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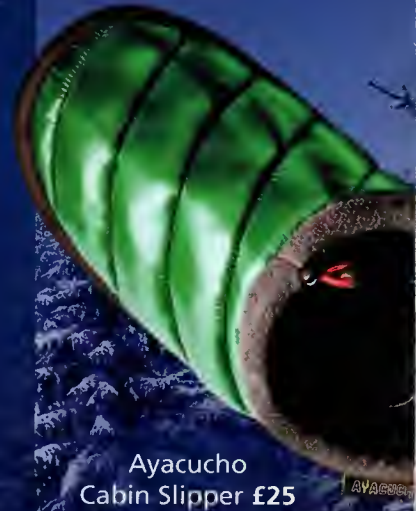
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# WELCOME TO THE WINTER ISSUE OF CANOE FOCUS

**A**s we get ready to say goodbye to 2014, we can look back on another hugely successful year, for canoeing. For our GB teams, there's been a lot to celebrate this year including over 60 World, World Cup and European Championship medals; a record-breaking 18 Paracanoeing medals; and of course, World Championship titles for Louisa Sawers, Emma Wiggs, Jeanette Chippington, Andrea Green and Anne Dickins. In June, we also hosted the ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup at the Lee Valley White Water Centre; a hugely successful event which saw you support Great Britain in your thousands. Congratulations to all the athletes, coaches and support staff involved with this year's results and, of course, a huge thank you to our loyal volunteers and supporters.

The year also saw great success for our annual Go Canoeing Week, with over 8,000 of you helping us to paddle a staggering 34,010 miles during the week in May. Overall we've had approximately 25,000 people taking part in Go Canoeing activities since April and we've already confirmed National Go Canoeing Week for 2015, from 23rd – 31st May. We're looking forward to making next year even more successful!

Away from the water, we rebranded as British Canoeing in the spring & have steadily been rolling out our new name, logo and brand campaign throughout the last eight months. In the summer, we welcomed Mohamed Elsarky and Denise Barrett-Baxendale to the British Canoeing board of directors who, along with our existing board members, continue to help support the implementation of our strategic development plan.

As usual, a great way to round off the year was with the British Canoeing Volunteer and Recognition Awards, which took place at the end of October in Nottingham. A rundown of all the winners, including pictures from the evening, is included in this issue of Canoe FOCUS.

As we begin to look ahead to 2015, there is already a lot to look forward to including the ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships, which will be held at Lee Valley White Water Centre from the 16th to 20th September 2015. Tickets are now on sale at [canoelondon2015.com](http://canoelondon2015.com)

Of course, the year will be especially exciting for our sprint and slalom athletes, as they also look to qualify for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.



Before I sign off, I'd just like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

*Paul*

**Paul Owen, Chief Executive**

Your contributions make Canoe Focus happen. The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers, so don't be put off writing because you have no experience! Canoe Focus is all about canoeists to canoeist dialogue, a paddler's magazine written by paddlers. Technical information: Contributions preferably as a Microsoft Word file, which can be emailed to [coral.jackson@bcu.org.uk](mailto:coral.jackson@bcu.org.uk). All material is accepted on the understanding that British Canoeing and its agents cannot be held liable or responsible for loss or damage, although every care and effort is taken to safeguard material. Next copy date is 9/2/15. Material arriving after this date cannot be included in the March 2015 issue. Canoe Focus encourages contributions of any nature but reserve the right to edit and condense to fill the space available and unless otherwise stated unfortunately cannot reply to submissions or return any articles or images that are submitted to the magazine. Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the British Canoeing, its committees or members. The printing and advertisements in Canoe Focus does not necessarily mean that the BCU endorse the company, items or services advertised. All material in Canoe Focus is strictly copyright and all rights are reserved. Reproduction without prior permission from the editor is forbidden.

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**TELL US WHAT YOU THINK**

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/canoeengland](http://www.facebook.com/canoeengland)



**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](mailto:canoeingnews@bcu.org.uk).

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





# THE SLALOM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE COMING!

**S**eptember 2015 will see Lee Valley White Water Centre host the largest global canoeing event outside of the Olympic Games, when 300 male and female paddlers come together to take part in the 2015 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships.

See the world's top canoe slalom athletes, representing 55 countries, compete for World Championship glory across five disciplines (Men's/Women's C1 (single canoe), Men's C2 (double canoe), Men's/Women's K1 (single kayak), Individual and Team events) during five intense days of competition. Share their excitement as they qualify for the

2016 Olympic Games and are placed firmly on the 'Road to Rio'.

The event will see the British Team return to the Olympic course where they will be looking to replicate their recent success at the 2014 Canoe Slalom World Cup, securing an impressive medal haul of seven golds and one silver, and YOU could be there to cheer them on!

As well as world-class sport there will be plenty of free family friendly activities for you to enjoy, with a bouncy castle, climbing walls and an opportunity to try your hand at some paddling activities on the water too, making this a great family day out!

## USEFUL INFO



Tickets are on sale now from [www.ticketmaster.co.uk/london2015](http://www.ticketmaster.co.uk/london2015) or by calling 08444 999 999.

British Canoeing are offering members an exclusive 15% discount on advance purchase tickets meaning a family of four can attend from as little as £25! Use discount code BCMEMA when booking.

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# CANOE POLO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2014

**T**en thousand supporters came on a daily basis to watch the World Championships in Thury Harcourt, Normandy, France this autumn. Canoe polo is a very popular sport in the Normandy region and the local area had made a big effort in welcoming the world! 27 nations including new teams from Malaysia and Namibia, enjoyed a festival of street art, local food and crafts and comprehensive media coverage with GB players becoming local celebrities among visiting school children!

**REPORT BY JILL HODGSHON**

The competition this year was tough. It could be said that several countries have now reached a level of technical skill and tactical know-how to cause the GB squads plenty to think about. The women had another successful tournament only losing in the final, to Germany, 5-1. A nail-biting semi saw them beat the home nation in extra time with a golden goal from Aimee Robson, silencing for once a massive French crowd. Sadly, the highly successful and experienced British squad, led by Catherine Moffatt, could not on the day match the Germans for speed and fitness and we had to settle for a hard-fought silver.

The GB Men had a disappointing tournament finishing twelfth after a promising opening round. Several close matches found us on the losing side by one goal and despite flashes of dynamic team play and appearing faster and fitter than many opponents, scoring goals remained the main frustration. Two Friday matches on

the show pitch saw fantastic polo entertainment as GB battled against first France, then Germany. These are the games to watch for energy, action and atmosphere from the crowd!

The German side, who finished runners-up, only beat us 4-3 and that fact should encourage both players and coaches for the future.

The Under 21 Women had made huge improvements over the summer and played as an organised and confident team at the Worlds. They progressed easily through to semi-finals where they too met a superior German side that beat us 7-3. The bronze medal match against New Zealand, although an exciting end-to-end contest, also saw us on the wrong side of 7-5 finishing overall 4th. The heart-warming story of these championships must be that of young Bethan Littlewood, from Bridgend, who a year ago was fighting a serious illness but this year

was representing her country and finishing as their highest goal scorer! A lesson for us all in determination!

The Under 21 Men, who had been struggling in the summer warm up tournaments, had a very encouraging start at the worlds. In a very spirited performance against Holland, they won 7-0 with 6 of our squad getting on the score sheet! They progressed to the top flight where, despite beating Poland, they lost to New Zealand and Germany putting them in 5th-8th places. A final match against Poland for pride and 7th place saw GB win 5-3. Great saves from keeper Kartik, powerful shots from Pete Neal and Graham Webster and excellent sprinting from speedy Suryan combined to make very entertaining game of polo.

Well done to all our dedicated referees, coaches and of course players as we look forward to 2016 when the Canoe Polo World Championships come to Britain!

## GB POLO SQUADS

Women: Aimee Robson; Ginny Coyles; Alison Brown; Chaz Cheung; Katherine Moffatt; Claire Mitchell; Zoe Anthony and Louise Saxon.

Men: Martyn Williamson; Dan Robson; Olly Thomson; Matt Fletcher; Ed Feltham; Ross Montgomery; James Longley and Gallin Montgomery.

U21Women: Nicole Brain; Danielle Brain; Bethan Littlewood; Holly Pratt; Olivia Hithersay and Poppy Croal.

U21 Men: Tom Leigh; Suryan McCutcheon; Nathan Littlewood; Nathaniel Robinson; Pete Neal; George Roots; Kartik McCutcheon and Graham Webster.





# BCU STUDENT SAFETY SYMPOSIUM - PLAS Y BRENNIN

Around 40 students from universities from across the country attended the annual BCU Student Safety Symposium held at Plas y Brenin the National Mountain Sports Centre in Wales.

British Canoeing staff Jack Ford and Tom Doyle also attended the weekend to find out a bit more about the weekend and also to showcase the U Canoe programme to the students. The university students had two days of action packed sessions ranging from organising an overseas trip to steep creek paddling. The weekend is aimed at those who are, or are likely to be student club committee members/ those organising and running the club trips/ or anyone else who fancies it!

The main purpose of the event is to help your club to get out paddling more, to reduce the various types of risk that are out there to catch the unaware and to increase the skills and experience levels within your club. Jack and Tom managed to run an introduction to U Canoe session on the pool, which got students trying out a range of U Canoe activities both on and off the water. Jack told FOCUS, "It was fantastic to be able to work with a group of students on the pool and show them what U Canoe is about, the session gave the students a real insight into how U Canoe can help them deliver sessions to their freshers and canoe club members".

The symposium will be running again next year so please look out for details about it!

**"IT WAS FANTASTIC TO BE ABLE TO WORK WITH A GROUP OF STUDENTS ON THE POOL AND SHOW THEM WHAT U CANOE IS ABOUT, THE SESSION GAVE THE STUDENTS A REAL INSIGHT INTO HOW U CANOE CAN HELP THEM DELIVER SESSIONS TO THEIR FRESHERS AND CANOE CLUB MEMBERS"**

## EVENT SAFETY FORUMS

This year British Canoeing launched a new workshop for clubs and event organisers to support the safety management of events. The focus of the workshop is to raise awareness of safety management and duty of care issues as they effect clubs, both in their normal everyday activities and also when they many run events that are open to non-club members.

With effect from September 2015 all British Canoeing clubs and providers that run an event that is open to other clubs and independent paddlers will need to appoint a Club Safety Officer who will be required to have attended one of the workshops. With this in mind, we will be running a series of workshops across England during 2015. For information on this requirement and where there is a course running near to you visit the clubs section of the website.

## MEMBERSHIP INCREASING

British Canoeing individual membership prices will increase by £2 per year, from January. For adult members, this means a total annual cost of £42. Despite our efforts to reduce costs, we haven't been able to mitigate a general rise 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, starting January 1st 2015. We are also looking into more member benefits to pass on to you, which we will keep you posted on throughout the year.

The cost of your British Canoeing membership may be going up, but you're still getting fantastic value for money, working out at just 11.5 pence per day!

**And don't forget about the great benefits of your British Canoeing membership:**

- A license to paddle 4,500km of waterways
- Civil Liability insurance up to £10million of cover
- Four free magazines a year
- Great rates on boat insurance
- Up to 20% discount at Cotswold Outdoor

Your British Canoeing membership saves you pounds compared with buying these benefits independently. And in addition, by being a member of British Canoeing, you're not only saving money but helping support our brilliant sport too!



## Outstanding Instructors

We're looking for outstanding Instructors from Feb - Nov 2015. Based in Somerset, family run multi activity centre.

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## U CANOE & KAYAK PRO

The U Canoe programme has grown from strength to strength over the past year and has now been delivered in over 130 delivery centres. The U Canoe programme is continually being developed and adapted to suit the needs of our varying delivery centres. One important bit of feedback, which British Canoeing received from many U Canoe Wired delivery centres was the fact that the indoor kayaking machines were proving difficult to store when they were not being used. As the majority of Wired delivery centres are schools and colleges, space for any equipment is always at a premium and many colleges and delivery centres have had to decline the chance to deliver the programme because of the lack of storage space. One solution to this has been to work closely with one of our indoor kayak machine providers, Kayak Pro, to develop a machine, which would suit the needs of the schools and colleges.

Kayak Pro listened to the needs of our delivery centres and have produced a brand new machine called the Kayak Pro Compact Kayak. This machine has a telescopic design, allowing it to close up to only 1.5m in length, and can then be wheeled about and stood on end to minimise footprint. This compact machine can also be easily transported in an estate car, which is a major factor for British Canoeing staff who regularly move the machines between delivery centres.

It's hoped that with this development of the Kayak Pro Compact more delivery centres will be encouraged to purchase their own machines as they will be able to store them throughout the year.

U Canoe Development Officer Jack Ford told FOCUS, "Our relationship with Kayak Pro is an important one and I am extremely pleased that they have been able to come up with a machine which specifically suits the needs of our U Canoe delivery centres, I really hope that this will make the programme even more popular."

For more details on U Canoe go to [www.facebook.com/UCanoe](http://www.facebook.com/UCanoe)

For more info on Kayak Pro Compact go to [www.kayakpro.com](http://www.kayakpro.com)



## CHELMER CANOE TRAIL

On Sunday 5th October, the autumn sun shone on the participants of the Chelmer Canoe Trail Open Canoe Tour, organised by the members of Bramston Canoe Club. Starting from Springfield Lock, Chelmsford, thirty plus paddlers from Bramston, Braintree, Maldon & Dengie, Tendring and Southend canoe clubs, preceded down the navigation. As usual at this time of year, the vivid colours of the trees in their autumn finery made an excellent accompaniment to the paddlers as they left the hustle of the Sunday shoppers behind in the city.

This surprisingly quiet journey through the Essex countryside is the ideal way to spend a Sunday cruising down the navigation. Many decided to run the trip in style, bringing with them wicker baskets complete with a champagne picnic, which added another dimension to the words 'packed lunch'!

Touring kayaks were also welcome on the tour, and fair few joined in the fun as the mixed flotilla made its way to the destination of Hoe Mill lock, Ulting, where the cars had been shuttled to.

This is a pleasant journey no matter what season you choose to undertake it, but a word of warning, after high levels of rain, the nature of the navigation changes dramatically, making the numerous weirs on the route very dangerous. You will need to purchase a boat licence from Essex Waterways [www.waterways.org.uk/essex\\_waterways/canoeing](http://www.waterways.org.uk/essex_waterways/canoeing) available from Little Baddow, as this canal is not covered by your BC membership licence.

For further information on the 2015 trip and Bramston Canoe Club, please contact [events@bramstoncanoeclub.org](mailto:events@bramstoncanoeclub.org)

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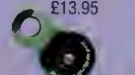
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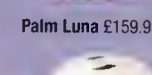
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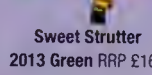
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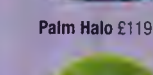
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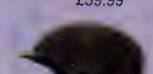
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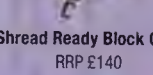
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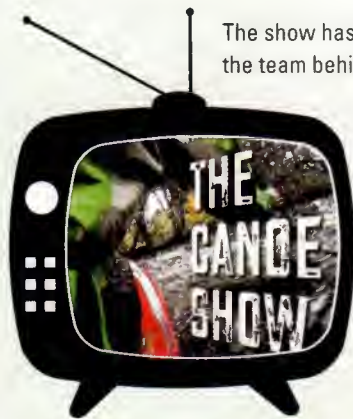
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# NEW ON YOUTUBE - THE CANOE SHOW

**N**ovember saw the launch of a brand new video magazine show on British Canoeing TV (YouTube), a show that lifts the lid on the world of paddlesport. 'The Canoe Show' is composed of multiple elements with a fast pace and dynamic feel, giving viewers a complete view of the diverse world of canoeing and kayaking.



The show has been created by the team behind GB Canoeing TV, which delivered an essential insight into the sport in the run up to the London 2012 Olympic Games. GB Canoeing TV has now been converted into British Canoeing TV, giving The Canoe

Show an instant head start with the previous channel's subscriber base.

The Canoe Show will take you on adventures, feature explosive competition, whitewater challenges and short expeditions as well as tranquil places of outstanding beauty and hidden treasures, only captured via boat. These will be intermixed with technique tips, skills, guides and information on kit and canoe trails.

In the first edition of The Canoe Show, retired Olympic Canoe Slalom

**"THE CANOE SHOW' IS COMPOSED OF MULTIPLE ELEMENTS WITH A FAST PACE AND DYNAMIC FEEL, GIVING VIEWERS A COMPLETE VIEW OF THE DIVERSE WORLD OF CANOEING AND KAYAKING."**

Champion Tim Baillie unveils one of British Canoeing's newest ventures the 'Three Lakes Challenge' - a unique road trip to paddle the three longest lakes in the home nations - Llyn Tegid, Windermere and Loch Awe; top paddler Tom Parker provides insights into navigating white water; there's the visual treat of Worthersee in Austria and action from the London World Cup.

