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Welcome

to the October issue of Canoe Focus



As the summer draws to an end, I hope you can all look back on a happy few months spent out on the water, enjoying your surroundings.

It's been another successful summer for all our GB teams, who have won over 50 medals between them, including an array of World & European gold & silver medals & a record-breaking nine Paracanoe World Championship medals!

In this month's issue we feature a report from the Canoe Sprint & Paracanoe World Championships, which took place at the end of August, in Duisburg. By the time you read this, the Canoe Slalom World Championships will have also taken place in Prague but, regrettably, due to printing schedules & such, we won't be able to bring you this report until our next issue, in December. If you can't wait until then though, have a look at the GB Canoeing Website, which has plenty of interviews & images to keep you going!

Congratulations to all the athletes, coaches & support staff involved in making this season such a good one. And of course, a big "thank you" to all our volunteers & supporters too.

Although the nights may be drawing in, there's still plenty to do out on the water. This issue of Canoe Focus includes information on Go Canoeing's Guided Tours, organised for October, November & even December! And, to get things going, they've arranged a truly spooky paddle, just in time for Halloween. Take part, if you dare!!

"Although autumn is now here and the nights may be drawing in though, there's still plenty to do out on the water at this time of year."

As always, we've also enjoyed reading all your paddling stories which, this month, include a 2400 mile paddle around the coast of Britain & a trip along the River Ardeche. Don't forget to send us your stories to the usual address: canoeingnews@bcu.org.uk

I hope you enjoy this issue of Canoe Focus. Until next time, happy paddling.

Paul

Paul Owen, Chief Executive.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

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

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

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

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

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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. All material is accepted on the understanding that the BCU 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 04/09/13. Material arriving after this date cannot be included in the April 2013 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 BCU, 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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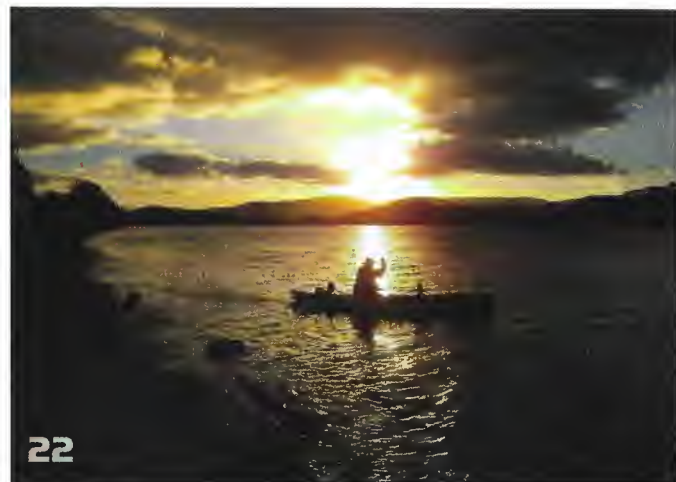


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Front cover
Paracanoe World Champion and Team GB member Jeanette Chippington digs in and puts the power down. Image by Balint Vekassy.







U CANOE

U Canoe is an informal youth based activity that can be delivered to a wide range of young people aged 14-25, across a variety of youth settings. The aim of U Canoe is to offer participant centred, resource- supported sessions, where 14 to 25 year olds determine their outcomes from the session. U Canoe aims to plug gaps in the current provision, encouraging new participants to the sport and stop the drop out. U Canoe has two offers to help achieve this, U Canoe Wired and U Canoe Unleashed.

U Canoe Wired aims to provide the initial excitement of canoeing in virtually any setting. By using the latest kayak ergometers and software participants can undertake a range of challenges, learn technique, challenge their friends or simply canoe.

U Canoe Unleashed is the perfect first step to getting on the water and becoming a regular paddler. U Canoe Unleashed also aims to provide a fun, informal, participant-led experience of canoeing and will give the opportunity to try out a range of activities, which will test and develop their canoeing skills without having a structured coaching session.

It will provide participants with a positive experience of canoeing in a relaxed, informal and friendly environment. Participants can decide on their own outcomes and will be encouraged by activators to progress into the most suitable canoeing.

U Canoe is currently in a pilot phase and has been testing its activities to various groups across the country including colleges, universities supported by the Development Team. In July U Canoe had the exciting opportunity to deliver both Wired and Unleashed activities to over 5000 Scouts and Guides at Poacher 2013, held at the Lincolnshire Showground. The event was a huge success and U Canoe was extremely well received by all those that took part.

To find out more information and to view the U Canoe video please visit the Canoe England Website or the U Canoe Facebook site www.facebook.com/UCanoe



Andy Hamilton had a very successful event.

PADDLESPORT AT THE WORLD POLICE AND FIRE GAMES

This year the World Police and Fire Games in Northern Ireland were held over two weeks, with 7,000 competitors competing across 56 sports. Mike Graham WPFG Federation president spoke at the closing ceremony and hailed the games as 'the friendliest and best games ever'. Sports Minister Carál Ní Chuilín said at the closing ceremony "It is appropriate to look back on an event, the like of which we have never seen before; the idea that we could host the WPFG might have been unimaginable a few years ago". Yet we have confidently welcomed thousands of competitors from across the globe to join in a sporting spectacular."



The WPFG this year also held two kayaking events in the shape kayak sprint and kayak surf competitions. The sprint was over two days at Castlewellen, County Down. The event itself was on Castlewellen Lake inside the gorgeous country park. The classes were in K1 and K2 over 1000m, 500m and 200m distances.

On the first day Andrew Hamilton joined forces with Jan Andag from Germany to win gold in the 1000m event. Over the rest of the weekend Andrew Hamilton also won silver in the 1000m, 500m and the 200m. Andrew has, in past years, raced internationally in both slalom and white water racing as a C1 paddler, so it was a change of discipline to switch to a kayak for Andy.

The surf event was held at Portrush on the North Coast. The event was organised to be on the same beach as the volleyball but a last minute change of venue was necessary due to the surf conditions. The kayak surfing was held alongside the surfboarding and SUP events. Competitors were from all over the world including USA, Australia and Hawaii.

To cap his success on the flatwater Andrew Hamilton asls managed to surf his way to a gold in the dynamic short surf kayak discipline.

TAKE THE INDOOR KAYAK RACING CHALLENGE

Are you ready to 'Take the Challenge' to keep paddling with your mates through the cold winter months. Indoor Kayak Race uses the adaptability of the indoor kayak machines to create fun events within your club, or for you to challenge other groups along to see who is the fastest, as an individual, or as a team. Fun and frantic individual and team races can be run on the machines, with opportunities to challenge your mates over a range of distances. The events can be adapted to suit you. Your Canoeing Development Officer can help you look at what you can do.

Level 1 events are for you and your mates in your club to create an opportunity to run a race evening or day to inspire your members to come along and get involved

Level 2 events are for your club to take on the other local clubs in your region, or go across the borders and see who is the fastest and best club in the area.

For more information on what the events are and how you can become involved get in touch with your Canoeing Development Officer to discuss what you can do to 'Take the Challenge!'

COMMERCIAL PADDLE SPORT OPERATOR FEES

A recent development at the National White Water Centre is the need for Commercial Paddlesport Operators wishing to use the site are now required to pay a fee per head to do so. Fees are to be paid at reception. The fees are as follows:

Facility Fee (not including top site): £8 per person**

Top Site (includes facility fee) : £12 per person**

The National White Water Centre told FOCUS that it is committed to continue developing paddle sport. The centre initially removed fees for recreational paddlers (other than for specific top site bookings) in an effort to make paddling on the Tryweryn more equitable and affordable for everyone.

The centre hoped paddlers would contribute through parking fees but this simply hasn't happened. Contrary to popular belief, the National White Water Centre receives no funding other than that which it generates itself. In order to be able to continue to offer free facilities for informal recreation and volunteers, the NWCC has had to follow other managed sites and recover some of its costs from those companies and individuals who derive profit from using the site and facilities. This decision was not taken lightly and it is hoped that they will continue to be able to offer private paddlers use of the facilities free of charge as a result of this decision.

**A commercial user in this context is defined as a company or individual who derives profit in order to earn a living, pay staff, or boost personal income. Volunteer club coaches under expenses (such as nominal fuel charges) or taking small amounts of money purely for club funds are exempt from this.*

***Single vehicle commercial user car parking is included with the commercial user charge. Other vehicles (such as those of clients travelling separately) are subject to standard site management parking fees. This system supersedes any annual car-parking charges, which will be refunded on a pro-rata basis when requested.*

THE SHETLAND BUS HAS LANDED

Patrick Winterton and Olly Hicks have made the first successful crossing from Scotland to Norway. After attempting the crossing with Mick Berwick in three singles in 2011 this time Patrick and Olly opted for a two-man sea kayak with Reed Chillcheater's bombproof cockpit canopies and four floatation bags for buoyancy.

The pair admitted to FOCUS that although 2011 was a miserable experience they learned the lessons they needed to be able to succeed this time around. "It was obviously futile to wait around for the perfect weather and therefore we had to have a boat and a resting system that could cope with big seas and high winds." Said Patrick. Although not forecast they had permanent mist, predominantly Force 5-6 SW-W winds and temperatures of 10 - 12 degrees while the rest of the UK were basking under blue skies in 30 degrees+.

As far as we are aware this is the first sea kayak crossing from Scotland to Norway. Derek Hutchinson crossed from Felixstow to Ostend back in 1976 and Olly Hicks himself repeated the WW2 Engelvaarder route from Sheveningen to Sizewell in 2011. Patrick and Olly's route from The Out Skerries to Bergen at 360 km is on a different scale. Sitting down for three days is the least of your problems when you have bad weather, oil rigs, tankers and the inevitable problem of how to relieve yourself when 100 km from shore and fully clad in a Kokatat dry suit.

Vende Globe sailor Pete Goss and Andy Warrender had announced they were to attempt the same crossing this summer but had technical issues with their boats. "It's a shame we didn't have competition out there." Said Olly. "But to be honest we had enough on our minds and were far from bored." Despite the fact that their compasses disagreed wildly with each other they landed just south of Bergen as planned after only 62-hours at sea. The Norwegian fishermen were obviously impressed and instantly offered them their catch as a welcoming gesture. A cod half the size of their kayak!

Check out www.kayaksonshetlandbus.org to see the route and details of their fund raising and the history of the Shetland Bus.



HUNDREDS TAKE TO THE WATER FOR BLUE MILE

The first ever Weymouth Ecover Blue Mile proved a massive hit this past summer, with thousands of visitors attending the event on Weymouth Beach and hundreds of people taking part. An amazing 440 people, many of them young children, took part in kayak and stand up paddle boarding (SUP) taster sessions during the two days. The sessions were free, but participants were asked to make a donation to the Ecover Blue Mile's charity partner, the Marine Conservation Society and in total raised £467.11 to help protect our seas shores and wildlife.

The Ecover Blue Mile kicked off the 10-day Dorset Festival of Sport, an Olympic Legacy event organised to mark the first anniversary of the 2012 Olympics, which saw Weymouth host some of the big water sports competitions.

Conrad Humphreys of Sport Environment, which organises the Ecover Blue Mile, told FOCUS: "This is what we are all about, getting people out onto the water and enjoying what the sea has to offer. And we've been blown away by the venue; Weymouth Beach is just perfect for learning water sports."

Steve Davies, Promotions and Events Manager at Weymouth and Portland Borough Council added: "Over 2,500 people came onto the site on Saturday and Sunday and all of the sporting activities, on land and on water, were very busy for the two days. It's been a great success."

Event sponsors, Ecover, handed out free samples of Ecover goodies to participants and members of the public. The water sports activities were supported by equipment partners Fatyak Kayaks and Naish UK, with qualified instructors from Canoe England and Weymouth College. Volunteers from Active Dorset were also on hand, evoking the spirit of London 2012 all over again!

The Marine Conservation Society had a beachside display and volunteers from the charity showed members of the public how marine debris affects the seas and wildlife.

Conrad Humphreys declared the first ever Weymouth Ecover Blue Mile a stunning success, "We've been absolutely delighted with the welcome that the Ecover Blue Mile has received from everyone in Weymouth. It's been great to be part of the Dorset Festival of Sport and seeing all these children so keen to jump in a kayak or on a SUP board shows that given the opportunity, they love getting out onto the water."

LOCAL ATHLETE SETS NEW WORLD RECORD

Former sitting volleyball champion Emma Wiggs from Croxley Green in Hertfordshire has set a new world record of 57.7 seconds in the 200m Paracanoe Sprint, a full 12 seconds ahead of the second place, and earned gold in the European Paracanoe Sprint Championships.

Just three months after taking up a new sport, Emma and her Great Britain teammates returned with eight medals including five golds from the European Championships held in Portugal.

Alongside her commitment to training, Emma is also an Athlete Mentor for Sky Sports Living for Sport. The initiative, which is delivered in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust, uses sports stars and sport skills to improve the lives of thousands of young people, boosting their confidence, improving their behaviour and increasing attainment. Sharing her unique journey and becoming a sporting success, Emma regularly visits schools across the South East to help to inspire and encourage students to achieve.

"I am delighted with such a positive start to my Paracanoeing career," explained Emma. "I decided to change sport to face an alternative challenge. Reaching the Paralympics last year with sitting volleyball, followed by my world record this year in Paracanoeing has been a brilliant inspiration to continue dedicating my life to sport. I hope that this commitment to succeed will help to inspire the students I work with for Sky Sports Living for Sport."

At only 18 years of age, Emma's life changed completely when she contracted a virus that impaired the use of her lower limbs. Emma went on to study sport science, becoming a PE teacher after her graduation in 2004. It was this focus and commitment to sport that led her to attend a Paralympic Potential Day in 2010, where she was offered the opportunity to represent Great Britain in an incredible five sports. Choosing sitting volleyball, Emma went on to compete in last year's Paralympic Games. One year later, she has been chosen to represent the UK in Paracanoe sprinting with the view to compete in the sport's Paralympic debut in Rio 2016.

Paracanoe sprinting requires the athletes to race against one another over 200m, testing their strength, power and focus. With adaptations allowed for the kayak and equipment, Paracanoeing allows almost all athletes to compete independent of their disability.

