.

She is now well into a hard training regime preparing for the Worlds however, whilst Dragonboating is recognised by Sport England it is not funded and so Julia is seeking help to raise the upwards of £2000 required for her fare and accommodation costs whilst attending the World Championships and training towards it. If there are local businesses that would like to support Julia then please contact her direct at dragonboatgirl@live.co.uk or through Bristol Empire Dragons or Bath Canoe Club.

GO THE BLUE MILE

The Ecover Blue Mile shares with Canoe England a passion for our blue environment and a wish to see people enjoy our seas and waterways in a way that looks after and cares for them. The event is run by triple round-the-world-racing yachtsman Conrad Humphreys, who told FOCUS, "There are 1.2 million paddlers in the UK, 35,000 of whom paddle regularly, which is great. We want people to get outside and immerse themselves in our natural world and do more to look after our seas and wildlife."

The Ecover Blue Mile, race for the environment, is staging two major events in 2013, where rowers, swimmers, canoeists, kayakers and SUP boarders can all come together and take part in races.

The Ecover Blue Mile in Weymouth is on 27-28 July and the flagship annual event in Plymouth is being staged over the weekend of 14-15 September. This year, the Ecover Blue Mile is hoping to raise £50,000 for the Marine Conservation Society.

Visit www.thebluemile.org to find out how to take part in the Ecover Blue Mile.



SPORTS CLUB SURVEY

In the afterglow London 2012, the Sport and Recreation Alliance has asked: "How ready are our sports clubs to deliver a meaningful and lasting Olympic and Paralympic legacy?" Wouldn't it be good if in ten years' time, the sports that shone during the Games, such as canoeing and kayaking, as well as wider sports and recreational activities, had all contributed towards a successful legacy that everyone could benefit from?

At the end of 2012, the Alliance's Olympic and Paralympic legacy snapshot survey revealed cause for optimism, but that more could be done to help sports clubs drive up grassroots participation.

THE SURVEY SHOWED THAT:

- Two in five clubs (42%) are experiencing an increase in the number of people joining their club since the Games but a quarter (26%) of these clubs are struggling to meet this demand.
- A lack of funding is preventing three in five sports clubs from growing their membership
- Increased running costs are holding back the growth of 54% of sports clubs and half are struggling with a lack of affordable venues or facilities.

DO YOU THINK THIS OUTLOOK REFLECTS THE EXPERIENCE AT YOUR CLUB?

The Alliance is carrying out its biennial sports club survey to piece together a picture of how our community and grassroots sports clubs are faring in the afterglow of the games. It will ask the following questions:

- What opportunities, challenges and barriers do you face as a sports club?
- How are you coping financially, and in terms of sustaining or growing your membership?
- Are you feeling the squeeze of local authority cuts?
- What training and support would you like to see offered by non-profit organisations to clubs in the future?

The information you provide is absolutely critical. Armed with your answers both the Alliance and the BCU will work to improve the environment for sports clubs and campaign to get the best deal for canoeing and kayaking.

Answering this survey will tell us how we can help you more like this in the future. Visit www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/policy/SSC to find out more

TESCO STAYS ON BOARD

The British Canoe Union has confirmed that their headline sponsor Tesco is to remain on board with canoeing and kayaking, but will refocus its partnership on the grass roots end of the sport.

Over the last two years Tesco has been the lead commercial partner of GB Canoeing and its Olympic programme during its quest for success at London 2012. Indeed 2012 proved to be the most successful Olympic Games in the sport's history. Tesco has now confirmed it will continue the partnership with the sport and realign its financial support towards Canoe England's 'Go Canoeing' programme, which they believe fits more consistently within the rest of their community sponsorship portfolio, aimed at getting more people active, more regularly.

Sue Hornby Director of Development commented to FOCUS, "We are absolutely delighted to welcome Tesco on board as a partner. Go Canoeing is an Olympic legacy project that aims to get more people canoeing, more regularly and is an excellent fit with Tesco's aim of getting families and people of all ages fit and healthy. We are engaged with a number of quality partners who can help reach new people and raise awareness of canoeing as a unique fun, family day activity."

For more information on how to get started or for information on the Go Canoeing programme and what it has to offer visit www.gocanoeing.org.uk or check out the Go Canoeing section later in the mag.

SCOTLAND TO NORWAY BY SEA KAYAK ATTEMPT

Two men have announced plans to attempt a crossing from Scotland to Norway by sea kayak this summer. Pete Goss MBE and Andy Warrender will voyage non-stop for up to four days as they attempt to complete the 'GORE-TEX® Guillemot Challenge'.

It's a feat that has been tried before but never completed, the pair hopes to prove that with impeccable design, planning and equipment, plus the spirit of adventure, you can achieve something great.

They will set off from the most easterly point of the Shetland Islands at some point in June or July, only leaving when the perfect weather window arises. Their homes for the next 320km (just under 200-miles) will be two production kayaks that have been specially adapted for the challenge with the help of some of the finest engineers in the country.

The equipment they use will stand testament to the evolution of sport as their hybrid approach marries the best of kayaking and sailing, paying homage to a long chain of on-water innovation that goes right back to the first Inuit.

They have been preparing for the challenge for well over a year and can now reveal that their recent circumnavigation of Tasmania was a key part of their training for the GORE-TEX® Guillemot Challenge.

Safety is in the planning and the most important part of their preparation is in building and testing their equipment. Pete and Andy are backed up by a team of experts from Gore, which is sponsoring the challenge.

Pete Goss MBE told FOCUS, "It would be very easy to fail at this and we don't choose to rely on luck. For us, the way to make this safe is to ensure the preparation is there. Eighty per cent of what will keep us safe will be done before we dip our paddles into the water."

The adventure has been named the GORE-TEX® Guillemot Challenge in a nod to the voyage of Scotland's guillemot chicks, some of which swim right across the North Sea to Norway not long after hatching. Andy said, "We thought, if they can do it, why can't we? We know it's going to be no easy feat and it will be completely different to our Tasmania circumnavigation in that it will be non-stop but we are confident that we can not only make the crossing, but make it safely."

Pete and Andy will blog about their adventure. To follow the team's progress visit the tracker at www.petegoss.com/tracker.php



RAYMOND PAUL BOND (KNOWN AS JIM) 06/12/1946 - 18/01/2013

"He had no idea how loud his laugh was."

Jim Bond was a stalwart member of Rutland Canoe Club who died in January 2013 when Alzheimers and Leukemia finally closed the last door in his life. He was one of those unsung heroes who put so much time and effort into encouraging and supporting others to get the most out of canoeing.

Jim was born in Portsmouth where he learned respect for the sea and rivers from his grandfather, a marine carpenter in the dockyard. His father renovated and upholstered vintage cars and Jim spent his boyhood learning these skills and throughout his life used his sewing skills in cars; motorbikes; parachutes; gliders; house building; furniture... and of course boats.

From 1967 to 1989 Jim worked in the RAF as an aircraft mechanic; working with Vulcans and Canberra (which probably caused his deafness); building his own gliders and competing all over Europe as well as being a Gliding Instructor at Cranwell.

As Jim got older a new outdoor passion entered his life, canoeing. Although he enjoyed a wide range of racing disciplines, his specialty was the open canoe and he quickly gained instructor status, which he began to enjoy more than competing.

Jim was an inaugural member of Rutland Canoe Club, which soon became a big part of his life especially in the coaching area. All year round Jim put time and effort into keeping the club open and welcoming new members. He played various roles including Secretary and Chairman – his last role unfittingly was Safety Officer (he would never have heard anyone shouting 'Help!'). Fond memories are held by Raymond Egan, chairman in the early days, of him and Jim racing their K1s round the creek, honing their paddling technique on the Canadian canoes; and one time when Jim brought down a parachute and a sewing machine and fashioned a rudimentary sail, which they rigged up on a Canadian canoe.

Camping; sea trips; river trips; canoe coaching at Bourne Pool; DW support crew; and anything involving spreading safe canoeing continued all through his paddling years. He would scoop people up on the banks of Rutland Water and encourage them to paddle – mums and dads as well as their children. He was the BCU Access Officer for the River Welland for many years and took this very seriously – each spring paddling from the source of the Welland down to Stamford. As he became ill he would still walk the Welland making notes and taking photos at different times of the year.

Current club member Lynette Shahmoradian comments that "Jim loved to paddle and to teach others to paddle, he was always ready with a huge smile when you were doing it right and was loud and fierce when you were doing it wrong... threats of 'I'll tie your knees together' were heard bellowing over the creek when I tried his tippy racing K1." Lynette remembers with fondness trying out his hand-built wooden sea kayak, 'nature to nature' as he termed it - wood on water."

Unmarried till he left the RAF, Jim then devoted his many talents and life to a ready-made family of four, one of whom (Lincoln Taylor) became a World White Water Racing Champion.

In the last couple of years the gang at RCC began to see less and less of Jim down at the club with only his varied collection of boats on the racks hinting at the many stories that lay behind them. He has left behind a wonderful legacy of the importance of coaching; of trying different craft; and most of all of enjoying paddling. Rutland Canoe Club is organizing a "Try a different boat day" in Jim's memory this summer.

"His big laugh, big smile and love of life will forever echo over the water and the sky."

For details of the 'Try a different boat day' event in memory of Jim visit www.rutlandcanoeclub.org.uk



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GO OUTDOOR LEISURE

The Outdoor Leisure Show, taking place this August Bank Holiday (24-26 August) at the River Lee Country Park has confirmed a partnership with Canoe England who will be supporting the canoeing and kayaking elements of the show.

The Outdoor Leisure Show will happen within the 10,000 acre Lee Valley Regional Park and encourages novices and the experienced alike to try a wide range of outdoor water activities from canoe & kayak taster sessions; dinghy and windsurf introductory lessons to canal narrow boat rides and boat interior tours. Those who prefer to remain on land are set to enjoy countryside walking, cycling and running activities set among acres of parkland with nature trails and towpath excursions.

Debbie Groom, Senior Development Officer at Canoe England told FOCUS, "Canoe England are excited to be working with the Outdoor Leisure Show. We aim to help and inspire more people to go paddling and to get on the water complementing the aspirations of the show. We will be offering a chance for people to get involved in paddling at the show in what should prove to be a must see event."

'Go Canoeing', the Canoe England Olympic legacy project, will be attending the Outdoor Leisure Show as part of the Canoe Village section within the showground, and enabling visitors to enjoy taster sessions in canoes and kayaks on the lake at Lee Valley White Water Centre.

There will also be a weekend-long program of entertainment, featuring live bands and real ale marquee, plus a traditional fairground, craft market and fine food fair. A wide range of exhibitors will offer outdoor activity, leisure and camping equipment, clothing and associated products.

Campers and caravan owners can pitch on-site to enjoy a full weekend of healthy outdoor inspiration for just £24 a night when you book for the whole weekend, or £30 for just one night when booked prior to 30th April. Mooring is available at a cost of £1.24 per foot booked prior to 30th April and £1.86 per foot thereafter.

Day tickets cost £9 in advance for an adult, £10 for a concession or £7 for a child (5-16), weekend tickets cost £20, £17 and £14 respectively. Tickets on the gate cost an average of 30% more. Great value family tickets are also available.

Visit www.wwooutdoorshow.com for more details and to order tickets.

OLYMPIC HERO RETIRES

Tim Brabants MBE, Great Britain's most successful Olympic kayaker and one of the world's most accomplished and respected Men's K1 sprint kayakers has announced his retirement from the sport.

The Surrey born 36 year old is a four times Olympic Games competitor. During the 2008 Beijing Games he made history by winning Britain's first-ever Olympic gold medal in canoeing or kayaking, with a convincing win in the K1 1000m where he led from start to finish.

At the Beijing Games he also won bronze in the K1 500m event, adding to the bronze medal he had won previously at the 2000 Sydney Games in the K1 1000m. He is a multiple World and European Champion and, in 2009, was awarded an MBE for his achievements in canoeing.

Tim explained his reasons to FOCUS, "This has been an incredibly difficult decision to make, but reluctantly I realise I have reached the point where I need to retire from the sport."

"It has become more obvious to me over the last few months that as much as I love the sport and would love to be Olympic and World Champion again, I've reached the point where I'm unlikely to improve or achieve the same results that I once achieved."

Brabants did compete in the recent GB selection events at Nottingham and reached the selection criteria, making him eligible to compete internationally for Great Britain in 2013. Yet he felt that continuing to compete this season, with the likelihood he would not regain his best form, would be unfair on both his family and fellow athletes. "As a competitive athlete with a competitive brain I cannot make this decision easily and I know lots of athletes have had to go through this. It is a difficult decision and it is not based on the selection results, because I have done well enough to be selected to race internationally from those results. But it wouldn't be right to just keep competing for the sake of competing and, when you're not getting your best results, it wouldn't be fair on my family or on the other athletes in the sport that are trying to come through."

Tim graduated as a doctor from the University of Nottingham in 2002, but put his medical career on hold to concentrate on competing in last summer's London Olympic Games. Since last autumn he has been based in Cape Town with his South African born wife and children.

He now plans to resume his medical career with the likelihood of specialising in emergency medicine. He is keeping his options open about the possibility of returning to Britain and is keen to stay involved with the sport.

"Now is the time to step back, get back into my medical career and see where the next few months take me," he added. "I would like to stay involved in the sport in some way and my level of involvement will become more apparent over the next six months to a year."

Eric Farrell, Tim's coach for the past 20-years, sees him as a pioneer of the sport of Sprint Canoeing in Britain and said: "Tim has reached the pinnacle of the sport and he is by far the most successful canoeist we have ever had in Britain. "I am highly fortunate to have been involved with an athlete of Tim's calibre right through his career and it has been great to make the whole journey with him. He has been an absolute pleasure to work with."

Paying tribute to Brabants and his many achievements, John Anderson MBE, GB Canoeing Performance Director said: "Tim Brabants has been a true champion and a huge inspiration for athletes in canoeing and kayaking in the UK. When he won the first ever Olympic medal for GB in Sprint Canoeing at Sydney in 2000 he led the way for other athletes in our sport."

"He continued throughout his career to win Olympic, World and European gold medals, and is the most successful Olympic athlete that our sport has ever seen. We wish Tim and his family every success and happiness for the future."



YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS

News From Your Region

CENTRAL

MIDLANDS CANOE SHOW

Paddlers from across the Midlands and beyond enjoyed a great day out at the second annual CKT Midlands Canoe Show at the Nene White Water Centre. The event, organised by Canoe Kayak Trader, attracted over 150 people with opportunities to demo boats and meet the top manufacturers. There were also workshops on the river, white water course and a 100m ergo challenge to win a buoyancy aid!

There was a real mix of people getting involved on the day, with regular club paddlers and people taking to the water for the very first time! Event organizers Alex, Jenna and Matt from Canoe Kayak Trader were really pleased to see so many people taking part. Alex said "There really has been something for everyone, we have had people totally new to canoeing coming along and getting out on the water as well as some seasoned club paddlers having a great day and learning some new skills!"

The day also saw 16 lucky people head out for a scenic two hour guided Go Canoeing Tour along the river Nene and it's hoped that more tours will be able to take place on the Nene in the near future, but it's just one of many places nationally that people can access guided Go Canoeing experiences.

B3 LIVING COMMUNITY DAY

As part of the funding provided by Sport England to build the Olympic white water course in the Lee Valley Park, one of the conditions was to provide open days for the local communities to be able to take part in activities provided by the Centre.

During the school Easter holidays, residents of the B3 Living housing association were invited to come down to the centre to try their hand at canoeing on the lake, rafting on the legacy course, visit a few stands set up in the cafeteria on healthy living, and of course the favourite with the younger children and raft guides, face painting!

While the rafters enjoyed the white water fun in the sunshine, Dan Daley and his team of coaches from the centre, took out three groups of young people from the Broxbourne estate, who did their Paddlepower Start certificate. As usual, though it was sunny, the wind at the centre decided to blow a bit, keeping the temperature down and causing a bit of bunching with the kayakers until the paddlers got the hang controlling their craft. All passed and will be presented their certificates at B3's awards evening.

Thanks should go out to Sam Brearey and Dan Daley from Lee Valley, and to Brian Cooke and Sophie Phillips from B3 Living for organising the fun day had by all.



Devon, Paddlers Paradise

- 13 Estuaries
- 8 Heritage Coastlines
- 2 National Parks
- 3 Canals
- 2 Lakes
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News From Your Region

CENTRAL



CANOE KAYAK TRADER FIRST TO THE MARK!

Canoe Kayak Trader became the very first official Quality Marked, Go Canoeing Provider in the country, offering guided tours on the beautiful Rivers Leam and Avon.

Situated in the picturesque Jephson Gardens in Leamington Spa, the centre offers a range of activities for people young and old to get out on the water as well as a wide range of boats for hire and a paddlesports shop on site.