The Canoe Show will be released quarterly and is presented by British Canoeing TV producer Roger Burlinson and BBC canoeing commentator Helen Reeves. Show two is already in production and is scheduled for release at the end of January 2015. More on this in the next Canoe Focus.



## MAIL BAG

LETTERS, MAIL POSTS & TWEETS OF THE MONTH



**@SingingPaddles:** "Just completed the Thames trip. Very helpful lock keepers!"

**@SharnbrookeOE:** "Yr11 OE Kayakers passed their BCU 1\* today. Battled against windy conditions to earn the award"

**@Brownhills PE:** "Many thanks to @Canoe\_England for our ergo's we received earlier this week! Pupils can't wait to get started on them! #watersportshub"

**Cari Taylor:** "Thanks to each and every volunteer who keeps this wonderful sport alive!!"

**@BeActivator\_MR:** "Students @WarwickshireCol #Moreton had a great time learning to kayak today! Get in touch if YOU fancy having a go."

**@CATS\_Headoffice:** "@Canoe\_England Bude CATS held a Girls only 2014 Street Paddler scheme. They all achieved L4 quals #happydays"

**@YouthSportTrust:** "Outstanding National Governing Body winner is @Canoe\_England #SGOSummit"

**@emwiggsy:** "@Rio2016\_en @Paralympic 700days to keep improving & striving for better! @GBCanoeing r #challengingbest & excited for #paracanoe debut!!"

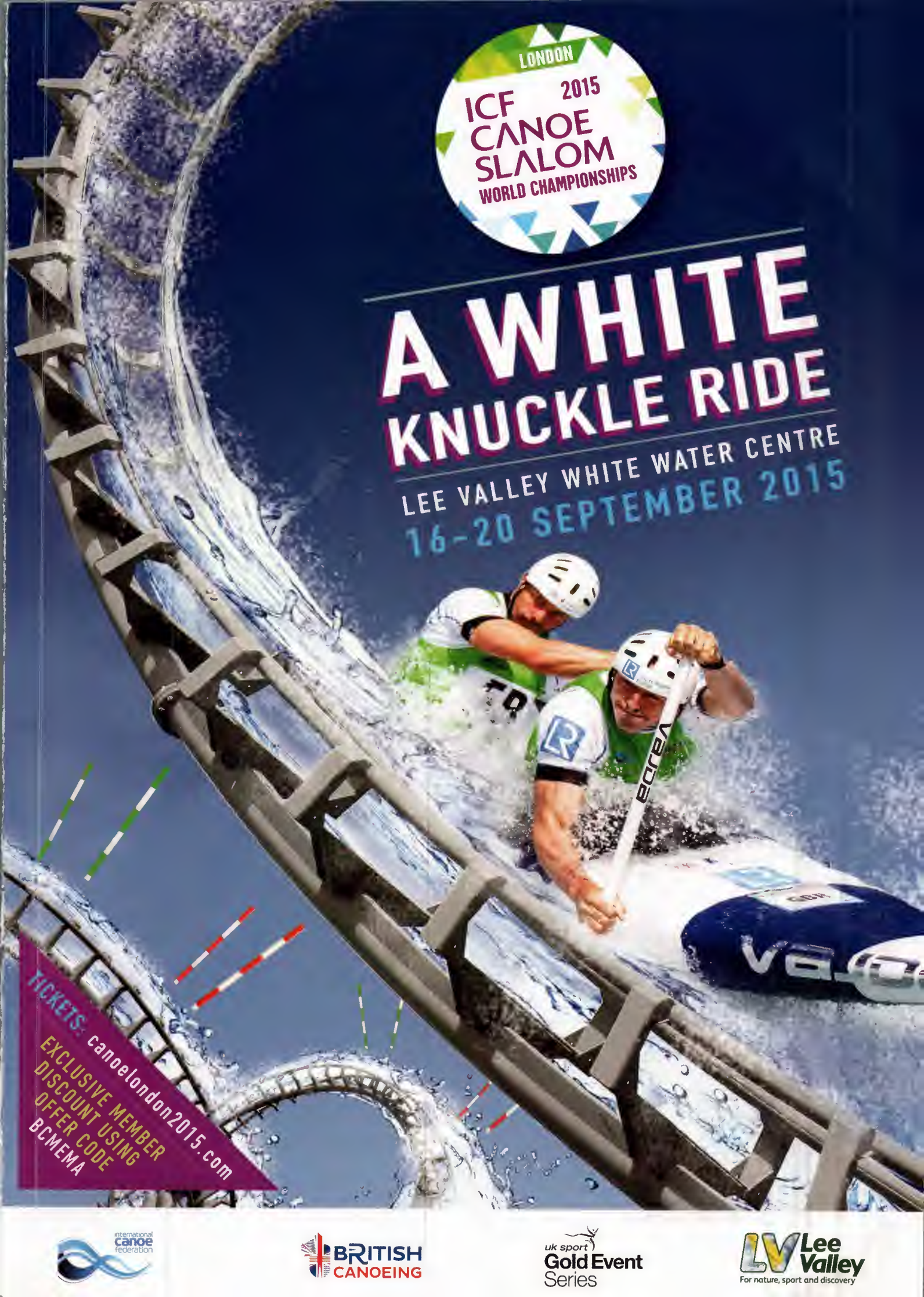
**@Dunne\_Nutrition:** "Big thanks to @LoveSmoothies for the delivery to @GBCanoeing today! A very happy group of athletes!"

**@Etienne Stott:** "Today is the first official day of training for the 2015 season for @GBCanoeing Feels like the first day back at school."



# A WHITE KNUCKLE RIDE

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# YOUTH

## ESSEX YOUTH SPORTS TRUST PROJECT



As part of a national project by the Youth Sports Trust to include more sports into its School Games programme, British Canoeing were asked if we could pilot a project in Essex with links to the Olympic site at Lee Valley. Conveniently, the Essex Slalom Squad had just reformed and affiliated as a club the previous September and were looking for school links to promote slalom in Essex. Paul Younger was the lead

coach from the club, liaising with Sara Robson, the School Games Organiser from the Chelmsford School Sports Partnership, who selected 12 pupils from Great Baddow High School to participate in the six-week programme.

Weeks one to five were based at the indoor swimming pool in the High School, with the pupils receiving coaching on a kayaking machine and using the plastic boats of Maldon & Dengie Club for the water based training. The school also had a visit from Shaun Pearce, who gave a short talk on slalom and the Legacy Squad based at Lee Valley. To finish, in week six, the group, along with members of staff and the coaches, visited the white water centre, where they got the chance to not



only watch the senior squad in training, but also to experience the thrill of the Legacy course in the two-man rubber kayaks. This was then followed by a coaching lesson by Shaun using the slalom canoes and kayaks of the Legacy Squad.

The feedback from the parents stating that their children had not stopped talking about their experience has been very welcome to the club and the SGO, and follow up plans are in place to provide the pupils the opportunity to further their paddling careers.



## BRITISH CANOEING ON TOP

British Canoeing is delighted to announce it has won the NGB Award at the recent YST National Sport Games Organisers summit. The awarding panel told FOCUS, 'The sport has been open to all suggestions in terms of developing an offer that is accessible to all young people not only breaking down barriers of facility, equipment and access to water, but also focussing on opportunities for young people with disabilities. They have also sought to increase participation in targeted areas by adopting a strategic supply and demand approach. They had also maximised C4L opportunities.'

For more information visit: [www.youthsporttrust.org/events-awards/awards/sgo-national-summit-awards-2014.aspx](http://www.youthsporttrust.org/events-awards/awards/sgo-national-summit-awards-2014.aspx).

## EAST MIDLANDS PADDLER UP FOR TOP AWARD

Congratulations go to East Midlands paddler Jess Beresford (16) who was recently short-listed for the University of Derby's Young Adventurer of the year award. Jess attended a ceremony in Buxton, Derbyshire where the overall winners were announced. The overall prize went to two young sailors, also from Derbyshire who have competed at European level as a pair at the age of 15.

It was a very proud moment for Jess's family and Midland Canoe Club, with whom Jess paddles on a weekly basis. Her thirst for exploring the sport of canoeing has led her from beginner to being one of the most competent paddlers in the club. Even at her young age she leads adults on white water trips, showing great skill and confidence – always with a beaming smile!

Amongst white water trips all over the UK and the Alps, Jess now expresses her competitive side through Slalom. Having joined the fledgling club squad from the start, she is now part of a talented pool of youngsters battling it out at competitions all over the region.

Jess was among some inspirational company; nominees came from across the country from various backgrounds and sports. Some of the nominees had overcome their own difficulties to excel at their chosen activity. Hopefully Jess will act as inspiration for other young paddlers out there with a flair for adventure and maybe next year we can see more canoeists battling it out for the top award!

History was made

# COO, ISN'T IT DARK IN HERE!

## BRITISH CANOEING WMRDT TRIP THROUGH THE DUDLEY TUNNELS

**T**he rich limestone and coal deposits of the West Midlands enabled the industrial revolution. The regions cavern and tunnel network not only sourced these materials the canal tunnels were created to facilitate transportation. The Dudley Canal Trust came into being in 1970 with the aim of protecting and preserving the tunnels. For trust details, history and an interactive map see [www.dudleycanaltrust.org.uk](http://www.dudleycanaltrust.org.uk)



Phil Hadley kindly arranged a regional paddle trip through the tunnel, the third of recent years and Ray & I booked in. Very early, I set off, canoe on car, to pick Ray up from his home at 6:30AM. We saw the sunrise en-route and arrived in time for the start at 8:30AM.

Phil and Max took point in Phil's Pocket Canyon with John Heath as rear safety in his lovely Summersong solo canoe. We had a wide range of canoes and kayaks on this trip. Helmets are mandatory through the Dudley Tunnel and the Trust loaned helmets to those without. Head torches are essential. A minor canoe jam occurred at the end of the Dudley Tunnel (2888m) caused by having to portage the stop lock, perhaps we could have pushed it open. After the next portage Phil treated us to a short talk on the heritage of the area,

then on we paddled to our lunch stop at the Bumble Hole Tea Rooms. These were closed, as was the Netherton Tunnel (2768m), however C&RT staff were on hand to allow our group through after lunch. Pausing midway through the Netherton tunnel, Phil cheerfully announced, "If you've heard that tunnels move, they do, and here at the centre is the most likely place for it to happen!" Examination of the wall revealed the ends of 15m long tie bolts that had put in place for stabilisation.

Ducking under the 'closure' tapes we exited the Netherton, portaged up to the old main line canal and paddled on to end our 13.46km circular trip. Many then repeated the Dudley tunnel in a somewhat longer narrow-boat. Thanks to all who paddled and made this trip so enjoyable.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE REPS

This year marks the introduction of British Canoeing's Higher Education Representative scheme, which will aim to boost the number of university students taking part in the sport. Higher Education students form a key part of participation targets across all sports due to the high volume of students who are aged between 18 and 25, falling within Sport England headline participation target age range of 16-25. Owing to new surroundings and lifestyle patterns at the start of a new academic experience students have always been a likely group to take part in the sport but tracking and supporting that interest through from interest to regular participation has until now been left to the clubs alone.

Reps have been introduced at Nottingham University, UCLan, Teesside, Loughborough, Southampton and Bristol with a training day completed on 8<sup>th</sup> October. These reps will be 'mini' development officers for us at British Canoeing with UCLan and Nottingham already boosting participation through the introduction of the U Canoe programme to maintain interest through traditionally busy periods at the start of the year. One major problem for each of the clubs at present is the capacity issues, which so many clubs outside of universities also share. Universities often use swimming pools for early sessions but due to lack of space, boats or coaches some of the potential members can be lost

through the inability to actively involve all students. U Canoe has helped but resolutions for the future will undoubtedly come out of this programme.

Throughout this pilot year the reps will also be increasing the amount of advertisement of the sport outside of the traditional Fresher's Week burst at the start of each academic year.

With promise of increased competition and the introduction of the sport to social events such as

Glo Canoeing, a UV enthused event, which sees Indoor Kayak machines brought into Students' Union social space, the potential to reach new members in new ways is an exciting prospect.



## SPRINT REGATTA SUCCESS

Warwick's inaugural canoe sprint event, which took place on October 4th 2014, has been hailed a huge success. The event saw around 100 paddlers rubbing shoulders with Olympic stars and racing in a fun and friendly atmosphere on the River Avon just close to Warwick's historic castle. Hosted by Royal Leamington Spa canoe club, the sprint regatta was the brainchild of head racing coach Attila Herbert who organised the project - including state of the art photo finish timing borrowed from the British Canoeing's Sprint Racing Committee - with help of club members and racing junior parents.

The presence of Olympic and World Cup K1 and K2 medal winners was a huge highlight. Ed McKeever, Jon Schofield, Liam Heath, Rachel Cawthorn and Lani Belcher took part in a thrilling 200m exhibition race and later took star-struck lightning paddlers out in K4s. The GB athletes also handed out medals and signed vests and boats.

Even though the weather was a little miserable to start with, the sun came out by the end of the day, helped along by sparkling commentary from Leamington paddler and entertainer Brett Sirrell. In one surreal moment, over fifty K1 and C1 paddlers shot off the start line to strains of AC/DC'S 'Thunderstruck'!

Paddlers and public had a chance to try out their technique on kayak ergo machines brought along by British Canoeing and there were cakes, refreshments and a hog roast to tuck into. Attending from Banbury Canoe Club, Siobhan Urquhart commented, "A fantastic day - well organised, but with a lovely light, fun touch. Many, many thanks to everyone who was involved."

Attila Herbert said, "This was a huge undertaking, but we're so glad people enjoyed it. We're grateful to the GB athletes who gave freely of their time and inspired youngsters on the day. I'm passionate about getting young people into the sport. Our own junior racing team were buzzing after the day, which was on a home stretch of the river for them."

Chris White, MP for Warwick and Leamington Spa also attended the event and commented that it was, "A fantastic and inspiring sporting event".

Podium golds for 200m sprints went to Annelies Flack (BCC - Banbury), Steffi Kriegerstein (BWD- Dresden, Germany), Alex Greaves (RLS - Royal Leamington Spa), Max Burkhardt (BWD), Veit Kriegerstein (BWD) and Kal Kinser (BCC). Will Smithson (RLS) won the 4km race and Kal Kinser (BCC) the Lightning 2km race. The 'Tibor Trophy' winner for all round paddling excellence went to Charlie

**"A FANTASTIC DAY - WELL ORGANISED, BUT WITH A LOVELY LIGHT, FUN TOUCH. MANY, MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO WAS INVOLVED."**

Smith of GB Canoeing, for reaching sprint final one and coming second in the 4km race.

With such excellent feedback, Leamington Canoe Club intends that the event may become an annual one and will be shortly announcing a date for 2015.



## CANOE WITH A VIEW FOR ACTIVE CUMBRIA

The team at Active Cumbria (Cumbria County Sports Partnership) recently had a great morning on Derwentwater taking part in the 'Canoe with a View' tour run by Go Canoeing provider Keswick Canoe and Bushcraft. None of the team had really taken part in canoeing previously so when Rachel Hudspith, Development Officer at British Canoeing, suggested it as a great team building activity the team soon had it all booked!

It was a glorious day and a fantastic way to take in the spectacular surroundings. In total there were four Active Cumbria boats and some people picked up the paddling much quicker than others! Teamwork, communication, problem solving and listening were all extremely important skills and some were mastered quicker than others. Shaun from Keswick Canoe and Bushcraft was a fantastic instructor who made the day fun and entertaining sharing his local knowledge along with being there for support and encouragement if necessary. We were also fortunate to have the opportunity to learn some Bushcraft skills (wood collecting, creating a fire and working a Kelly kettle) from Shaun and, as expected, it all became rather competitive! When all the team were safely back on dry land we all agreed that it was a great couple of hours and the majority (those who mastered paddling!) would love to do something similar again in the future.

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# UCLAN PARTNERS WITH PLAS Y BRENNIN TO DELIVER OUTDOOR COURSE

**S**ports and outdoors students from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) will benefit from practical lessons with one of the country's top providers of outdoor adventure activities following a partnership agreement with Play y Brenin, the National Mountain Sports Centre, to help deliver some of its courses. This unique partnership between UCLan and the Sport England National Centre means that UCLan students studying on the outdoor leadership and adventure sports coaching degrees will benefit from the expertise of staff from Plas y Brenin, as well as that of staff at UCLan, in one of the most popular outdoor activity locations in the UK.



A combination of UCLan and Plas y Brenin staff will jointly deliver a range of modules at the National Centre in Snowdonia that develop the students' practical, coaching and leadership skills. This includes mountaineering, rock climbing, white water kayaking, sea kayaking, mountain biking and canoeing. In turn, the university's Institute of Coaching and Performance will work closely with Plas y Brenin on research projects, such as understanding the judgement and decision-making processes of

experts in adventure sports, which will help to influence the future development of the outdoor profession over the next decade. UCLan senior lecturer and former Head of department at Plas y Brenin Loel Collins told FOCUS, "This exciting partnership with one of the focal providers of outdoor adventure in the UK will allow our students to gain hands-on, practical experience with some of the best instructors in the industry in a unique environment. Along with my colleagues from the Institute of Coaching and Performance I am looking forward to working with Plas y Brenin on some innovation research projects that will hopefully set the standard of expert practice in the outdoors industry."