Emma continues to dedicate her time to her students through Sky Sports Living for Sport, allowing them to celebrate her successes and achievements, "Being able to share my experience with students is an incredibly rewarding experience. Not only does it allow me to teach others the skills and lessons I have learnt, it also opens my eyes allowing me to enhance and understand my own abilities. To be able to contribute towards such an inspiring initiative while continuing my training is a fantastic opportunity."

To find out more about Sky Sports Living for Sport or to register your school for the next academic year, visit www.skysports.com/livingforsport You can read all about how Emma and the GB Paracanoe team got on at the World Paracanoe Championships on page 34.



ARMED FORCES PADDLE IN WAKE OF OLYMPIANS

Canoe Slalom paddlers from the Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy followed in the wake of Team GB's successful Olympians when they enjoyed a training weekend at Lee Valley White Water Centre. Kayakers from the Armed Services challenged themselves on the London 2012 venue's Legacy Loop and Olympic Course during the training exercise.

Major Alex Burt AGC (ETS) spoke to FOCUS about the event, "It was a great opportunity for our personnel to use the excellent training facilities at Lee Valley; it is important that we challenge our team members in the most demanding situations and the Olympic Course certainly achieved that.

We also have a focus on development and the Legacy Loop was ideal to hone the skills of the younger paddlers who will go on to represent the Services at military and civilian events."

The paddlers began their training weekend with an assessment and then a one hour session on the smaller Legacy Loop on Saturday before moving on to the Olympic Course for two one hour sessions.

The aim of the training exercise was to provide individuals the opportunity to focus on training, gain the experience of the high volume water, and to challenge all participants regardless of their personal paddling ability within a safe and controlled environment.

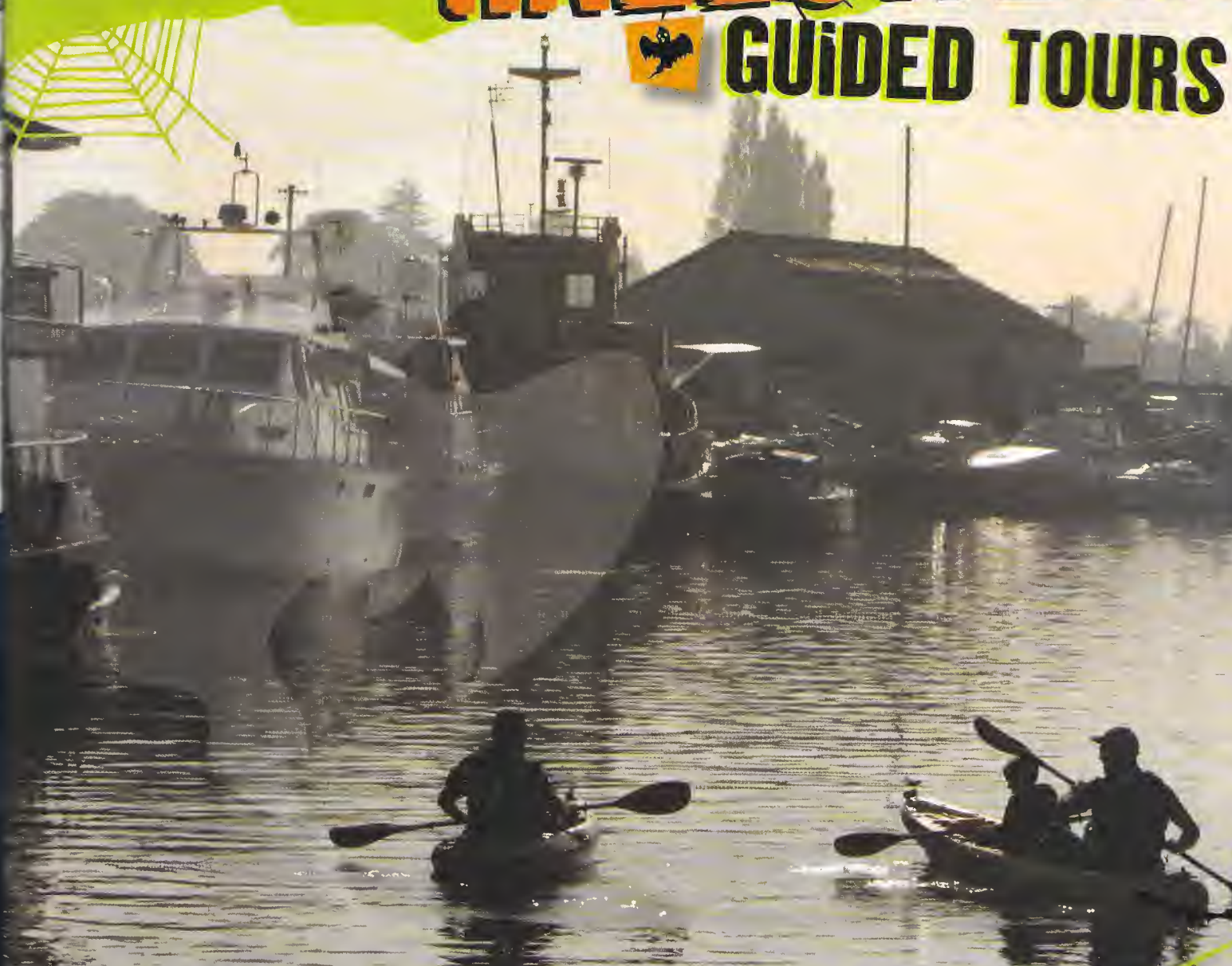
Lee Valley White Water Centre was the only London 2012 venue to open before the Games and the first to reopen after them. It runs a number of successful legacy projects and is used for a wide variety of activities involving participants of all levels from complete beginners to elite athletes.



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"A BIG VOTE OF THANKS FROM CANOE ENGLAND TO ALL THOSE THAT ATTENDED THE EVENT, ALL THOSE WHO RECEIVED AWARDS AND TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO MAKING CANOE SPRINT RACING SO SPECIAL FOR THE LAST 40 YEARS."

BCU ORDER OF MERIT AWARDS

Forty years of national regattas at the National Water Sports Centre in Nottingham were celebrated recently when over 40 volunteer sprint regatta officials attended an awards dinner at Rushcliffe Golf Club, Nottingham.

They were joined by David Gent, Chairman of Canoe England, and four guest officials from New Zealand (Karen Simpson, Matt Warren, John Trotter & Ian Welch) who had attended the recent European Sprint Championships in Portugal.

Special Order of Merit Awards were given to 16 officials for at least 25 years service each, and much more in some cases. Regatta organiser, Peter Morley, kicked off the awards with help from Gordon Wycherley reading out a short citation for each of the recipients. Congratulations are in order for Rowland Jones, Rosy Gray, Peter & Teresa Bland, Elaine & Barry Murray, Martin & Liz Brooks, Diane

Bates, Philip Hughes, the Sunderland family, Neville, Joyce, Keith, Philippa, and Neil, and Peter Morley himself (who was on fine form on the night). In fact the Sunderlands are an example to all in that Neville and Joyce have inspired and recruited three generations of their family to be officials enabling sprint racing to be one of two Olympic canoe sports, something which we would not be able to say if it wasn't for our volunteers.

The evening was made even more special with George Oliver (Nottingham Kayak Club), accompanied by his wife Radmilla, being presented with his Award of Honour by David Gent. The assembled gathering was in for another treat when three time Olympian, Laurence Oliver (Lincoln Canoe Club), passed round his 2012 Olympic torch and chatted about his experiences. This made for a great photo opportunity, particularly for our New Zealand visitors. Throughout the meal there was a quiz to see if anyone could name the 29 officials who have taken an ICF sprint examination since the mid 1960's, with eleven attending this historical occasion. One or two attendees got almost all the answers correct. Peter Morley was presented with a thank-you memento by the New Zealand officials and David Gent brought matters to a close by pointing out that it is not every day that the BCU gives out so many Merit Awards.

A big vote of thanks from Canoe England to all those that attended the event, all those who received awards and to all those who have contributed to making Canoe Sprint racing so special for the last 40 years.



LEE VALLEY LEGACY - A YEAR ON

A year on from London 2012 the Lee Valley Legacy Programme is capitalising on the success of the London Games, creating a lasting legacy to support GB Canoeing in achieving its vision of being the number one Olympic canoeing nation with success and depth of excellence at every level.

Shaun Pearce, three times World Champion, Olympian and GB and Canoeing's Lead Performance Pathway Coach, drives the Slalom Legacy Programme at Lee Valley, which in its first six months has out-performed his expectations. Twelve youngsters that train regularly at the club sessions held at the London 2012 venue are now in the Southern Region Academy and a further five are part of the Southern Super Regional Squad.

Shaun also manages a Talent Identification Programme in Lee Valley's secondary schools, which aims to seek out and create potential champions from previously non-paddling children. This summer his team screened and tested 1400 youngsters aged 11 and 12, selecting the top 20 for regular coaching to improve their skills and take part in training designed to fast track them into the canoe slalom competition structure.

Increasing coaches' slalom knowledge and supporting them to develop is also a key part of the Legacy Programme. Local coaches have completed a discipline-specific coaching module set up to develop their Canoe Slalom teaching skills, enabling them to coach slalom at clubs and be part of the Lee Valley Legacy Project.

Combined, the Lee Valley Legacy Programme adds up to a very simple formula whose outcome is getting more young people paddling and providing the opportunity for them to progress. Hopefully one of these young paddlers will step onto the podium at a future Olympic Games.



Skull in Pose with some of Lee Valley's young paddlers

YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS

News From Your Region

CENTRAL

MERCIAN AVON DESCENT

The Avon Descent takes place on Sunday November 3rd, starting at Stratford on Avon and finishing 10-miles downstream at Bidford on Avon with six weirs to shoot or portage. There are classes for all with K1, K2, WWR, TC2, and touring singles and doubles. This is a popular end of season event for those racing or looking for an enjoyable day trip. Last year well over 100 paddlers took part.

Further information with plenty of pictures from last year, is on the Mercia Canoe Club website www.merciacanoclub.org.uk or e-mail info@merciacanoclub.org.uk for details.



ACTOR GOES CANOEING TO PREPARE FOR ROLE

When Terry Mynott was researching his role depicting Captain Paul Boyton in the forthcoming film 'The Greatest Living Englishman', the story of Captain Matthew Webb, he realised that he would need to get some training to be able to replicate the skill of his character.

Being a member of Canoe England, Terry contacted the office at Bingham asking if they could point him in the direction of a club, who could assist him with a day's training. Living not far from Bedford, the obvious choice was Viking Kayak Club, the home club of Olympic Champion Etienne Stott.

The primary objective of the day was for Terry to be able to give a good account of his forward paddling skills, and to this end, Club Chair Rob Bates started the day's session using the clubs ergo, fine tuning the skills that Terry had already brought with him. We then ventured onto the Great Ouse, using a sea kayak loaned from Dereham Canoe Group, where the theory was put into practice by going for a trip along the Bedford Embankment, and then back upstream towards Kempston following part of the River Great Ouse Canoe Trail.

The day ended as it had begun with the sun shining down, and the river peacefully flowing by. Terry was pleased with the excellent coaching given by Rob, and was seriously considering joining the club in the future, when his filming permits.

For further information on Viking Kayak Club www.vikingkayak.co.uk

3 FOOT PEOPLE FESTIVAL

Chelmsford CC were asked by their local City Council to help out by running a water based event at their 3 Foot People Festival, a parent & toddler event that ran for four consecutive school days over Summer.

The plan was to take parents & toddlers out in the Bell Boats on a small lake only 3 foot deep, in Central Park. The club had never seen boats on this lake before so it seemed quite a good opportunity to get something new going.

Would it be popular, would the children get bored, how hard would it be for our people if the guests didn't join in and paddle?

No need to worry about the kids enjoying the experience as they thought it was great and so did the Parents. Some parents paddled with their children and some sat and talked to their children about the ducks! Some of the Bell Boat Helms told stories. And the club members worked hard to make sure everyone had a great time.

Nearly 2000 people took trips on the boats. (some managed to queue up three times during the day) with many females and youngsters taking the opportunity to try our sport for the very first or to reignite their enthusiasm for the sport.



The South West
Canoe Show
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The Quay, Exeter, Devon



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News From Your Region

CENTRAL

THE VIKINGS ARE COMING!

Newly Clubmark accredited Newark CC celebrated obtaining the accreditation with a weekend of Viking fun at their home on Thurlby Lake. The club has been working towards the award over the last twelve months and were delighted when Canoe Development Officer, Ben Seal visited to hand over their certificate. Club Chair Gordon Smith was very pleased that all the hard work had paid off and told FOCUS, "This is a really great family club and we are pleased that we have met the standard for Club Mark; hopefully this will help us keep developing and growing in future".

The presentation of the certificate came ahead of their annual family fun weekend, which this year had a Viking theme! Members young and old took part in a host of activities on and off the water including archery and shield making.

The club has had a busy summer attending events like the Newark County Show and a club open weekend. They are currently running their popular 'Schools Out' programme for youngsters, giving them the opportunity to complete their Paddle Power Award. One of the most popular events of the summer was their Yarwell Mill trip, which gave members of all abilities the opportunity to journey on moving water for the first time. On her first club trip, Gina Crampton described the highlights of the 10-mile paddle as, "The highlight of the weekend for me was the thrill of paddling the back water in the dark, but closely followed by the serenity of paddling on the river, the anticipation of the weirs, going down the weirs and then being amazed at the stamina of five year old Kian going in the water for the first time!"

Hopefully Newark will keep up the great work inspiring people in the future now they are a Club Marked club.

U CANOE GETS UNLEASHED IN NOTTINGHAM!

Throughout the summer students from two Universities in Nottingham got a chance to try out Canoe England's new youth focussed project 'U Canoe'. The initiative, targeted at 14-25 year olds, aims to get more young people paddling regularly both on the water (Unleashed) and on ergo machines (Wired). It is hoped that the project will offer a fun, flexible and sociable experience to new paddlers, keeping them hooked for life!