Matt Bishop who runs the centre said he was ecstatic to have received the Quality Mark from the Go Canoeing team and was very much looking forward to welcoming people to come along and get involved in one of their new guided tours. "This is a really beautiful stretch of water and I'm really pleased we can support the Go Canoeing program to help get more people out on the river and enjoy their surroundings".

It is hoped that Canoe Kayak Trader will be joined very soon by a host of other new Go Canoeing Provider locations to take a tour on your local river.

More information on the Leam Tours and all the Go Canoeing opportunities can be found on the Go Canoeing website

RSPB WILD COAST SEA KAYAKING TOUR

On Sunday 21st July, Maldon and Dengie Canoe Club, working with the RSPB, Burnham Sailing Club, and the Royal Burnham Yacht Club, will be hosting the third RSPB Wild Coast Tour around Wallasea Island. The tour is approximately a 10-miles circumnavigation of Wallasea Island and is for sea kayaks and touring kayaks over 3.5 metres long. It's not a suitable trip for a novice paddler. Regrettably, this year the organising committee have decided that they will not be taking entries for open canoes, as from experience in the previous tours, open canoes have struggled to complete the tour, and posed rescue issues for the tour guides.

The tour costs £10 per person, and will start with a briefing at 09:00. The flotilla must leave Burnham at 11:00 to catch the high tide at the island's causeway. From here it proceeds around the south of the island, and the tour normally finishes around 16:00, where you can review the day in the bar at the Royal Burnham Yacht Club.

For further information and a booking form please contact Clive Marfleet either by email clive.marfleet@tiscali.co.uk or phone 07795508839

MILTON KEYNES CANOE CLUB ACHIEVE CLUB MARK

Milton Keynes Canoe Club has become the latest club to be awarded Club Mark status. This is a fantastic achievement for a very healthy and active club, offering a wide range of exciting activities for young people within our sport. The club is based at Caldecotte Lakes in Milton Keynes.

Anyone wishing to find out more about the club can do so by visiting www.mkcc.co.uk

News From Your Region

NORTH

CANOE '2012' EVENT

Recreational paddlers at Knottingley Canoe Club, who were still feeling inspired by our athletes medal success at the Olympics, were given the opportunity to try some slalom and sprint kayaking at a 'Canoe 2012' event that was organised to replace their regular pool training session.

Slalom poles and buoys were quickly set out at the start of the session and were used to mark out a simple course in the swimming pool. Individuals then took it in turns to see who could paddle round the course fastest with time penalties for touching a pole or buoy.

Meanwhile, in between slalom runs a kayak ergo machine was being used on the poolside to let paddlers try their hand at a 200m sprint. This challenge proved to be especially popular with the group, who were all keen to achieve the best time possible and more importantly to try to get a better time than their friends!

The club ended the night feeling even more inspired and with a much healthier respect for our Olympic paddlers. The club are now looking to see if they can raise the funds to buy a kayak ergo machine of their own.

NORTH WEST CLUB FORUM

Canoe England recently ran a series of club forums around the country, and in the North West it was held at Crosby Lakeside in Merseyside. Included in these forums were a series of useful workshops, facilitated by Canoe England staff and other professional bodies.

This year the workshops that were on offer were, Developing a Marketing strategy and Safety Management, which are both key areas in the operational procedures of any club. Also an equally important workshop on offer was the Time to Listen course.

22 people attended, who representing 14 clubs from the North West area. The two afternoon workshops were split pretty evenly on the day as everyone attended the morning session and the tutors delivered their sessions in such an interesting and informative way that the day ran over by nearly an hour and people still wanted more information! Everybody took away something positive to take back to their clubs from this workshop, and if you haven't been to any look out for them next year and get your name down.

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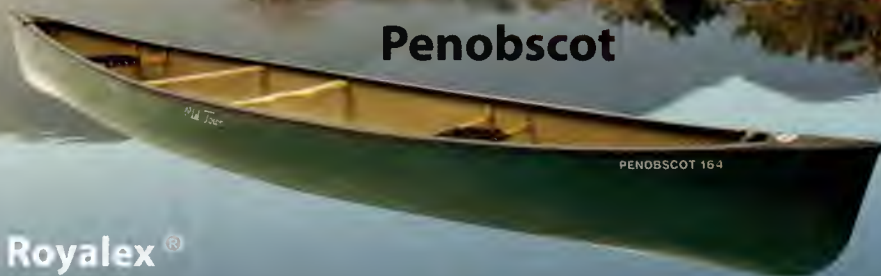
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PADDLING FOR ALL AT CHIPPENHAM

Chippenham Canoe Club has launched Paddle-Ability. Through donation from Invacare UK and Specialised Orthotic Seating, matched by Sport England Sportsmatch, the club has purchased a bright yellow katakanu.

This is a new venture for Chippenham, and further widens the range of activities that can be delivered. Safe and fun, it gives the experience of being on the water as part of a team for people of any ability. Paddle-Ability will be led by Martin Harrall and Julia Mannering, they will be working with Wiltshire Council for introduction to local schools and day centres.

The Sport England application form was comprehensive and required supporting evidence, being prepared is worth the effort. Notification of the award only took a few weeks so the club was able to place the order and take delivery of the katakanu before the start of the new river season. Sadly, before it could be delivered one of our young members, Jemima Prees, died tragically in a skiing accident. By kind permission of her parents, the boat is to be named 'Jemima Florence Daisy' in her memory.

Through the charity 'Jemima's gift' set up by her family, the Club will be acquiring 'Flying Starfish' a second katakanu.

FANCY DRESS PADDLE IN AID OF CANCER RESEARCH

Wadebridge Canoe Club recently held its inaugural Fancy Dress Paddle in memory of one of its founder members Carol Davey. Carol sadly passed away after a short battle with lung cancer last April. Paddlers from across Cornwall joined the club to have a relaxing paddle down the River Camel and raise funds for Cancer Research UK. There were prizes for the best fancy dress, which was won by Jeremy and Collette from Wadebridge Canoe Club in their Native American get up. The picture doesn't tell the whole story as emanating from the tepee on their canoe was Red Indian war chanting! Jeremy told FOCUS he had wanted to have smoke coming out of the tepee too but decided the fire risk was too high! With donations from the just giving site and money collected on the day the total stands at £380.

If you want to make a donation then go to www.justgiving.com/fancydresspaddle.

GO CANOEING - MEET THE SAILING CLUBS OF HAMPSHIRE

Stemming from a growing number of queries from local sailing clubs in Hampshire saw the first Go Canoeing meeting at a sailing club recently. Looking to complement what sailing clubs already offer to their members and supporting the growing number of sit on tops turning up at sailing clubs the open evening forum talked about everything from star awards, disciplines, Go Canoeing tours, types of boat, events and more. It will enable sailing clubs to support their membership and provide them with the knowledge to offer paddlesport to all ages and ability in the coming summer season and beyond.

BERKSHIRE SCHOOLS SPORTIVATE PROJECT

19 Schools across Berkshire are currently involved with a large Sportivate project to get over 250 young people to Go Canoeing. Utilising the three top Canoe England centres in Berkshire, Adventure Dolphin, Wokingham Waterside Centre and Longridge Activities Centre; the project includes seven school sports areas as coordinated by the school sports partnership. The eight-week project will culminate in a mini festival and will act as a blue print for the 2014 school games.

GUILDFORD SERIES A HIT YET AGAIN FOR SEA CADETS!

Every year the Southern Area Sea Cadets Paddlesport Team run a host of courses for Sea Cadets and Adult Volunteers. These range basic introductory courses right up to 4 star training and UKCC L1 Coaching Courses. Their most popular courses are the Area Multi Paddlesport Weekends – commonly known as the 'Guildford Series', which are a combination of four summer weekends in April, May, June and July, held at the Southern Area Paddlesport's Team base at Guildford Sea Cadets, on the River Wey.

By the end of the summer it is anticipated that 200 people from within the Sea Cadets right across the south east of England, will have accessed a range of differing Canoeing and Kayaking activities as well as having 12 new coaches developed.

Following the April weekend where stand up paddle boarding was trialled and an additional FSRT course added following the demand from participants, one cadet said, 'I loved the course and the whole experience. I found all the staff really helpful and friendly, which gave it a good atmosphere and I can't wait for the other courses I am also booked on for the next few months at Guildford.'

THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE - SPORTS AND HEALTH DAY

Young people who are involved in The Challenge Network, which is a community charity set up to support young people and offer them volunteering opportunities and give them key life skills recently attended an event at the Saracens Rugby Stadium. The young people attending came primarily from the North London and Lower Herts area, although each London Borough has its own Challenge Network.

Part of the day gave consisted of come and try sessions, looking to expose the young people to new sports and sign post them onto opportunities and local clubs. The young people were encouraged to come and try canoeing and to take on an ergo challenge with prizes for the top male and female times.

The day was enjoyed by all with some of the young people showing an interest in taking up the sport at club level.



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Article by Nigel Robinson, BCU Level 5 Sea Kayaking & Surf Coach

WHAT GEAR?

Sea kayaking is an absolutely amazing past time but you are venturing out in to one of the wildest environments around, so choosing and using the right kit is essential for keeping you safe comfortable and enjoying a great day out on the sea. Here's the FOCUS guide to the equipment you'll need to go sea kayaking.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

When buying kit give some thought to the conditions in which you might be kayaking and bear in mind that you might end up in the water, so always dress according to the water / air temperature, the wind and the weather. Remember to allow room for extra clothing to be worn underneath your top layer.

THERMAL LAYERS

By wearing several layers of clothes the paddler has more scope to regulate body temperature by removing or adding clothing. Generally a number of thin clothing layers are warmer and less bulky than fewer thicker items. Start with a thermal vest, then a thin fleece and, when cold, a thicker outer layer. Manufacturers usually label their products according to layer, e.g. base layer /outer layer. Materials such as polyester, nylon, or wool provide the best insulation against the cold and wet. The advantage of synthetic layers is that they are warm even when wet and they dry more quickly.

OUTER LAYERS

Depending on the conditions you paddle in, your experience and exposure will determine the outer layer of clothing. The main options are paddle top and salopette combination, paddle top and long john wetsuit or drysuit. These have two functions to act as a barrier against the wind and to keep the water off/out.

BUOYANCY AIDS (PFDS/PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES)

A buoyancy aid wraps around the body providing flotation, insulation and impact protection, but unlike a lifejacket, will not necessarily hold the head/face clear of the water. A buoyancy aid is only effective when it is fitted correctly for your weight and size.

TOWLINE

Towing is a means by which a paddler can assist an incapacitated paddler and kayak to a safe location. The towline can be one of the sea paddler's most useful and versatile pieces of equipment.

FIXED SKEG

A fixed skeg is part of the original hull design, forming an extension of the keel and a flattening of the rocker at the rear of the kayak.

RETRACTABLE SKEG

A retractable skeg is again fitted at the rear of the kayak but now takes the form of a pivoting blade that can be retracted into the hull (skeg box) or lowered externally in increments. In doing so it creates resistance and stops the rear of the kayak sliding around and causing a broach.

KAYAK CONSTRUCTION

Plastic is now the cheapest most popular material for kayaks. However for the dedicated sea paddler glass-reinforced plastic (GRP) remains the choice due to the ability to personally customise the craft to the individuals needs, even if it is a little more expensive!

SPRAY DECKS

Spray decks are available in three types: nylon spray decks, which are easy to fit and remove and are usually worn by beginners; Neoprene spray decks, which are harder to fit but more likely to keep rough water out. And a combination of neoprene deck and nylon torso.

KAYAKS

The range of sea kayaks available today is huge so what should someone new to the sport look for?

The first question anyone considering purchasing a sea kayak must ask, is 'what do I want the kayak for', or 'what do I want to do in this kayak?' The only way to find out if a kayak is right for you is to get out and paddle as many different kayaks as possible. Not just in a sheltered bay at a 'come-and-try-it' session held at one of the many sea kayak symposiums, but at least for a day or possibly longer, out in the type of conditions you would usually paddle in.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Having the correct safety equipment does not result in automatic safety. Nor does carrying a GPS, EPIRB, VHF radio or mobile phone guarantee a rescue. They are simply an aid, not the first line of defence.

The following recommended safety equipment should be carried:

- Selection of flares including a day/night flare attached to buoyancy aid
- VHF radio (waterproof and charged)
- Fully charged mobile phone in a suitable dry bag (for back-up to the VHF)
- Split/spare paddle
- Pump/hand bailer/sponge
- Waterproof torch with working batteries
- Waterproof compass
- Waterproof watch
- Emergency knife attached to PFD
- Basic first aid kit/a simple repair kit
- Sunscreen/sunglasses/sun hat
- Spare clothes
- Exposure bag
- Map/chart in waterproof case

THE PADDLE

Your paddle is effectively your drive train, brakes and steering so it's important to get it right. A well designed, good quality paddle will make a lot of difference to your enjoyment and comfort on the sea, however if you're looking to buy your first ever paddle there's no need to break the bank.

Here are some tips when choosing what to buy:

- The taller you are the longer the paddle you want, but between 212cm and 218cm in length will suit most.
- The feather, the name given to the angle the blades are offset by, is important, 60 to 70 degrees works well for sea kayaking. Many modern paddles have the ability to adjust the feather.
- A straight shaft is fine to start with, but as you progress there are some advantages to using a cranked shaft.
- The bigger the blades the stronger you need to be, when paddling on the sea, you'll often want to maintain a steady, smooth stroke, where loads of power is not necessarily required, consider this when choosing, too big a blade face could leave you fatigued early.
- Weight. Not so crucial when your starting out, but as you start to look at longer trips a lighter paddle is an advantage. Balance weight with strength and durability. Paddles made of composite material like carbon tend to be strong and light.
- Paddle leash. Some sea paddlers like to use a simple cord leash to attach their paddles to their kayak, so they won't float off by accident.

RUDDERS

Many sea kayaks now come with or have the facility to retrofit a rudder and therefore aid manoeuvrability.

The great advantage is the increased manoeuvrability especially at close quarters, or to help keep the kayak on course. However, just like the retractable skeg they all have various operating systems to raise and lower the rudder blade, as well as this there are also operating wires connecting the foot operating system to the rudder stock that effects the turning movement, all of which can fail! Therefore it is vital that the paddler can competently handle the kayak in all conditions, with or without the rudder.

National Go Canoeing Week 2013 - A Huge Success

Go Canoeing's annual festival of paddling fun, National Go Canoeing Week, has been hailed a great success after the nine-day event met its main aim, getting bums in boats. From 18th-26th May a whole range of events and activities took place across the country, giving newcomers and experienced canoeists alike the chance to pick up a paddle, climb into a kayak and have a crack at canoeing. Go Canoeing Development Officer Jenny Spencer said: "It was a great week and with everything from Starter Sessions and Guided Tours to open days and demo days, there really was something for everyone.

Paddlers lining up for a pre-paddle talk from the coach at a starter session.



"It was a real joy to see so many happy, smiling faces out on the water and we'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who got involved and helped make National Go Canoeing Week 2013 such a fantastic event."

But as the dust settles on what was a jam-packed week of activity, there is still a chance to get involved in National Go Canoeing Week 2013.

Send us your paddling pics and let us know what you got up to during the week and we'll post them on our website and Facebook Page. We'd love to hear your stories from the week, whether you took part in one of our events or activities or headed off on your own adventure.

Our NGCW photo competition is now over, but if you caught some memorable moments, striking images or scenic vistas, you can still enter your work into our ongoing photo competition, which will be judged in September.

As with the NGCW competition, there are two categories; View from a Canoe and You, Your Canoe & the Environment and there will also be some great prizes on offer. To Enter, email your photos to jonathan.schofield@gocanoeing.org.uk



NGCW was a chance to try out all different types of canoe and kayak.



"It was a great week and with everything from Starter Sessions and Guided Tours to open days and demo days, there really was something for everyone."

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

While National Go Canoeing Week has been an exciting time for the Go Canoeing Team, the one thing that really got us buzzing this year was our prize draw, which included a paddling session with an Olympic medallist!

We're currently putting the arrangements in place for our lucky winner to get out on the water with one of our Olympic heroes and, as the competition has proved to be such a big success, we've decided to do it all again.

If you would like to win the opportunity to go canoeing with an Olympian, all you need to do is sign up to the Go Canoeing mailing list before September 30th. Once signed up, you will be automatically entered into the prize draw, which also includes a two-night Family Stay in a National Trust Lake District Camping Pod.

We hope that National Go Canoeing Week inspired you to get out on the water, but if you missed out on the chance to get involved there's still plenty going at Go Canoeing to help you reignite your passion for paddling.

Our bank of Canoe Trails has now topped the 40 mark and we have some great Guided Tours listed with more to be added throughout the summer.

For more information, visit www.gocanoeing.org.uk



THE PALM BIG PADDLE TOUR

Go Canoeing will also be joining forces with our partners at Palm Equipment International as their Big Paddle event goes on the road. The Palm Big Paddle Tour will stop off at three destinations this month; Llanberis, Shepperton and Teesside, giving participants the chance to get involved with guided tours, workshops, games, races and general paddling fun.