Dave Cheetham, Marketing Manager for Play y Brenin, commented, "We're delighted that UCLan has selected The National Mountain Sports Centre as the base for its outdoor leadership and adventure sports coaching degrees.

"UCLan has a reputation for bringing out the best in its students, helping them go on to develop long-lasting and fulfilling careers in the outdoors. As an organisation its



## BRITISH CANOEING 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Notice is hereby given that the 35th Annual General Meeting of British Canoeing will be held at the British Olympic Association, 60 Charlotte Street, London, W1T 2NU, on Saturday 7th March 2015 at 2pm. All members are welcome to attend.

The general nature of the business to be dealt with will be as follows:

**AGENDA:**

- Welcome by Mr Albert Woods OBE, President, British Canoeing
- To appoint tellers for the meeting
- To adopt the minutes of the 34th Annual General Meeting
- Matters arising from the minutes of the 34th Annual General Meeting
- To adopt the 35th Annual Report of the BCU Board for the year 1.11.13 to 31.10.14.
- To adopt the accounts for the financial year 1.11.13 to 31.10.14.
- Declaration of the result of the election for the BCU President
- To appoint 'haysmacintyre,' as the auditors for the financial year 01.11.14 to 31.10.15, and to authorise the directors to fix their remuneration.

Note: Any person being a Full Individual Member of the Company shall be entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote at the above mentioned Annual General Meeting in their place. Such proxy must be a Full Individual Member of the Company.

Further details of the business of the AGM, and Voting by Proxy form, will be posted on British Canoeing's website here - <http://bcu.org.uk/about/british-canoeing-agm/> - on 12th February 2015.

By order of the Board Secretary

standards and values are firmly in line with our own, and we're convinced this unique partnership between two of the most highly experienced and respected providers of outdoor training will result in an unrivalled learning environment for its students.

"Aside from enjoying top-class coaching, world-class facilities and equipment, the students will be immersed in the exciting and inspiring world of a National Sports Centre. Every day high performance athletes, coaches and enthusiasts, all eager to help enthuse and inform, will surround them. Aside from their day-to-day studies, they will rub shoulders with many of the country's most successful climbers; paddlers and riders and have the opportunity to engage directly with decision makers from the governing bodies of those sports.

"We have no doubt their future careers will be influenced by every moment of their stay with us."

UCLan's outdoor leadership and adventure sports coaching students are also given the opportunity to gain practical experience abroad as well as in the UK and have taken expeditions in Norway and Canada in recent years.

Plas y Brenin is based in Snowdonia, North Wales, and is one of Sport England's three National Centres. The centre runs a year round programme of mountain sports and outdoors activities catering for every level of competence, experience and ability. Plas y Brenin is managed by The Mountain Training Trust on behalf of Sport England.

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# WHAT GEAR

## KAYAK FISHING

ARTICLE & PHOTO BY ANDY BENHAM

EXPERT KAYAK FISHERMAN AND AUTHOR ANDY BENHAM PRESENTS THE FOCUS GUIDE TO THE ESSENTIAL KIT YOU'LL NEED TO GET STARTED IN THE EXHILARATING WORLD OF KAYAK FISHING.

**A**lthough it's perfectly possible to fish from just about any type of kayak, or indeed a canoe, for the purposes of this feature I'm going to concentrate on those boats that are specifically designed for the activity, namely fishing sit on tops. The reason most people choose a sit on top as their weapon of choice for fishing is quite simple, for a fishing trip the actual paddling often just becomes a way of getting somewhere, and it's the fishing itself that becomes important, and the ability to move around, put your legs over the side for stability, and have all your gear close to hand on the deck become important parts in your choice of transport. Although people can and do kayak fish on rivers and lakes, for the purpose of this feature I'll concentrate on what 99.9% of kayak anglers in this country do – sea fishing.

### KAYAKS

Dedicated fishing boats tend to divide into two categories, the wider, slower, shorter boats coming into the market mainly from America, and intended for use in very sheltered waters, sometimes with the angler standing up using polarised glasses to sight fish; and the longer, slimmer, faster more sea worthy boats intended for more offshore use, traditionally these have come from New Zealand or South Africa, but America is now catching onto this market and producing suitable boats and UK manufacturers are also producing these boats too.

Newcomers are often drawn to the shorter wider boats by the huge primary stability, but there are loads of them on the second hand market for the simple reason that they aren't really suited for sea fishing in the UK, except for occasional use in very sheltered conditions. These boats are sometime bought by newcomers to our sport, but the would be angler ends up changing to a more suitable boat sooner rather than later. So, for UK kayak angling, a longer, thinner, more sea worthy design is a better bet. When it comes to length, then 12ft is around the minimum for a decent fishing kayak, with the majority of boats being between 14 and 15 feet, anything much over 15ft tends to be faster but can pay a price in terms of manoeuvrability.

The sea is a harsh environment for a kayak, so look for a boat with decent quality fittings, made from A4 stainless steel, moulded in inserts are generally better than rivets at keeping things in place, but cost more during the manufacturing process.

### BUOYANCY AID (PFD)

It should go without saying that a correctly fitting buoyancy aid must be worn at all times. Those buoyancy aids found in the touring section of the shop usually fit the bill best, as some large front pockets always come in handy for filling with bits and pieces. Bear in mind you'll be sitting still for long periods, as well as paddling, so check the fit is OK for both activities. The aforementioned bits and pieces tend to weigh a bit, so always go for as much buoyancy as possible, I'm sure it's an apocryphal story, but rumours of buoyancy aid sinking under the weight of angling gear persist to this day.

### RODS & TACKLE

You could write a book on the fishing kit required for fishing from a kayak, and I don't intend to go into much detail here, but I will say stay away from really short rods, often marketed as 'kayak fishing rods'. A good kayak fishing rod will let you reach around the bow of the boat if a fish runs under your kayak, so look for rods around 7 feet or more in length.

Personally, I'd never leave shore without at least a pfd, paddle leash, knife and a radio. These are the essentials, many people start by buying fish finders and other gimmicks, which can enhance your fishing, but the thing to bear in mind is that the kayak bit of kayak fishing is potentially far more dangerous than the fishing bit, and you need to take your personal safety seriously even if just popping out to catch the occasional mackerel.

### KNIFE

A FISHING KAYAK IS A VERY 'ROPEY' ENVIRONMENT WITH BOTH RIGGING AND LINES EVERYWHERE, SO A GOOD KNIFE, EASILY ACCESSIBLE IN AN EMERGENCY IS A MUST HAVE. MOST ANGLERS WEAR THEIR KNIVES IN QUICK RELEASE HOLSTER ATTACHED TO THEIR BUOYANCY AIDS. A BLUNT NOSED BLADE HELPS TO AVOID ACCIDENTALLY STABBING YOURSELF. FOR THOSE WORRIED BY THE SAFETY ANGLE OF CARRYING A KNIFE, THEN BEAVER MAKE A VERY GOOD ROPE CUTTER AIMED AT THE DIVE MARKET, WHICH MAKES VERY SHORT WORK OF EVEN THE TOUGHEST TANGLE.



### ANCHORING

UNLIKE IN A PURE PADDLING SITUATION, WHEN FISHING ITS OFTEN AN ADVANTAGE TO BE ABLE STAY IN THE SAME PLACE, OR AT LEAST SLOW DOWN YOUR SPEED OF DRIFT. SO AN ANCHOR AND PERHAPS A DROGUE WILL COME IN VERY HANDY. BOTH DROGUES AND ANCHORS ARE POTENTIALLY VERY USEFUL SAFETY DEVICES AS THEY ENABLE YOU TO STAY PUT IN A PARTICULAR LOCATION, BUT BOTH SHOULD BE DEPLOYED OFF A PROPERLY FITTED ANCHOR TROLLEY, AND SHOULDN'T BE USED UNTIL YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENT IN THEIR SAFE DEPLOYMENT.

### COMMUNICATION

Another important item of kit is some means of communicating with the shore, while a phone in a dry bag is very useful to have, I'd say a VHF radio is also an essential piece of kit, and many kayak anglers are also carrying PLBs these days. Not only is a radio good if you get into trouble but because you are out there fishing you are often sitting still, waving fishing rods about, and it's not unknown for a well-meaning person on shore to think you are in distress and inform the coastguard. With a radio, they can call you up and check before dispatching the RNLI. The new DSC equipped handhelds are particularly good, as they also give your position. Sticking with the subject of communication for a while I also carry a day and night flare on me when I go fishing, if you put a dab of Vaseline or similar over the exposed parts then they will last their four year service life in a PFD pocket, hopefully the only time you'll touch it is when you take it for disposal at the end of its life. For around £10 you can get a waterproof light to attach to your buoyancy aid, again you'll probably never touch it, but it can be a life saver if you ever get involved in a night time rescue, don't forget to check the battery every once in a while. Again, in terms of being seen, a few metres of SOLAS tape can make a massive difference, particularly in low light, and only cost a few pounds.



### DECK LAYOUTS & FITTINGS

Fishing kayak deck layouts tend to fall into one of two camps, those with a central rod or tackle pod, between your legs, and those with a more open deck layout, but less storage. If you do go for a design with a rod pod check there is enough room for your legs either side of the rod pod as some designs can be a bit tight, particularly if wearing heavy winter clothing. The huge advantage of the rod pod design is that you can store all your fishing tackle away inside the boat, which can come in handy for those less than perfect surf landings. Recently designs have seen some interesting developments, particularly those boats with removable tackle pods, there is even one boat where the tackle pod can be replaced with a child's seat, making this a very flexible design. In terms of material, rotomoulded plastic still rules the roost, and plastic boats can take an enormous amount of punishment without major complaint, keels can wear with time, but many manufacturers are now fitting replaceable keel strips in high wear areas.

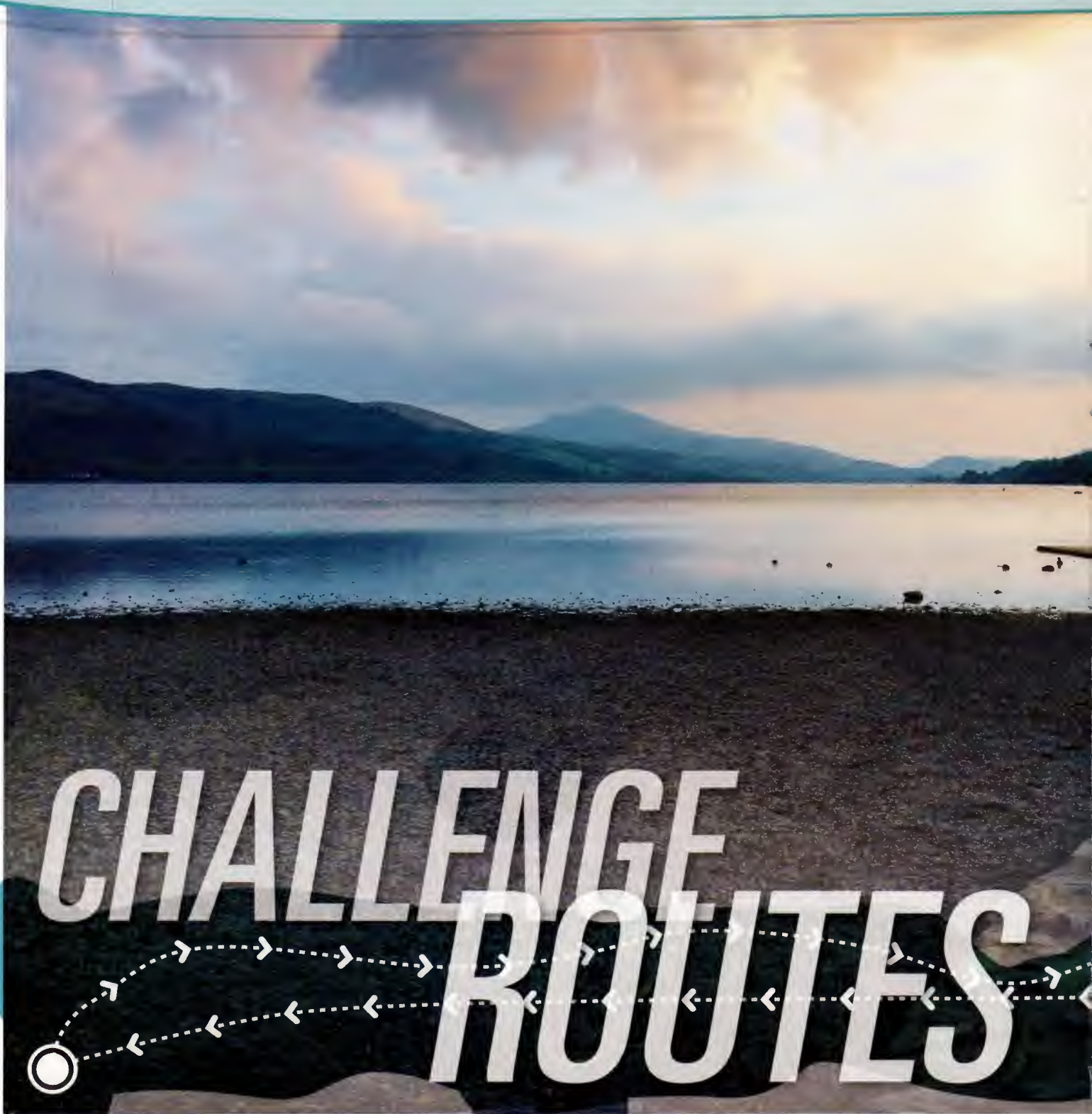
So, once you've got your kayak sorted what else are you going to need?

### CLOTHING

In terms of clothing, fishing is again different from recreational paddling in that you are likely to be paddling hard for a relatively short period of time, then to be sitting around, perhaps for several hours, before paddling hard to get back home again. During the sitting around bit you are also perched on top of a sit on top, so if you intend to fish other than in those few short summer weeks, then a high quality, breathable dry suit will come in very, very useful. You'll also need to correctly layer your clothing under the drysuit to enable it to breath properly, but on the plus side, it can breathe through the legs and trunk as you won't have your legs inside the boat and don't have to wear a spray deck, so you might be surprised as to just how comfortable they can be to wear all day even in quite warm weather. If you do happen to fall in, then a drysuit will massively come into its own.

### LEASH

Perhaps the most important piece of safety equipment specifically for kayak fishing is a paddle leash. The actual fishing bit requires both hands to operate the rod and reel, and as a result the paddle, if not leashed, is free to escape, with potentially disastrous consequences. As with sea kayaking, a spare paddle is also a good addition to your kit. Sitting on top of a kayak surrounded by toys, you soon learn the kayak angler's favourite maxim, 'leash it or lose it', as every year many thousands of pounds of kit are donated to Neptune's burgeoning tackle collection by newbie kayak anglers. Rod leashes cost a few pounds to buy or can easily be made at home and will save you a fortune.



ABOVE: EVENING SUNSET  
OVER BALA

**THE ROUTES  
ARE NATIONALLY  
RECOGNISED  
JOURNEYS ON  
WATERWAYS  
THAT HAVE BEEN  
CAREFULLY  
SELECTED TO  
PROVIDE YOU  
WITH UNIQUE  
CHALLENGES.**

**I** f you're looking for a challenge to tackle in 2015, maybe as a New Year's resolution or even as a personal challenge during National Go Canoeing Week, why not consider a Go Canoeing Challenge Route?

The routes are nationally recognised journeys on waterways that have been carefully selected to provide you with unique challenges. They are designed for you to plan and complete in your own time, in your boat of choice and at your own pace.

If you are the competitive type, however, once you've completed a Challenge Route you can submit your completion time and we'll send you a certificate and display your time on our national leader board.

The routes are aimed at those who have existing canoeing experience; however, at just seven miles long, the Llyn Tegid (otherwise known as Lake Bala) Challenge Route is a fantastic choice for people with less experience, or those looking to build up their experience before embarking on some of the longer Challenge Routes.

Lake Bala is set in the enchanting and peaceful surroundings of Snowdonia National Park and the stunning mountain scenery, beautiful picnic spots and rare wildlife make this an inspiring setting to take on your first Go Canoeing Challenge Route.

Gav Grayston from the website Get Out With the Kids took on the Lake Bala Challenge Route with his wife and three children and found the weather added a challenging element to the route, especially when he was the one doing all the work! Describing the return journey across the lake, Gav said, "This time the wind was right in our face. So were the waves. With the wind coming down the valley from the mountains in generally one direction, the waves have a chance to build over 3.5 miles. If you stop you go backwards!



"The trick with Bala though is to hug the shore on the return stretch (depending on the wind of course). There are lots of little headlands that can block some of the wind and waves, though there are points where you have to venture back into the main channel.