Students from Nottingham Uni Polo Club and Nottingham Trent Kayak club piloted the water based 'Unleashed' activities, which proved to be an instant hit! Nottingham University took to the water on Highfields lake, while Nottingham Trent enjoyed sunny sessions on the Winfield pool at the National Watersports Centre.

U Canoe project officer Jack Ford was pleased with the initial pilots, he told FOCUS, "Feedback from the sessions has been overwhelmingly positive, it was fantastic seeing the young people just getting out, having fun and taking the lead on deciding what they want to do."

U Canoe sessions are to be led by 'Activators' whose job it is to make the sessions as fun and as participant led as possible. They are all equipped with a U Canoe kit bag and resource cards, full of ideas to run activities on and off the water.

The Canoe England Participation Team is now looking to roll the project out at specific locations across the country. There has already been keen interest from colleges, uniformed groups, youth groups and some leisure centres.

For more information please contact your Canoeing Development Officer or visit the U Canoe Facebook page to see the promotional video.



News From Your Region

NORTH

5TH ANNUAL SUMMER SOLSTICE WINDERMERE LAKE RACE

This event organised by Windermere Canoe & Kayak was a test of stamina and fitness that challenged paddlers of all abilities in a timed trial for the full length of Lake Windermere 10.5 miles or a shorter 5.5 miles. This year saw an array of craft taking to the water, from outriggers, canoes, sea kayaks, dragon boats, sit on tops and many K2's. The aim of the game is to get as many paddlers involved from beginners to the experienced for either a personal challenge or to beat the race record still held by Michael Mason set in 2009, completing the length of Windermere in 1-hour and 17-minutes. Since then each year has been wetter and wilder than the last, this year was no exception with a strong headwind to battle against!

If you want to join next year's bigger and better Summer Solstice race in the beautiful, Lake District, which offers spectacular scenery throughout the paddle. **Here's a date for the diary; Saturday 21st June 2014.**

DERWENTWATER REGATTA

Five Thousand visitors flocked to the Derwentwater Regatta, held at Lake Derwentwater in Crow Park, Keswick to take part in the assortment of 'Go Canoeing experiences on offer recently. Activities ranged from Go Canoeing Taster Sessions and short tours provided by Nichol End Marina and Keswick Canoe & Bushcraft who also offered a giant slalom event and bath tub racing as well as 'Build and Paddle your own Coracle'. Plattyplus Watersports offered a Voyager Canoe or Dragon Boat paddling experience or to sail a Viking Longboat. Meanwhile back on dry land the Go Canoeing team held Kayak and Canoe Machine time trials and an opportunity to find out more about Go Canoeing and discuss canoeing as a fantastic sport. Many more stalls, displays, fun fair and field gun, which by tradition started the 'Parade of Sail' helped to ensure a great day to entertain the crowds.

The event organised by the Borrowdale National Trust, aimed to reinstate an event first started in 1778 by Joseph Pocklington, an eccentric local landowner who devised madcap activities including swimming and rowing around the island alongside a fair for the spectators. The event was a huge success and will be featured again in 2014.



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CHESHIRE RING RACE 2013

Macclesfield and District Canoe Club organised the Cheshire Ring Race over the summer, the 96-mile challenge attracted entries from 52 paddlers competing in different classes.

The fastest time this year was by Stuart West and Dave Pedlar, in the K2 all-the-way, set a blistering time of 15.10.12, beating the previous record set by Peter and Lee Howson in 2009 by 2.27.12. Stuart also holds the K1 all-the-way record of 15.27.27.

There were three K2 x 5 pair relay entries from MADCC, Trentham and Nottingham who finished within an hour of each other. Trentham took the trophy in 17.57.46, followed by MADCC, with the all-ladies team from Nottingham third; but for a navigational error and a short diversion in the direction of Llangollen the ladies had looked set to win.

Jean Astley and Adele Blakeborough from Chester CC, appeared accompanied by their own film crew! Jean is to feature in a series called 'Ordinary people doing extraordinary things' Sports Pursuits. The pair managed a commendable 19-hours 32-minutes in the K2 all-the-way class.

Three K1 all-the-ways, set off within 30-minutes of one another and were separated by roughly two and half hours at the finish. Neil Evans emerged as the winner in 20.50.27 and retained the K1 trophy from last year. Congratulations also go to the furthest flung team, the Buccaneers from Scotland, who completed a K1 3-paddler relay in 18.30.12.

As in previous years several teams chose to paddle in aid of charities and at the last count a total of over £5000 had been raised for Macmillan, Cancer Research UK, and the East Cheshire Hospice. The Ring race will be back again in June 2014.



CANOEING IN A VICTORIAN PARK

Taylor Park, which is a beautiful Victorian park situated in St Helens Merseyside has been the setting for some exiting canoeing programs that ran over the summer. The outdoor education team in St Helens provided a series of free paddle sport sessions at the park. The boats that were on offer to try were: kayaks, rafted canoes and sit on tops.

Also on offer as a come and try it session, without getting wet! The indoor kayak machines were there to wet the curiosity of people walking by. These proved to be a great asset in the day. They were tried by a wide variety of ages with many good times being recorded over the short 50-metre distance.

The sessions were mostly aimed at the under eighteens age group but, a few brave adults who accompanied some of the young people also had a try. The idea of these sessions was to raise the profile of kayaking and canoeing in the borough. It is the hope that in the future, depending on the interest, a kayak club could be set up and situated in Taylor Park.

The sessions started early in the morning and ran throughout the day. There were a great number of participants who turned up to take part in the event and even people who were just walking in the park with their children who saw the interest and put the names down before rushing home for spare clothes. So they could have a go. The sessions proved to be a great success and more are planned over the rest of the summer.

GREAT YORKSHIRE SHOW

After last year's washout the hot and sunny weather for this year's event certainly brought the crowds to the Yorkshire Show.

Thanks to North Yorkshire Sport and Canoe England along with volunteer helpers from MAD Paddlers CC, Bradford and Bingley CC and East Yorkshire CC the crowds were able to try their hand at paddling on the kayak ergo machines.

With two machines linked up to a big screen there were lots of races over a distance of 50m, all the times were recorded and the fastest in the different age categories were posted on a leader board. Things got very competitive with family members, classmates, friends and colleagues all trying to outdo each other and to see if they could get their name onto the leader board.

Canoeing Development Officers and the volunteer helpers from the local canoe clubs were always on hand to offer advice and to answer any questions about getting involved in our sport and everyone who came to the stand took away information about 'Go Canoeing'.

Over the three days of the show over 1,000 people from every age group and background had a go at racing on the machines including people some surprising ones such as freshly made scarecrows and fairies who claimed to be over 250-years old!

NOSTELL PRIORY 'GO CANOEING'

The National Trust has recently joined forces with 'Go Canoeing' and has committed to opening up more of their properties for developing opportunities to experience canoeing. As a result of this meetings were held earlier in the year to look at the possibility of offering canoeing on the beautiful lake in the stunning gardens of Nostell Priory.

MAD Paddlers Canoe Club have their base near to the priory and were drafted in to see if they could help. After running some initial closed sessions to check the suitability of the lake for canoeing activities a programme of 'Starter Sessions' was then programmed and advertised to the public.

The take up on these sessions has been great with almost all of them being fully booked up. Interest in canoeing has even infected the stall at Nostell Priory and the club are hosting an extra session just to allow them the opportunity to get involved.

The sessions have been a great success for everyone involved and Liz Wrigglesworth, Sports Development Officer at Nostell Priory spoke to FOCUS about the developments, "John and Brian from the MAD paddlers have been great, the sessions have quite an informal style allowing everyone to explore the lake themselves but picking up some basic skills along the way. Feedback has been excellent from all participants as well as other visitors watching the action as they are walking through the gardens. All in all a massive success and a really positive activity for our property."

WAREHAM WEDNESDAYS REGATTA

Every Wednesday for six weeks in the summer, Wareham town in Dorset puts on a music and activity festival. This summer has been bigger and better than before. At the start of August 'Wareham Wednesday's' welcomed the regatta race.

Wareham Boat Hire (WBH) organised the regatta providing free boats for racers on the night. Experienced volunteers helped with timing and safety during the event with assistance from Poole Harbour Canoe Club.

There were three races with different distances for three age groups. Half a mile for the under 11-year olds, one mile for 11-18-year olds and two miles for 18 plus. Some competitors borrowed boats and others brought their own, from sea kayaks to tandem Canadian canoes.

The winner of the under 11's race was Tim Ostler with a very close second from Yasmin Jones. The 11-14 race was won by Harry Gillingham and the under 18's saw a fantastic effort from first time racers with Ben McCarthy making top spot on the podium. Finally the two-lap event was won in style by Malcolm Acreman in the men's category from Poole Harbour Canoe Club and Tania Kaplan from Wareham Canoe Club in the ladies. WBH offered free starter sessions throughout the evening for those unwilling or unable to race this year.

For those who didn't brave the water this time round, Go Canoeing offered a kayak ergo sprint challenge to paddle 50m as fast as possible. Participants became hooked, trying to beat their previous best time, friends and family.

The event was finished off with prizes for the winners, live music and fireworks. Next year WBH hope more competitors from paddling and non-paddling backgrounds will take the challenge on the water! Wareham regatta had something for everyone. An event not to be missed!

Wareham Boat Hire is joining the growing network of Go Canoeing providers in Dorset and will be supported by Go Canoeing to get more people enjoying the water on their doorstep.

For more information about WBH please visit www.warehamboathire.co.uk



STAINES-UPON-THAMES GO CANOEING!

Wonderful weather brought out the crowds with a good show for the Surrey Canoe Club at their Go Canoeing starter session. Manning a stand and operating on the water to, plenty of visitors came along and gave Canoeing a Go. Paul Marsden, Chair of Surrey Canoe Club told us. "It was good to participate in this year's event and watch the first time paddlers enjoy the time on the water from young to old, a real cross section of people enjoying the river. Laughter enhances even a sunny day like today".

One of the more special guests who tried canoeing for the first time was Denise Saliagopoulos, as the most senior conservative member attending on behalf of the local MP. "I very much enjoyed canoeing with Surrey Canoe Club. It is an honour to have met them. They are doing a tremendous job in encouraging young people, both able bodied and disabled to get onto our waters. Encouraging healthy outdoor sports for young people who never would have thought they would enjoy it so much. The volunteers are so dedicated. They have some real achievable ideas for the future and we will support them. This is also about our Olympic legacy and how we need to build on this. This club is doing just that."

The club though it was great that she agreed to give it a go considering that she was wearing a dress and high heels!

SEVERN AREA RESCUE ASSOCIATION OPEN DAY REGATTA

Early August saw the second Outdoor Activity Fun Day held at Mallards Pike in the Forest of Dean to raise money for SARA, the Severn Area Rescue Association. SARA is an Inshore Rescue boat and Land Search organisation covering the Severn Estuary, upper reaches of the River Severn, and the rivers Wye, Bristol Avon and Usk. It's tasked by the Coastguard, Fire, Police and Ambulance services across its operational area to provide search and rescue services twenty-four-seven, 365 days of the year.

Wayne Morgan and Dianne Worrall of Way2Go Adventures set up the annual event for the first time last year, raising £928 for SARA. This year the event was even more successful and raised £1826 on the day. The event offered the chance to try lots of activities in a safe environment, including canoeing, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, and even water zorbing! There were also some land-based activities including outdoor cooking, den building, Nordic walking, laser tag and segways. The qualified instructors volunteered their time for the event and all monies raised went to SARA. Volunteers from SARA were there on the day to demonstrate some rescues and give advice on water safety. Paddlesport was extremely popular for the first timers, from very young toddlers to their grandparents and every age in between, not forgetting the dogs! Many people were surprised by how much they enjoyed it and now want to find out more. The day ran smoothly by a very well organised team. The open day showed off our sports for what they can be: social, responsible, and environmentally friendly and, most of all, FUN!

SARA is a charity organisation, therefore fund raising events are very important to ensure they can continue to operate. SARA covers popular canoeing rivers in South Wales and the West of England. For more information about SARA and how you could support them, please visit www.sara-rescue.org.uk



SPORT HAMPSHIRE AND IOW SUMMER ROADSHOW

This summer Go Canoeing has partnered up with Hampshire's County Sport Partnership, Sport Hampshire and IOW. They have been out and about at events across the county such as New Milton Sports Day, Lepe into Action, Decathlon EXPO, Havant Sports Fair and many more. The kayakpro ergo's have been put through their paces encouraging people to have a taster at paddle sport technique, see what starter sessions are on offer and check out our club network.

COACHING WHAT GEAR?

Just staying warm and safe for a day's paddling can be fairly kit intensive. If you add to that the need to coach you could soon find your dry bags bulging with supplies and your boat sitting very low in the water. So it helps if the kit you choose to take has multiple uses. Saying that though, even a one hit wonder may be worth the effort of dragging it along if it gets across the point you are trying to deliver. Here is a selection of things you may consider and their potential applications.

Article by Karl Midlane, BCU Level 4 Inland, Sea & Open Canoe Coach at Plas y Brenin, The National Mountain Sports Centre.

THE USUAL?

Whatever kit you would normally take to look after yourself and your companions in that craft and water conditions (like towlines or throw-lines) should be included, but a few of these might need modifying slightly for coaching.

First Aid: This needs to be fairly comprehensive, just slapping duct tape on a cut might be all that is expected by your mates, but students will expect to be well looked after (remember your higher duty of care).

Spare Clothes: A spare fleece in your size may not fit your all of your students, fleeces in XS & XL sizes can be cheaply sourced from charity shops or lost property boxes.

Spares of Everything: It is incredible how many students can misplace equipment on a short drive from your storeroom to the water's edge, so having a few spares of the essential bits in your vehicle will often prove invaluable. Even if your students are experienced paddlers and plan to provide all their own equipment, they will sometimes turn up with things that are too old, damaged or inappropriate for the planned task. Having spare bungs, bolts and tools with you is an easy way to impress clients who turn up with shoddy boats.

Group shelter: Emergency shelters need to be big enough for the whole group.