There's something for everyone, so whether you fancy trying canoeing for the first time, want some coaching or advice or have a winning cardboard canoe design, come along and join us for a paddle!

For more information about the Palm Big Paddle Tour, visit www.thebigpaddle.com



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Alpine River Running

Running rivers in the UK can often be a frustrating affair. Not enough water, too much water, not to mention the familiar cold damp weather we often endure. So it's no surprise that after a hard winter of domestic river running our thoughts stray to warmer climes. The French Alps have a long history of luring UK paddlers for a yearly spring and early summer dose of adventure. It's really only a day's drive away, and generally boasts a warm and sunny climate, beautiful mountains, great food and drink, and, most importantly, loads and loads of fantastic white water runs to suit every level of paddler! So if you're planning a trip there this year here's our FOCUS on paddling in the French Alps...



WHY THE FRENCH ALPS?

For many years the French Alps was host to an annual migration of UK paddlers. It was the traditional location for many canoe clubs' annual summer trip and it was a favourite amongst hordes of university clubs, who would make the campsites of the Durance Valley their homes for weeks on end. To some degree it still is, but over the last few years the French Alps has been a little overshadowed by other, further-a-field, more exotic locations. But the fact of the matter is that the southern French Alps still offers a fantastic location with so many great sections of white water rivers that you can spend a week there and barely scratch the surface.

WHEN TO GO

If you're a seasoned alpinist, or are looking for pushier water then May and early June can offer big flows, but the rivers should be treated with respect, and you'll find that the hazards on even the lower grade runs increase significantly in seriousness. You can expect big spring melt water levels, but by mid-June things will have settled down a bit, the high flows will have started to run off and the area will provide you and your group an incredible amount of diverse and varied river runs. By the end of June, and into July, there are generally great, more manageable, levels for all and this is the time that many clubs favour to make their trips.

GETTING THERE

The fact that you can drive there with a roof rack full of boats is a great advantage. There are numerous ferry companies that run regular channel crossing services, from Dover and Folkestone. Driving to the Alps from a French Channel Port normally takes about twelve-hours, so add on an hour and a bit for the ferry crossing and any distance you may have to cover in the UK and you're looking at a journey time of anything from 14 to 20 plus hours. The best way to tackle this is by having two or more drivers share the driving, so you can take

shifts at driving and sleeping every couple of hours and do the journey in one push. Food, fuel, loo and coffee stops are also recommended every three to four hours to keep you awake and the blood flowing in your legs! Many groups usually catch a late (graveyard shift) ferry and then motor through the night using the above system. This cuts down considerably on the amount of traffic you'll encounter and can save a couple of hours off the trip. Alternatively you may want to break it down and stop overnight. It goes without saying that a good European atlas is a must, and make sure that all your vehicles have the necessary equipment/spares that are required by law, such as emergency triangle, spare bulbs, breathalyzer, first aid kit etc.

WHERE TO BASE YOURSELF

The main centres to stay at revolve around the bigger and more popular rivers. Briançon offers camping possibilities and has some nice apartments. It's close to the Durance and Guisane. L'Argentiere la Bessee is a small town, but has a popular campsite, which sits on the banks of the Durance, right next to the slalom course section. This means that there's plenty of scope for paddling straight from your tent door, and you can run the classic runs of the Durance Gorge, and the Gyrone and take out just a few yards from your camp. It also sports a nice lake, so it's good for family fun. Its fairly central location between the larger centres of Briançon and Embrun makes most of the classic runs fairly accessible. Guillestre and Embrun are also popular places to stay, as they offer a little more if you're looking for après paddling eateries or nightlife, and the campsite next to the famous Rabioux Wave was always another popular choice for paddlers.

ALPINE GEAR

Although the air temperature is generally hot the water in alpine rivers is snowmelt so is positively freezing! By all means take a short-sleeved top and board shorts,

"Although the air temperature is generally hot the water in alpine rivers is snowmelt so is positively freezing!"



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"No matter how many times you visit the French Alps, the speed and power of the water is always a bit of a shock."

but be sensible and dress for the swim. Alpine runs are faster than UK ones, and it's easy to get caught out. A long john wetsuit, or thermal layers and dry trousers/dry-suits will offer you more protection on your legs in the case of a swim and a long sleeved cag is also a good idea. It can get pretty cold at river level if the weather turns overcast, or you're in the bottom of a gorge. Save the 'shortie' for playboating or short fun runs, or if you do wear it on longer river sections always take a long sleeved cag and thermal as well. Good footwear is essential and it needs to have a solid grip sole for moving about over rocky terrain. It goes without saying that you should be taking your usual river running safety gear. Every paddler should be carrying a personal throw-line, whistle and knife and the group should have at least a couple of longer bank-rescue bags amongst them, as well as first aid kits, pin kits and split paddles. Boats are a personal choice, but it's best to veer towards a general river runner or a full on creek boat.

A WORD OF CAUTION

No matter how many times you visit the French Alps, the speed and power of the water is always a bit of a shock. Even on easier runs the water is fast and eddies can be few (or speed by way to fast). The rivers are generally higher in the afternoons due to the day's sun melting the snow up high. Take your time. Warm up on a lower grade river than you would normally attempt and get yourself in to alpine-mode. Give yourself plenty of time too; be realistic in your estimations on how long a run will take you. Factor in extra scouting/portaging; allow time to deal with any mishaps... The curfew on the water is six and it's bad form at best to break this. And no one wants to find themselves at the bottom of an alpine gorge with the sun starting to set!

RIVER RUNNING STYLES AND GROUP SIZE

As mentioned above alpine runs are fast and eddies can be sparse. This means that they are best suited to smaller groups. Groups from three up to about five work best, maybe six at a push. With this in mind if you are part of a larger group consider splitting in to smaller more manageable groups. Eddy hopping works great on alpine rivers and most runs are predominantly of the read and run, boat scouting variety. Having said that there are occasions where bank scouting, setting safety and portaging are advisable. Be aware of your group and if you're the lead paddler make sure you always leave plenty of time to grab that eddy a long way before any hazard. Clear river signals are also a must, and five-minutes before you get on to make sure everyone is singing from the same song sheet can prove invaluable.

THE CLASSIC RUNS AND BEYOND

If we were to produce a blow by blow account of all the rivers of the South Alps we'd need a book, not a few pages, so the best advice is to do some research online before you go, to help you plan your ideal itinerary as you organise your trip. There's lots of good info on the web, but we'd also highly recommend getting hold of a copy of White Water South Alps by Peter Knowles. It's recently seen a new updated issue and is packed with excellent river and regional info. **CF**

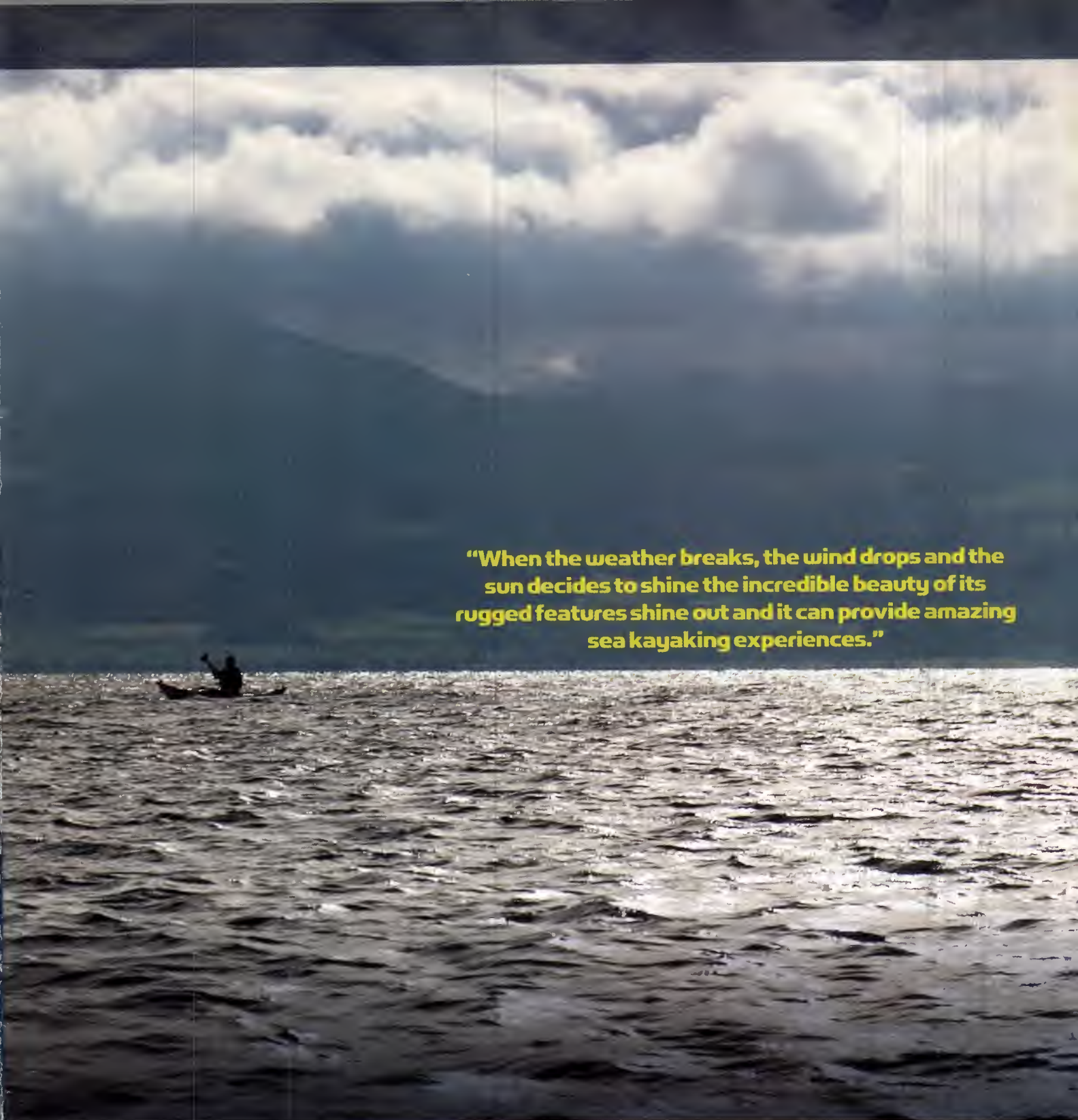
10 Great Sea Kayaking Destinations

Sea kayaking can offer a very special kind of experience and right here in the UK we have some of the most beautiful, wild and challenging sea paddling in the world just waiting for you to discover...

There are few things that can offer the feeling of freedom that a sea kayak journey can! Gently gliding across shimmering water looking at the abundance of sea birds, or riding over rollers on a challenging open crossing, sea kayaking has something to offer everyone. In this FOCUS guide we've chosen ten classic destinations, but remember we do live on an island and there is great sea paddling to be had all around the UK's coastline, so it's always possible to plan a sea paddling trip, no matter where you live...

1. ANGLESEY

It's no surprise that this little Welsh island is a real hot-bed of UK sea kayaking. It's coastline can offer excitement to the most hardened and experienced of ocean paddlers, but it can equally entice the beginner to the charms of a sea kayak and the arms of the ocean. The circumnavigation of Anglesey is a classic sea kayaking expedition incorporating the fast tidal streams of the Menai Straits, which separate Anglesey and the mainland. People have been known to complete the 90-mile route in less than twenty-four hours. For those looking for gentler paddling however, there's plenty to be found; a paddle round to the impressive Parliament Cave in Gogarth Bay and back, or a trip round Puffin Island are just a couple of examples.



“When the weather breaks, the wind drops and the sun decides to shine the incredible beauty of its rugged features shine out and it can provide amazing sea kayaking experiences.”

2. NORTHUMBERLAND

Wild Northumberland's coast can be savage and inhospitable to a sea kayaker, but when the weather breaks, the wind drops and the sun decides to shine the incredible beauty of its rugged features shine out and it can provide amazing sea kayaking experiences. From the sheltered waters of the Tweed Estuary, to the windswept shores and tidal flows of Lindisfarne and the Farne Islands Northumberland is simply stunning. Dotted along the coast are magnificent castles at every turn and the whole region is alive with wildlife and soaked in history making it a very special place indeed to take to the sea. ▶





3. CORNWALL

The Cornish coastline is steeped in history, myth and legend and with its abundance of imposing cliffs, secluded bays and coves, white sandy beaches and wildlife it's no wonder that it's a popular destination for sea kayakers. It has something to offer all levels of paddler, too. From exciting multi-day trips to rock hopping just off a sandy beach, the Cornish Peninsula has a diversity of environments that's truly impressive. This means that you always stand a good chance of matching the conditions and type of trip to your needs. In the summer the beaches and roads can become crowded with tourists, but out on the ocean it's always possible to find some peace. And who knows? You may even come across a visiting basking shark too!

4. THE SOUTH HAMS (SOUTH DEVON)

The beautiful beaches and coastline of South Devon offer some fantastic opportunities for sea kayak journeys. A designated 'Area of Outstanding Beauty', its sheltered estuaries, sea cliffs, caves, tucked away beaches, and an abundance of wildlife make it a fantastic place to take your first forays out on to the ocean in a kayak.

The Kingsbridge Estuary at Salcombe is lovely and with its car park and easy access to the sea Salcombe also makes a great base from which to explore the surrounding area, simply breathtaking, coastline. The south coast here is exposed and can get rough in tough conditions. Pick a calm, sunny day though and you'll be in sea kayaking heaven.





Sea kayakers ready and waiting for adventure.

“Nevermind the UK, the Outer Hebrides is in the top ten sea kayaking destinations in the world!”



5. PEMBROKESHIRE

Pembrokeshire in Southwest Wales was the UK's first 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' and is home to the UK's only coastal national park, so it's small wonder that it is a brilliant place to go sea kayaking. For the visiting ocean paddler the area really does have everything you could wish for, stunning beaches mixed with impressive sea cliffs: peaceful estuaries and, for when you get more experienced, even island crossing and circumnavigations!

6. THE ISLE OF WIGHT

As an ever-popular holiday destination on the south coast, the Isle of Wight needs little introduction. From a sea kayaker's perspective though it's a real gem and can offer a fantastic location for easier, beginner trips and longer more challenging trips alike. Its coast is varied and beautiful, including the famous Needles, and despite only being a short hop across the Solent by ferry (unless you choose to paddle the crossing) from the mainland it provides its own distinct, unique, feel. At least half the island is designated as an 'Area of Outstanding Beauty' and it has the advantage of being able to provide a wealth of other off-the-water attractions and interests too, making a great destination to combine a family holiday with some sea kayaking adventure. ★

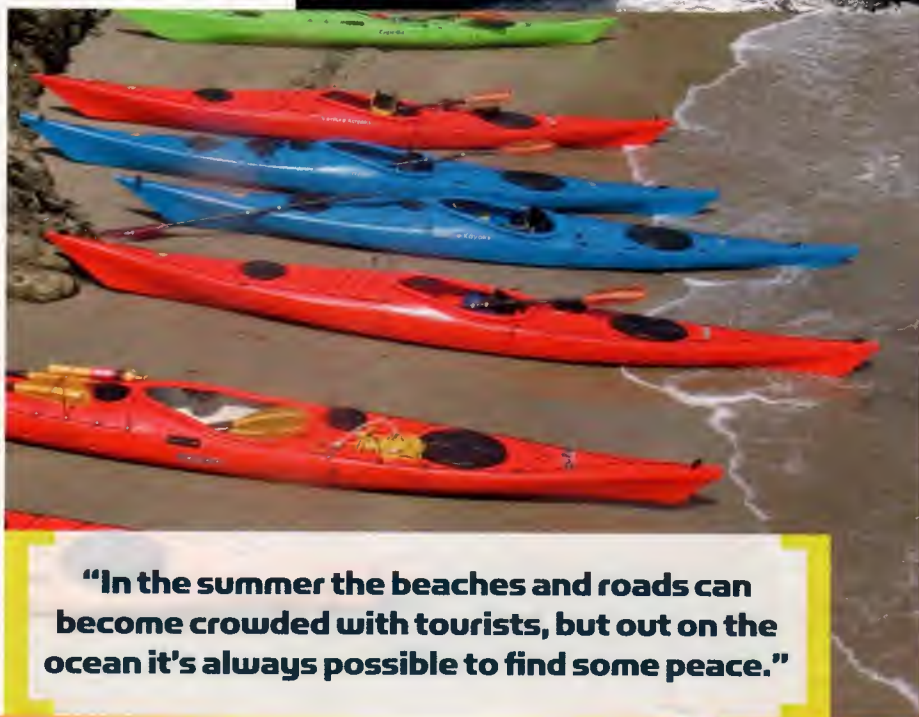
7. NORTH NORFOLK COAST

An often overlooked gem, the Norfolk coastline is simply stunning. It doesn't have quite the same rugged, exposed feeling of many of the other entries here, and towering sea cliffs are off the agenda but the beaches, bays and estuaries of Norfolk can offer the sea kayaker some great experiences. It's incredibly peaceful and even on busy days many of Norfolk's beaches have empty hideaways where you can stop for a spot of lunch. With miles and miles of wide sandy beaches, unspoilt 'Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty' and some of the best nature reserves in the country (including Titchwell, Snettisham and Cley), bursting with birdlife, it's easy to see why the Norfolk coast will appeal to the nature loving sea kayaker. Situated on the east coast of England and known as the bulging rump, Norfolk enjoys a pleasant climate all year round, with a below average rainfall for the UK, so it's a great place to cut your sea kayaking teeth.