"Our eldest had done well, but in places where we were exposed to the wind and the waves, she wasn't making much headway. The solution? she pontooned with the one we were already towing. That meant we were now facing into the waves and the wind, towing two inflatable canoes. There were plenty of moments on that journey where I was the only one paddling five people into wind across three inflatable craft! It was hard work!

"Finally, we got close and the wind and waves were less, and the girls wanted to finish the last bit themselves. Suddenly our canoe was flying through the water without the two boats behind, and we soon reached the shore.

"So, at 3 hours and 44-minutes, I don't think we'll be at the top of the Go Canoeing leader board, even if we took off the 15 minutes for the picnic at Llangower!" (To read more about Gav's adventure visit: [www.getoutwiththekids.co.uk/water/lake-bala-challenge](http://www.getoutwiththekids.co.uk/water/lake-bala-challenge))

The Lake Bala Challenge Route can be combined with our two other routes, Loch Awe and Windermere, allowing you to complete our ultimate Go Canoeing Three Lakes Challenge. Before attempting any of the Go Canoeing Challenge Routes, please read the full information pack online that outlines the entire route and contains additional local information and key safety guidance.

#### USEFUL INFO

For more information and to view the full information packs, visit: [www.gocanoeing.org.uk/go/index.cfm/challenges](http://www.gocanoeing.org.uk/go/index.cfm/challenges) →



# NATIONAL GO CANOEING WEEK

**W**ith just weeks left in 2014, it's that time of year when people reflect on the previous 12-months and start planning for the year ahead. And if you've already started filling in your 2015 diary, we've got a date for you that you won't want to miss – National Go Canoeing Week!

Next year's event will take place from 23rd - 31st May and, after a phenomenal turn out this year, we want even more people taking part in 2015. It's a week that anyone can get involved in, from complete beginners

to seasoned pros and all forms of paddlesport are celebrated from stand-up paddleboards to open canoes.

This year we launched the Every Mile Counts theme, encouraging the nation to collectively paddle the distance around the UK coastline. For 2015 we want to go even further and hope you will join us on our journey to Rio and beyond. To get involved in National Go Canoeing Week, all you

need to do is get out on the water during the event and register the number of miles you complete on the Go Canoeing website.

Go Canoeing Development Officer Jenny Spencer told FOCUS, "This year was a huge success and with 290 organised activities on offer from 72 locations we were confident we would hit our ambitious target. The Every Mile Counts theme seemed to really spark the imagination of the canoeing







community, as well as newcomers to the sport, and we had over 8,000 people take part, helping us collectively clock up a staggering three laps of the UK!

"We were delighted so many people came on that journey with us and we decided we needed to do something to top it next year. With the 2016 Rio Olympics looming ever closer, 2015 is going to be a key year of preparation for our sport. We wanted you to feel part of the excitement and help us hit our target of paddling to Rio and beyond for National Go Canoeing Week 2015.

"The route will take in the west coasts of Europe and Africa, before a hop across the Atlantic to the city of Samba and then up the eastern seaboard of the US and a final stretch back across the Atlantic. The journey will total 24,901 miles, which is also the exact length of the equator and means we're essentially asking you to help us paddle around the entire world!

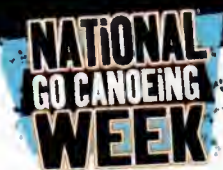
"We hope that's an inspiring prospect and we'd love to see even more people taking part in the week next year, so why not get the date in your diary and start thinking about how you can get involved in National Go Canoeing Week 2015?"


All our fantastic National Go Canoeing Week activities will be listed on the website, [www.gocanoeingweek.org.uk](http://www.gocanoeingweek.org.uk), where participants can register their miles and keep track of the ongoing total.



#### USEFUL INFO

We'd love all clubs and centres, however big or small, to think about ways you can help promote the sport and support your members and newcomers to get involved during National Go Canoeing Week. The easiest way to be a part of the fun is to register some Go Canoeing Starter Sessions, but if you've been thinking about organising a larger event, why not tie it in with National Go Canoeing Week? 



To register a Starter Session, or for more information about how to get involved, visit the Organisers' section at [www.gocanoeingweek.org.uk](http://www.gocanoeingweek.org.uk) 



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# WORLD RIVERS DAY



**THIS IS THE FIRST YEAR  
BRITISH CANOEING  
HAS SUPPORTED THE  
EVENT AND IT IS GREAT  
TO SEE SO MANY  
PEOPLE FROM THE  
PADDLING COMMUNITY  
PARTICIPATING AND  
CONTRIBUTING TO  
WORLD RIVERS DAY.**





**E**ach year millions of people in more than 60 countries participate in World Rivers Day and this autumn British Canoeing supported the event and encouraged paddlers across the country to get involved and love their local river. The aim was to highlight the many values of rivers and to increase public awareness of the need to better care for our waterways.

## WORLD RIVERS DAY ACTIVITIES

River Derwent, Workington Litter Pick – West Cumbria Rivers Trust & Copeland Canoe Club.

The West Cumbria Rivers Trust had a range of great events to celebrate World Rivers Day, including a litter pick organised by Copeland Canoe Club, in partnership with West Cumbria Rivers Trust and British Canoeing. The litter pick took place on the River Derwent, upstream from Workington, and was aimed to highlight the many values of rivers and to increase public awareness of the need to take better care for our waterways.

18 sacks of rubbish, plus some very big lumps of plastic pipe-work, several footballs and even more tennis balls were removed from the river! There were a lot of bigger bits of waste that the participants were unable to take out due to size, awkwardness or sheer risk involved - several 45-gallon drum

sized blue plastic barrels and lots of broken glass have been reported to the local authority.

The event brought together paddling communities from Copeland CC, Lakeland CC and Workington Sea Cadets with support from Allerdale Borough Council. The day was a great success in strengthening paddling links and providing a cleaner river, which will benefit wildlife, conservation and interest groups. The group also found a message in a bottle, which had travelled across the Atlantic Ocean!

Karin Croft, from the West Cumbria Rivers Trust Catchment Partnership, told FOCUS, "We had a hectic, educational and fun week of watery events culminating in a mass litter clearance on World Rivers Day itself. It was fantastic to see water enthusiasts come out in force to clear litter from the Derwent Estuary, litter that would otherwise have stayed in the system and caused damage to and endangered wildlife, boats and angling equipment. British Canoeing, local and national canoe groups not only had fun on the water but they made a real difference to the water environment. A huge thanks goes out to all those involved, it was a real team effort and a celebration of everything that's important in looking after our rivers and seas for the future. I'm really looking forward to working together again!" →

British Canoeing Waterways and Environment Manager Richard Atkinson spoke to FOCUS about the event, "This is the first year British Canoeing has supported the event and it is great to see so many people from the paddling community participating and contributing to World Rivers Day. It really celebrated our waterways and highlighted the environmental issues and pressures that our beautiful rivers may face."

There were a number of ways that people got involved in World Rivers Day including organising a river clean up or simply spending time on their local stretch of river and enjoying the natural landscape and wildlife.



### WORLD RIVERS DAY GO CANOEING GUIDED TOURS

Another way people got involved with World Rivers Day was to spend some time on their local stretch of river to enjoy the natural landscape and wildlife on one of the many Go Canoeing Guided Tours. A specially trained tour guide with fantastic local knowledge led each tour.

#### TOURS:

Birmingham - Regional Guided Tour  
Berkshire - The Sounding Arch Tour (Bray)  
Berkshire - World Rivers Day Guided Tour  
Windsor - Weekend Tour  
Hampshire - Canoe & Kayak Tours  
Staffordshire - Shugborough Loop Tour  
Dorset - River Frome Guided Tour  
Manchester - World Rivers Day Guided Tour  
Devon - The River Exe Tour  
Leicestershire - Paddle to the pub  
Kent - Nature Tour  
Reading - World Rivers Day Tour

### GET OUT WITH THE KIDS - PADDLING THE MERSEY - AN URBAN CANOE ADVENTURE

As a result of this fantastic promotion British Canoeing introduced 'Get Out with the Kids' on their first Go Canoeing Guided Tour in Manchester with our franchisee Venture Out as part of World Rivers Day. The 'Get out with the Kids' family produced a great write up with pictures and video on their website and Facebook of their experience. Most importantly it looks like they had a brilliant time and it is great to get a write up from family participants viewpoint. It portrays canoeing in a very positive way, ideal for attracting active families, who have a love for the outdoors, to paddling.

To read the write up, visit:  
[www.getoutwiththekids.co.uk/water/paddling-the-mersey](http://www.getoutwiththekids.co.uk/water/paddling-the-mersey)

### THE WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM PADDLE

The West Midlands Regional Paddle on the River Severn from Bridgnorth to Arley took place on World Rivers Day. There were 54 paddlers from various clubs throughout the region. Dave Bateman from Ackers said, "Everyone had a really good day and said what a great day it was and will we be running the event next year. It was a good way to get paddlers from various clubs together in one place rather than lots of paddlers going to an array of different venues."





### WORLD RIVERS DAY IN NORTH DEVON

Bideford Canoe Club has developed a site for introductory moving water skills and slalom on tidal water on the River Taw. On World Rivers Day they cleared fallen trees from the site.

### LEICESTER OUTDOOR PURSUITS CENTRE

Organised litter pick around Birstall. 14 bags of rubbish, including a child's car, was collected by 14 volunteers. Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre have organised monthly litter picks.

### PADDLEPLUS ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS AND CLEAN UP THE RIVER AT BIRSTALL WEIR

Volunteers from PaddlePlus Canoe Club were joined by the regular LOPC litter picking volunteers to undertake a tidy up at Birstall Lock, which included litter picking, removing overhanging branches and constructing a portage point. The group were over 20 strong and achieved a great deal in the day. It was fantastic to mark World Rivers Day with a day's work that made such a visible difference.

RiverCare groups in the East of England Region organised lots of clean ups on the day:

- Abingdon
- Bedford
- Colchester
- Diss
- Peterborough
- Sleaford
- Stamford

IT WAS A GOOD WAY TO GET PADDLERS FROM VARIOUS CLUBS TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE RATHER THAN LOTS OF PADDLERS GOING TO AN ARRAY OF DIFFERENT VENUES.

Thank you everyone for all the hard work this year. Let's make 2015 even bigger with more events, and more partnership working with organisations such as the Rivers Trusts, Environment Agency and Canal and River Trust to make a better environment for everyone! ☺



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**TOP  
TIPS**

FOR

**WHITE WATER  
PADDLERS**

ARTICLE AND IMAGES BY ROSS MONTANDON, LEVEL 5 COACH  
& CREATOR OF NEW WAVE COACHING



**T**he UK white water season is firmly here, so to help get the most out of your time on the water this winter here's some essential tips of how to achieve the core fundamentals of good posture in your kayak. Whatever grade of water floats your boat, maintaining good posture will help you to paddle in a dynamic style, generate power and keep things safe, whatever the river throws at you.

### THE BASICS ARE IMPORTANT

Creating an active posture for white water paddling is a 'bread and butter' fundamental of becoming a better paddler. Activating your posture will allow you to engage positively with the ever-changing white water environment. Having good posture allows you to move your boat around with much less effort, and to go with the ebb and flow of the water much more easily than if you were simply slumped in your boat. Being able to move around the boat is key as it changes the shape of the boat on the water, allowing us to access a

range of movements. Ideal for those tight eddies, clean boof strokes and smashing through stoppers.

### ACTIVATING YOUR POSTURE

Like anything in life activating, and maintaining, good posture takes practice. At first we may have to consciously remind ourselves to do it, before it becomes automatic. The effects of holding good posture in your kayak though will be instant. When we use the word activate what we mean is getting your posture ready for action. Here's how:

### OUTFITTING

Before we even start we need to make sure we are comfortable in our boats. Modern kayak outfitting is superb with ratchet strap back-bands, and the like, becoming a familiar feature. A little support is good, but make sure you don't over tighten. You should also be able to apply pressure to your footrest, as this gives purchase to access drive. Don't have your feet flat on the footrest. You want your toes to be touching at the ball of your feet. Your boat should be like a favourite pair of shoes, snug but comfortable! This connectivity is important because when we move, our boat should move with us. →

“**LIKE ANYTHING  
IN LIFE  
ACTIVATING,  
AND  
MAINTAINING,  
GOOD POSTURE  
TAKES  
PRACTICE.**”

ENGAGED POSTURE ON  
STEEPER WHITEWATER

## 2 ENGAGE

I like to loosen up a little before a paddle. If I've had to sit in a car for a few hours prior to paddling then I really need to stretch things out. Especially the lower half of my body! Many paddlers neglect the lower body when warming up or stretching out.

To engage start by stretching tall, as high as you can go while in your boat. Imagine a piece of string is pulling you up from the top of your head. Once you have reached your full range come back down to sit half way between fully stretched and your lowest point. This is the height you want to be engaged.

Imagine your body is like a coiled spring and one of the many ways you can move is up and down. As you paddle white water your body should be moving up and down, very much like a shock absorber or a suspension fork on a mountain bike.

## 3 PUSH OUT AND IN

Now we have our height sorted. Push your chest out and imagine taking a big breath inwards. As you do so pull your shoulder blades inwards towards each other and slightly downwards. For those who want to find out more about this position look up Scapula Setting. This allows us to open up our chest allowing for increased range of movement.

## 4 CORE IT UP!

As paddlers and coaches we can sometimes get a bit over enthusiastic with using buzz words like 'core', 'dynamic' and 'hyper tension'. It makes us feel like we know what we're talking about! But to finish off we can push our bum and lower back into the backrest whilst tightening our rock hard abs (If you haven't got them now good posture and paddling will see you right) because this allows us to be able to rotate and edge, so optimising our movement in our boat.

### IN A NUTSHELL

- Sit tall and high then sink down slightly
- Push chest out and shoulder blades towards each other and down
- Push bum back and stomach forwards to optimise your movement
- Practice makes perfect posture

Without a doubt it takes time and practice, on and off the water, to really achieve good posture. Have a go getting some video footage of yourself and then watch other paddlers, such as slalom racers, sprint and marathon paddlers or freestylers, who all generally have very good posture. This will really help you to see and identify what you're trying to achieve. It'll take a little time but eventually you won't need to think about it and you'll be posture perfect every time you paddle.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF  
FOCUS WE WILL LOOK  
AT THE DYNAMIC  
FUNDAMENTALS OF  
MOVING AROUND  
THE BOAT.

KEEPING A DYNAMIC CHANGE ALLOWS THE PADDLER TO  
MOVE AROUND THE BOAT








USING THE BODY AS A SPRING TO ABSORB IMPACT



## ROSS MONTANDON

Ross is one of the youngest commercial coaching providers in the industry. He spends his days sharing his knowledge running his kayaking coaching business New Wave Kayaking which focusses is on individual, personalised coaching to help paddlers get the most out of their time on whitewater. 



To find out more visit [www.newwavekayaking.com](http://www.newwavekayaking.com)



Beillie / Stott, Cardiff. Image Pete Astles

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## FOCUS ON

ARTICLE BY JAMES SMYTHE, MARATHON RACING COMMITTEE MEMBER

# CANOE MARATHON

CANOE MARATHON IS AN ALL-ROUND DISCIPLINE THAT OFFERS MORE OR LESS EVERYTHING THAT CAN MAKE A PADDLER LOVE OUR SPORT; CHALLENGING YOUR BODY AND YOUR MIND ON ALL SORTS OF WATER, TO ACHIEVE BOTH PERSONALLY AND AS PART OF A TEAM.

**I**t's physical, posing each of us a personal challenge to make the distance, stay upright or overcome other racers. It's highly tactical, with the outcome often known only at the last minute, and the chance to surpass your physical abilities with an intelligent race. It's varied, with opportunities to race from four frenetic miles to one hundred and twenty five of the longest miles you may ever experience. And it covers a full range of our natural and manmade inland waterways across the UK.

PHOTOS BY  
OLLIE HARDING

As a nation, we're also extremely good at it, having claimed 25 world and ten European titles in the history of the sport. Along with the clubs, marathon racing is a foundation of much of the success we've enjoyed in sprint racing too; four of the ten athletes on the GB Olympic Podium program this year have been marathon world medallists, and the majority of them started their careers in clubs, doing both marathon and sprint races.

## RACES, RACES EVERYWHERE

Over the last year, nearly 3,000 people have taken part in at least one competitive race nationwide. They each completed more than three events on average; with one young paddler from Banbury racking up twenty-four finishes in the season! Most of these events were part of the year-round Hasler series, comprising 55 races across the country from Cornwall to Moray.

The Hasler series is built around clubs, with teams competing in races across their region to win a place at the annual final and a chance to win the Hasler Trophy. Teams like 2014 champions Norwich Canoe Club bring together all abilities from relative beginners to world-class athletes, with each paddler racing in a mixed

class 'division' according to his or her expertise. A typical regional Hasler race offers a lot of classes, so everyone has a chance to race people at, or close to their own ability level. There are Lightning K1 and Mini K2 races for under 10s and 12s, and mixed Divisions from 9 through to 1, most of which offer both singles and doubles events.