AND THE KITCHEN SINK...

As a coach you are on your own. Although you may have a lot of people with you if a problem occurs everyone will look to you to solve it and their lack of experience in that environment may limit the assistance your students can provide. Items of equipment that are often shared out amongst a group of peers, such as slings and karabiners for river rescues, flares, tow lines and VHF radios for sea kayakers may all need to be supplied by the coach, and kept in their own boat to make sure they are readily available if needed, and not stuck in the boat that is pinned inaccessibly in the middle of the river!

“Whatever light weight waterproof equipment you choose to take with you to enhance the learning process it is no substitute for the knowledge, imagination and experience that a good coach can carry in their head.”



COACHING TOOLS.

Having a few non-paddling items with you can be great teaching aids.

Toys, Balls & Sponges: Brightly coloured toys and balls are great for games and my favourite 'steal the duck' game works just as well with 8-year old novices as it does with military groups on adventure training. They also make excellent targets for developing accuracy; if you are developing specific skills, being able to hit a floating tennis ball whilst doing a stern rudder requires more precision than just doing it in an open space.

MODEL BOATS

Models of your chosen craft can be an alternative to demonstrating manoeuvres and will allow for viewing at speeds or angles not available in real life.

WATERPROOF VIDEO CAMERA

This is great for showing a student what they are really doing rather than what they think they are doing. They allow a coach to review a single performance multiple times and in slow motion for partially detailed analysis. They also have the capability of storing pre-recorded examples of performances to use as demos if you are a bank based coach.

Written Resources: Laminated copies of maps, guidebooks, tidal flow diagrams, wildlife identification charts and your favourite mnemonics can also be added for classroom clarity in the wilderness environment, and the back of laminated sheets can be pressed in to service as a whiteboard.

Tape, Pens, Crayons or China graph Pencils: Anything that will work in the damp to put a marker on boats or paddles can be handy to remind people of things like hand spacing on the paddle or blade entry points next to the boat.

YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Whatever light weight waterproof equipment you choose to take with you to enhance the learning process it is no substitute for the knowledge, imagination and experience that a good coach can carry in their head.

Undoubtedly the one most important thing for a coach to carry with them is their lesson plan for the day. Whether you choose to type it out and laminate it, scribble it in a waterproof note book or just have it committed to memory, putting some thought in to the day's objectives and coming up with a logical progression will make a bigger difference to the success of the session than any fancy toy or gadget.



INFO



Karl is a canoe and kayak coach at Plas y Brenin, The National Mountain Sports Centre working on their huge range of white water sea kayaking and open boating courses and holidays all year round. If you'd like to know more about Plas y Brenin and what they have on offer, why not visit their website at www.pyb.co.uk where you can help yourself to a free 72 page colour brochure.



Spooky Halloween Guided Tours

With Halloween just around the corner, we're fast approaching that time of the year when things go bump in the night and spooks and spectres come out to play. But while ghastly ghouls and scary skeletons are not everyone's cup of tea, it's worth remembering that during this eerie time of year, for every trick there is also a treat!

So to celebrate this spine-chilling festival of fear, Go Canoeing will be running special Halloween-themed Guided Tours at locations across the country. Participants will be treated to a spot of spooky paddling and our ghoulish guides will be on hand to give you an authentic supernatural experience.

Go Canoeing Development Officer Jenny Spencer said: "Whether it's bats and broomsticks in Birmingham, pumpkins and poltergeists in Plymouth or the living dead in Liverpool, our Halloween Guided Tours are sure to send a shiver down your spine as well as put a smile on your face.

"We had such a glorious summer this year that it really was perfect weather for canoeing and kayaking. But just because temperatures are falling, it doesn't mean you can't still have fun on the water and our Halloween Guided Tours are a great way to do just that.

"Each tour will be slightly different, but they will all provide a unique, fun way to enjoy Halloween and a truly fang-tastic experience!"

The tours are perfect for adults as well as children and participants are invited to join in the fun by pulling on the most hair-raising outfit they can find. Mischievous monsters, vile vampires and ghastly goblins are all welcome on the paranormal paddles so let your imagination run wild.

As this issue of Canoe FOCUS went to print, Go Canoeing had the following Halloween Guided Tours listed:

- **Canoe Kayak Trader, Leamington Spa** – 31/10/2013
- **Mountbatten Centre, Plymouth** – 31/10/2013
- **Kayaking London** – 27/10/2013
- **Adventure Okehampton, Devon** – 29/10/2013 and 31/10/2013
- **Wokingham Waterside Centre, Wokingham** – 26/10/2013
- **Ackers Adventure, Birmingham** – 31/10/2013
- **Albert Dock Halloween Tour, Liverpool** – 27/10/2013
- **Norwich City Halloween Tour** – 27/10/2013
- **Windermere Canoe Kayak, Cumbria** – 31/10/2013
- **Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre, Leicester** – 31/10/2013
- **Portsmouth Watersports Centre, Portsmouth** – 31/10/2013
- **Engage Watersports, Maidenhead** – 31/10/2013



More dates and venues will be added closer to Halloween, so keep checking www.gocanoeing.org.uk to find a Guided Tour near you.

OTHER GO CANOEING NEWS

There are now 15 Official Go Canoeing Guided Tour Providers offering tours at locations across the country. This number is on the increase and we are hoping to continue to add to our network of providers throughout the winter and into 2014.

We have also been adding to our ever-expanding range of Canoe Trails and will soon have more than 50 routes listed on our website. The trails are a free resource and are the perfect way to find interesting new places to paddle.

So with more Canoe Trails and Guided Tours, as well as national events and information about local clubs and centres, there is something for everyone on the Go Canoeing website, wherever you are in the country. www.gocanoeing.org.uk **CF**



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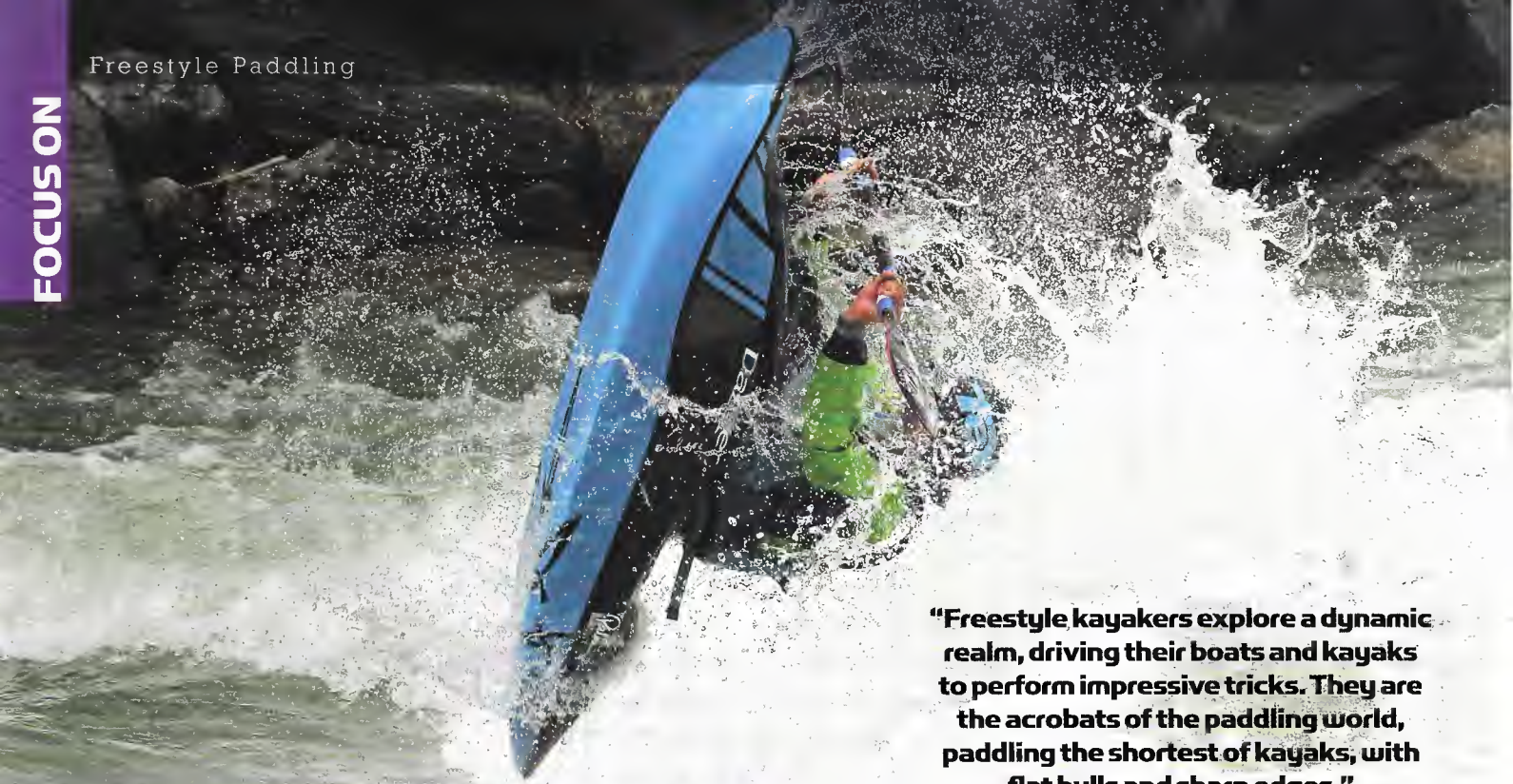


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“Freestyle kayakers explore a dynamic realm, driving their boats and kayaks to perform impressive tricks. They are the acrobats of the paddling world, paddling the shortest of kayaks, with flat hulls and sharp edges.”

FOCUS on Freestyle

Team GB paddler and former Men's World Freestyle Champion James Bebbington throwing a big loop. Photo by Katya Kulkova courtesy of Palm Equipment.

Do you yearn to launch your boat in to the air above a fast wave in a display of athletic control and power? Then the modern and exciting discipline of freestyle paddling could be just what you're looking for.



UK pro-freestyler Bren Orton training at the whitewater course at Nottingham. Photo by Dale Mears courtesy of Pyranha Kayaks

WHAT IS FREESTYLE?

At its simplest freestyle is about playing the river's features with your mates. At its pinnacle is an awesome spectacle with ICF recognition and its own World Championships. Freestyle kayakers explore a dynamic realm, driving their boats and kayaks to perform impressive tricks. They are the acrobats of the paddling world, paddling the shortest of kayaks, with flat hulls and sharp edges. Surfing big standing waves or big hydraulics, or holes as they're commonly called, formed within rapids, these kayakers pitch their skills against each other in competition by accumulating as many points, scored by performing as different tricks in forty-five seconds as possible. Freestyle competitions tend to be held in a very controlled environment.

ROOTS

The modern form of competitive freestyle paddling stem from the early days of river exploration and a desire to explore, conquer and play on the dynamic whitewater river environment. The use of fibreglass boats in the early seventies created a new spark of exploration, fuelling the progression of whitewater racing and slalom kayaking, as whitewater's first true competitive disciplines. While slalom kayakers threaded between the added obstacles of gates, which could not be touched without penalty, and river racing events stayed close to the middle ground of the whitewater grading system (graded from 1 being easiest to 5

being the hardest), the beginning of freestyle, or 'rodeo' kayaking as it was called then was formed when a few paddlers decided to get together and see who could show off in their boats the most. In no time at all tricks and boat designs accelerated to push the limits of what could be done in kayaks to the point that modern freestyler's boats are now shorter than the paddles used by those early pioneers! Today freestyle has developed in to a breathtaking display of athletic and creative prowess with paddlers performing complex aerial moves, complete with competitions being held all over the world and with an official World Championships.

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

At a point in the mid nineties boat designs began to diverge and specialise to accommodate changing needs. Freestyle boats first became lower volume and slicier, then came the advent of the planning hull revolution, and finally they became shorter and shorter.

COULD I EVER DO THAT?

When you're just starting your journey in the fantastic world of canoeing & kayaking just stepping on to your path towards becoming a whitewater kayaker can seem a challenge, but with practice and the right training there's no reason that you can't try your hand at these exciting and fun disciplines. There's lots of opportunity and many low level fun events that are accessible to all. As a newcomer, the cheapest and easiest way to start your progression is by joining a local club. Joining a club will give you access to equipment during training sessions and also proficient kayakers who will push you towards your

**Images by
Katya Kulkova &
Dale Mears
(courtesy of Palm
Equipment)**

desired goal. Depending on what time of year you have joined, your club will either have pool-training sessions or outdoor flat-water training, both are great environments to start learning the basics, such as the roll and an efficient forward stroke. From day one your confidence will increase as you learn the strokes to control and keep your kayak upright. It goes without saying that from picking up your paddle, it will take a little time before you fancy signing up for your first competition, but don't be put off checking out events to see what it's all about in the flesh, whether you're a seasoned pro, a beginner or a weekend warrior, the various events, which take place across the UK are not just a platform for progression but the social backbone of a very inclusive and unique branch of the sport.

WHERE TO FREESTYLE

We are lucky in the UK to have four artificial whitewater courses, with a fifth nearing the end of completion. Each provide reliable venues for freestyle paddling and competitions. There are also numerous world-class waves that pop up around the UK when the rivers rise.

There are also more and more fun events around the UK, which do not involve competition and aim to celebrate the sport and provide an opportunity for paddlers to get involved.

COMPETITION

In Great Britain, competitions are open to all levels, with novices and GB Freestyle team members competing at the same events. Competitions comprise of various classes (K1, C1, OC1, Squirt) and categories (gender and age - junior, senior, master). Most events also have categories for different ability levels (novice, intermediate and elite) allowing you to compete at the right level. Often different rules are used for the different experience levels e.g. fun or less rigid rules for novice categories and International freestyle rules for elite categories.

Competitions take place at freestyle venues across the whole of Great Britain, with some competitions offering coaching sessions to support those new to the sport.