8. THE OUTER HEBRIDES

Nevermind the UK, the Outer Hebrides is in the top ten sea kayaking destinations in the world! The 150 mile-long island chain that is the Outer Hebrides stands off the north west coast of Scotland and offers visitors culture, history, beauty, peace and adventure in equal measure. Miles of unspoilt white sandy beaches, rugged mountains, world famous archaeological sites and their fair share of hearty Scottish food and heart-warming whisky.

For sea kayakers, they offer rare opportunities to see some of the UK's most mysterious and magical wildlife, whales, dolphins, seals and otters. Add to the mix the diverse sea bird population, which includes puffins and white tailed sea eagles amongst a host of others. The Outer Hebrides are ideal for sea kayaking adventures, and there's a wide range of sea kayaking trips available, from scenic pleasant paddles to committing crossings, all set in an outstanding natural environment. Crystal clear blue water and white sandy beaches will inspire your sea paddling like never before.



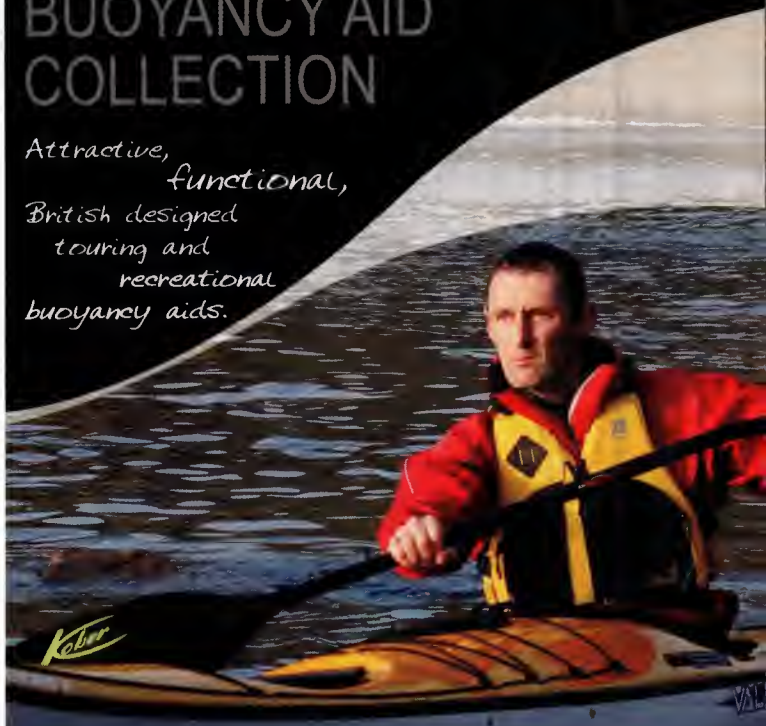
"In the summer the beaches and roads can become crowded with tourists, but out on the ocean it's always possible to find some peace."



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9. KNOYDART AND THE SMALL ISLES

Scotland is so blessed with an abundance of amazing wild and wonderful coast that it was hard not to fill this list with just Scottish destinations. Knoydart is situated in the Western Highlands and, although part of the mainland, still has an island feel about it. It is a mountainous peninsula, sandwiched between two beautiful lochs, Loch Nevis and Loch Hourn. Its coastline offers a wealth of trips to the sea kayaker and there are plenty of opportunities for wild camping. Heading south west across the water is the Isle of Eigg. The rocky An Sgurr, composed of volcanic pitchstone, which gives the island its distinctive profile, dominates its southern end. The rugged coastline provides no sheltered anchorage, but a new pier has greatly improved access. Muck lies a few miles to the south west of Eigg, and is a small, low lying island, exposed to the Atlantic swells. Head north and you'll come to Rum, the largest and most mountainous island in the group. Canna lies to the north west. And the whole region is home to many seabirds and marine vertebrates such as whales, dolphins and the plankton-feeding basking sharks.

10. THE JURASSIC COAST (DORSET)

The Dorset coastline boasts the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Park, the only one of its kind in the UK. As you'd expect it's very beautiful and a perfect spot for some sea kayak action. Experienced sea kayakers can challenge themselves against the area's hefty tides, and those with less salt-encrusted beards can simply enjoy a relaxing jaunt among the rocks. Lulworth Cove is a superb spot for spending a few hours afloat or you can stretch your self with a longer trip from Swanage Bay to Kimmeridge Bay. If you're feeling lazy, then why not take advantage of the storage space that sea kayaks offer and break the journey into two and camp out overnight. On the other hand if you're feeling very energetic, why not take those two days and go all the way from Swanage to Weymouth Bay? If you fancy really taking it easy, are new to sea kayaking or just want a spot of sheltered water, then a paddle in Poole Harbour could be just your cup of tea.



COURSES & GUIDES

The sea can be a treacherous place and deserves respect, the weather and tidal conditions can dramatically affect any trip, so it's ill advised to just hop in a kayak and paddle out in to the unknown. Taking a sea kayaking course will certainly help you get a grasp of the basics with regards understanding these two important factors and help you plan your own trips, but a great way of gaining experience and enjoying your first forays on to the sea safely is to book on to a guided trip. Guides are always highly qualified and in many cases will also provide gear and boats, so it's a great way of trying sea kayaking before you commit to buying your own boat. Guides are also a fantastic source of local knowledge and most will be paddling encyclopaedias of wildlife, history and legends. CE has produced a Canoeing on the Sea Environmental Guide which is available to download from our Website. Visit <http://bit.ly/ZaFSxG> Please take a look at it before going out on the sea.

A Record Year in the Making



THE 2013 DEVIZES TO WESTMINSTER INTERNATIONAL CANOE MARATHON SAW A NEAR RECORD ENTRY FIELD TAKE ON THE 125-MILE COURSE IN CHALLENGING CONDITIONS, WITH A HANDFUL OF TOP CREWS BATTLING FOR VICTORY.

At the finish, Daniel Seaford and Stuart West won the Senior Doubles with a time of 16 hours 44 minutes and 23 seconds. Across all categories, 301 boats of all abilities started battling against sub zero temperatures in some of the toughest conditions in years to complete one of the world's most demanding open-to-all endurance events. Over one third of entrants in the Senior Doubles retired.

THE RACE FOR VICTORY

Behind the headline, there was genuine drama. The competition for DW2013 was set up a year ago, in Easter 2012, when Richard Hendron and James King won for the third year in a row. That win put them on a level with two other crews for a hat trick of wins. Victory in 2013 would make them the first crew in the 65-year history of the race to win Devizes to Westminster four years in a row. Winning once is an incredible achievement; four on the trot would be truly phenomenal.

Step forward a handful of crews in the line up with the ability and experience to win who were ready to spoil the Hendron/King party.

Top of that list were Dan Seaford and Stuart West. Dan won in K2 back in 2009; Stuart came second in 2008 losing by a margin of just 45 seconds, this time he was entering to win. The build up Waterside Race Series had shown Seaford and West were on top form and peaking at the right time winning the final race and series. Hendron and King didn't enter Waterside D adding to pre-race speculation.

The DW start is one of the challenges. There is no mass start, no scheduled start time. Crews leave Devizes when they want, based on how long it will take them to arrive at Teddington where the River Thames becomes tidal. Departure times become part of the strategy and tactics for the top crews.



By Peter Hutchison



Breaking the ice at the start of the race. Photo Alexander Soloviev - www.sasnn-photo.co.uk



George Barnicoat and James (Louis) Allen leave Devizes. Photo Alexander Soloviev - www.sasnn-photo.co.uk

Despite leaving half an hour apart, Hendron/King and Seaford/West were within a minute of each other for the first 35 miles. Seaford and West edged ahead and were ten minutes up at Reading (54 miles). Seaford had fallen in at a portage near Aldermaston so a full kit change at Reading used up valuable time.

The gap had closed to five minutes by Marsh, almost half way down the course. By Marlow, Seaford and West had the lead back to ten minutes. Portaging in the dark, Seaford and West dropped their K2 in a deep lock at Cookham, mistaking it for the put-in point. Retrieving it took time and Hendron and King were the faster crew between Bray and Old Windsor (87 miles) and it looked like the race might be back on. A broken paddle for Hendron / King at Old Windsor put an end to that as the support crew were forced to run back to the car for the replacement.

“Winning once is an incredible achievement; four on the trot would be truly phenomenal.”

From Shepperton to Westminster, Seaford and West increased the gap. By the time they crossed the finishing line just beyond Westminster Bridge, they'd secured a winning margin of over 30-minutes.

For West victory was met with relief as it took a while to sink in. At the finish the pair were exhausted. When the news was confirmed Seaford was ecstatic. “It was quite nice to prove we were a winning team,” West recalls.

For Hendron and King, second place was a moment of reflection. “A fourth win would’ve been nice,” said Richard. Did that broken paddle change the game? “We lost by more than the time it took to get the paddle, so the break didn’t change the result,” added James. ▶



QUALITY RACING ACROSS THE FIELD

"It was a fabulous race between the top two crews," commented DW Veteran commentator Paul Ralph, reporting that at one point along the course the top two crews were within 1/500th of a second of each other. But Ralph highlights the quality across the field.

Stuart West agrees: "The race was beyond Richard/James and us. Matthew Enoch and Adam Norfolk of Nottingham KC were also a risk." That risk was removed around Hurley when Seaford and West overtook the Nottingham pair who were to finish third.

Fourth place went to the Belgian crew of Jan Laenen and Erik Verduyck with a time of 17:59. Both have won the K1 event in the past, so know the course well, but their performance in K2 Senior Doubles was a great unknown.

Liz Broughton, one of the top UK female marathon paddlers in the country, paired up with Steve Baker, coming in fifth with a time of 18hrs 46mins. Being sick all the way down didn't help and Lizzie joins the legions of paddlers with unfinished business who have the familiar nagging feeling of wanting to come back and do it properly. Ralph calls the performance "phenomenal in very difficult conditions."

A quite stunning result is the sixth place finish of Shuna Braithwaite and Kat Burbeck who were the fastest female crew for the third year in a row finishing in 19:07.

And in seventh place were Shirine Voller and Mike Thornton with a time of 19:11 digging away in the first C2.

A COLD AND WINDY EASTER

All crews had to endure the same conditions. A week out from the race, the Thames was in flood flowing very fast; ideal for experienced crews, more worrying for first timers. There was emerging talk of record times but by the time the race started, the flow had dropped off and the winning time was one hour ten minutes outside the record.

The main challenges were the cold and easterly head wind. Senior Doubles crews going through the night reported ice on the decks, blocks forming in the folds of clothes. West reflects, "I didn't realise your hands get cold and then at one point they just stop feeling cold." Full feeling is yet to return to his fingertips.

The easterly wind added to the physical challenge, sapping energy and stealing precious seconds. "A lot of people misjudged the conditions," thinks West. The figures bear out the sentiment. A retirement rate of 37% in the Senior Doubles is well above the one-fifth retirement rate of recent years.



Setting out from Devizes.



FOUR DAYS FREEZE

If the Senior Doubles had it tough, the four-day DW crews fared little better. It's a matter of debate whether prolonging the 125-mile course over four days makes for a tougher or easier DW. They're just different.

The first crew out of Devizes on Good Friday morning had the toughest call. An Arctic icebreaker would've been more use than a standard K2 as the bow of the boat crunched through the ice that thickened once the temperatures plummeted in the open countryside. Reports from down the course suggested that crews were having to portage for as much time as they were paddling on the first day.

There was only ever one team expected to win the Junior Doubles, and George Barnicoat and James (Louis) Allen of Longridge CC delivered with a time of 15-hours 12-minutes, a full 100-minutes ahead of the second place crew.

Allen said the boat was running the best it ever has. "We'd been very happy on the Watersides, doing DW just felt even more comfortable and we could both just pull hard and get on with the race." A crew to watch if they make the move to Senior Doubles!



Shuna Braithwaite and Kat Burback were the fastest female crew for the third year in a row. Photo Alexander Soloviev - www.sasnn-photo.co.uk



Passing in front of Westminster.

THE UNIQUE CHALLENGE OF DW

Most DW entrants aren't there to win, but for the experience and challenge. The reasons for entering are as varied as the entrants themselves. Well over half of the 634 entrants were first timers taking on the challenge. They joined the race from 17 different countries. The oldest was 73 years young and 17% were women. Many were returning for unfinished business.

One of the most memorable stories is the Australian couple doing DW as part of their honeymoon. The groom was in the boat, the bride in the support crew, the wedding photo album finished with a completed DW campaign in the Endeavour class, after a last minute shift from the Senior Doubles due to concerns about race conditions.

So who's up for DW2014? Seaford and West probably won't be on the start line together. "I don't need to do it again," said West who entered 2013 with the sole purpose to win after that second place finish in 2008.

Others will have personal demons to conquer or challenges to fulfil. Quite a few will be returning for unfinished business.

Whatever your reason, the challenge starts with getting to the start of the 66th annual Devizes Westminster International Canoe Marathon. If you have the courage, see you there.

"The main challenges were the cold and easterly head wind. Senior Doubles crews going through the night reported ice on the decks, blocks forming in the folds of clothes."

ENTERING DW2014

DW 2014 is open to all. If you're interested, you should start preparation in late summer building steadily to Easter 2014. Easter is 18-21 April 2014, a late one so it should be warmer. More information at www.dwrace.org.uk CF



The safety crew helping race winners up the steps at the course finish. Photo Peter Hutchinson.



K2 Senior Doubles winners Dan Seaford and Stuart West. Photo Peter Hutchinson.



GB Sprint & Slalom Report

Multiple Olympic medallist David Florence showed again at the team selections why he was ranked number one last year.



Article by Katriona Bush
Images by Antony Edmonds & Rob Eyton-Jones

The Select Few

2013 GB SPRINT & SLALOM TEAM SELECTIONS

After two weekends of intensely contested selection trials at the watersports centre in Nottingham and Olympic white water course at Lee Valley, GB Canoeing has selected its canoe sprint and slalom teams for the 2013 international season.

CANOE SLALOM

The results from Nottingham left selection opportunities wide open going into the final weekend at Lee Valley, the first time that racing had returned to the impressive Olympic venue, which witnessed double medal success for Team GB on that memorable day last August.

More than 1000 spectators were in attendance and saw with interest the way the venue is being re-developed into its post-games legacy mode, which includes a new coaching base for GB Canoeing.

Whilst all the London Olympians showed their class and ability to be consistent across the four race series, the weekend also saw the exciting emergence of young talent in a number of events.

No event was more hotly contested than the Men's K1, where Olympian Richard Hounslow clawed his way back onto the team by winning the final race, to add to his second place from Saturday.

Youngster Joe Clarke also secured his place in impressive style, claiming the prize of top boat of the series. He said: "It is a great feeling and it will be my first year on the senior team. I am only 20-years old so this is a big achievement for me. Richard (Hounslow)

is a good training partner of mine so it is fantastic to be on the team with him."

A disappointed Tom Brady had to settle for a place in the U23 team, despite having enjoyed a taste of senior action last year; Huw Swetnam squeezed him out.

In the Men's C2 the battle was on for the one place available, with Olympic medallists Baillie and Stott and Florence and Hounslow already pre-selected. It was the crew of 21 year old Adam Burgess and Greg Pitt (24) that rose to the challenge, taking the scalp of the Olympic Champions by 100th of a second to win the final race.

Adam told FOCUS: "It was a really good day for us beating Tim and Etienne and great to come to the finish line and hear everyone cheering. We knew coming into this weekend we had the advantage over Rhys (Davies) and Matt (Lister) so we just stuck to our plan and executed it well!"

The other youngster to make a big impression was 22 year old Tom Quinn in the Men's C1. Whilst David Florence continued to show why he was ranked world number one last year and dominated the weekend, Tom finished second to snatch the last team place behind Mark Proctor. ▶





Rachael Cawthorn retained her place on the team in style.

London 2012 gold medallist Ed McKeever "blowing off the cobwebs."



In the Women's K1, Lizzie Neave and a 'back to her best' Fiona Pennie, battled it out to end the series level on points and only after detailed calculations was Lizzie declared lead boat. 20-year old Bethan Latham continued her fine form to nudge out Louise Donnington and will now make her senior debut this season.

18-year old Mallory Franklin, who collected maximum points winning three from four races, will be joined by Kimberley Woods, also 18 and Alice Spencer in the Women's C1 senior team.