A big race like the one held each year at Pangbourne on the Thames is a logistical marvel. Nearly five hundred racers need to be corralled into at least seventeen start lines, and set off to a tight timetable that minimises the risk of classes clashing at portages or turns. A Division 1 race usually covers twelve miles with a few portages past locks or weirs, at an average speed of around seven miles an hour. That's a pace a half decent runner would struggle to match for



**OVER THE LAST  
YEAR, NEARLY  
3,000 PEOPLE HAVE  
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AT LEAST ONE  
COMPETITIVE RACE  
NATIONWIDE.**

such a distance, despite not dragging along their bodyweight in water. Our entry-level Division 9 racers still have to tackle four miles and it's impressive to see how relative beginners take the distance in their stride.

The Hasler system is really effective at getting people into the sport and progressing through the ranks - each race won is followed by a move up to meet a more challenging set of competitors, or a longer distance at the next event. It also cements our sport's sense of community: from beginners to world champions all testing themselves on the same stretch of water and on the same day, for themselves and for their clubs.

Hasler races seem to fill the season from spring to autumn, leaving little space in a busy paddlers' or parents' schedule. Nevertheless, 'free' weekends

are filled up with all sorts of local and national long-distance events. These include winter classics like the Glasgow to Edinburgh canal challenge, or the weir-shooting Avon Descent. But the most popular race in the calendar starts in a small village on a canal barely wide enough to turn a K2. Waterside A joins Great Bedwyn to Newbury in Berkshire, and packs twenty one lock portages into under fourteen miles, so almost constitutes a paddling and running biathlon. The reason for its popularity - apart from it signalling the start of the marathon season - is that it covers part of the Devizes to Westminster course and is seen as good preparation for those building up to marathon's ultimate challenge. Such is demand for places that it has now had to cap entries at 400 boats to avoid gridlock at each village it passes.

## THE CANOEIST'S EVEREST

The Devizes to Westminster is one hundred and twenty-five miles of canal, river and portage, raced non-stop by up to two hundred double canoes and kayaks through day and night. It's also a singles and junior doubles event covering the same course over four days, but the overnight breaks make the distance no shorter. The epithet 'Canoeist's Everest' has stuck with good reason.

First attempted sixty-six years ago, the official DW record has stood for the last thirty five, defying all the recent progress in boat and paddle design. It may have none of the pace of a Hasler race start line, but the challenge, teamwork and sense of personal achievement it offers to those who overcome it, make all those who clamber up the steps at Westminster Bridge feel just a little more accomplished than when they left Devizes Wharf.

## RACING WITH YOUR HEAD

Once a marathon paddler learns to master their boat, most races stop being a simple matter of stubborn endurance, and a whole new dimension of tactical racing opens up. Place yourself alongside and just behind a fellow competitor, and you find yourself lifted by the wave they involuntarily produce as they pull themselves through the water. This gives the impression of paddling downhill and a chance to rest a little. Of course, getting over and onto the wave involves a bit of uphill too. As more boats get involved a group forms, and with it the opportunity to either go faster for less effort, or to impose more effort on your competitors to keep up.

So in those big race starts, the winner is rarely the one who races ahead from the word go. The pace of a group is usually going to be faster than someone working alone, and the paddlers who have used the group to their advantage can manage very high speeds to gain position into the finish. Before they get there, most races will include little difficulties like turns, portages or upstream sections. This is why marathon develops and requires great all-round boating skills, balancing power, an unstable craft, moving water and the occasional need to jump out and run with the boat. →



**ONCE A MARATHON PADDLER LEARNS TO MASTER THEIR BOAT, MOST RACES STOP BEING A SIMPLE MATTER OF STUBBORN ENDURANCE, AND A WHOLE NEW DIMENSION OF TACTICAL RACING OPENS UP.**



**GREAT BRITAIN'S GREAT HISTORY IN MARATHON**

Britain was one of the founding nations in international marathon racing, leading the creation of the World Cups series in the early 80s, and full ICF World Championship status from 1988 where the first championships were held at Nottingham. Alan Laws of Lincoln Canoe Club was one of those who worked hard to establish the sport, and continues to lead its expansion with the ICF, taking the World Championships to Oklahoma, USA in 2014.

Since 1988, as a nation we have won twenty five world titles and thirty world silver or bronze medals. The most recent of these were in Oklahoma: Richmond's Lizzie Broughton taking silver in the women's K1, Sam Rees-Clark of Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club silver in the U23 women's K1, and bronze in the women's K2 with Amy Ward of Elmbridge. These successes put our women ahead of our men in the historical world and European medals count, and further demonstrate both the health and encouraging future of the discipline in our country.

Racing in the 90s, as the sport established itself in more and more countries worldwide, also built the reputations of our sport's legends. Ivan Lawler of Elmbridge Canoe Club won five gold and two silver medals at Marathon World Championships (not forgetting a gold and a silver in K2 10k also), at a time when the marathon worlds were only held once every two years. Anna Hemmings, from the same club that drove and continues to heavily influence our international successes, won six titles and two silver medals in women's K1 and K2.

**WHAT'S NEXT IN MARATHON?**

Arguably the greatest influence and opportunity for marathon today is technology. For the last few years, major internationals have been

viewable by a worldwide audience via web streaming. Races in Oklahoma drew over 10,000 views online.

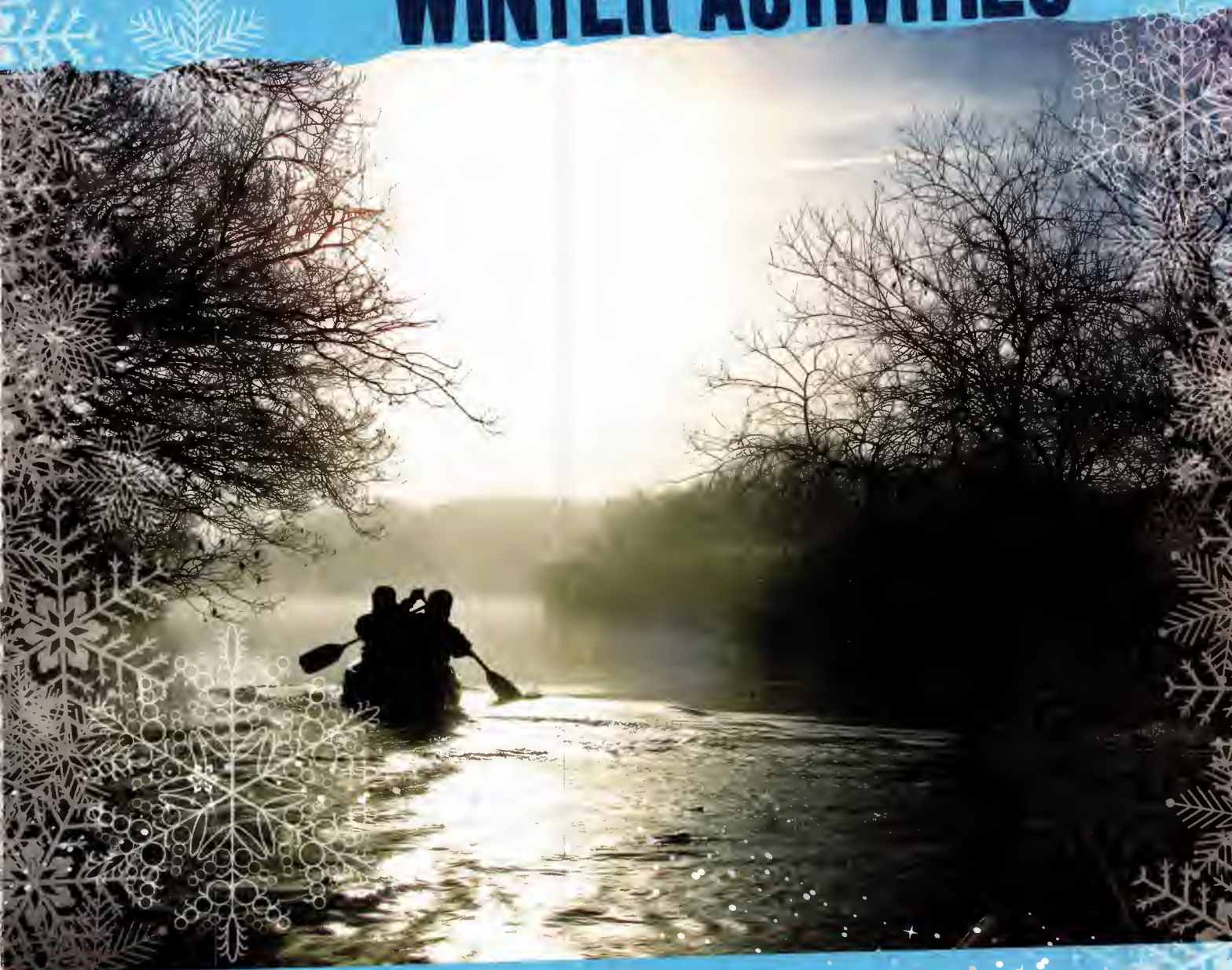
Paddlers are also active in creating their own content about marathon. Ben Brown's v-log tracked his domestic and international successes and helped him to nearly a quarter of a million YouTube subscribers. A waterproof video camera, some imagination and hard work can bring the excitement of our sport to a much wider public.

GPS tracking also brings the sport to life. This year saw a major trial on the Devizes to Westminster, with all the non-stop crews carrying a GPS transmitter. Supporters following online could track individual crews' progress through the day and night, and the sight of a hundred and fifty little tracking dots converging on central London at dawn helped people comprehend and experience the greatness of the moment.

But the common theme in the success of canoe marathon remains the strength and diversity of our clubs. Healthy competition and a broad regional spread make it a great sport if you want to see the country (or the world for that matter). But week in and week out, clubs across the country introduce people to marathon racing, helping them achieve everything from small personal successes that serve them in life, to international glories. **CF**

**GO**  
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ALL YEAR ROUND  
WITH OUR  
WINTER ACTIVITIES**



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# TIGHT TURNS AND SIMPLE SPINS

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY KARL MIDLANE

GET YOUR OPEN CANOE MANOEUVRING WITH EASE BY PICKING THE MOST APPROPRIATE OPTION FROM A PLETHORA OF POSSIBILITIES.

**W**hen it comes to manoeuvring your canoe there is a surprisingly limited number of things you can do with your paddle. You can pull or push with it, you can slice it through the water with minimal resistance, or you can hold it stationary for maximum resistance. Each of these can be done with a vertical or horizontally orientated shaft. If all these potential combinations do not give you enough variety for your desired outcome then you can also modify your tilt (what kayakers call edge) and your trim (the forward and backwards balance of the boat).



In an attempt to ascertain, which stroke might be best suited to different potential manoeuvres, let us assume that we are proficient with the basic forms of strokes in the comfort of a flat water environment and look at a few options to try to determine: what each stroke can potentially provide for us? And what we need to provide for it to work at its most efficient? And finally how it may need to be modified for moving water or tandem paddling.

## FORWARD POWER

Forward power strokes provide lots of forward momentum and a noticeable turning effect. In moving water you may reach a point where the water flowing towards you is moving faster than you can pull your paddle through, if this happens you will no longer be able to propel yourself forwards and you will have to resort to other options like pushing off a rock or repositioning in to slower water.



### REVERSE POWER

Similar to forward power, this provides turning as well as breaking effect, or backwards momentum.

### SWEEP STROKES

A forward sweep stroke requires a nearly horizontal paddle and will provide a lot of turning and a significant amount of forward power. For a solo paddler in a traditional open canoe forward sweeps will propel the craft

around in a small circle. To produce a turn in a smaller space a little extra can be added on to the start of the sweep stroke by beginning on the opposite side of the boat and drawing an arc toward the front of the boat, lifting it briefly out of the water to clear the front of the boat before continuing with the normal sweep stroke. This does not need any swapping of hand position on the paddle, you are just making a sweep stroke longer by adding extra

**“WHEN IT COMES TO MANOEUVRING YOUR CANOE THERE IS A SURPRISINGLY LIMITED NUMBER OF THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR PADDLE.”**

at the start, you may also need to temporarily shift a knee for better reach. As explored in the June 2014 issue of FOCUS tandem paddlers will only perform the sweeps between their end of the boat and the 90 degree point. →

TOP: KARL MIDLANE TIGHT  
TURNS AND SIMPLE SPINS  
SUPPORTING SHOTS



### REVERSE SWEEPS

Reverse sweeps will provide turning and backwards power, this could be used to produce a dramatic turn but at the expense of any forward momentum.

### DRAW STROKES

A vertical paddle and a pull towards the boat will provide sideways momentum to the boat and works effectively with a stationary, or moving boat, and in flat or moving water. If you utilise the same stroke as a tandem paddler it will only move your end of the boat. If both tandem paddlers perform the stroke on their own sides of the boat it will produce a turn on the spot. This works equally well in flat or moving water and with a stationary or moving boat. Unlike sweep strokes the turn is produced without any potentially unwanted forward or backwards momentum.

A solo paddle can produce a similar effect by doing a bow draw (a draw stroke aimed towards the front of the boat rather than its balance point)

Once a draw stroke has been completed it can be repeated by taking the blade out of the water to reposition it or by twisting it through 90 degrees to slice it back to the start point. Slicing back out will produce drag if the boat has forward momentum through the water, which could mean an unwanted turn and reduction in speed.



### PRY STROKES

A pry stroke is similar to a draw but pushes instead of pulling to produce momentum in the opposite direction for all of the scenarios mentioned above. Extra power can be generated, by using the gunnels of the boat as a pivot point.

### BOW CUT

The bow cut (also known as a bow rudder by kayakers) is another vertical paddle stroke that can produce a fast dynamic turn, pivoting around a vertical shaft, but to be effective it needs speed. The boat needs to be travelling at a significantly different rate to the water. Drifting with a flow and sticking your blade into water that is moving at the same speed as your boat will just not cut it. The momentum of the boat will be taken and redirected in a new direction as the blade is held in position resisting the pressure of the water against it.





## MODIFYING THE STROKE

On flat water the angle of the blade makes a big difference, if there is only a small angle on the blade compared to the centre line of the boat a gradual turn will be produced with the speed being maintained well, a larger angle will produce a sharper turn but at the cost of momentum. On moving water the blade may be angled to present the largest surface area possible to the flow, and adapted during the turn to maximise the pressure.

The drive face of the blade faces towards the front of the canoe and is used during the stroke to provide the resistance. It is easy to convert this into a bow draws if the speed of the turn dies off, which can then be converted seamlessly in to forward power once the manoeuvre is completed.

## CROSS BOW CUTS

Cross bow cuts are similar but are performed on the off side of the boat to produce a sharp turn away from the paddling side. Again the drive face of the blade is facing towards the front of the boat, this can be converted in to the bonus extra part at the start of a sweep stroke described above.

## STERN RUDDER

Trailing a horizontal blade at the back of the boat can be used to maintain a straight line or initiate a gentle turn, either way it needs speed, whether that is the boat moving through the water or water flowing past the boat. →



## WHICH STROKE TO CHOOSE FROM YOUR REPERTOIRE WILL DEPEND WHAT YOU WANT YOUR BOAT TO DO.

### SO WHICH ONE DO YOU PICK?

Which stroke to choose from your repertoire will depend what you want your boat to do, but there are some options you can rule out to reduce the choice.

How fast is the boat moving in comparison to the water? If you are stationary or travelling with the current things that need speed like bow or stern rudders will have no effect, so consider power or sweep strokes that add momentum, or pry strokes and draws that work with or without speed.

How fast do you want your boat to be going once the manoeuvre is completed? If you need to add speed forward sweeps may be the key. If you need to reduce the speed may be you need a reverse sweep. Stern rudders or draw strokes could allow some control without any dramatic change in speed.

### COMPLIMENTING YOUR PARTNER

Tandem pairs will need to select strokes that not only produce the desired outcome but also are compatible with their partner's choice. If the bow paddler goes for a cross bow, cut the stern paddler will be of no help

if they simultaneously try do a stern rudder, both these need speed to make them effective but neither paddler is providing any, a reverse sweep would be even worse as it would kill any speed the boat has. A better solution would be for the bow paddler to initiate the turn with a forward sweep giving their partner the clue that something is about to happen, before planting the cross bow rudder. Once the blade is in, the stern paddler can keep applying forward power, and as long as they continue to drive the boat forward it will keep carving a smooth arc.

The key here is to trust your partner, the bow paddler is best positioned to see any obstacles you may need to avoid and they also have a really powerful repertoire of strokes at their end of the boat to initiate a new change of direction. So if you see them suddenly trying to make the boat go left, trust them and add to their performance something that will help to make it even more powerful and effective. There is probably a really good reason for whatever they are trying to do. A little prior planning is also a good idea, as most tandem paddling team's 'telepathy' seems to be less effective than they think. **CF**



### FOCUS EXPERT

Karl Midlane is a level 5 coach working for Plas y Brenin. He started paddling in the scouts many years ago and has gone on to compete in slalom K1 and C2, white water kayak in the Alps, Pyrenees, and Himalaya, Canoe in Canada, Sweden and Ghana, sea kayak along the coast of Norway and most of the best bits of the UK.