One of the biggest events of the year is The Youth Freestyle Series. The Youth Freestyle series is a number of one-day events aimed at progressing white-water paddlers. It is open to any paddlers aged 18 and under with a fairly reliable white-water roll who want to improve their freestyle or white water paddling or who want to take part in a fun freestyle competition. It doesn't matter if you have no previous experience of competition or if you're on the GB team, the competition caters for all levels of paddler. **CF**

USEFUL INFO

Want to get involved with Freestyle Paddling? Check out these useful links

www.bcu.org.uk/our-sport/freestyle-kayaking/
www.gbfreestylekayak.com



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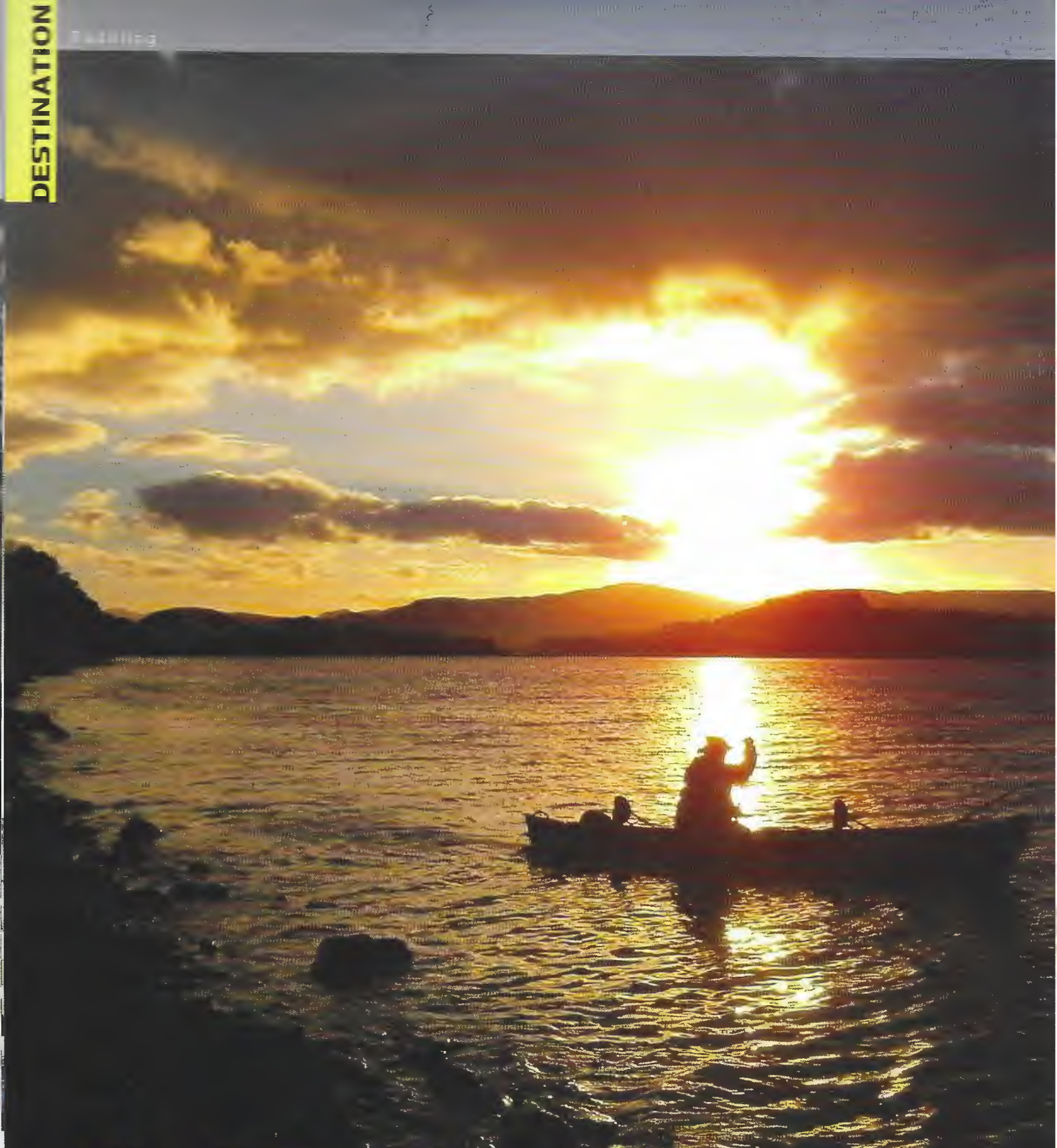
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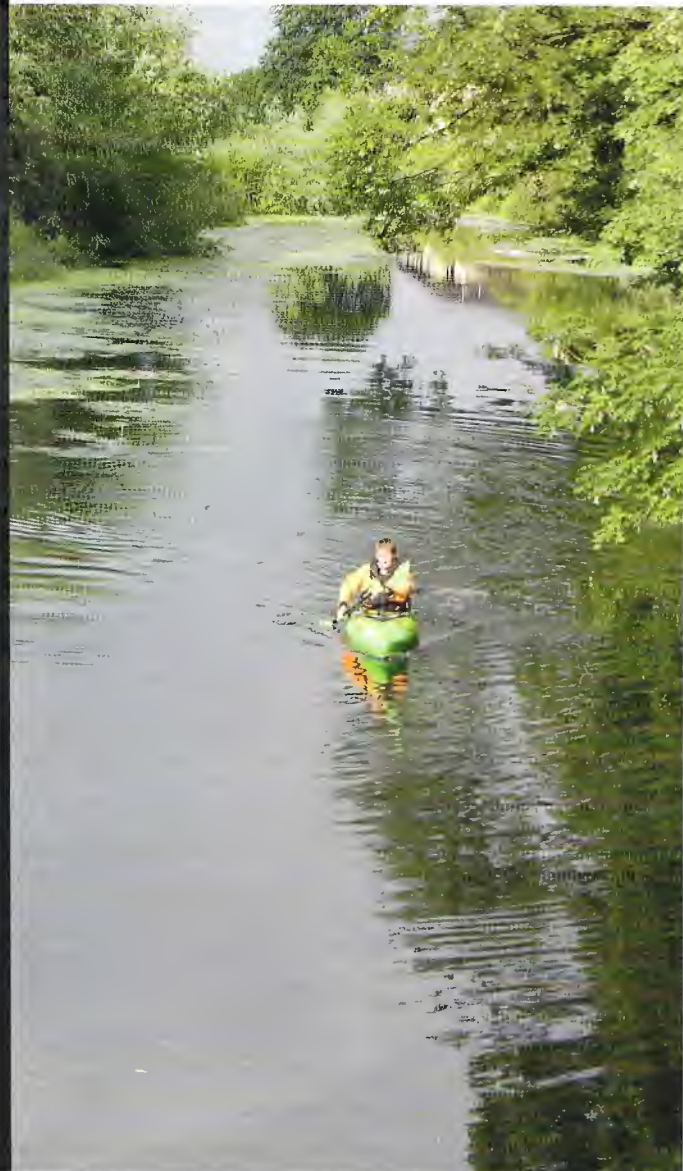
10 Great Paddle Touring Trips

Photo by Vicky Duckworth

RIVER SEVERN

The UK's largest river, the Severn rises from the flanks of Plynlimon in the Cambrian Mountains of Wales. As it flows from its source, through Powys, Shropshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, to its mouth in the Bristol Channel it covers an impressive 350km. It's narrow and twisting in its upper reaches, but its scenery is stunning and the Jackfield Rapids supply a small shot of excitement for those seeking thrills. Although the Severn can be fearsome in flood, it can become very shallow over gravel beds in some places during the drier summer months, most notably as it flows through the picturesque town of Bewdley in Worcestershire. It then broadens out as it flows slowly along its way to the city of Worcester. There are many locks and weirs to negotiate along the way, but they're all canoe and kayak friendly and it's a fairly easy job to get out and walk round. In parts, such as near the marina at Stourport it can become busy with other river-users, especially during the summer months, but in others you'll have the whole river to yourselves. The Severn can offer multi-day trips, there are some riverside camping opportunities, but there are also some fantastic riverside pubs that offer accommodation. If you fancy something shorter then there are plenty of stretches along its length that offer great touring days out. ▶

There are few things more enjoyable than slipping along a gently flowing river, or across the glass like, mirror flat surface of a lake or loch, listening to nothing but the dip of your paddle. Whether you're just out on a paddling pootle for an afternoon or heading out for a multi-day journey, touring kayaks and canoes are the perfect vehicles for exploring our varied and beautiful waterways. Here's a few suggestions on some truly classic canoe & kayak touring trips and destinations to get you started, but once you've caught the canoe & kayak touring bug there are plenty more out there, just waiting for you to discover...



RIVER THAMES

Old Father Thames, celebrated for centuries in literature and art, is probably the most famous river in the UK, if not the world! But although it flows directly through the heart of our capital there's a whole lot more to the River Thames than just the glittering glass towers and bridges of London. It becomes officially navigable at Cricklade in Wiltshire and the upper stretches of the river offer some beautiful potential for paddle touring. Further downstream the Thames begins to grow in stature. There are plenty of easy access and egress points along the way and some lovely riverside pubs. Henley, famous for its boating regatta, and the section between here and Marlow is picturesque and green. Further down stream at Runnymede you can moor up and then take a short walk to where the historic Magna Carta was signed; and the section between there and Windsor is a

popular stretch for paddling day trippers. Shepperton and Sunbury are great spots to start a Thames paddling tour from and you could journey down stream further to the historic palace at Hampton Court. After the lock at Teddington the Thames becomes tidal, so it's a more serious venture, but more experienced paddlers will love the unusual view that the river offers of our capital city, and cruising past such powerful landmarks as the House of Commons with Big Ben looming and the London Eye just downstream is certainly a special paddling experience.

“Old Father Thames, celebrated for centuries in literature and art, is probably the most famous river in the UK, if not the world!”

**RIVER STOUR**

The River Stour flows quietly through the Suffolk and Essex countryside taking in the delights of 'Constable country'. For nearly its whole length the Stour flows through a wide valley and presents paddlers with a plethora of picturesque panoramas, making it ideal as a destination for the touring paddler. Powered craft are unable to access much of the Stour due to weirs and shallow section, easily portaged with kayaks or canoes, which makes for quiet, peaceful touring with an abundance of wildlife in, and around this lovely river. A useful navigation guide to the Stour can be downloaded from <http://bit.ly/wYD4sf>

RIVER TRENT

The River Trent is another of the major rivers of England. Its source is in Staffordshire and it flows through the Midlands until it joins the River Ouse at Trent Falls to form the Humber Estuary, which then empties into the North Sea. In times past the industrial landscapes that the Trent runs through for part of its length meant that it was heavily polluted, but water quality has improved significantly in recent years, and it provides quality touring along its length. From quiet rural settings to passing through historical cities, such as Burton and Nottingham, it is one of the great English rivers. The Trent also boasts a tidal bore in its lower reaches, the Trent Aegir, which occurs when a high spring tide meets the downstream flow of the river.



Photo by Chris Gale



RIVER MERSEY

Almost as famous as the Thames, the Mersey flows through the industrial heartlands of the North. The name 'Mersey' originates from the Old English 'Maere', which means boundary and the river was the boundary of the ancient Saxon kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria. The Mersey is formed when the River Tame and the River Goyt meet in Stockport. The full length of the Mersey is 110km, but it can offer a wealth of shorter day trips, or even multi-day trips for the more adventurous. Surrounded by industry the Mersey also suffered from pollution in the past, but a successful and intense clean up operation has seen

this magnificent river once again sparkle, with fish and wildlife returning to its waters and riverbanks. Canoeing & kayaking are actively encouraged on the Mersey and a paddling trail, available to download as a PDF, runs from Stockport to Carrington. www.canoeengland.org.uk/media/pdf/EA%20Merseyguidedraft.pdf

RIVER LEA

Despite its proximity to some pretty urban areas the River Lea in Hertfordshire provides some delightfully green and leafy stretches for paddle touring. It can be fairly narrow in places, with overgrowing trees and duckweed, but this just adds to the Lea's personality and gives the river a wild, adventurous feel. Its waters are clear and fish can be seen darting underneath and Kingfishers flashing amongst the riverside foliage. The Lea also has man-made weirs and locks to negotiate (one has been built specially to provide fun for paddlers looking for a little moving water action) but these are all easily portaged.

THE RIVER NENE

Flowing between the cities of Northampton and Peterborough the Nene, along with the Great Ouse, is one of the main watercourses of the east and has much to offer the touring paddler, until it reaches its tidal section, at the curiously named Dog in a Doublet lock. There's a man-made whitewater course that runs from the Nene, just outside Northampton, ideal as a starting point, and the section of river from here is a lovely, leafy paddle. The Nene provides pretty and interesting scenery throughout its length but the section between Thrapston and Oundle is, in our opinion, worthy of special note. The section from Wandsford down in to Peterborough, taking in Ferry Meadows lakes, is also a really nice paddle.

RIVER WYE

The River Wye is one of Britain's most scenic and unspoilt rivers, and has long held a special place in the hearts of UK paddlers. From its source deep in the Welsh mountains, from the same streams of Plynlimon that also spawn its big brother the Severn, the River Wye flows through scenic countryside passing through Hay-on-Wye, Hereford and Ross-on-Wye along its way. It supplies a little whitewater excitement as it tumbles over the gentle rapids at Symonds Yat, and then calmly continues on through Monmouth and Tintern until it finally reaches Chepstow where it joins the Severn Estuary.

The lower Wye Valley with its steep wooded cliffs is particularly good for touring paddling and you'll see wildlife and birdlife a plenty as you float along. If you just want to spend a few hours cruising along it is possible to hire sit-on-tops or canoes for a day trip. But for those who want a little bit more adventure the Wye offers the keen paddler a 100-miles of touring, and the opportunity of multi-day paddling trips, with plenty of campsites and riverside pubs along the way if you decide to go for it.



"From quiet rural settings to passing through historical cities, such as Burton and Nottingham, it is one of the great English rivers."