The senior team will head to Krakow, Poland for the European Championships 6-9 June.

SPRINT

The three London 2012 Olympic medallists head the list of athletes selected to compete for the GB Canoe Sprint senior team this season.

Men's K1 200m gold medallist Ed McKeever will race in this event at the first two World Cups of the season: Szeged, Hungary and Racice, Czech Republic.

Speaking after winning his K1 200m final at the Nottingham selection regatta, McKeever said: "That was my first race since London and it's nice to go out there and blow off the cobwebs, so to speak. The World Cups will be the real benchmark of where I am internationally."

Jon Schofield and Liam Heath, Olympic bronze medallists in Men's K2 200m, will combine forces again in the K2 200m at both World Cup events. "Liam and I have been solely focussing training this winter on the K2 200m", said Schofield after the pair won both their K2 200m finals at Nottingham. ▶

"Whilst all the London Olympians showed their class and ability to be consistent across the four race series, the weekend also saw the exciting emergence of young talent in a number of events."





“We would like to win the World Championships. It would be a stepping stone to Rio and it’s about making sure we are at the forefront of things in a few years’ time.”

Men’s K2 Olympic bronze medallists Liam Heath and Jon Schofield will join forces again at the World Cup events.

“We will hopefully perform well in the two World Cups and get ourselves selected for the Europeans and World Championships later this year. We’ve had a second and a third place before at Worlds and a three successive wins at the Europeans, so we would like to win the World Championships. It would be a stepping stone to Rio and it’s about making sure we are at the forefront of things in a few years time.”

Also selected for World Cups 1 and 2 are newly crowned Men’s K1 1000m national champion, Jon Boyton, with Ed Rutherford and Andy Daniels in the K2

500 and 1000m. Representing GB in the canoe at the World Cups will be Olympian Richard Jefferies, winner of the two Men’s C1 200m finals at Nottingham.

Confirmed in the women’s line-up are Olympians Jess Walker and Rachel Cawthorn, who will both compete in the K1 200 and 500m events. Said Cawthorn, after winning K1 200 and 500m finals in Nottingham, “It feels really good because the 500m is the one I’ve been training for and it was a good race in tough conditions with a massive headwind. I’m looking forward to the World Cups to see where I am internationally.”

The Women’s K4 500m will see London Olympians Angela Hannah and Louisa Sawers return to international competition in the K4 500m and joining them as crewmates are Lani Belcher and Hayleigh Mason.

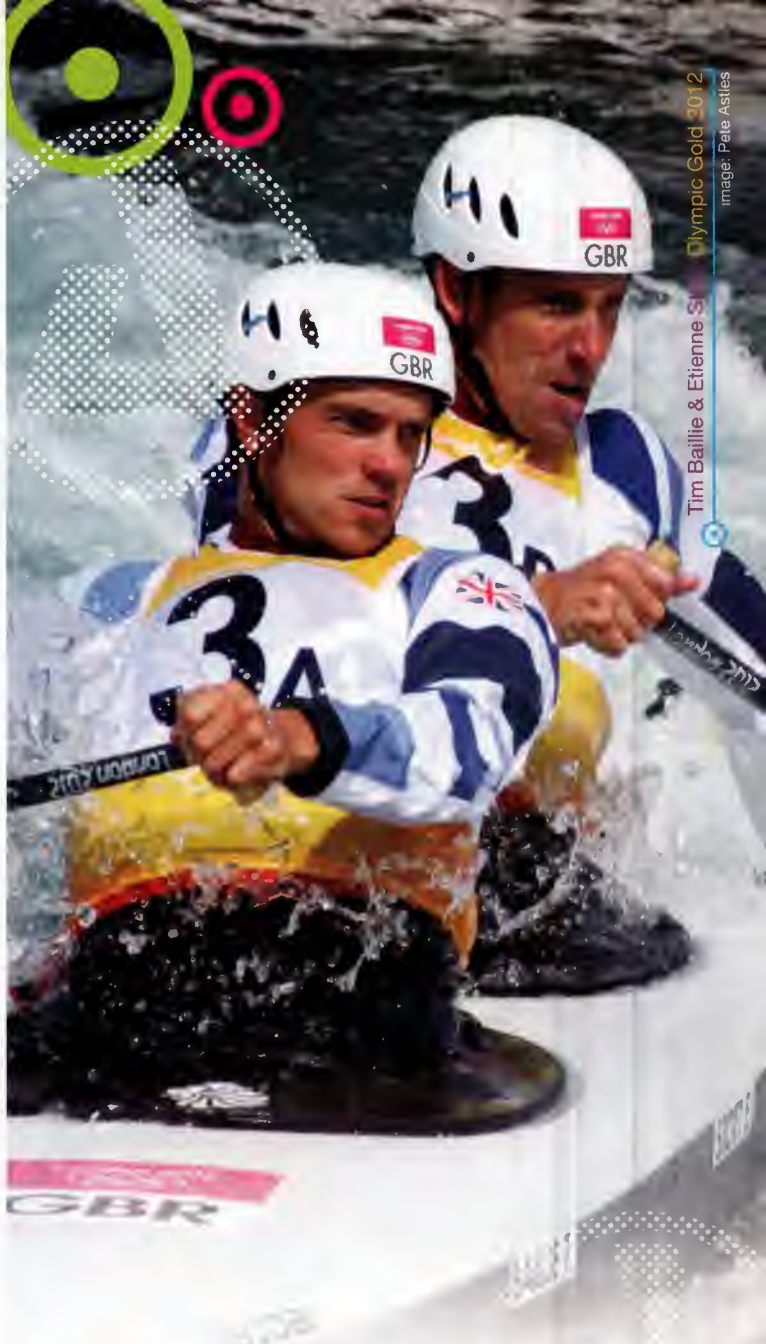


Amongst the new faces in the 2013 GB Senior team selected by the sport's International Panel is 23-year old Hannah Brown, who finished second in the second K1 200m final at the Nottingham selection event.

To see the full list of selected athletes in both sprint and slalom go to: www.gbcanoeing.org.uk/news

Congratulating the paddlers, BCU Performance Director John Anderson MBE said: "There has been some outstanding racing in both disciplines and in particular we have seen some encouraging performances by youngsters coming through.

Coupled with the appointments of new head coaches Paul Ratcliffe (slalom) and Scott Gardner (sprint), we are now looking forward to the season and getting our campaign for the next Olympics in Rio underway." **CF**



Tim Baillie & Etienne St
Olympic Gold 2012
image: Pete Astles

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All About the Journey

Wilderness Canoeing on Loch Sheil





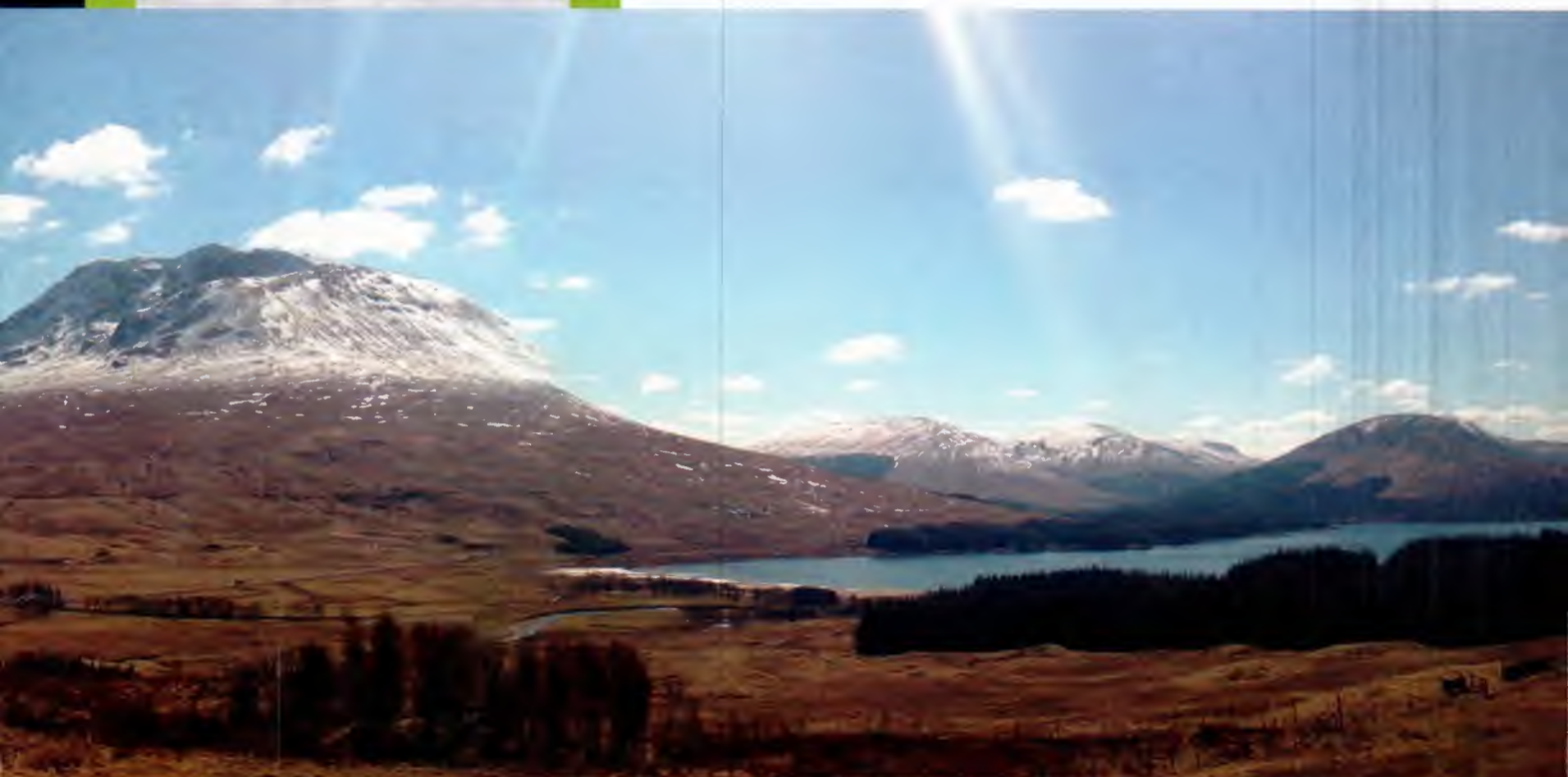
“Loch Shiel is an amazingly beautiful place, rugged and extreme at times, tranquil and idyllic at other times. Never underestimate the Loch and always play it safe and you wont go far wrong.”

The earliest known canoe is thought to have been built between 8200 BC and 7600 BC. This makes canoeing a very, very old method of getting around indeed. It does not surprise me then that canoeing seems such a natural and logical way to travel. Canoes enable us to pass through vast wilderness and take us to places that would otherwise be impossible or extremely difficult to get to on foot, by car or other means. For this reason, open canoes and bushcraft go hand in hand. Canoes can take us to those quiet, untravelled corners of the British Isles. Back in 7600BC bushcraft was simply living and existing, nowadays it is a loose collection of skills that enable us to live outside, happily and sustainably. It is a very popular past time for many and a way of life for some.

The UK, on the surface at least, can seem an unlikely place for wilderness canoe travel. However, look north, to the shining light that is Scotland and you will find a veritable playground of fresh and salt water lochs. Rivers, forests, mountains and moorland can be found. Thanks to the Land Reform Act 2004, we can all enjoy unfettered access to this vast, magical and beautiful land. Providing that we follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and leave no trace, we are free to canoe, camp, light fires and fully relax into the outdoor experience.

My story begins in Aberfeldy, Scotland where I was due to pick up a trailer full of canoes and then drive the 100 or so miles to Glenfinnan in the West Highlands at the north end of Loch Shiel. It was on this drive that I learned that although 100-miles does not sound like a long way and after all, Scotland is quite a small country and I drove 500-miles to get there, it is unwise to underestimate the labyrinth of single track roads, mountain passes and unbelievably distracting natural beauty.

Some three and half hours later, I arrived, met my group of eight and got started. First of all, as with most canoe trips, we had to organise the shuttle, which is a strangely and, for the most part, unessentially complicated process of ensuring that there is a car at either end of the Loch! ►



WILD WATER

Loch Shiel is 128-meters deep and some 28km in length as the crow flies. Our route took us along the shore line, rarely crossing the open expanses, in order for us to make use of natural shelter from the wind, provide an easy escape route off the water should the need arise and to better enjoy the scenery.

What Loch Shiel lacks in direct access it makes up for in isolated wilderness, which can be both a curse and a blessing. You are unlikely to be disturbed by anyone or anything on the Loch, other than the occasional red deer, ticks or the cursed Highland midge; but be warned: if anything serious should happen to you, you are very much on your own. There is no road access other than the northern end at Glenfinnan and the southern end near Acharacle. There is a small logging track that runs along the south eastern side but do not bank on encountering passing traffic.

For much of the 28km, the Loch is hemmed in by towering, snow capped mountains, heather fields and bogs, making getting in and out on foot a very tricky and unwelcoming prospect.

It's this remoteness that attracted us to the Loch, we wanted to experience real wilderness. We were not disappointed.

Back at the start point, we had a briefing, checked and loaded our equipment and tested the trim of the boats. First of all, it is easy to overload a canoe with five day's worth of equipment, most of which you probably won't need, but you're not carrying it right? So throw it in anyway? No, less is definitely more when it comes to expeditionary travel, essentials only and do not forget that although you are not walking with your kit on your shoulders, you are still propelling it through the water with your arms and shoulders, so the lighter your load, the easier it will be.

My group opted to learn this the hard way and even asked me, in all seriousness, if they should take a car battery to charge their phones and cameras with. I toyed with the idea of some tough love on this question, often preferring to let people learn from their own mistakes, but relented in the interests of safety and the environment, the battery went back into the car.

SPREADING THE LOAD

Trimming the boats is the process of ensure that the weight is evenly distributed for calm conditions and when paddling into the wind, it is better to have more weight in the front of the boat, allowing the bow to dig in a little and make it less prone to turning in the wind.

Next is the question of how to secure the load into the boat. First of all we want to ensure that in the event of a capsize, the gear does not float away or blow away in the wind, losing a sleeping bag out there could be disasterous.

Most people tend to tie gear into the boat, tying it all down to ensure that nothing can fall out. The disadvantage to this is that it makes it virtually impossible to X resuce or empty out quickly while on the water, it's just too heavy.



My preferred way of securing gear is to use the leash method, one end of the rope or cord is tied with a releasable knot to a suitable anchor, this cord is then threaded through every item of kit on board and finally tied off the the last item or bag. Enough slack is left so that the whole lot can be thrown out and enough slack is there to X rescue the boat, get everyone back in and then easily retrieve the gear by pulling it in. It is important to make this tidy and leave no chances for arms, legs, hands or feet become snagged in the rigging.

This may seem complicated and extreme but consider that the water temperature was so cold that dipping a finger in was actually painful, imagine trying to empty a boat out with five day's worth of food, sleeping gear, water and everything in while suffering the effects of cold water emersion and probably hypothermia shortly afterwards. In the event of a swim on Loch Shiel in April, it is imperative that you get out of the cold water immediately and into dry, warm clothing and preferably off the water to warm up by a fire

I had briefed my group on all of these points before we set off, along with some guidelines on recognising the



onset of hypothermia before it takes hold and then off we went. The sun came out for us as we left Glenfinnan and with a mild breeze behind us we sped off to find the first camp site.

BEING OUT THERE

A couple of peaceful hours later we arrived at a likely looking spot, a large shingle beach in a secluded bay with a small island in front of us; sheltered from the wind with flat, grassy surfaces to sleep on. It is rare to find a perfect campsite that ticks all of the boxes but in essence you are looking for somewhere that is safe, protected, and has abundant resources. You need a flat surface to sleep on, free of overhanging dead tree branches or other things that might fall on you in the night, enough firewood to keep you going, fresh water and shelter from the wind. I would also add to that, somewhere that the deer do not obviously sleep: the grass and bracken are absolutely loaded with ticks, a parasite that sneakily attaches itself to you and drinks your blood. Anywhere where there are deer, there will be large numbers of ticks!

“Much like happiness, expeditions are about the journey, not the destination.”

A trip like this is as much about just being there as it is about canoeing or bushcraft. We gave ourselves plenty of free time to explore and relax into it but as the group discovered, things take time in the wild: firewood must be collected, tents must be pitched, food cooked, water filtered and purified, plans for the following day made and equipment looked after. It is easy to underestimate just how much work is involved in running a camp but as a rough guide, expect to be spending a good two or three hours on setting up camp, cooking and sorting your water and gear out.