### USEFUL INFO



Plas y Brenin is The National Mountain Sport Centre, running a huge range of paddlesport courses and holidays all year round. Find out more about Plas y Brenin at [www.pyb.co.uk](http://www.pyb.co.uk)



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# The GREAT GLEN

## by Open Canoe

ARTICLE BY COLIN BEARD, PHOTOS BY STEVE DOUCH AND ADRIAN FALL



**T**he dark surface of Loch Lochy was whipped up by the wind causing dumping waves intent on swamping our heavily loaded canoe. Sitting in the stern I trimmed our Endless River sail as best I could and tried to hold our course with a stern rudder. Stephen in the bow let out whoops of delight, or was it fear, as we surged forward, surfing each wave as it passed under our canoe. This was my introduction to canoe sailing and it felt like a baptism of fire. We were in the middle of the Loch hundreds of yards from either bank. What, I wondered, would happen if we capsized?

ABOVE: GLAS DHOIRE  
TRAILBLAZER REST

It all started months before when Stephen and I went for a tandem paddle on our local run, the River Cuckmere in Sussex. Practicing breaking in and out of the current we thought we worked well together. Then I made a mildly amusing throw away remark, "Today the River Cuckmere, tomorrow the Great Glen!" Neither of us took this remark seriously but the seed had been planted

in our minds and it grew. The prospect of paddling the Great Glen Trail kept cropping up over the following weeks, mainly over pints of Harveys Ale. We knew of a second paddling pair, Steve and Adrian, who were also interested in the Great Glen Trail and so in this way the die was cast.

The Great Glen, clearly visible from space, was created millions of

years ago by a geological fault, which forms a chasm separating the North West Highlands from the Grampian Mountains in the south- roughly Fort William to Inverness. There are three large lochs in the Great Glen: the largest is Loch Ness, which is literally a monster at 23-miles long and carrying two cubic miles of fresh water! Some of these Lochs are linked by whitewater rivers. However the canoe trail in its entirety was only made possible by the engineer Thomas Telford who linked the Lochs by a canal system, enabling cargo boats and therefore canoes and kayaks to traverse the Great Glen.



**THE DAY WAS  
EERILY STILL AND  
NOT A BREATH OF  
WIND RUFFLED  
THE MIRROR LIKE  
SURFACE OF THE  
CANAL AS WE  
GLIDED ALONG."**



A WELL PACKED CANOE



ENTERING LOCH LOCHY

### THE PLAN

We all met up in a local hostelry and discussed logistics. We decided that two vehicles each carrying a canoe would be the cheapest option. We then agreed on jobs; mine was to make up a medical kit suitable for a mini wilderness expedition and purchase OS maps, and Canoe Trail Guide, Steve had to get his clutch fixed and purchase five days worth of camp food in bulk. Stephen and Adrian had to purchase wheels (for portaging round loch gates) and sails. Stephen provided a lightweight tent and investigated bed and breakfast accommodation in Fort William.

A week before we set off we had a trial pack up and paddle on the River Cuckmere. This was very useful in 'ironing out the creases' as Stephen put it. Stephen and Adrian travelled up a day early to register our expedition, purchase a facilities key and meet us at the take out in Inverness. We left Adrian's van in Inverness and, squashed into Steve's car, set off across the Great Glen to our starting point at Fort William. In this way we got the shuttle sorted a day early. Taking nearly two hours, this drive bought home the epic scale of the trip we were taking on; Loch Ness resembles an inland sea rather than a lake. →



CAMP FIRE AT GLAS OHOIRE TRAILBLAZER REST

## CANOE TOURING

### DAY 1

With a fantastic view of snow draped Ben Nevis, breakfast in the conservatory of the Glenshian B&B, Corpach was a sumptuous affair. Adrian and Stephen had picked a perfect overnight stop just north of Neptunes Staircase and with the Caladonian Canal in the back garden! After an hour or so of last minute fixing of mast posts and boat packing, we wheeled our craft a short distance up the road to a convenient jetty. Water pouches and bottles filled and requisite photos taken we set off.

The day was eerily still and not a breath of wind ruffled the mirror like surface of the canal as we glided along. It was tempting to drift and just take in the beauty of our surroundings, but decided instead to get as many miles under our belts as we could while the conditions remained benign. Our maps showed that the The River Lochy flows virtually parallel to this stretch of the Caladonian Canal. It appears to be a more exciting alternative to the canal, but its water flows in an unsuitable direction: instead of carrying us north west it would instead take us back to Fort William!

By afternoon we had reached Gairloch without encountering other water craft. Being pre-holiday season the canal was deserted. After passing under a road bridge we hauled our canoes up a steep bank, installed wheels and made the short portage around some imposing loch gates holding back the waters of Loch Lochy. Here we chatted to a gang of fellow paddlers: the only other open canoes we were to see on the whole journey. It turned out that they were doing a short stretch of the Great Glen and were being assessed by a coach.

With calm conditions continuing we thought a realistic target to aim at would be Glas-dhoire Trail Blazer Rest about two thirds of the way along Loch Lochy. We confidently set out for the north shore with its rugged mountains famous as an area used for commando training during World War Two. By now all thoughts of home back in Sussex had evaporated replaced by rhythmic mesmerizing paddling strokes. By late afternoon we made it to the Trail Blazer Rest and soon had a roaring fire going



THE START AT BANAVIE

next to a miniature open sided log cabin where we hung up our dry suits and where we planned to sleep. As we sat round the fire munching our ready meals and gazing at the beautiful scenery we agreed that we had made good progress. But the wind was getting up now blowing squally showers down the loch and we turned in early.

### DAY 2

A leaden sky and south westerly breeze greeted us as we climbed down from our comfy wooden platform: a good day for canoe sailing I thought. We had made excellent progress on day one and our confidence was high as after a hearty breakfast we packed our canoes and erected our sails. In the process, we tore some of the stitching of our sail: a bad omen perhaps but the sail was still functional. At first we sensibly kept close to the north shore. The south shore, however, seemed more sheltered and so with the prospect of better sailing we decided to head due east across open water. That day the wind funnelled down through the Great Glen from Fort William and created short dumping waves, which



ADRIAN & STEVE SAILING ON LOCH OICH



LOCH NESS



CAMP FIRE AT TOR POINT

threatened to swamp our canoe. We made it to the south shore, but I was a bit shaken and felt I had learnt a valuable lesson about sailing on Scottish lochs. 'Choose your shore and stick close to it!'

The mast post on Stephen's canoe (which connects the mast to the inner hull) had come adrift so after portaging the Laggan Lochs we did some makeshift repairs. Here we were dwarfed by the luxury cruise ship Lord of the Glens on its way from Inverness to Fort William. Two kilometers of relaxed canal paddling lead to Loch Oich and more sailing. This time the conditions were benign and we were able to relax, change partners and admire the scenery. As a pastime we

played one of Steve's favorite games: naming makes of kayak from A to Z. The beautiful Loch Oich was the high point of our traverse of Scotland so from now on the trip would be downhill!

To avoid three portages on the next part of the Caledonian Canal we opted for whitewater on the River Oich. This grade 2 river flows north out of Loch Oich over a weir and after 9 km empties into Loch Ness. There was plenty of water flowing over the weir, which promised a bank full river with only a few boulders to trouble fully laden canoes. After shooting the weir on the far left and passing under a road bridge we stopped for lunch in the rain: sardines and oat cakes. Yum! The River Oich provided a nice bit of variety with one or two more simple rapids, spectacular rock faces and forested hillsides.

The scenery suddenly opened out and we were faced by the stunning vista of a vast stormy Loch Ness. We were at the half way point. It had been a long wet day and the comforts of Fort Augustus beckoned. So we spent the night at Stravaigers Lodge, which provided showers, under floor heating and a large barn for making boat repairs.



RIVER OICH ENTERS LOCH NESS

**THE VIEW DOWN THIS GIGANTIC STRETCH OF WATER WAS TRULY AWESOME AS OUR FINAL DESTINATION WAS OVER THE HORIZON HIDDEN BY THE CURVATURE OF THE EARTH..**

### DAY 3

Fortified by a few beers at a local hostelry and a comfortable night we were ready to take on the full length of Loch Ness in one day. We picked a halfway point at Foyers Trailblazer Rest on the south shore about twelve miles down the Loch. If we could do this by lunchtime, then we had a good chance of completing the journey. A gentle southerly wind was blowing as we left Fort Augustus and headed for the south shore. The conditions were almost serene. The view down this gigantic stretch of water was truly awesome as our final destination was over the horizon hidden by the curvature of the earth. Our colourful sails were reflected in the glassy Loch surface as we glided past mile after mile of wild rock faces and sparse woodland. Here and there picturesque waterfalls cascaded down the mountain side and into the loch. In the event of an emergency, landing spots were few and far between and there were no roads. →



LOCH NESS

### OUR COLOURFUL SAILS WERE REFLECTED IN THE GLASSY LOCH SURFACE AS WE GLIDED PAST MILE AFTER MILE OF WILD ROCK FACES AND SPARSE WOODLAND. HERE AND THERE PICTURESQUE WATERFALLS CASCADED DOWN THE MOUNTAIN SIDE AND INTO THE LOCH.

At last we made Foyers Bay and stopped on a shingle spit for lunch. The wind had dropped completely as we sat on a log by the water's edge soaking up this marvelous Scottish spring day with not a midge in evidence. The perfect peace was broken by one or two oyster catchers calling their protests at our trespass on their territory.

For the remainder of our journey down Loch Ness civilization was more in evidence in the form of a Loch side road, small houses and the romantic Urquhart Castle on the north shore. With the help of Steve's GPS device we could easily track our progress on the map. To keep our spirits up we played more A to Z games and even resorted to singing: our efforts to make a noise just seemed to emphasize our insignificance in the landscape. Our singing was drowned out however by the dark mass of a low flying RAF Hercules C130: I wondered if the pilot had spotted us?

As a cold wind started to funnel down Loch Ness we landed at the western end of Dores beach and pulled our craft out of sight into the pine forest which covers Tor Point. This is a great place for wild camping. We pitched Stephen's tent on spongy pine needles and built a fire pit. Soon we had gathered enough driftwood for a campfire and had our evening meal prepared before dusk. As I dozed off in my sleeping bag lulled by the sound of waves crashing onto Dores Beach I wondered if we would be able to launch safely in the morning?

#### DAY 4

Over breakfast we decided that shooting the River Ness down to Inverness would make a more exciting final day than negotiating the more placid canal with its obligatory

portages. But first we had to get there! Getting off Tor Point was in some ways the hardest paddle of the whole trip. A south westerly breeze created small dumping waves at the head of Loch Ness and this made for an awkward paddle round the point in loaded boats. The paddle turned into a sort of race, which Adrian and Stephen won despite Steve and me starting first! There is, actually, a fourth Loch in the Great Glen: the diminutive Loch Dochfour, which we traversed and hardly noticed and soon we were confronted with the first of three weirs on the River Ness. There was plenty of water in the river so no major

problems were encountered and there were some nice eddies providing opportunities for moving water antics.

In ecstatic mood we landed on a shingle beach at Fishermans Carpark, Inverness. More pictures were taken by an enthusiastic bystander as we congratulated ourselves on a great trip. We spent the next ten minutes hauling our boats across the shingle to the car park. Here I was beckoned over by an old chap who had watched our struggle from his car.

"If yud just have lined your boats doon the river a wee bit it would have been a lot easier ye Ken!"

Of course he was right. Our enthusiasm and the buzz of completing such an epic and beautiful boating adventure had blinded our common sense! **CF**

#### USEFUL INFO



The paddlers were all members of the Cuckmere Valley Canoe Club.

Colin Beard, Stephen Wright, Steve Douch, Adrian Fall ([www.thekayacoach.com](http://www.thekayacoach.com)).





# Qualification Courses

Sea



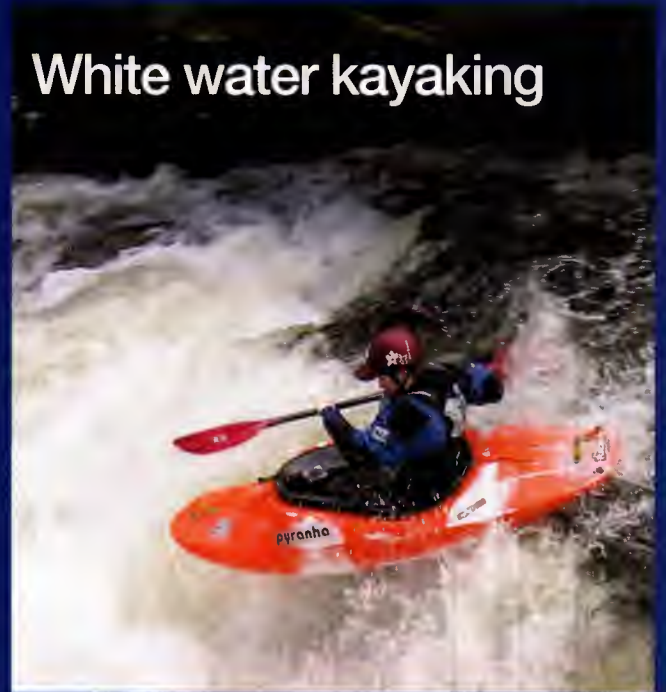
Open canoeing



Surf Kayaking



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[www.glenmorelodge.org.uk](http://www.glenmorelodge.org.uk)

  
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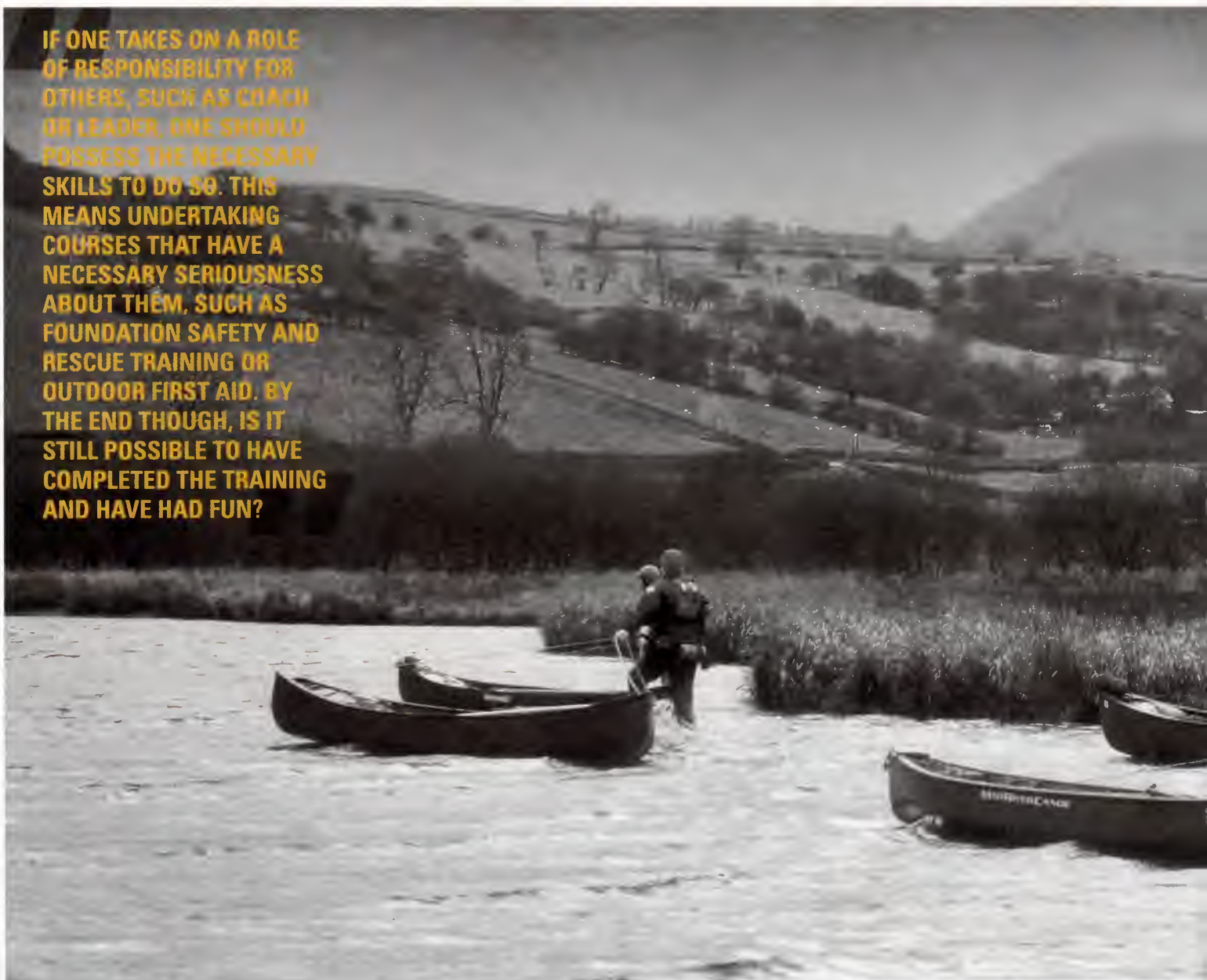


LEFT ANDY ON EVENING ARRIVAL AT BALA

RIGHT CHARLIE ON THE TRYWERYN

# TWINKLE, TWINKLE

IF ONE TAKES ON A ROLE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS, SUCH AS COACH OR LEADER, ONE SHOULD POSSESS THE NECESSARY SKILLS TO DO SO. THIS MEANS UNDERTAKING COURSES THAT HAVE A NECESSARY SERIOUSNESS ABOUT THEM, SUCH AS FOUNDATION SAFETY AND RESCUE TRAINING OR OUTDOOR FIRST AID. BY THE END THOUGH, IS IT STILL POSSIBLE TO HAVE COMPLETED THE TRAINING AND HAVE HAD FUN?