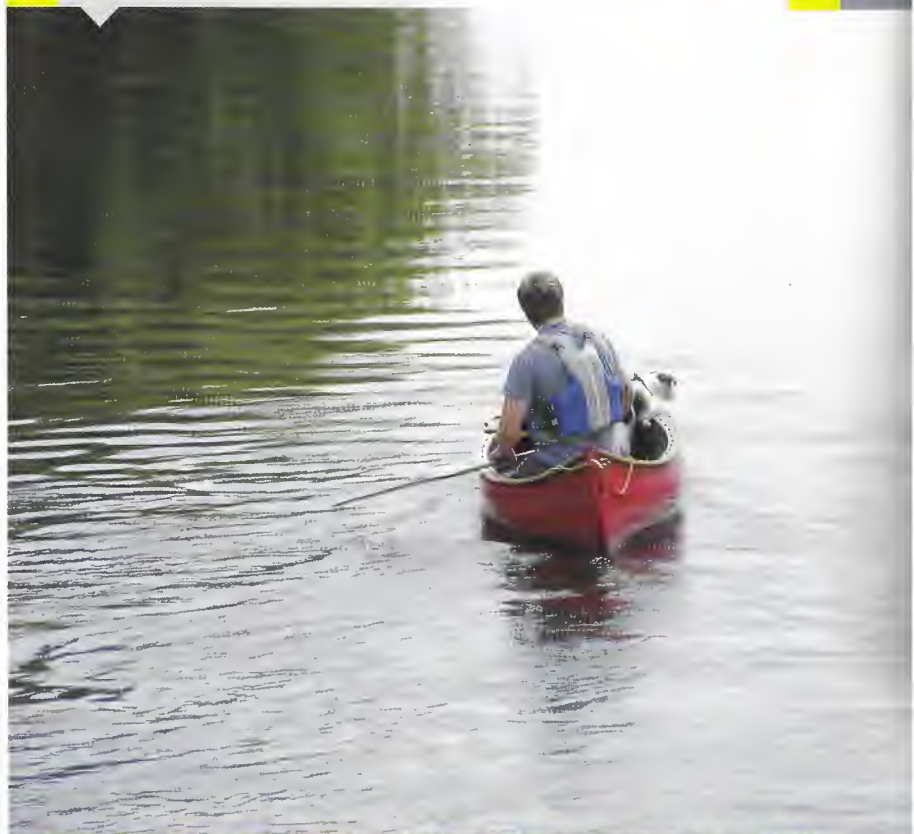


Photo by Ross Montford.





THE RIVER SPEY

A Scottish touring gem, and one of the most popular rivers for paddle touring in the UK. Paddlers travel from all over to enjoy a 'Spey Descent'. Early in its life the Spey runs gently through the Cairngorms National Park and a more beautiful journey, through a backdrop of towering, majestic Munros, is hard to imagine. The Spey then winds lazily along through 'Whisky Country' the most densely populated whisky distillery area in the world! The mountains have now given way to rolling hills but the scenery is still stunning. This is a fantastic trip for nature lovers and you can expect to share the river with oystercatchers, herons, osprey, otters, deer and leaping salmon. The trees, flowers and mountain views are truly hard to beat with a wealth of day, weekend or multi-day trips to choose from.

RIVER BLACKWATER

Part of Northern Ireland's excellent Canoe Trails network the Blackwater is an ideal venue for touring paddlers of any ability. The Blackwater gently meanders through the beautiful countryside of counties Armagh and Tyrone, flowing gently into Lough Neagh (Europe's largest inland Lake spanning 90 miles in circumference). As well as the peace and quiet of the river the Blackwater also passes the Argory, an impressive National Trust property, which is well worth the time to pay a visit. As we've mentioned the Blackwater is just part of the NI Canoe Trails, which combine to make Northern Ireland a fantastic destination for a paddle touring holiday. Check out www.canoeni.com/canoe-trails/ for more details and downloadable maps for each trail. **CF**



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USEFUL INFO

CANOE TRAILS

There is something quite magical about being out on the water in your canoe or kayak... whether you are on flat water, white water, lake or the sea the pleasures and fun are never ending. To help you find lots of fantastic paddling trips we're building a catalogue of cracking downloadable canoe & kayak trails. Full of useful information and details about the trip that will make your time on the water easier to plan, and more fun.

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In at the Deep End!

Article by Philipa Arding

800 MILES IN A SEA KAYAK

For once I didn't open my mouth as soon as the thought popped into my head... "I suppose I could join Nick as far as John o' Groats". I mulled it over for 12-hours before suggesting it, and then, within hours of voicing the new plan, it was sorted. Around Britain 4 Britain - Nick Arding and Lee Pooley sea kayaking around the UK linked to beach cleans that Jo and I would run, to raise awareness and funds for the Marine Conservation Society and our other charity Clic Sargent. Two years in the planning. Three weeks in, and Lee had struggled with a bad back all the way. Time for him to stop, the consequences of continuing were too great. Nick had paddled on to North Wales solo and decided understandably that it wasn't what he'd signed up for. Hours of contingency planning solved nothing, and then this idea came to mind.

Nick and I got into sea kayaking six years ago when, after crushing my legs in a farming accident I was unable to climb for a while. He threw himself into it with his usual enthusiasm, and I enjoyed it hugely; lots of days padding in the south west, a couple of return trips to Lundy and paddling around the Isle of Wight, but was keen to get back to climbing and now sea kayaking is an option for a wet day. I'm not a great water baby and learnt to roll in a pool a few years ago, but have not advanced the skills any further. I'm strong on endurance and ok in a rolling sea with reasonable swell.

Nick and Lee were paddling Rock Pool Taran's, big fast kayaks that carve through the waves and have a rudder. I was kindly offered a 'baby Taran' by their designer Mike Web when Lee had to pull out, but decided to stay with my LV Explorer, Ready Steady. I didn't feel it was the right time to adapt to a new boat, and I knew

what I could cope with in my Explorer. It proved a good decision although a rudder seems to have big advantages over a skeg in a following or beam sea.

WHERE & WHY?

I can hear some shaking of heads, what is a relatively inexperienced 51-year old sea kayaker doing embarking on an 800-mile trip? Well, I had a great guide in my husband Nick, we had a generous time limit, so could sit out bad weather and I believed hugely that AB4B couldn't just stop, not without at least giving this a go. Although I hadn't paddled since last summer I was fit and we set ourselves a 20 nm target per day and by starting where Nick had already got to, on the Menai Straights, I had an area of sheltered coast to get into the swing of things before we reached the more exposed shores of the west coast of Scotland.



"We had great days, we had challenging times, and we had 'grit your teeth and get on with it' sections."

Crossing the Solway Firth

We had great days, we had challenging times, and we had 'grit your teeth and get on with it' sections. There is something very special about being self sufficient, managing your day to achieve as much as possible with few distractions from the 'real' world: wake, pack up, eat, paddle, camp, eat, sleep, repeat. We had the flexibility to paddle when the tides could help us; start early, finish late but have a midday break, or kayak for a longer spell during the day.

SEA AIR

Within ten days my fitness had improved and I could comfortably paddle 25-30 nm a day. Our routine of breaking and setting up camp became pretty slick, though the loading and unloading of kit and hauling of boats up and down sand or boulder beaches was a tiresome task. I'm used to living out of a rucksack in a tent, so that was no hardship, but I really struggled with the salt and constantly being wet. I had imagined that there would be streams running off the hills on a number of the beaches we camped on but I was wrong. No chance of a fresh water wash. So at the end of each day it was a ritual of drying salty skin with a salty towel, change into progressively more salty clothes, attempt to dry wet salty kayaking kit,

Defeat at Wigtown Bay

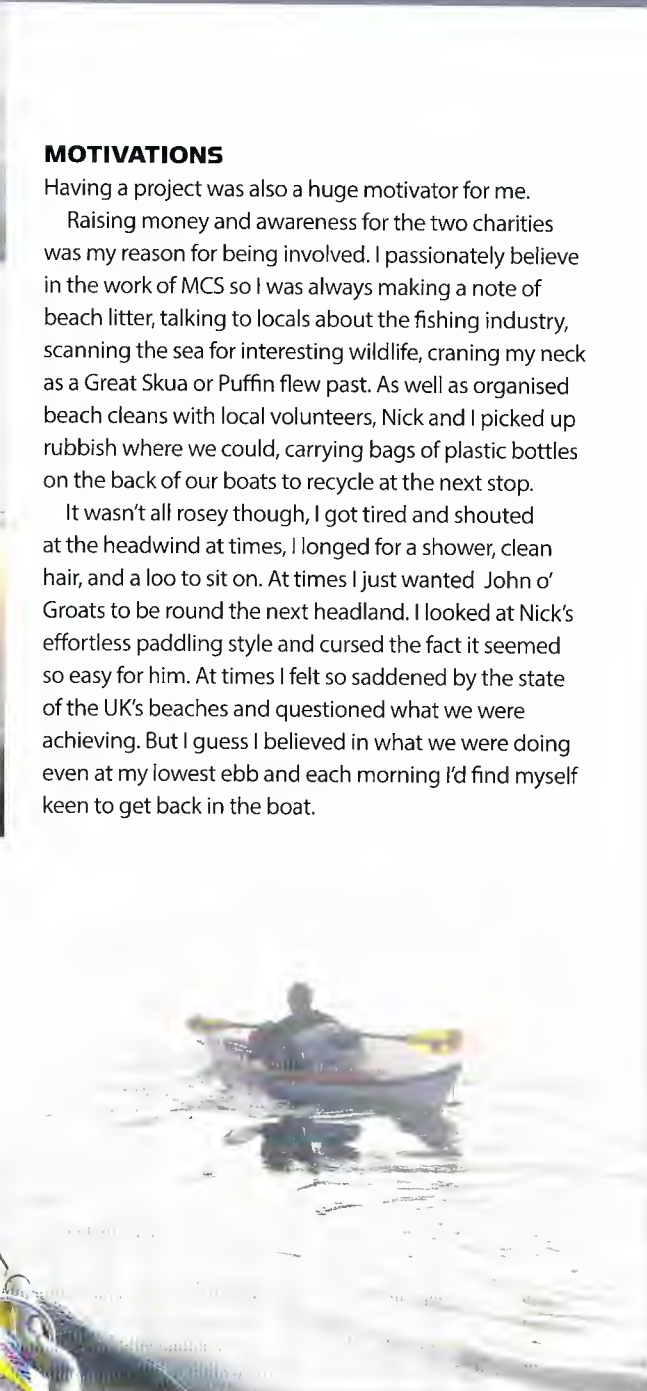


which you'd put on damp again in the morning. After moaning one morning that I'd hardly slept because of feeling so sticky, Nick complimented me by saying I was like one of those fly papers people hung in their kitchens with dead flies stuck on it!

But, it was a privilege to choose where to camp each night, grass being the 5 star option, shingle the next with sand an annoying last choice. To sink onto a warm sleeping bag, gaze at a stunning sunset or listen to the rain drumming on the tent, knowing your day was done and we were slowly inching our way up the map was a great feeling. ▶



Approaching Oban



MOTIVATIONS

Having a project was also a huge motivator for me.

Raising money and awareness for the two charities was my reason for being involved. I passionately believe in the work of MCS so I was always making a note of beach litter, talking to locals about the fishing industry, scanning the sea for interesting wildlife, craning my neck as a Great Skua or Puffin flew past. As well as organised beach cleans with local volunteers, Nick and I picked up rubbish where we could, carrying bags of plastic bottles on the back of our boats to recycle at the next stop.

It wasn't all rosey though, I got tired and shouted at the headwind at times, I longed for a shower, clean hair, and a loo to sit on. At times I just wanted John o' Groats to be round the next headland. I looked at Nick's effortless paddling style and cursed the fact it seemed so easy for him. At times I felt so saddened by the state of the UK's beaches and questioned what we were achieving. But I guess I believed in what we were doing even at my lowest ebb and each morning I'd find myself keen to get back in the boat.

"There is something very special about being self sufficient, managing your day to achieve as much as possible with few distractions from the 'real' world"

Campsite Pt of Ayr





TEAM WORK

Having been together for 14-years Nick and I know each other pretty well but expeditions always add a different dimension to a relationship. Nick was the guide but as time went on, we did more planning together, discussing options, timings, whether to hug the coast or go for an open crossing. I've always been against these, loving the different perspective you get from a boat as you explore the coast. With a destination to reach however, I began suggesting 'straight lining it' from headland to headland a bit more, which Nick was considerably avoiding. The hope of seeing a big ocean mammal was also sometimes a decider, though dolphins and porpoise were the largest creatures we saw, and at times we resorted to playing 'A to Z' of body parts, Scottish mountains, cities...

We had a few disagreements. With a four-hour weather window one evening to cross to Arran, we agreed to kayak for an hour and see how it was going. The beam wind and lumpy sea was hard work, and after the allotted time we rafted up and chatted. I said I wouldn't be happy if the wind got any stronger or the waves any bigger, and was told it wasn't that bad, 'there aren't any breaking waves'. I was persuaded to give it another half an hour, and paddled off muttering to myself. Moments later, I heard Nick's piercing whistle and loads of shouting, and learnt that he had lost the radio. He'd decided to get the radio out of his day hatch, but before he'd had time to secure it, a breaking wave had hit him, and the resulting support stroke had meant the radio was washed away. Something told me it wasn't the time to say 'but there aren't any breaking waves!' ▶



Nick approaches the Mull of Galloway

Point of Ayr





Sandwood Bay



Recycling!



Refuelling - Sound of Jura

SUPPORT CREW

Another motivator was the incredible people we met, all of whom believed in what we were doing. We were offered support in a myriad of ways; Jackie gave us a bunch of bananas when we knocked on her door to refill our water, Eve and Mark not only offered their lawn for our tent but a shower and supper too. We were given unique glimpses into other people's lives; we chatted to Ansen McCloud on the north coast of Scotland who we spotted winching his fishing boat up a tiny steep boulder beach, which he accessed via an arial rope way. He was a sprightly 69 year old and his family had been there since 1800, escaping the 'clearances' as the land wasn't considered good enough for sheep farming. Every interaction we had with people was positive, and it was a privilege to experience.