Which brings us neatly on to water. On a limited diet, i.e. no fresh fruit and veg, we need to drink around two to three litres of fresh water a day, depending on how hard we work and how much we sweat. This quickly adds up to a huge amount of water that needs to be filtered, to get rid of particulate matter and purified to kill off bacteria, parasite and viruses living in the water. We filtered our water through Millbank bags and boiled it to make it safe to drink and it was a major task each day to filter and boil enough water to keep everyone hydrated and with topped up water bottles for the following day. ►



FINDING THE RYTHYM

The mountains of the West Highlands harbour changeable weather that is difficult to predict so it is always worth keeping one eye on it. The following morning saw fairly high winds and an icy temperature. Paddling a canoe in the wind is challenging, it is important to keep your paddle in the water. This gives you some traction against the wind and helps to stop it from blowing you off course or across the loch. The Indian Stroke is particularly useful for this as the paddle remains in the water at times and provides forwards power and can be adapted into a J stroke for steering.

Another good option in windy weather is to build a raft using your canoes and some poles. We foraged for a couple of straight, strong dead pine poles and lashed the five boats together with some discarded rope that we found on a beach, the front three boats providing forwards power and the rear two providing steering. This is a great option with many benefits, not least, it is a more sociable way to get around and everyone can chat and in our case make fun of each other along the way. Rafted canoes are very stable but care must be taken to ensure that they can deal with waves and not swamp.

A few days into the trip, we all settled into the peaceful rhythm of nature, stopping when it was too windy and finding time to relax in the sunlight while waiting for windows in the wind to move onward. It is important to know when to stop on trips like these, there is no point in trying to fight nature, you will lose. Best to find somewhere nice to stop and wait it out. This is why I always have at least an extra 24 hours' worth of food with me, as should you when traveling in remote places.

On the last night we found yet another picture postcard, sheltered bay with a golden sandy beach and small island a stone's throw away. I opted to set my hammock up in the pine woodland behind the beach while the rest of the guys put their tents up on the flat, grass bank in between. That night the sky was clear, a sure sign that it's going to be a cold one. The clear sky provided some of the best star gazing to be found anywhere on account of the lack of artificial light pollution, the sky literally looks different up there. This provided a good opportunity to discuss navigating by using the stars.



The following morning, all of our damp and wet kit was frozen solid, washing in the dangerously cold loch was simply not an option as I rolled out of my toasty warm sleeping bag, our nice, safe and easy to paddle raft, still tied together on the beach was an inviting prospect. One last briefing on the dangers of letting our guard down towards the end of an expedition and we were off to our destination, the township of arachacle.

The scenery by this point was changing, the mountains fading behind us and a large, open, flat expanse in front of us, but the water was calm here which was a nice change. The mountain pass that makes up most of the northern end of the loch helps to funnel the wind and concentrate it into a problem. Once clear of the mountains, the wind can disperse and is less of a problem. I could not help but notice a slight sadness at leaving the mountains behind though, they are so close to you, surrounding you on all sides that they feel like shelter and safety. It's a difficult feeling to express.

We headed south and after paddling for a couple of hours, watching a tiny black spec in the distance become larger and larger until it became a pier. We were there, at the finish point.

Loch Shiel is an amazingly beautiful place, rugged and extreme at times, tranquil and idyllic at other times. Never underestimate the loch and always play it safe and you won't go far wrong.

Much like happiness, expeditions are about the journey, not the destination.



MATT FLETCHER

Matt is a BCU UKCC Level 2 coach, SPA climbing instructor and IOL / NCFE Bushcraft Practitioner. He works in a freelance basis and specialises in enabling expeditions for groups and bushcraft training. At the core of everything he teaches is the Leave No Trace ethic, ensuring that the message is passed on and that our wilderness and countryside areas are kept in the best possible condition for other to enjoy.

When not teaching, running courses and on expeditions, he is usually climbing, canoeing, in the woods somewhere or on an expedition! www.BushcraftandSurvival.com CF

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DISCLOSURE CHANGES

On 1st May 2012 the Protection of Freedom Act received Royal Assent, which introduced new safeguarding and vetting requirements. To meet the changes and new eligibility criteria for regulated activity we have updated the BCU Disclosure Policy and Guidance. Full details are available from the Canoe England website in June.

www.canoe-england.org.uk/about/safeguarding-and-protecting-children-and-vulnerable-adults/

The Government have postponed their announcement re the implementation of the Single Disclosure and Continuous Updates elements. This is now expected summer 2013 and we will update our guidance on Disclosure once the details have been confirmed.

PRICE CHANGES

From 1st July we're changing some of our prices.

Canoe England individual membership prices will increase by an average £2 annually. For adult members this means a total annual cost of £39.95.

We've frozen prices for the past two years and despite continuous efforts to reduce our costs, we haven't been able to mitigate a general increase in costs beyond our control.

We want to continue to provide members with the same level of benefits and that's why we're raising the price from July. The price of your Canoe England membership may be going up slightly, but you're still getting fantastic value for money, working out at just 10 pence per day!

5 reasons to be a Canoe England member

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Your Canoe England membership saves you pounds compared with buying these benefits independently.

In addition to the above by being a member of Canoe England, you not only save money, you help support our brilliant sport of canoeing!

BUCS CANOE POLO 2013

Report by Beth Barratt, photos by John Witherstone

The British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Canoe Polo tournament was held at Hatfield Water Park, Doncaster on 20th/21st April 2013. As usual, a huge number of Universities turned out to compete for the all-important BUCS title. Brilliant sunshine helped the competition get off to a great start as teams got straight on to tackle each other in the knock-out rounds.

By the Saturday evening Sheffield Hallam, Sheffield and Durham were looking like clear favourites in the Open category, while Durham and Loughborough looked set to take each other on for victory in the Women's.

An early start on Sunday morning saw Loughborough girls clinch a 2-0 victory over Durham sending them through to the next rounds leaving Durham to look for another route back to the final. Matches at 10.20am in the Open league saw Sheffield Hallam narrowly beat Warwick 3-2 and Durham beat Sheffield 2-0. Durham and Sheffield Hallam then came head to head with Sheffield taking the lead and winning with a score of 4-2. Sheffield thought they had their route back to the final mapped out but Warwick stole the show beating Cardiff 4-1 and then Durham 4-2, leaving Durham with a bronze as they sailed into the final. With some work to do, Durham Ladies beat Cardiff 4-1 and Southampton 3-1 before taking on Bristol in a 3 half golden goal knockout and finally securing their place in that all important BUCS final.

So, it was time for the finals. Nottingham Old Boys took on ULU Old Boys, smashing them 5-2 and Durham Men's B clinched a 3-2 victory over Cardiff Men's B. In the Women's, Loughborough and Durham battled it out until Loughborough finally won with a score of 6-3. The Open league final saw Sheffield Hallam destroy Warwick to take the BUCS title.

A massive 'thank you' to Loughborough University for organising the competition.



“Brilliant sunshine helped the competition get off to a great start as teams got straight on to tackle each other in the knock-out rounds.”

PADDLE-ABILITY

BCU PADDLE-ABILITY SYMPOSIUM

Report by Nick Liley, photos from Gill Arnett

Canoe England hosted the national Paddle-Ability Symposium in Birmingham on 16th and 17th March 2013. The event was run for coaches with experience of, or an interest in paddling with disabled people. The symposium was run in conjunction with the Lake District Calvert Trust, an outdoor centre, which specialises in working with people with disabilities. Over the weekend, the group attended a number of workshops and courses, all with an aim of increasing their knowledge and awareness of coaching disabled paddlers.

On day one, instructors from the Calvert Trust led the morning with the BCU Paddle-Ability Foundation Course. With such a significant amount of knowledge and experience in the room, much was learnt and shared amongst the group.

Afternoon workshops included a fascinating look into the world of Paracanoe classification by Julie Lowe and Carme Adell. Ollie Harding and Gary Quittenton led an insightful workshop into how clubs can include disabled paddlers into their sport, and Clarisse Smith of Canoe England demonstrated how clubs could improve their Paddle-Ability programmes through Paddle-Ability Top Clubs and Go Canoeing.

On day two there was the opportunity for everyone to get on the water as part of the new Paddle-Ability Intermediate Course. Led by the Calvert team, this was a more practical day, which gave delegates the opportunity to share practical solutions of how they could get disabled paddlers to fully participate in their sport. The group looked at seating solutions, paddle adaptations, ways of stabilising boats and concluded with a session looking at rescue techniques. The message throughout the weekend was simple; to focus on what people can do, rather than what they can't. Adaptive equipment doesn't always need to be particularly technical or expensive. The standard tools of choice may suffice: Duct tape and foam! With good planning and by simply talking to the individual, coaches have all the tools they need to enable most people to get on the water and enjoy this great sport.



"Focus on what people can do, rather than what they can't."

DOUG STAFF FROM FALCON ROWING AND CANOE CLUB

"The weekend was both an enjoyable and a valuable learning experience for me. There was lots of sharing of experiences and resources along with fun practical sessions. The course has given me greater confidence to work to include all folk who want to experience paddle-sports whatever their level of ability. I learnt a great deal. More importantly I have been introduced to a supportive and enthusiastic group of coaches who are my on-line 'human resources' there at the end of an email to answer my questions and point me in the right direction. The Calvert Trust (staff) were the ultimate outdoor professionals - knowledgeable, experienced, resourceful, adaptable, people-centred and great fun to be with."

Following the symposium, Doug is now running a skills course and a D of E expedition on the River Thames for young adults with disabilities.

If you're interested in Paddle-Ability please contact Canoe England or the Lake District Calvert Trust, and watch out for the next symposium in 2014.

www.canoe-england.org.uk

www.calvert-trust.org.uk/lake-district

“The term ‘Mini’ probably reflects the length of course possible at Stone.”

STAFFORD AND STONE CANOE CLUB – MINI SLALOM SERIES 2013

Report by Andy Neave



The Stafford and Stone Winter Mini Slaloms have been organised since the 1970's. In the early years just one or two events were held but since the late 1980's a series of three races has been completed every winter. On the small number of occasions when an event has been postponed due to weather or high river levels a revised date has permitted completion of the series.

The term 'Mini' probably reflects the length of course possible at Stone. In the 1970's, slalom courses often exceeded 200secs at Premier events but at Stone the fastest times might only be 120secs.

The Mini Slaloms attract entries across all divisions. A handicap system gives paddlers from all divisions and categories an opportunity to do well with the top 10 boats across the series competing in a one run final to determine the overall Winner. Stafford and Stone have been presenting mugs as prizes since 1997 and many regular competitors across the years have built up quite a collection. All paddlers that complete the series without gaining a prize are presented with a mug as a thank you for supporting the events and as consolation for not having actually won a mug at any of the slaloms.

2013 proved to be a record year with the highest ever single event entry of 175 at Mini 1 and the best series total of 444 entries. Good fortune favoured the series this year with the scheduled dates avoiding the worst of the bad weather and the flooded weekends. The handicap favoured C2's and in the final Woods & Woods from Rugby CC took the title ahead of Smith & Harratt, Winchester CC/S&SCC with Alan Aslin from Midland CC taking 3rd.

Full results are available at www.canoeslalom.co.uk

FEMALE FOCUS

In this issue we catch up with two great female paddlers from around our fantastic sport...

5 MINUTES WITH... Freestyle Kayaker Gabby Bates



I first got into canoeing... when I was about eight years old with my mum!

A typical day, for me, is... depending if I'm at uni or at home; seeing friends, kayaking, uni stuff, gym, playing guitar, jam sessions, or a night out

My best canoeing moment ever... was when I won bronze at the world championships in 2011!

My real guilty pleasure is... a nice fancy cocktail I'm scared of... rafts, but only when I'm in my boat and there's a raft next to me.

My ultimate goal in life is... to have fun. Whether it be on the water, or at uni, or whatever, enjoy it. Whatever we do, we do better if we enjoy it. Ultimately I'd like to go into performing arts, however I know how competitive the industry is.

An ideal night out for me is... drinks with good friends, followed by town. If not, going to cool places and taking the guitar's to jam. (Sorry, I sound like such a hippy)

This year I'm most looking forward to... the summer! Boating lots! Being in Edinburgh Fringe festival, and having fun!

5 MINUTES WITH... Sea Cadet Corps PO Becky Kendall



I'm a volunteer with the Sea Cadets...

this involves two nights a week teaching 10-18 year olds a variety of land and water based skills, including kayaking. I spend most weekends throughout the summer with cadets from surrey, and southern area teaching levels one and two, with an extra night per week focusing on racing skills ready for the cadet's three regatta's each year.

The most challenging aspect of my role is... finding out what works best for each individual cadet, and helping them to push past their initial boundaries. It is important to make open-ended plans, to meet their changing needs for each session. It makes me a lot more grateful for what my coaches did, and are still doing, for me to get me to the level I am at now and move forwards.

My favourite part is... seeing my cadets capsized cheerfully when they used to be afraid of it, or beating their best times in race training. Its personal things that you don't really appreciate until you get to know them, so once it clicks for them, the transformation is incredible to watch, and nothing beats it.

I first got into canoeing... at thirteen through the cadets, and then went on to join the Wey Kayak Club in Guildford. Since then I have become a trainee 4* sea kayaker, a 3* surf kayaker and a trainee level 2 coach. There has always been a mass of support from my colleagues in the cadets to go further as a paddler and develop into a stronger coach.

A typical day, for me, is... a quick swim before working in the pre-school for most the day, then either heading down to the cadet unit for the evening, or relaxing at home.

My best canoeing moment ever was... on a Sea Kayak trip on the Jurassic Coast, finding a gap in the cliff line by Old Harry's Rock and surfing through it; it was such a rush! Either that, or passing my 3* surf assessment, as it was something that I had to try quite a few times to get right.

When I'm not working, I'm... normally down the gym with friends, down the unit with cadets, or on the water. I don't generally like to be doing nothing, so the cadet lifestyle works well for me, and having a big group of paddlers to meet with means there's plenty of chances for a bit of time on the water.

I'm most looking forward to... running my own sea kayak day trips and courses; once I have passed the 4* sea kayak leader assessment and the BCU UK CC level 2 assessment, I will need to go onto a moderate water endorsement course. I think it will be fun to do a weekend trip, and camp overnight with the cadets by the sea!

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WATERWAYS & ENVIRONMENT

CANOE LAUNCH ON THE RIVER TEES AT LOW FORCE

The River Tees at Low Force offers some of the best paddling opportunities in the North Pennines. The geology has created an excellent sequence of short falls that provide the experienced paddler a great challenge.

Low Force, however, is within the Upper Teesdale National Nature Reserve and is one of the most protected landscapes in the UK. This is because due it contains many nationally rare and vulnerable habitats including the flower rich banks of the river.

Natural England and North Pennine Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) have worked to manage access throughout the reserve and prevent further localised erosion by visitors to Teesdale.

Canoe England have worked in partnership with the North Pennine AONB, riparian owners and Natural England to design a bespoke timber canoe launch which has now been installed immediately upstream of Low Force Falls.

The launch will enable paddlers to access and enjoy the river whilst protecting the important habitats, which colonise the riverbanks.

We all want to preserve our natural aquatic environment and Canoe England is working hard to educate paddlers of the importance of not seal launching which has the potential of damaging the riverbank vegetation especially in environmentally sensitive area such as Low Force.

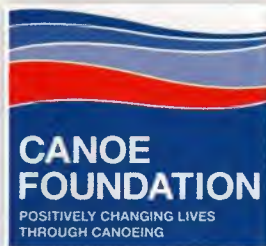
LONG SERVICE AWARDS

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.



FUNDRAISING FUN AT GB CANOEING SELECTIONS

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'. As the Charity develops further, the presence of the Canoe Foundation at some of the more high profile events in the paddle-sport calendar has increased. One such example of this was our attendance at the GB Canoeing slalom selection weekend at Lee Valley on 27th and 28th April 2013.

With a large number of spectators, paddlers and support staff attending the event over the two days, this was an ideal way to increase awareness of the Charity, while at the same time engage with those attending to raise funds in a fun way. Therefore utilising the help of numerous volunteers, we sold hundreds of tickets for our Charity Duck Race, which was held at the end of racing on the final day of competition.

Upon their release from the bridge at the top of the Lee Valley White Water Course, hundreds of little yellow ducks floated down the rapids, with the prizes awarded to the first three ducks to complete the course and reach the bridge just below the finish line, while other prizes were awarded at random as the ducks were collected.

Top prize winners:

1st Duck 165 – K. Hurrell from Leytonstone

2nd Duck 75 – G. Whitehead from Enfield

3rd Duck 408 – M. Westley from Sidmouth

All winners will be contacted individually, with prizes sent out directly.

In addition to the Duck Race, other activities were also held on site, with individuals able to purchase a range of GB Canoeing clothing (to keep them warm in the cold weather), while others chose to take to the water with a Go Canoeing come and try it session or have a go at the 20m Paddle Challenge on the kayak ergos.

One of the other aspects which drew a big crowd on both days was the appearance of our Canoe Slalom Olympic Champion C2 crew. They did signing sessions, where young and old came to have their photo taken with the athletes, see and touch a London 2012 Gold Medal, as well as getting autographs.

Overall it was a great weekend of competition at Lee Valley and it was great to see so many new people introduced to the sport.