LEFT: NIGHT NAVIGATION ON LAKE BALA

RIGHT: LIVE BAITING AT CHAPEL FALLS

# LITTLE STARS

ARTICLE AND IMAGES BY  
BAZ COACHING

TRACKING IN STRONG WINDS LAKE BALA



**T**his article started life as a piece on personal development, and how important it is, as a coach whose livelihood depends on the development of clients, to re-visit the role of learner. It all got a bit pretentious and there seemed to be a lack of fun. Redrafts came and went and then I remembered something significant and all clicked into place . . .

British Canoeing offers skills training and awards across the huge range of disciplines under its umbrella as the national governing body for paddlesport. Delivery is through providers from the professional centres to uniform groups, from freelancers to local clubs. However you access your training the one thing we need to remember is that we choose to do courses, often parting company with a substantial amount of money as we book on. Thus, as a recreational activity, there ought to be an element of fun and enjoyment, or why did we choose to do the course in the first place (no jokes about masochism at this point, please!)

## SERIOUS QUESTION

Now, I have a few more star awards than some and several less than many. I have gone far enough up the ladder that my qualifications and experience allow me to make a living from paddlesport. There have been times, however, when in the water, under pressure of an assessment, I wondered if what I was doing was enjoyable. An important point to make here is that if one takes on a role of responsibility for others, such as coach or leader, one should possess the necessary skills to do so.

This means undertaking courses that have a necessary seriousness about them, such as foundation safety and rescue training or outdoor first aid. By the end though, is it still possible to have completed the training and have had fun?

I think it is and recently received some training that reminded me of those other courses I have attended where the coach/trainer managed to get the points across, captured the seriousness of the discipline, whilst reminding me that what I was doing was for enjoyment.

## ON COURSE

Ray Goodwin is a name well known in open canoeing circles but he is a pretty good all round boater, if his CV is anything to go by. Two of us from Brixham (step forward Charlie from Adelong Outdoor Education) were after some five star open canoe leader training and wanted to get out of the south west to extend our experience; Ray seemed the natural choice and December the month it could happen. Bala provided the backdrop, with its lake and choice of rivers offering appropriate grades and coaching areas. Luckily, two others, Matt and Andy, were after the same thing and a course pulled together. →

### SERIOUS FUN

Ray runs his training course over four very full days and a night, in order to cover the elements of open water skills, night paddling, navigation and river leadership. With strong winds and heavy rain happening, there was a need for flexibility in the programme so that we could cover the syllabus and make the most of our time on the water. We started with a trip on the Afon Tryweryn.

There were a few nervous comments being made as we got to know one another and scouted Chapel Falls. An air of sobriety descended despite the high level of sarcastic banter and smiles. Of course, we all ran down the falls perfectly well and then, whilst we chatted on the bank, something happened. Ray's eyes

twinkled and soon I was swimming, voluntarily, in the stopper whilst Charlie missed me with her first attempt to live bait. I swam into the eddy and jumped back in; Charlie got me second time. There were smiles all around, genuine laughter and the tone was set for the rest of the session.

Next day was Mile End Mill on the Afon Dyfrdwy (Dee), where we explored upstream travel and ran a couple of the drops. Much huffing and puffing at the start, battling against a good flow, led to us practising our poling on the bank before trying it on the water. Then it happened again – Ray got that twinkle. We inspected one of the rapids and after a good discussion on what the water was doing, took turns to run the agreed line. Well, I have never been airborne in a

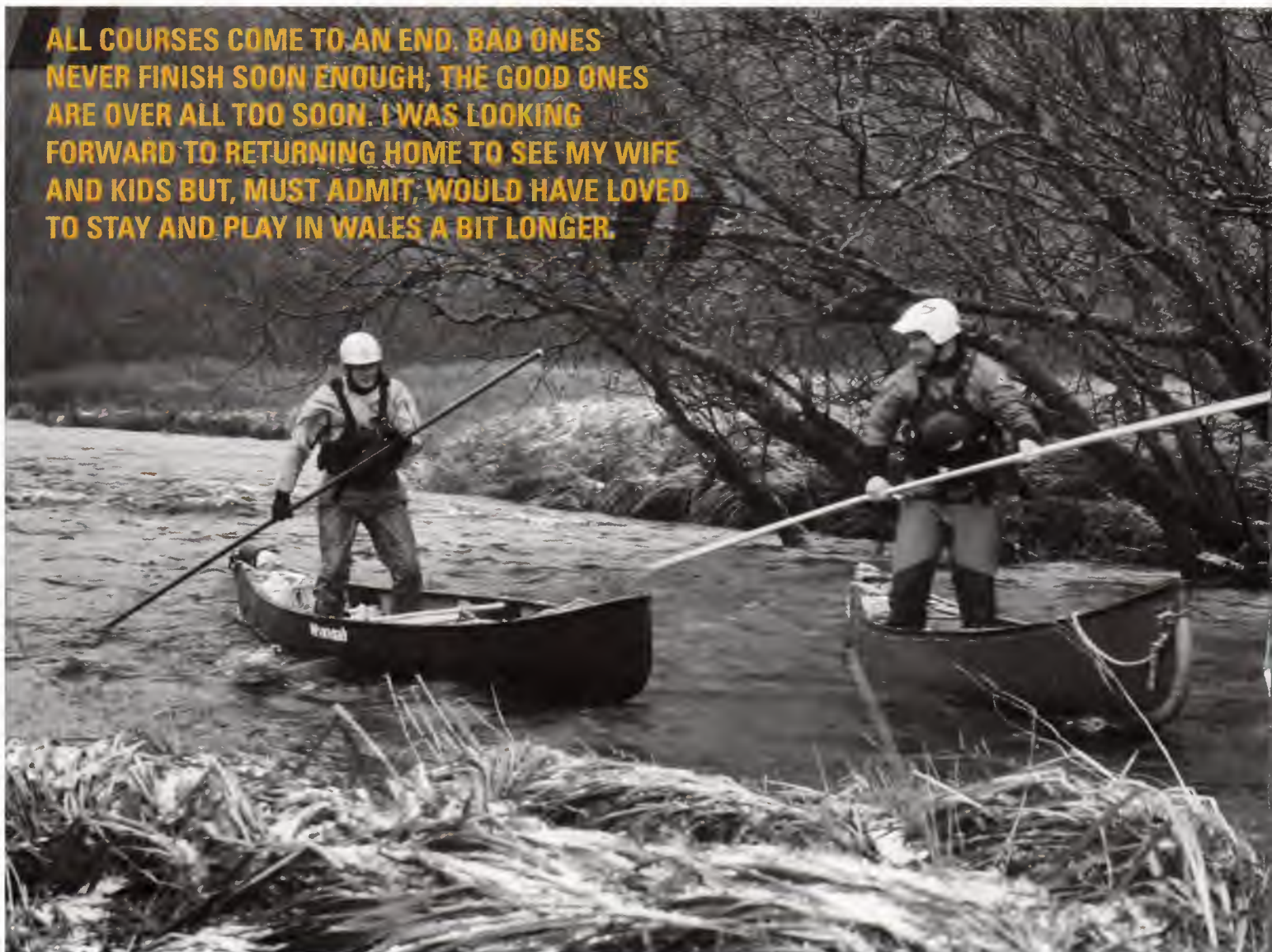
16ft canoe before and Ray captured the moment perfectly. It was a highlight for all and the next drop felt comfortable, although it was equally challenging. All were having fun! A quick lunch and off to Lake Bala for some night paddling.

### NIGHT MANOEUVRES

Lake Bala really is very dark. The lack of light pollution makes it ideal for practising moving around on inky black water, with just the odd silhouetted mountain or large tree to aid your bearings. We all felt the need to get the navigation exercise right and to keep control of the group. Yes, there was a feeling of pressure, but by now the group members were comfortable in one another's company and could appreciate how lucky they were to be out together.

BELOW: POLING BACK TO PLAS Y BRENNIN

**ALL COURSES COME TO AN END. BAD ONES NEVER FINISH SOON ENOUGH; THE GOOD ONES ARE OVER ALL TOO SOON. I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO RETURNING HOME TO SEE MY WIFE AND KIDS BUT, MUST ADMIT, WOULD HAVE LOVED TO STAY AND PLAY IN WALES A BIT LONGER.**



Unsurprisingly, given the weather, Matt and Andy's enthusiasm for van-based cuisine was diminishing and they joined Charlie and me at Bala's White Lion Hotel for pub grub. Chatting about shared experiences in the comfort of a hotel bar, with good food and drink, is definitely one of the reasons I enjoy working in the outdoors. No matter that we were on five star training; anecdotes of recent exploits and thoughts of the two days ahead provided vehicles for Mickey-takes and giggles.

## SHOOTING THE BREEZE

I love that open canoes can run rapids, be used to carry kit on open water and, when conditions allow, be adapted for sailing. A day on Lake Bala found us struggling in extremely strong winds and

having to switch to tracking techniques in order to make headway. Moving around the lake and up the stream that feeds it was hard work but all do-able with good technique. Then sails came out – did we really need them in these conditions? First, Ray showed us a single canoe system and Matt had a go with his similar set-up. Next, Matt, Andy and Charlie, were tasked to build a downwind rig. Then that eye twinkle thing again. "Baz, come and have a play with this." Ray wanted to try out some new ideas and soon we had a two canoe raft built with small sail erected. It fair hurtled along. With Ray's stern rudder combining with my bow jams, significant steering could be achieved. We made landfall, dropped sails and with light levels falling fast and surf building down the lake, there was just time for some surfing. It was a shame the rain came down so heavily but even so, surely this was too much fun to be called leadership training!

## ALL GOOD THINGS...

All courses come to an end. Bad ones never finish soon enough; the good ones are over all too soon. I was looking forward to returning home to see my wife and kids but, must admit, would have loved to stay and play in Wales a bit longer.

Our last day was based from Plas Y Brenin, the National Mountain Sports Centre. Running down river from there with hail stones collecting in the bottom of the canoe (and it being too cold for them to melt), for a moment I could have coped with a classroom theory session and hot coffee. Some serious poling warmed us up on the return journey, whilst the falling about when we got it wrong created the laughs needed to get us back for a lunch huddled in the centre doorway. Another run down and Ray set up some lining challenges, followed by tandem paddling and, finally, rescue and retrieval exercises. Had I seen a twinkle in that eye of his as Ray asked Charlie and me to tandem across the flow and eddy out behind the rock? Maybe...

So, in the end, what is this article all about? It certainly is not the profound essay on personal development I set out on – I shall save that for submission to IOL. Has



it been a promotion for Ray's five star training courses? Perhaps - it was very good. More, I think it is really about making sure that if you elect to take on a challenge in anything recreational, that you keep in mind that said challenge is about doing something that feels rewarding and satisfying, provides a positive experience and a good deal of enjoyment. Even at five star level, it is possible to learn and have fun – just watch out for eye twinkles! 📺

**TOP:** SAILING ON LAKE BALA

**ABOVE:** TAKING AIR BY MILE END MILL



## USEFUL INFO



### About Ray Goodwin

Ray is the author of 'Canoeing' and runs a number of paddlesport and mountaineering courses from his base in north Wales. Besides bespoke programmes, he can run number of BCU qualification training and assessment courses. For more details go to: [www.raygoodwin.com](http://www.raygoodwin.com)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### About the Author

Baz Coaching provides a bespoke personal development service from a base in Brixham, south Devon. For details contact [baz@bazcoaching.co.uk](mailto:baz@bazcoaching.co.uk) or visit the website: [www.bazcoaching.co.uk](http://www.bazcoaching.co.uk)

# ENJOYING THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT



**A**s an island nation, the seas around Britain have always been important route ways, and there have never been more opportunities for you to get out on the open seas too. With over 10,000 miles of coastline to explore, there's a huge amount for you to see from the water – from spectacular cliffs to tiny islands, secluded bays to huge estuaries, and a huge diversity of sea life. British Canoeing, in partnership with the RSPB, has recently published its new guide to for paddlers, *You, Your Canoe and the Marine Environment*, and so we thought this was the perfect chance to celebrate the freedom and adventure you can find out on the open water.

## WHAT CAN I SEE?

The range of environments and wildlife you can see and experience along the coastline will range massively from place to place. The big estuaries can offer comparatively sheltered paddling, providing a safe haven for

marine life from birds to cetaceans, such as dolphins and porpoises. In many areas you can spend your day exploring craggy cliffs and islands, especially along the north-eastern and south-western coasts. And even stretches of coast that may appear uninteresting at first glance can may for a rewarding paddle – for instance along the Lincolnshire coast at Skegness you can see the changing environments from the pleasure beaches of the seaside towns, the vast offshore wind farms to the important nature reserves at Gibraltar point. This coast is popular with harbour and grey seals, providing wildlife interest too.

Our seas give a great new perspective on some of the nation's iconic bird life. As an example you can

view magnificent colonies of Puffins at locations around the three home nations, getting an opportunity to observe the behaviour of these unique birds. The RSPB produce a range of guides to help you to spot and identify birds across the UK, including the coasts, and our new guide to paddling in the marine environment, published in partnership with the RSPB, will help you do so in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Spotting wildlife is one of the great joys of paddling on the sea – but remember to treat the species you see with respect. If in any doubt, keep well back and observe them from afar. Many sea kayakers find binoculars and a good camera a vital part of their equipment – and you'll still be getting to see the wildlife from a new vantage point.



## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Our new guide, *You, Your Canoe and the Marine Environment* gives loads of information on enjoying our seas responsibly and safely, but in the meantime here are some of our key tips:


### Ten principles to remember

When encountering wildlife, whether on sea or on land, these ten general principles will help you make the most of your adventure:

- Find out about the area before you go. Note down any sensitive places and species likely to be present at that time. Remember that wildlife may be particularly sensitive to disturbance in areas not normally visited by people.
- Be aware of any protected area designations. These may have certain restrictions on human activities where they have the potential to damage or disturb wildlife.
- Keep to designated paths or launching points where possible.
- Paddle at a safe distance from wildlife, keeping noise and sudden movements to a minimum. If animals change their behaviour in reaction to your presence, move away without causing further disturbance.
- Never surround animals and don't block them in from their escape routes. You will enjoy the sightings much more if they are relaxed about your presence.
- Look, then move on. Don't linger for too long if you think it may disturb or displace wildlife.
- Don't damage plants and other habitats that animals depend upon.
- Float your canoe for launching and lift out when landing, so as not to cause damage when launching or landing along natural banks/beaches..
- Take your litter home with you.
- Be a wildlife friendly kayaker by reporting any sightings of seals, whales and dolphins to one of the relevant organisations, any injured animals to the RSPCA, and any reports of disturbance to birds to the RSPB (see contact details).

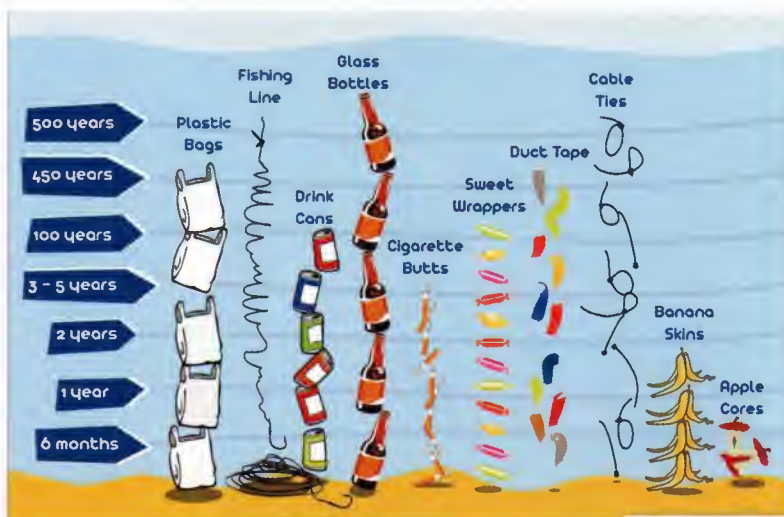
## MARINE ENVIRONMENT

### HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Before venturing out onto coastal waters for the first time it is important to get help and advice. There are a huge range of operators out there who can help you get a taste for the open waves. These range from companies that can hire you a canoe for a few hours, through to guided tours, helping you experience the wildlife that also call our shores home. Many canoe clubs (even those based in land!) have a sea kayaking section, with members who regularly head to the coast, and these can be a great way of learning the skills, and may even have boats you can loan too. If your sea-legs take root, British Canoeing's Star Awards offer a sea kayaking pathway to help you continue to develop your skills and take on greater adventures. We also produce a guide to Sit On Top Paddling, which is available on our website. 