PADDLE PASSENGER

I had a passenger on my boat all the way; Ready Teddy is a small teddy bear we found floating in the sea off the Isle of Wight, the trip that sparked the AB4B idea. He became our mascot, a link that children benefiting from Clic Sargent could relate to, and rescued from being a piece of marine litter. He journeyed either tucked under my chin inside my PFD or sunbathing on my deck bag, at times having the role of a 'security blanket'!

And so we approached John o' Groats. The north coast was kind to us, despite a testing easterly wind, there was little swell and the scenery was incredible. We rounded Cape Wrath, feeling as if we were tip toeing past a sleeping giant, and sneaked through the Man of May tide race on the infamous Pentland Firth. In the planning phase, people had asked whether I was tempted to paddle any of the proposed route and my response had been a steadfast, 'no way'. In hindsight I am so glad I seized the opportunity when the circumstances changed. An amazing six weeks. I surprised myself by feeling an odd pang of regret as we finally arrived at John o' Groats! **CF**



Loch Fyne



Tobermory



Heading towards the Mersey



Where's the sea gone - Blackpool



Wild sea off Whiten Head



Safely across to Scotland!

"At times I felt so saddened by the state of the UK's beaches and questioned what we were achieving. But I guess I believed in what we were doing even at my lowest ebb and each morning I'd find myself keen to get back in the boat."



The finishing smiles!



Waiting for the tide, Raven Glass

USEFUL INFO
If you would like to support Around Britain 4 Britain visit www.justgiving.com/teams/AB4B

Sprint World Championships 2013

Reports by Rob Eyton-Jones. Images by Balint Vekassy

Medals did not come easily to any nation competing in this year's World Championships at Duisburg, but Great Britain's Liam Heath and Jon Schofield won the K2 200m silver going one better than their bronze at last summer's London Olympic Games.

It was an opportunity for the British pair to renew their long running rivalry with Olympic champions Alexander Dyachenko and Yuri Postrygay. Characteristically, the Russians won the final but the gap between the two crews is closing. "It certainly feels like we are getting closer to them and we are absolutely delighted to come away with the silver medal," said Schofield afterwards. "Today is way up there with our best and it means we are second in the world at the moment, which is the highest we have ever been. The field is getting ever harder every single time so to stay on top with the quality of the competition is pretty special!"

"Today is way up there with our best and it means we are second in the world at the moment, which is the highest we have ever been. The field is getting ever harder every single time so to stay on top with the quality of the competition is pretty special."





RACING FINISH

For the Brits it was the perfect end to a year in which they won two World Cup silver medals yet finished fourth in the European Championships. Jonnie reflected, "You are only as good as your last race and after our disappointment with the Europeans we really motivated over the last nine weeks. We put in a really good block of training where we pushed hard and it's paid dividends."

Also in the medals at Duisburg was Britain's Ed Rutherford, winner of the K1 5000m bronze. A successful marathon paddler as a junior, the 23 year old only began competing in the K1 5000m this season, combining the discipline with the K2 500m and 1000m, partnering Andrew Daniels. "It's a pretty good feeling to win the bronze medal," said Rutherford. "Going into the race I thought maybe I could have an outside chance of a medal but I was looking for a top 10 result, so this was extra special. I got a great start and from then on I just made all the right decisions about where to go and where to sit, so it worked out really well." Meanwhile Olympic Champion Ed McKeever finished 6th in K1M 200m. In an incredibly competitive field he lacked his trademark lightening fast start but has vowed to come back stronger next season following a full winter's training.

Elsewhere Rachel Cawthorn was fifth in the K1 500m final, improving on her sixth place finish at the London Games, following up with a third place in the K1 200m B final.

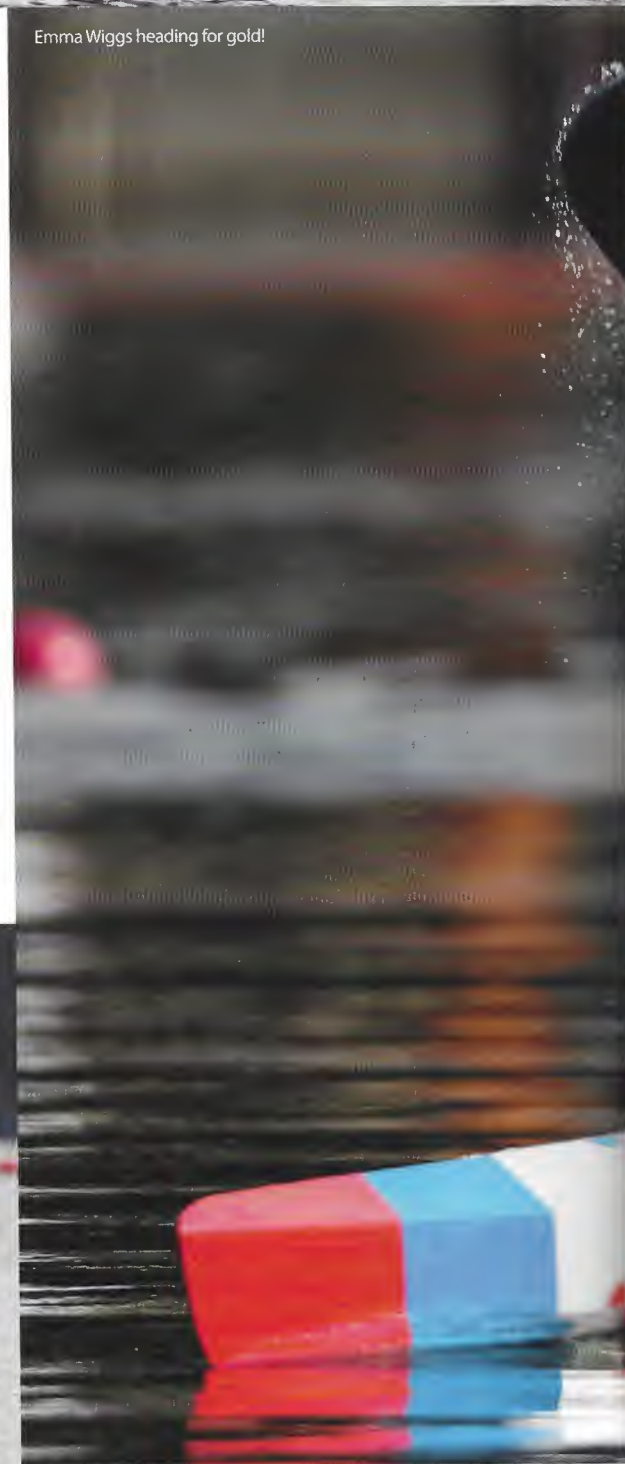
Jessica Walker and Hannah Brown finished seventh in the women's K2 200m final and sixth in the K2W 500m B final, whilst the GB women's K4 500m crew came first in the B final, making them tenth overall in the competition. GB Canoeing Performance Director, John Anderson MBE has this to say regarding the results, "Medals haven't come easily to any nation this year and it was an outstanding medal for Liam and John. I'm delighted for them both and they finished a lot closer to the Russians than they did in London last summer.

"Ed Rutherford delivered a tactically good race in a high-class field. Germany's Max Hoff, who finished behind him in fourth place, is an outstanding athlete with success in distance events so this was a great medal for Ed to win."

Ed Rutherford celebrates taking the K1 5000m bronze.



Emma Wiggs heading for gold!



Rachel Cawthorn putting down the power.



SPRINT WORLDS 2013 PARACANOEING

At the start of an Olympic cycle, which will see Paracanoeing introduced in the Rio 2016 Games, the sport is undergoing a rapid transformation with a flood of newcomers and performance improvements across the board.

The GB sprint team arrived at last month's World Championships in Duisburg as the most successful Paracanoeing nation and they left as the world leaders from the 32 nations, which entered. Their medal tally was three gold and three silver medals more than second placed Brazil.

Jeanette Chippington won golds in the women's K1 200m A, V1 200m A and V1 200m TA events on an opening day which saw Emma Wiggs win women's K1 200m TA gold, Nick Heald the silver in the men's V1 200m TA and Dan Hopwood a bronze in the men's V1 200m A event. ▶



"The day has been such a whirlwind, a mad dash then rush, rush, rush that I literally got off the water, had the medal ceremony, then was back in the water again for the next final," said Chippington who crammed her three finals into less than 90-minutes.

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

The most experienced member on the team, Chippington explains how the rest of the world is catching up: "The other countries are really biting at our ankles. Even in the heats you couldn't leave anything to chance, you had to go out hard not knowing all the competition. But we have also improved and it was a great day for the team."

GB Paracanoe Programme Manager, Steve Harris squad has grown from three to ten athletes in just one year, the result of athletes raising their games to achieve the high standards for selection, combined with a talent identification programme and UK Sport funding which allows his team to offer a wider range of service provision.

His new athletes won their share of the medals, amongst them Wiggs and Andrea Green, both sitting volleyball competitors who competed in the London Games before moving to canoeing this March and both gold medallists in Duisburg, Green winning the V1 200m LTA final.

Former endurance cyclist Anne Dickens won silver in the women's V1 LTA and Ian Marsden, a former international able-bodied power lifter, who excelled in hand cycling and shooting before turning to canoeing this year, took the silver in the men's K1 A final.

"It's been a ridiculous journey and I'm lucky to have the team around me both in the sport and at home," said Wiggs after winning the women's K1 200m TA.

"There is a massively good feeling amongst the team and a lot of my success is down to the hugely talented coaches we've got at GB Canoeing and the incredibly hard work they have done with me."

Hard work and determination comes naturally to Marsden who in his final pushed the previously unassailable four times World Champion Fernando Fernande from Brazil to the line with both athletes smashing the world record.

"My aim was to try and compete for Great Britain in canoeing and medal in the first year," said Marsden. "So it was very disappointing not to get gold today because it was so, so close. Fernando world's best time was 53.55 and we both hit 51 today. There is usually a huge gap between him and the next person and he's not had anyone coming close to him before."

"The other countries are really biting at our ankles. Even in the heats you couldn't leave anything to chance, you had to go out hard not knowing all the competition. But we have also improved and it was a great day for the team."

Anne Dickens took an impressive silver in the V1 LTA



Ian Marsden



PARAPADDLING INTO THE FUTURE

Delighted with his team's grand total of five gold, three silver and a bronze medal, plus close fourth places by Martin Tweedie and Liam Twigg, and a sixth place from Oliver Twigg, GB Paracanoe Programme Manager, Steve Harris said, "As the standard across the world has increased we have kept pace with that standard and have kept ourselves ahead. We asked the athletes to commit to the programme, which they have done and in combination with UK Sport funding and high quality service provision the programme has paid dividends.

"What is most encouraging is that where our paddlers finished third or fourth this week, all of the athletes that beat them have been paddling for ten years or more. Now we will go back, assess the work we have done and continue our drive towards the Rio Games." **CF**



Experienced GB Paracanoe competitor Jeanette Chippington took some impressive wins.



Tim Baillie & Etienne Stora Olympic Gold 2012
image: Peter Astles

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The Devizes to Westminster 2014

Article by Peter Hutchison

THE ANSWER TO YOUR WINTER PADDLING BLUES

After a great summer, the best way to square up to the prospect of cold winter months is with the challenge of training through the dark nights to take part in Devizes Westminster International Canoe Marathon.

Shuna Braithwaite and Kat Burbeck celebrate finishing their third race.

The 125-mile course from Devizes in Wiltshire to Westminster Bridge in the heart of London may be daunting, but with planning, preparation and training, it's a few months of focussed training to success for anyone prepared to put in the effort.

Imagine the sense of achievement you'd feel in Easter having put in the training and completed DW 2014. It's time to sign up. Here are a few tips to developing your DW campaign, provided by a selection of crews with differing abilities.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

First up, you need to work out which DW you want to do. Senior Doubles is the straight through, non-stop race for adults over 18. Alternatively break the course down over four days as a Junior, Vet/Junior, Singles or Senior Endeavour crew. Whichever you choose it's a gruelling challenge that will demand growing attention as training increases in the months and weeks leading up to Easter 2014.

BUILDING A CREW

Once you've decided to enter, you'll probably need a partner. Look for someone with the same goals. The experience is too intense to find out that one of you is

"Imagine the sense of achievement you'd feel in Easter having put in the training and completed DW 2014. It's time to sign up!"



happy to finish while the other is looking for a sub-24 hour time. Be open and honest with each other; if your goals are different, find a better-matched partner.

With the crew sorted, the next step is to get training. Senior Doubles 2013 winner Stuart West recommends starting as early as possible and training as often as you can as, "There's no substitute for time in the boat."

TECHNIQUE

Training should cover a range of elements. Good technique, says Junior Doubles 2013 winner Louis Allen, is key. "You can rely on it when you're tired," he says, suggesting it distracts you from the pain and, of course, means you go faster. Joining a club is one of the best ways of working on your technique, even better if the club has a history of DW competition.

Make a training plan that builds as the race approaches, mix it up; time on the water with both distance and interval training work, running, gym works (repetitions rather than building bulk). Paul Hayes, two-time finisher, suggests the training plan is a way of reinforcing positive progress. "Reward yourself with treats when you hit milestones," Paul suggests, "Garmin do some great incentives!"

PORTAGE PRACTICE

Over such a long course, DW often favours the crew with fewest errors. The 77 portages provide multiple chances for mishaps. Ellie Walker, teaming up with Peter Walker to win the Junior / Veteran race in 2013, says, "Practice and run". It's a well-held and frequent view of successful teams that portages are the easiest place to waste time, lose momentum and halt progress.

Taking part in the Waterside and Thameside series, incorporating much of the course, is one of the best ways of developing course knowledge for the novice crew. Shuna Braithwaite, half of the highest performing female crew for the last three years, worked through the bits Waterside and Thameside left out as part of their course preparation.

KIT, FOOD AND DRINK

These are critical to DW performance. Experiment with kit, food and drink to find out what works for you. Kit should keep you comfortable and warm. Food should stay in your stomach when you're being active. Try out different fluids to see what you're comfortable with over a long period of time whilst exercising. You'll get tips, but you need to find out what is the best combination for you. Louis Allen calls it, "Trial and error"; Stuart West says, "It's personal"; Ellie Walker proves the point recommending, "Ham sandwiches with a white chocolate button and a jelly baby."