Further details about the Canoe Foundation; our attendance at future events; how you can fundraise for us; Case Studies from some of the projects we have supported; and all the latest news can be found on the website at www.canoe.foundation.org.uk and through our social media www.facebook.com/canoe.foundation and @CanoeFoundation

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

Until next time happy paddling!



[RIVERS ACCESS CAMPAIGN]

ACCESS SITUATION A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE



There have always been twists and turns in the access debate and the promotion of it within the media but none more so than on 4th April when the Guardian journalist George Monbiot placed an article/blog in the Guardian on the following: 'We have no right to our rivers while Richard Benyon's interests are served'

www.guardian.co.uk/environment/georgemonbiot/2013/apr/04/right-rivers-richard-benyon-interests

The comment is around how the environment minister is being permitted to oversee a highly sensitive issue in which he has an active proprietorial stake. The blog highlighted the poor track record of Richard Benyon when addressing such issues as increased access for the public (amongst other things mentioned in the article) due to his and others private landowner interests.

Mr Benyon, as well as being an MP, is a director of the family controlled Englefield Charitable Trust without going in to detail here a little research work easily finds out what Mr Benyon has done in his career and his record whilst in Parliament.

George Monbiot expressed the views, which are shared by Canoe England, that: for many years canoeists, kayakers and wild swimmers have been seeking access to the rivers of England and Wales and that there are failings with the current thoughts by some that rivers are private landowners/fisheries interests have little interest to share the rivers. Taxpayers money should be used for public betterment and not for private interest.

Alongside the blog people were able to add comment and many did including Mark Lloyd CE of the Angling Trust. The access issue is not and never has been a canoeing v angling debate yet some prefer to polarise it that way.

Mr Lloyd said ... "The BCU/ George Monbiot are causing confusion to paddlers due to us promoting the work of Rev'd Douglas Caffyn and his work has no foundation in truth or reality. The law has been repeatedly confirmed by the courts and is clear: there is no universal right for people to canoe on non-tidal waters. The BCU has repeatedly ordered their officers not to sign agreements drafted locally with angling clubs and landowners unless they are for unrestricted rights.

Anglers have done far more than any other group to fight pollution and restore water habitats. The Angling Trust and Fish Legal devote most of our time and resources to lobbying, campaigning and taking legal action to protect the water environment, for the benefit of fish and other aquatic wildlife."

Canoe England (CE) added to the blog the following in rebuttal: CE does not subscribe to this assumption. We believe that the strength of recent historical research on the historical use are grounds

for a presumption in favour of access and public rights to physically usable inland waters. It is noted the Angling Trust has not produced an informed challenge to the research by the Rev'd Dr Caffyn's. Whilst not a lawyer he has received degrees at both Masters and Doctorial level for his research. We would have expected the Angling Trust to argue and justify the certainty that the law is settled.

Public access to inland waters remains a long-standing issue that has not been addressed by a succession of government administrations. It has caused some interests to consider canoeing can be unlawful.

CE would like to draw attention to Mr Lloyd's statement that 'The law has been repeatedly confirmed by the courts and is absolutely clear: there is no universal right for people to canoe on non-tidal waters'. However, Defra has very recently informed Members of the BCU 'that there is no clear case law on whether a 'common law right of navigation' exists on unregulated rivers. This is widely accepted to be an unclear and unresolved issue.'

Canoe England have continued to correspond with AT in an attempt to improve relationships and to create a dialogue to take the shared use of our waterways forward in a positive manner. However, as already mentioned, the AT is not willing to discuss the matter of access further unless there is a precondition that we accept their opinion of the law.

(This can be read in full on line and on the www.canoe-england.org.uk/waterways-and-environment/latest-news/

We wait to see what 'fisherman's tales & myths' the Angling Trust will produce next!

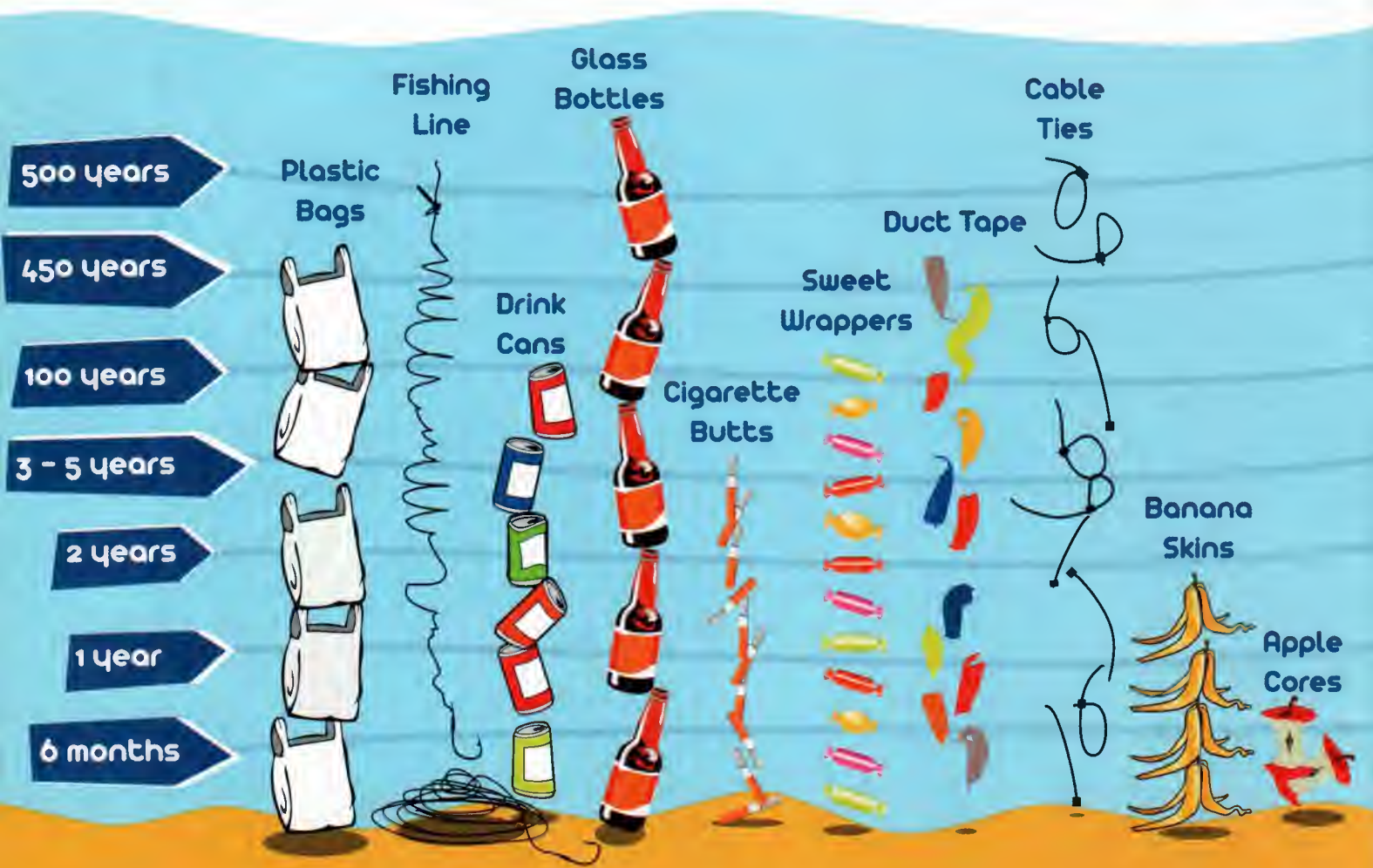
"The environment minister is being permitted to oversee a highly sensitive issue in which he has an active proprietorial stake."

DOVEDALE

CE is aware that many clubs have received information and posters concerning the Dovedale and other actions. This information has not come from Canoe England and a statement concerning canoeing on the Dovedale from Canoe England is available on the Canoe England website www.canoe-england.org.uk/waterways-and-environment/latest-news/

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VIKING A DEFEND TITLE IN ESSEN

After winning the Odense International tournament in Denmark back in January, Viking got themselves back in to training to prepare for Essen 4s. Essen 4s is one of Viking's most enjoyable tournament, it's Canoe Polo's equivalent to Rugby 7s. A much faster form of the game, with 4 a side teams, it creates more goals and a much more exciting spectacle.

Viking were drawn in a tough group, they would have to play one Dutch team and two very strong German teams. Viking woke early on the Saturday morning raring to compete against their highly skilled Dutch opponents. Viking were conscious that a win would stand them in good stead to progress through the group stage. Viking quickly got used to this form of the game, exciting the crowd with a controlled performance winning the game 6-3. After a quick breakfast Viking's next game was potentially going to be their biggest test of the group, against a very physical German team, Meidericher. Having previous encounters with the team Viking knew exactly what to expect from their opponents but out classed them with a devastating display of passing and clinical finishing which saw them ease past the German's 11-2. This left them in a strong position; the final group game saw Viking facing a tough Liblar side to see who topped the group. Liblar were a completely different challenge for Viking with a youthful team who all had very good ball skills. Viking's strong defence gave them a strong foundation to take the game to Liblar. The home crowd were won over with Viking's fluent pass and move skills, showing some flare and winning the game 7-2.

A good days work on the Saturday left Viking top of the group, meaning an early start to their Sunday with their first game being at 7am! The Viking team visited their usual restaurant in Essen, Drago's for their typical bruschetta and mixed grill combo.

The Sunday morning quarter final saw Viking face one of the club's previous overseas players, Thomas Bartels, within a Dutch team called Trekvogels. Viking quickly raced into an early lead which allowed the team to relax and go through the phases of play, comfortably winning the game 11-5. Some sloppy goals were conceded but Viking were confident that they could sure up their defence for the semi final.

Unfortunately Viking travelled all the way to Germany to play an English based team, St Albans. This team was a mixture of young and old international players, containing two Viking 'B' team players, both loaned out for the weekend. This was Viking's toughest game yet, requiring a strong defence and some patience mixed with imagination in attack. Soon Viking's superior level of class showed through and St Albans were forced to chase the game. This was an ideal situation for Viking's faster and fitter players, who ran their opposition ragged winning the game 8-3. St Albans then went on to play Meridian C (another English team) in the 3rd/4th place playoff where Meridian narrowly won a close contest.

Once again Viking progressed through to the final against the home team, Rothe Mule Essen. This has always been a tough game, but Viking having the better results of the previous encounters. Rothe Mule were a well-balanced physical team, with a strong defence and powerful attackers. The final was played in front of a capacity crowd, mostly all cheering the home team, but Viking won them over once more with their intricate passing and boat speed around the pool. The game was kept within a goal throughout its duration, with Rothe Mule scoring on the buzzer to earn an exciting golden goal finale. Viking won the restart and controlled the possession until a typical Viking passing move saw the German defence ripped open once again and the golden goal was scored from close range.

This latest piece of Silverware saw Viking match last year's success winning the two first major international tournaments for a second year running. The Viking team will now get back to training to carry the success into the summer internationals. As well as Viking success it was a good showing for all of the British teams in attendance. Three of the top four places were taken by British teams!

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Legacy Focus at Lee Valley White Water Centre

Hundreds of young people representing every London borough as well as Essex and Hertfordshire will have the opportunity to try white water rafting at Lee Valley White Water Centre in the third annual schools festival on Monday 8 and Tuesday 9 July.

Development work is progressing well at the centre and the construction of the new pavilion will hopefully be completed in time for this festival.

The expansion of the facilities will increase the accessibility of the venue for local communities, participants and sports clubs.

The London 2012 venue, which hosted the six day canoe slalom event, recently celebrated its second birthday and continues to provide outstanding opportunities for participants of all abilities to follow in the wake of Team GB's successful Olympians.

Organisers are expecting this festival to be as successful as the previous events, which have involved over 2,500 pupils, with the expectation that participants will have been inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics.

The schools festival will involve a range of partners including Canoe England and Tottenham Hotspur Foundation who will be running a range of activities encouraging people to give sport a go during the festival.

This is just one of a number of legacy events that Lee Valley White Water Centre continues to run to encourage a wide variety of people to take up paddling.

The centre recently hosted young people from Holdbrook Youth Group, which is based in nearby Broxbourne as well as their families who enjoyed rafting, canoeing and kayaking.

The event, which was organised by Lee Valley Regional Park Authority in partnership with social business B3 Living, Broxbourne Borough Council and Canoe England proved a huge success.

Talking about the event Sam Brearey, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority Sports Development Officer said: "It's great to be able to offer a real legacy to the local residents and see them enjoy getting on the water and engaging with paddlesport. This is the second event held in partnership with B3 Living, Broxbourne Borough Council and Canoe England following on from a successful event on Halloween last year." She continued, "The Holbrooke Youth Group has been great at taking a real responsibility for the events and helping to make them fun and enjoyable for everyone involved. Credit must go to them for their hard work."

As well as remaining open for paddling throughout the duration of the development work Lee Valley White Water Centre is also holding a number of other diverse activities this summer including the challenging aquathlon series.

Beginning at the White Water Centre, the monthly event involves two race distances of either a 250m or 500m open water swim in the centre's lake followed by a 3k or 5.5k run along a scenic route around River Lee Country Park.

The aquathlon series will run on the second Tuesday of every month from May until October. **CF**

USEFUL INFO

For full information on all the activities at Lee Valley White Water Centre or to book visit:
gowhitewater.co.uk or call 08456 770 606

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



CHECK OUT THE BEST CANOEING & KAYAKING IMAGES FROM THE APRIL AND MAY 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 Coral Jackson, 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.



Ashley Winterbottom

Ben Tinker

Eoin Carroll

Ed Cross

Steve Adamson

Carl Mumford

Costin Latan

Allyson Cochran

Chris Weston

Charlotte Smith

Alex Wyatt

Adam Fielder



Fran Humpherson



David Slybacon



Gavin Hart



Hazel Perry



Hugh Jenkinson



Janet Heywood



Jake Deakin



Ieuan Belsha



John Keggin



Howard Greville-Giddings



Ian Davis



Jaak Joris



Grant Underwood



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Juana Paula Martín



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Jason Bellaby



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Liz Witherford



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Matthew Jones



Nick George



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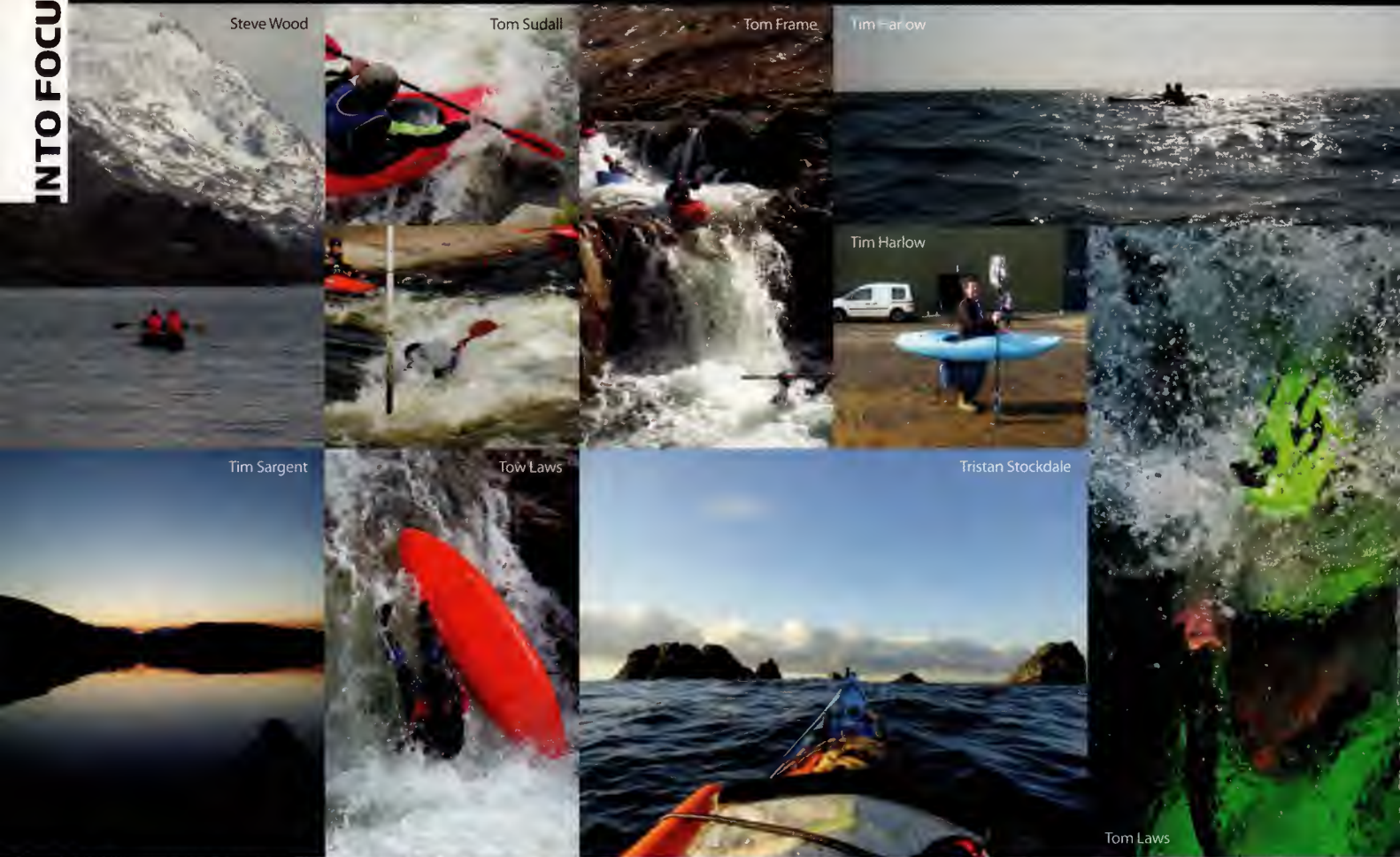
Sammy Jackson

Tim Harlow

Siobhan Gallagher

Steven Walker

Peter Clarke



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Tom Sudall

Tom Frame

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Tim Sargent

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Tristan Stockdale

Tom Laws

Win a Fatyak Kayak and a year's supply of Ecover Cleaning Products!