ABOVE: TIM GILBY



### USEFUL INFO

British Canoeing's new guidance document for paddlers called *You, Your Canoe and the Marine Environment*, and is available from our website, or by calling the office on 0845 370 9500.

The following organisations can also provide a range of information about sea kayaking and the marine environment:

- Leave No Trace [www.lnt.org/](http://www.lnt.org/)
- Natural England [www.naturalengland.org.uk/](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/)
- Natural Resources Wales/  
Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru [naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/](http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/)
- Green Blue [www.thegreenblue.org.uk/](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk/)
- RSPB [www.rspb.org.uk/](http://www.rspb.org.uk/)
- RSPCA [www.rspca.org.uk/](http://www.rspca.org.uk/)
- National Trust [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/)
- Marine Management Organisation [www.marinemanagement.org.uk/](http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/)
- Wildlife Trust for information and reporting sightings [www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org)
- Sea Trust [www.seatrust.org.uk/](http://www.seatrust.org.uk/)





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\*Some clubs may qualify for grant funding – Contact us for more details.



**LEFT:** SEPTEMBER WINNER — BARRY CURLEY, STUNNING IMAGE FROM BARRY THAT HE'S TITLED, 'A VERY FITTING, 'AT ONE WITH THE WORLD.' HIS SHOT REALLY CAPTURES THE ESSENCE OF PADDLING ON THE SEA AND WAS TAKEN AT THE RUGGED AND BEAUTIFUL STAC AN ARMIN, ST KILDA, OUTER HEBRIDES.

# PHOTO COMPETITION

**CHECK OUT THE VERY BEST  
CANOEING & KAYAKING  
IMAGES FROM THE AUGUST,  
SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER  
WITH THE WINNING ENTRIES  
TO OUR POPULAR REGULAR  
PHOTO-COMPETITION...**

**W**

e're constantly amazed at the fantastic photos that you submit each month, from the inspiring

images that flood into 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 captured a perfect paddling picture that might be a winner?

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.

And don't forget, as a BC member, you get 15% off\* all year round at Cotswold Outdoor on production of your membership card in store or by entering your affiliate code online. Find your nearest store at [www.cotswoldoutdoor.com/stores](http://www.cotswoldoutdoor.com/stores)



PLEASE NOTE WE CAN ONLY ALLOW ONE ENTRY PER PERSON PER MONTH.

\*NOT TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFERS OR DISCOUNTS. VALID ONLY ON PRODUCTION OF A BRITISH CANOEING MEMBERSHIP CARD AT THE TILL POINT OR DISCOUNT CODE ONLINE.

## HOW TO ENTER



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 Canoeing, National Water Sports Centre, Adbolton Lane, Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham NG12 2LU. Email: [coral.jackson@bcu.org.uk](mailto:coral.jackson@bcu.org.uk)

Keep up with the latest entries and monthly winners by visiting [www.facebook.com/canoengland](http://www.facebook.com/canoengland)



**ABOVE:** AUGUST WINNER – DAVID COOK

THIS LOVELY PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN ON KAWNIPU LAKE IN QUETICO PARK, IN NORTH-WESTERN ONTARIO. DAVID FEELS THAT HIS PICTURE SHOWS CANOE CAMPING AT ITS BEST - CLEAR WATER, CLEAR SKIES AND NO WIND, AND WE COULDN'T AGREE MORE.

**BELOW:** OCTOBER WINNER – ROB MCINALLY

ROB WORKS FOR SEASPORTS SOUTHWEST IN TEIGNMOUTH, SOUTH DEVON, AND WAS CAPTURED BY ONE OF HIS CUSTOMERS AS HE ENJOYED AN UP-CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH A RATHER ADORABLE, AND VERY INQUISITIVE, LOCAL SEAL.



# BRITISH CANOEING VOLUNTEER AND ATHLETE RECOGNITION AWARDS 2014

# AWARDS

**T**he annual Volunteer and Athlete Recognition Awards, sponsored by Towergate Insurance, took place on October 25th at the Nottingham Belfry Hotel. The occasion provides an opportunity to recognise all the hard work by the many thousands of volunteers across the country that have made it possible for so many people to participate in our sport. Around 130 guests attended the evening to celebrate the achievements of our wonderful volunteers and to also recognise those athletes that had enjoyed success in a World or European Championship in 2013/2014. The evening was again expertly compered by BBC East Midlands news reporter, Mark Shardlow, who had the chance to ask the athletes some insightful questions, whilst handing out the awards.

IMAGES BY  
RICHARD ATKINSON

The dinner was delicious with plenty of wine enjoyed and the quiz kept people on their toes throughout the evening. Paul Carroll from the South West Region said, "There was good company, good food, a well organised and presented evening, the opportunity to meet some of our best athletes and volunteers and to top it all two national awards went to South West paddlers"

Jack Ford, organiser of this year's awards told FOCUS, "The National Awards are a great opportunity for clubs to recognise some of the hard work that is put in daily by the volunteers at your clubs. It would be fantastic to see more nominations come in next year and then have even more people come to the awards evening."





## THE WINNERS



### CANOE FOUNDATION YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR - PRESENTED BY DAVID GENT AND JEANETTE CHIPPINGTON

Awarded to a young person who commits time and effort to a club, centre or community throughout the year in one or more roles.

#### Winner - George McGiveron, Frome Canoe Club

George attends all club sessions, events and working party days organised throughout the year helping both on and off the water; taking on the mundane tasks with as equal energy as the more exciting! Despite only turning 16 this year, George has been instrumental in introducing countless young people to the club and is a brilliant role model for both adults and young people alike.

**Runners up:** Nicholas Young, Charlie Melson



### USEFUL INFO



If you would like to find out more information about the Volunteer Awards please contact [volunteers@canoe-england.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@canoe-england.org.uk)

### CANOE FOUNDATION IMPACT ON DISABILITY – PRESENTED BY DAVID GENT AND JEANETTE CHIPPINGTON

In recognition of outstanding contribution and commitment to increasing opportunities for disabled people of all ages to participate in canoeing.

#### Winner - Belinda Blackwell, Wokingham Waterside Centre

Belinda stands true to her word that 'anyone can go paddling'. She ensures that canoeing at Wokingham Waterside Centre is accessible to everyone who wants to give it a go. She has actively sought out and encouraged engagement with over 15 groups, schools and organisations that provide services to those with a disability and created new fun and exciting ways for them to access paddlesport, offering one to one support where needed and providing an experience many would not have thought possible. Belinda has helped the centre achieve Paddle-Ability Top Club as well as run a recent national MENCAP pilot.

**Runners up:** Sandra Sayadi and Jill Corso

### RUTH HOLDWAY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR – PRESENTED BY ROBERT HOLDWAY

Awarded to a club volunteer working in the community, regions and behind the scenes, who has made a significant difference through their time and effort.

#### Winner - Stephen Ball, Burton Canoe Club

As a key member and contributor to the management, coaching and facilities of the club he is always willing to help no matter what the task or inconvenience. Stephen has been a key driving force behind the organisation of the club's large and very popular annual events such as the Dove Tour and seeks nothing in return other than the pleasure in enabling others to go canoeing. (Ben Seal collected the award on Stephen's behalf)

**Runners up:** David Surman and Peter Yates →



**THE OCCASION PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECOGNISE ALL THE HARD WORK BY THE MANY THOUSANDS OF VOLUNTEERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY THAT HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR SO MANY PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR SPORT.**

**WATERWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT VOLUNTEER – PRESENTED BY FIONA PENNIE**

Recognition of the outstanding contribution of a volunteer who has considerably improved and worked to preserve access and/or conserved the canoeing environment.

**Winner - Noel Humphrey, South West Region**

Noel's passion, knowledge and understanding of access and the environment has a huge impact on paddlesport and the environment in the South East. From organising litter picks, returning the rivers back to their natural beauty; to liaising with the Environment Agency, National Trust, Surrey Wildlife Trust and Local Authorities in order to help resolve issues on the local rivers.

**Runners up:** Robert Yeowell and Robert Bates



**PERFORMANCE COACH OF THE YEAR – PRESENTED BY FIONA PENNIE**

Recognition of a qualified coach working from entry level upwards, whether with young people or adults across any discipline who have made an outstanding contribution to raising the performance.

**Winner - Ian Raspin, Holme Pierrepont Canoe Club**

Ian works for the Canoe Slalom Olympic Development Programme as well as giving back to the sport through volunteering at Holme Pierrepont Canoe Club. Dedicated to giving nothing but 100% in helping young talented athletes to achieve their potential, Ian's commitment and drive comes from his genuine passion for the sport and seeing others achieve their goals. Ian is always looking to build on his already extensive knowledge he has been involved in coaching athletes in all classes over the years, with his unwavering support helping them achieve great things.

**Runners up:** Gordon Walling and David Jefferies



**VOLUNTEER COACH OF THE YEAR – PRESENTED BY HANNAH BROWN AND CLAIRE O'HARA**

Recognition of a qualified voluntary coach who works at all levels of the pathway across all types of paddlesport whether with young people or adults and who has made an outstanding contribution to a club, centre or community.

**Winner - Ian McMullen, Chester Riverside Canoe Club**

Described by fellow Chester Riverside Canoe Club members as 'motivational, wise, fun, firm and above all awesome!' Ian has been coaching and inspiring a wide range of people into the sport over the last 30-years. Having coached athletes who have gone onto represent their country; to others who have gone onto become coaches themselves his quiet unassuming manner Ian inspires the loyalty and respect of young people, coaches and parents alike.

**Runners up:** Tim Midwinter and David Priestley



**ATHLETE RECOGNITION AWARDS – PRESENTED BY JOHN ANDERSON AND ALBERT WOODS**

**Winners -** Mallory Franklin, Fiona Pennie, David Florence, Richard Hounslow, Hannah Brown, Alex Edwards, Jeanette Chippington, Claire O'Hara. (not pictured) Jasmine Royle, Andrea Green, Eilidh Gibson, Louisa Sawers, Martin Tweedie, Anne Dickins, Nick Heald, Fay Lamph, Lizzie Broughton, Emma Wiggs, Ian Marsden

**SAFETY AWARD – PRESENTED BY HANNAH BROWN AND CLAIRE O'HARA**

Recognising an individual who has made a significant contribution and impact to the safe running of a canoe club, centre or event. For Example: Club Welfare Officer or Event organiser.

**Winner - Terry Middleton, Southern Area Sea Cadets**

Terry volunteers for the Southern Area Sea Cadets and is the Lead Coach for Safety and Rescue training. He runs a multitude of courses training sea cadets, paddlers and coaches on the importance of safety and rescue. Well respected for his knowledge, Terry and will go out of his way to offer practical and technical advice and guidance on any enquiries relating to paddlesport, safety and rescue. He ensures he is up to date with any discipline specific changes and communicates these to the relevant people.

**Runners up:** Hazel Roe and Peter Frost



**EVENT VOLUNTEER – PRESENTED BY MALLORY FRANKLIN**

Recognition of volunteers whom work behind the scenes at local, regional, national or international events.

**Winner - Paul Rose, Plymouth College Canoe Club**

Paul has organised the Tamar Hasler race every year for the last 27-years, giving up his own time to benefit the regions paddlers. He has introduced hundreds of young people to the sport and has developed strong links with, and provided support for other clubs in the area, not just his own; Plymouth College Canoe Club. (Michael Sims collected the award on Paul's behalf)

**Runners up:** Clive Williams and Andrew Keegan



**OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION - PRESENTED BY DAVID FLORENCE**

Recognition of outstanding service to paddlesport, including long service, commitment and major contribution to the development of the sport.

the development of the sport.

**Winners -**

Mike Sunderland, Stuart Briggs, Patricia Davison, Charlotte Dennis, Peter Yates, Clive Neale, Diane Bates, Andy Davey, Jim Armstrong, Simon Ricketts



**CLUB OF THE YEAR – PRESENTED BY NIGEL MILLS AND MALLORY FRANKLIN**

Recognition of clubs who provide opportunities for everyone to experience high quality paddlesport activities at all levels. Clubs who excel in one or more of the following; volunteer management, development of coaches and volunteers, innovative approach to the working with schools, working to improve the environment and/or involved in innovative projects.

**Winners - Kingston Kayak Club**



**CENTRE OF THE YEAR – PRESENTED BY NIGEL MILLS AND DAVID FLORENCE**

Recognition of centres who provide opportunities for everyone to experience high quality paddlesport activities at all levels. Centres who excel in one or more of the following; volunteer management, development of coaches and volunteers, innovative approach to the working with schools, working to improve the environment and/or involved in innovative projects.

**Winners - West Berkshire Activity Centre in partnership with Adventure Dolphin** **CF**





# MERRY CHRISTMAS

HERE'S AN EARLY GIFT FROM CREWROOM (KIT SUPPLIERS TO GB CANOEING)



ANNUALLY COMMISSIONED MARKET RESEARCH INTO OUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING HABITS SHOWS THAT MILLIONS MORE OF US EVERY YEAR TURN OUR BACK ON STRUGGLING THROUGH THE CROWDS AND TRAIPSING ROUND THE HIGH STREET.

**A**dvances in web technology mean that finding those festive gifts for our loved-ones has never been easier and nowadays filling your shopping basket can be as simple as just a few clicks on your mouse.

Even for those of us whose brains search in vain for good ideas come Christmas-time, the web is a welcome problem solver – and Crewroom, one of Britain's top sportswear brands is a great place to start.

For starters, the award-winning and pioneering technical sports-kit manufacturers have an early Christmas present of their own for all Canoe Focus readers.

The company is offering a 10 per cent discount on all purchases\*, up to and including December 31st. All you do is enter the code "LOVECRM" at checkout stage when you make your purchase.

(\*Crewroom branded product, full price items only)

[WWW.CREWROOM.BIZ](http://WWW.CREWROOM.BIZ)

## BACKDRAFT TOPS/LEGGINGS

Crewroom, who have been providing bespoke kit for GB Canoeing, have some fabulous items on offer this Christmas, for example, their women's and men's Backdraft tops.

This longsleeved garment is light and airy with some beautiful features including a ruffled back panel on the women's version for a flattering finish and mesh panels in the areas which need ventilation. It's made with an anti-pilling fabric, and it washes time and time again without losing its shape, quality or soft handle.

It may feel like your favourite cotton T-shirt but it wicks, breathes and dries super fast so you can train in ultimate comfort. The reflective detailing adds the final touch to this all rounder of a top.

Also check out their no-fuss leggings for women. Named 'no-fuss' because simply put, these leggings just fit and feel amazing. Their clean lines and natural feel make the stretch jersey fabric really supportive and flattering. A perfect addition to your kit bag for early-morning jogs.



## EVERTEK GRID TRAIL JACKET

And finally, here's a Christmas gift idea that combines a fashionable urban look and feel with all the protection you'll need for a long cross-country trek or trail. Crewroom's Evertrek Grid Trail Jacket (Men's) is both at home around the streets of London and a perfect fit for rural outings.

It uses a water- and wind-resistant softshell and includes some nice little features like the wide square toothed zip, a hood with rope inspired drawstring and reflective detail on the cuffs and hood.

The internal fleece is anti-static with four-way stretch for real comfort and is lightly brushed making it super cosy. We've even made the arms using an articulated cut for the perfect fit and finish. A great all-rounder of a jacket.

The women's version is just as stylish and is guaranteed to keep you snug and warm whether you're an inner-city mum or a country girl.



## CORE EQUILIBRIUM GILET

Crewroom's Santa also recommends their Core Equilibrium Gilet.

Crewroom's design team know that sometimes your technical T just isn't enough and yet you don't want the restriction of a base layer – well, here's your answer. Beautifully light, completely breathable yet wind- and shower-resistant, this gilet is the perfect companion when your core needs just a little bit more.



## CLASSIC HALF-ZIP SWEATER

For the Classic Half-Zip Sweater (Men's), Crewroom has taken natural-feel fibres and spun them into performance fabric to give you a beautiful product which feels like wool but performs perfectly on those blustery trail runs and hikes.

The sweater is cut with classic lines and subtle details including a contrast neck panel, YKK half zip, flattering shoulder panels and flatlock stitching. This garment is a classic piece that can be worn as a perfect mid-layer.



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