Canoe England has teamed up with sustainable cleaning specialists Ecover and Fatyak Kayaks, to add an exclusive You, Your Canoe & the Environment category to our usual monthly Photo Competition. We want to see your snaps of the UK's most breathtaking landscapes, waterways & wildlife!

Entries will be open from 1st May until 26th August, with the winners being announced on 31st August, giving you plenty of time to get that all-important shot!

The prizes are amazing - a year's supply of Ecover products and a Fatyak kayak. The winners will also be invited to take part in the Ecover Blue Mile in Plymouth on 14-15 September.

Your photos will go into a gallery on the Ecover Blue Mile website and a selection will be exhibited at the Ecover Blue Mile in Plymouth, where the winner of the Fatyak kayak will be presented with their prize.

To enter, simply send us your best shot (at least 5 megapixels) along with your contact details and some brief information about where the photo was taken to: josephine.mcenaney@bcu.org.uk

Put 'Ecover Photo' as the subject. All images submitted will automatically be entered into the usual Canoe England monthly Photo Competition too and the usual Terms & Condition's, which can be found on the Canoe England Website, will apply.

So, what are you waiting for? Grab your camera, get out on the water and start snapping!!





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Preventing Injury on the Water

English Institute of Sport (EIS) Senior Physiotherapist Julie Pearce, who leads physiotherapy support to athletes on the GB Canoe Slalom programme, provides an insight into what's done at the top level to ensure athletes are ready for competition and shares some basic preparation tips.

Whilst there's no doubting that the greater an athlete's technical ability, the lower their risk of injury, as with any sport physical fitness is a significant contributor to success in the boat, enabling athletes to carry out the technical skills required.

A high level of core strength and flexibility is required to manoeuvre through the water at speed and to control the body as it is put through some extreme positions.

Reducing time lost to injury and illness is therefore vitally important at the elite level and a key focus of my work alongside the management and treatment of injuries when they do occur. But avoiding these pitfalls is also important to recreational paddlers too.

Many injuries associated with canoeing and kayaking are brought on by one or a number of risk factors; including deficiencies in technical skill as well as external factors such as ill fitting or incorrect equipment.

Some of the more common injuries within the sport can range from overuse injuries such as acute shoulder impingement and rib stresses to the altogether more traumatic shoulder dislocations or rib separations.

Since 2008, when the UK Sport/EIS Injury & Illness Prevention Project began, we have been capturing data that has been really useful in forming our proactive strategies for both injury and illness prevention.

This data has given us the evidence to support many things we already knew, for instance that shoulder injuries are the most common within the sport, and has been underpinned by benchmarking (or screening) of our elite athletes on a yearly basis.

“Posture is so important in injury prevention, particularly in terms of reducing the occurrence of overuse injuries.”



“Many injuries associated with canoeing and kayaking are brought on by one or a number of risk factors; including deficiencies in technical skill as well as external factors such as ill fitting or incorrect equipment.”



Having assessed the risk factors we might, for example, implement some shoulder prehabilitation exercises into the athlete's training routine and coordinate with their Strength and Conditioning and technical coaches in order to incorporate it into their paddling.

Although traumatic injuries are much harder to prevent due to the forces of the water, implementing the benchmarking and prevention strategies they help us to formulate has enabled us to come a long way in eliminating overuse injuries within the GB squad.

BE PREPARED

Whatever your ability, before going on the water consider:

- Is my clothing and equipment adequate and well maintained?
- Is the course suitable for my ability level?
- Have I had the right nutrition beforehand? (refer to Dr Kevin Currell's article in previous issue.)
- Am I fit with an adequate range of movement?

INJURY MANAGEMENT

Whilst risk can be reduced injuries do happen. When they do, follow the PRICE principle for immediate care (within the first three days):

- Protect
- Rest
- Ice
- Compression
- Elevation

The full PRICE guidelines are available via The Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Sport and Exercise Medicine (ACPSM) website (www.physiosinsport.org)

For non-traumatic injuries where you may not immediately seek medical attention, if symptoms do not resolve themselves within five to six days seek advice from an appropriately qualified physiotherapist before returning to paddling. There is a 'Find a Physio' facility on The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy website (www.csp.org.uk) that can help you find someone near to you. **CF**

POSTURE

One of the key elements within the benchmarking concerns posture. We assess whether the athlete:

- Has good boat posture with the ability to rotate
- Has the muscle stability to hold posture
- Has the dynamic muscle control to effect functional movement

Posture is so important in injury prevention, particularly in terms of reducing the occurrence of overuse injuries. For instance if your scapula (shoulder blade) tilted forwards (anteriorly) and you are trying to paddle and lift your arm, that's likely to make the tendons sore and lead to a shoulder impingement (tendinitis).

This is caused by the repetitive movement of the shoulder joint that's not well aligned or dynamically controlled, so the prevention strategy is to check the athlete has good shoulder alignment and dynamic control.

Through the benchmarking we've identified that the elite athletes tend to have a greater degree of external shoulder rotation than you'd perhaps expect to see in an average person but that this means they often lose some of their internal range.

As adaptations occur to allow elite level performances, some risks increase because of the changed biomechanics, so we monitor that closely and look for any variations to the norm as well as use the information from the benchmarking to form the basis of our injury prevention strategies.

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 visit www.eis2win.co.uk

The River Dee Source to Sea

A SOLO OPEN CANOE EXPEDITION FROM LLYN TEGID TO CHESTER

RAINDROPS WERE TAPPING ON THE ROOF OF MY CAR AS I TRIED TO GET SOME SLEEP, PERSISTENT YET REASSURING, RAIN WAS GOOD, RAIN MEANT THAT THE RIVER WOULD HAVE MORE WATER IN AND FRANKLY FOR THIS TRIP FROM THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER DEE TO THE SEA, THE MORE WATER THE BETTER.

Paddling towards the pale glow in the east.

Back in May 2012 I attended a presentation by Daz Clarkson; he told of his solo expedition in Nepal, of lonely emotions and dealing with challenges both mental and physical without even a single buddy to discuss tactics with. The idea of soloing fascinated me, I wanted that challenge but time and money were against me so I wouldn't be heading off abroad anytime soon. Around the same time I had read a blog by Ray Goodwin; he and Chris Charlton had paddled the River Dee in a single day, a fantastic achievement!

An idea began to formulate in the back of my mind, could I somehow get my teeth into soloing without travelling thousands of miles and spending hundreds of pounds? The simple answer was yes; logistically a solo source to sea trip on the Dee would be quite simple. Chester is 40 minutes from home and Bala is only an hour and a half.

I decided to try and raise a bit of money for charity by getting sponsorship for my trip. I settled on LUPUS UK as a paddling mate's daughter suffers from Lupus and he had told us quite a bit about it one distant sunny day sat in the Tryweryn car park.

DAY ONE - SKILL

5:00am. Zero hour. My alarm woke me and I clambered out of my sleeping bag and straight into thermals, dry trousers and my cag. I drove my car onto the beach right next to the lake's shore and packed my boat with everything I would need over the next couple of days.

At 6:15 I launched onto the lake and headed for the pale glow in the east. Sunrise wasn't due for another hour and I had a lot of paddling ahead of me. After 10-minutes on the lake I passed under a bridge and entered the River Dee. Very soon my first significant obstacle and only mandatory portage loomed up out of the darkness.

5:43 AM 8°C

The sluice gates just outside Bala cannot be paddled; it is a physical impossibility. A 200m portage on river right put me back on the river, with nothing interrupting my progress between my bow and the end of the journey.

The Dee was still very much in its infancy and was relatively narrow and fast flowing, meaning I made good progress. As the sun rose it brought morning mist. Although this made choosing my lines difficult, it was wonderfully atmospheric and added to my sense of solitude. I was accompanied by squirrels and pheasants, all of which watched me with some interest before bolting for cover. By 10:20am I had paddled 25km and approached the first landmark I recognised. Pont Dyfrdwy is where the A5 crosses the river. Every white water paddler in the UK will have passed over this bridge at one time or another when driving from Llangollen to Bala and I knew it meant I was on schedule.

An hour or so later I got to Glyndyfrdwy, home to one or two well know coaching establishments and the start of the pre-Llangollen section of rapids, an excellent run with some great class II rapids perfect for open canoes. The banks are lined with trees, and they were glorious in their autumnal colours. My speed through this section was good, the river is slightly steeper and the flow picks up nicely meaning that I was past this 10km section in just an hour and a quarter.

The next stretch of river could be described as the Dee's adolescence; it is the wildest, most turbulent section I would face. This is 'The Classic Dee' where many paddlers, me included, have had their first taste of Welsh white water. The rapids' names will be familiar to most, including the famous Serpent's Tail and Town Falls. This is where my concentration needed to be strongest; I was no longer happily drifting through easy class II rapids. These were powerful Class II/III and I needed my wits about me. A young family out for an autumn walk watched me as I paddled back and forth choosing my line above Horseshoe Falls; they seemed shocked that I was even considering running the rapid. I ran the little chute that avoids the big stopper, through some sizeable waves and round the corner towards the Chainbridge Hotel. Over my shoulder I glanced at the family; they looked relieved, though not nearly as much as me.

Chainbridge rapid was next. At this level it was a fairly chunky wavetrain that led to the top of Serpent's Tail. I hit the biggest wave of Chainbridge rapid head on, took on some water and decided at that point that running Serpent's Tail would probably swamp me. I got out above and lined my boat down; I got back in right next to the big stopper at the bottom. I was glad I hadn't chosen to run it; a swim would have meant I was cold and wet for the rest of the day.

I continued on down to Mile End Mill, stopping in at Paddleworks for lunch, a coffee and a chat with the owner and fellow openboater Chris Leesmith. I had been paddling for six hours and covered 47km.

I put back on the water at 2:00pm with Llangollen Town Falls immediately ahead of me and beyond that another fantastic section with numerous class II rapids and a couple of weirs. Town Falls was simple enough; I had paddled it the previous week to get the line clear in my head. I ran the left hand route: a simple slide followed by a couple of waves. Again I had an audience;

a group of people on the bridge watched my progress and applauded once I was down.

From Llangollen to Overton Bridge is 26km. This had been my first experience of white water in an open canoe and I've not looked back since. The section normally takes six hours with a group; this includes coffee breaks, lunch stops, swims and time for discussions about lines. It was 2:15pm and the sun was due to set at 5:07pm.

I didn't stop at all, except to break out and ferry across avoiding a large tree blocking the river. I passed under the magnificent Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, the dramatic Cefn Viaduct and the modern A483 road bridge. According to my GPS my average speed was around eight or nine kilometres an hour. I should have this section cracked in no time. The sun however, had another plan: it got lower and lower in the sky behind me and because of the hills it disappeared from sight at around ten past four. I struggled on in the dusk for another hour until finally the rapids were behind me and all I had ahead were two weirs and then miles and miles of flat water.

At 5:00 I called it a day, I had been awake for twelve hours and on the move for eleven of them. I had run out of light and I didn't fancy having to deal with weirs in the dark. I put up my tent, heated up my dinner, ate, stripped out of my paddling kit and crawled into my sleeping bag. I was exhausted, I'd been paddling for eleven hours and I was sound asleep by 7:00pm.

I woke up around half ten, made essential phone calls to my parents, my girlfriend and Daniel McIntosh, the guy who was due to pick me up the following night. I then slept through to 6:00am when my alarm went off.

DAY TWO - STAMINA

Tuesday was cold and crisp. I awoke to beautiful autumnal colours surrounding my chosen campsite. I set off at 8:00am. I had allowed myself some snoozing time and then hadn't rushed myself in packing away and eating. I wanted to wait until it was light before I hit the weirs. The first of which is straightforward at most levels; the left is always easier than the right and I ran it without consequence. The second weir, just upstream of the Cross Foxes pub is much bigger and much more dangerous. I have run this weir in lower levels; a groynes creates a great steep chute with a stopper halfway down that can throw you from your seat. On this occasion however I decided that lining my boat down the shallower part of the weir would be the most prudent. I nearly came unstuck here; the current pulled my boat into the centre of the flow, I had no control and was forced to let go of my line and nearly lost the boat. I didn't fancy a cold swim downriver to chase it so I ran slipping and sliding around and down the bank to grab the line before it disappeared. A close shave! I got back on the water and headed under Overton Bridge with my sights set on Chester. The last of the white water was now behind me. ▶



“The Dee was still very much in its infancy and was relatively narrow and fast flowing, meaning I made good progress. As the sun rose it brought morning mist”

Between Overton Bridge and Bangor-is-y-Coed the river has some nice straight sections and maintains its momentum quite well. I covered this ten-kilometre section in well under two hours. From Bangor-is-y-Coed to Farndon, however, is a different story: If the Llangollen section is adolescence then this is definitely middle age! The slowest section on the whole river where not much happens. It travels ten kilometres as

Approaching Pont Dyfrdwy.



The infamous Serpent's Tail rapid.



The Cefyn Viaduct



A well-earned lunch stop.

the crow flies but the twenty plus meanders mean that I had to paddle 22km, completely unaided by the current. This was the hard part, the long slog; each meander looked the same as the last, on and on for what seemed like forever. I didn't see a single person, building, fence post or any other shred of evidence that anything existed outside my tiny world. All I could see was river, twelve feet of muddy eroded cliff and then the sky. The land is so flat there that not even a distant hill makes it into view. I started to ache; I figured it was probably psychological so I ignored it. Then I totally lost it and began to talk to myself. I counted kilometres on my GPS, I became obsessed with my average speed; making bets with myself that I could make it to a certain distance by a certain time.

I decided that to save my sanity I had better pull over for lunch. Without paddling to keep me occupied my mind began more calculations: Wikipedia had told me that the River Dee was 110 km long, Bangor-is-y-Coed had registered 84km on the GPS, I knew that this meandering section was 22km and the final 12km I was familiar with from previous trips. This added up to 118km, not to mention the bits in between.

Confused? So was I, all I knew was that my calculations based on 110km were irrelevant. I was not going to be in Chester before sunset, so I quickly finished my lunch and got moving. More meanders, the same tree viewed from three different angles, then another and another. Eventually, four hours after I entered them the meanders ended. I have never been so happy to see a road bridge in all my life. It was 3:00pm, and I had finally reached Farndon. I made a quick phone call altering my pickup time and pushed on.

After another hour of paddling the sun began to head back down, the bright autumn day began to go grey and dark until there was a dark inky black sky overhead. My pace had slowed, my body was fatigued, and my mind was numbed by the dark and the monotony. I no longer had a view and the houses and fields had been replaced by the silhouettes of trees against the night sky. This was my only visual guide to the river's course.

Small buildings came and went in the dark, only discernible by the lights in their windows. On through the blackness I went, my eyes straining for some familiar scenery, for reassurance that I was nearing the end. After two hours in the dark I saw cars crossing the river up ahead. I'd reached the A55 road bridge. Every time I travel to Wales I drive over this bridge and glance down at the Dee. I knew where I was. Chester was within reach. I was nearly there.

Sure enough after a couple of bends the lights of the City began to pop up all around, I passed some guys from Chester Canoe Club who asked me: "Where have you come from?" "Bala" I replied without breaking stroke. I wonder if they believed me.

Suddenly Chester was all around me, I recognised the buildings and the bridges. My aches and tiredness had gone, the end was minutes away. Up ahead I could see the big river cruise boats, moored up where I was getting out. I came alongside the bank and clambered up onto the road. I'd done it. According to the GPS I'd done 126km from Bala to Chester.

Now all I needed was a lift back! CF

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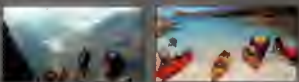
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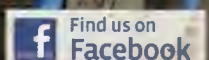
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