"Over such a long course, DW often favours the crew with fewest errors. The 77 portages provide multiple chances for mishaps."

PRE RACE PREPARATION

Your support crew won't paddle your boat, but a poorly prepared support team will seriously affect your performance. Pick a crew with a mix of paddling experience and course knowledge. Paul Hayes suggests, "Choosing a support team that get on with the people in the boat" as key to building team spirit. Stuart West says briefing and supporting at Waterside D are the best race preparation your support crew can get. Adding that apologising before the race for the inevitable moments of rudeness may be a good idea.

A frequent message from race organisers is to get your entry in early and read the rules, which includes details of essential kit.

Peter Walker suggests taking spares, in particular a rudder packed under your seat, and booking good accommodation along the course if you're on the four-day race, in addition to accommodation in Devizes before the start of the race. Peter also suggests checking and re-checking your schedule to make sure you hit the outgoing tide at Teddington at the right time.

RACE DAY

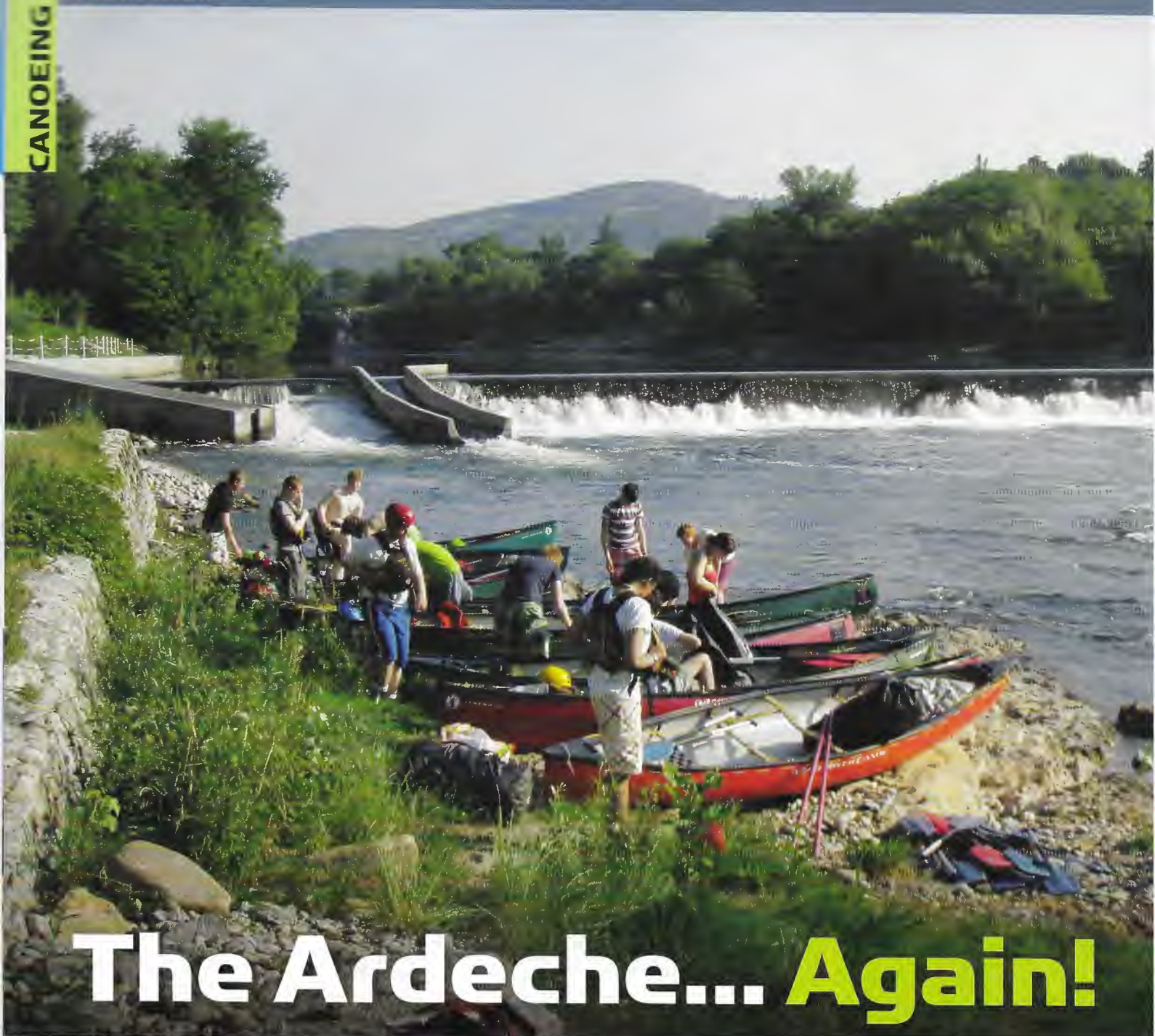
Arriving at a Devizes Wharf after a seamless and stress free preparation, you're free to set off. With a foundation of solid training and preparation, confidence, tried and tested kit, positive attitude in the boat and your well-prepared support crew, it's the simple matter of 90,000 odd paddle strokes between Wiltshire and success at Westminster. Shuna Braithwaite makes it more digestible, "Break it down to which portage is next and stick to the endurance race tip, having tested in your training, never do anything different in the race."

Good luck. You can do it. **CF**

USEFUL INFO

For more information visit www.dwrace.org.uk or look for Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race on Facebook.

Using Waterside A to prepare.



The Ardeche... Again!

"Baz, it's like this . . . by the time we go, Ben will be a new dad and won't be able to come with us. So, we need someone old enough to drive a minibus and trailer abroad." Despite the not so flattering invitation, how could I say "no" to an eight day trip to the Rhone-Alps region of France to paddle open canoes, including a two day trip along the mighty River Ardeche?

South Devon College runs a number of outdoor education courses geared towards those seeking a career in adventurous activities provision. As part of their development, students have the opportunity to participate in a number of residential experiences, some in the UK and some abroad. On this occasion, fourteen students, selected from BTEC Level 2 and 3 courses and the Foundation Degree, were taking the chance to build their open canoe and expedition organisation experience. They welcomed this newcomer onboard and even loaded a beautiful ash-finished Nova Craft Prospector 15' for my use!

THE HONEY POT

The source of the River Ardeche lies high up on the plateaus of the Massif Central, to the west of the region. From there it flows east, some 125km, along a steep-sided gorge, cut through limestone, to eventually feed in to the River Rhone. The walls of the gorge are up to 300m in places and the area is well known for a 60m natural stone arch, which spans the river, The Pont d'Arc. It is a honey-pot for paddlesports with thousands of tourists renting sit-on-top kayaks to paddle from Vallon to St-Martins. British children have paddled the river for years through companies such as Ardeche Adventures, Acorn Adventure and PGL, who all have camps in the area.

The drive down from Torbay is arduous. Alternating drivers kept the show on the road, allowing the kilometres to go by with regularity. In less than 24 hours we arrived at our campsite and started the settling-in/ tent erection process. A level site next to the River Chassezac provided our base, affording access to an immediate practice area, Lac Villefort and the Ardeche.



Bivouacing by the river at de Gurniers

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

A number of the students had some experience beyond BCU 2 Star Paddlesport and were keen to learn more. The BCU Open Canoe 3 Star afforded the ideal syllabus, allowing for development, with the students perfecting a wide range of strokes, skills and tactics, under the guidance of Gary (our Level 5 guru). As both training and assessment was on offer, all students were catered for. The warm water, breezes at the lake, range of river venues and hot sunny days made delivery a joy.

Open canoeing is amazing in its variety of disciplines and I think one could spend a lifetime attempting every avenue available to the keen paddler. Whether you paddle solo or tandem, river or lake, carry your camping kit for overnights or explore your local waterway for an hour or so, open canoeing has something to offer. If you have always thought it the sole preserve of a poorly stereotyped bearded bush-crafter, think again! If kayaking has lost its shine for you, give an open canoe course a try. It will give you a new outlook on paddlesport and even improve your kayaking. ►



“The source of the River Ardeche lies high up on the plateaus of the Massif Central, to the west of the region. From there it flows east, some 125km, along a steep-sided gorge, cut through limestone, to eventually feed in to the River Rhone.”

A PLAYFUL JOURNEY

A day at Lac Villefort, a day on the Balazuc section of the Ardeche and a play on the Chassezac prepared everyone for the descent that was to be the trip's focus. Taking the standard route from Vallon Pont d'Arc to St Martin, the group would stop overnight at Bivouac de Gournier. The bivvy site requires tickets, which can be bought in Vallon. Numbers are limited, so make sure you book in advance at busy periods.

Gary and I moved minibuses and trailers to St Martin (about an hour's drive) and had a lift back to Vallon care of Ardeche Adventures (thanks Phil). By the time we caught up with the group they were playing at Pont d'Arc. From here on we travelled as a group; scouting rapids, swapping tandem and solo paddlers and drip-feeding coaching points to eager students. Regular swims kept rising body temperatures in check (the gorge reached temperatures of 38oC) and injected a bit of extra fun, as well as some interesting new signals. With winds funnelling along the gorge, students were reminded why trim is so important in an open canoe. The high temperatures warmed the rock, creating thermals, played on by black kites, whilst the fringes of the river were home to some very friendly white wagtails.

The French are very positive when it comes to camping and caravanning. In the same way that the aire de reposts on motorways facilitate an overnight stay, so too do the bivvy sites on the Ardeche. At Bivouac de Gournier we found shaded spaces, hammock tying spots, picnic tables and a comprehensive toilet block. Besides us there were British children on adventure holidays, as well as family groups.

In the morning we found the local pompiers setting-up protection on the first rapid immediately below the get-in, pointing out the severe undercut, no place for a boater. All negotiated the rapid successfully and day two was underway.



ABOUT SOUTH DEVON COLLEGE

South Devon College offers outdoor education courses from its Paignton campus and Noss Marine Academy, from BTEC Levels 1 – 3 to Foundation Degree. It also provides a full degree through its link with Plymouth University. For more information, visit www.southdevon.ac.uk



Catching a few waves in the canoes was brilliant fun.



A rare swallow tail butterfly.

GORGE

For the rest of the journey the gorge continued to show-off its high-sided walls and beach after beach of small boulders and pebbles, on the inside of meanders. Swimming rapids, assessing skills, food breaks and even a little 'wombing' brought us, eventually, to St Martins. One final push against a strong head wind and everyone reached the get out.

The dramatic walls of the Ardeche Gorge made an impressive backdrop



Thanks to Darren Joy at Fluid Skills and to Phil Gasson at Ardeche Adventures for their logistical support.

Then it was pack minibuses and trailers, cold colas, quick change, dinner at Vallon, final ice cream and the realisation that another South Devon College group had completed an Ardeche Expedition.

Striking camp can feel a little mournful.

A supermarket dash at Ruoms helped to lift spirits but the final packing of bags, hook-up of trailers and boarding of minibuses meant some long faces as we started the journey home. The inevitable entries on Facebook confirmed what had been said at dinner the evening before - it had been a fabulous week.

So, would an 'older' man recommend the Ardeche to paddlers? Absolutely! For those with experience the river is there to be played on. For those new to the sport there are scores of companies waiting to sell you a trip on sit-on-tops with a shuttle thrown... And this is where the article started really. For me it was the 'Ardeche Again' as thirteen years ago my wife, Carol, and I did just that. In that time we have gained a family and enjoy open canoeing as a way of getting out and about on many of Devon's waterways. Maybe I need to start saving for next year and a trip to the Ardeche... again, again and again? **CF**

THE AUTHOR

Baz (Robert Bazeley) is a freelance coach working from Brixham, Devon. He has run his own business for the past twelve years, providing personal development opportunities and educational programmes. Visit www.bazcoaching.co.uk to find out more.





CANOE ENGLAND WINTER CLUB CHALLENGE

As the nights draw in and temperatures begin to fall, it's easy to forget how much fun we all have on the water. So this year, to help clubs and individuals stay inspired until spring, Canoe England has launched the Winter Club Challenge.

The challenge is a great way to keep yourself motivated by competing against paddlers at clubs across the country. There are two challenges to get involved in:

- Most Miles Paddled
- Most Places Paddled

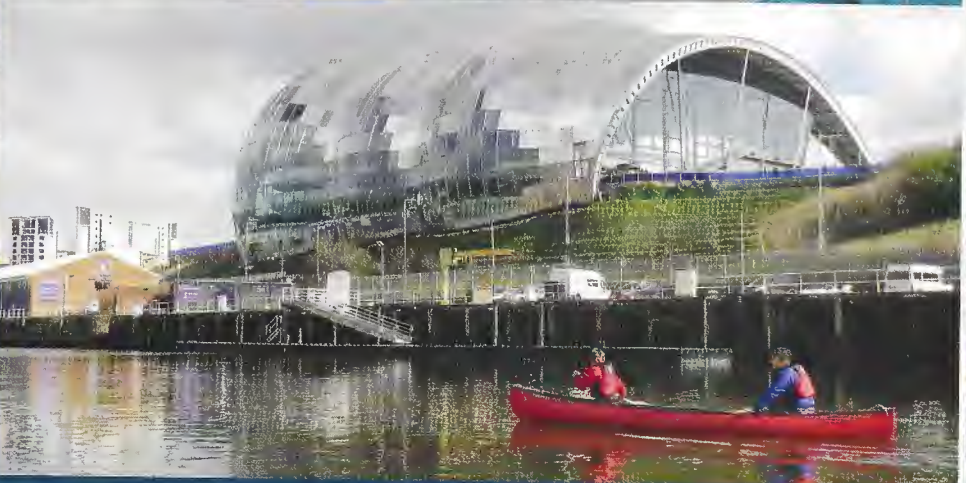
Canoe England Director of Development Sue Hornby told FOCUS, "As the nights draw in, it can be really difficult for some clubs to keep members involved, often they drift off and never return. To help combat this we wanted to come up with a way to help clubs retain members and give paddlers a reason to keep heading out on the water.

"Our two challenges, Most Miles Paddled and Most Places Paddled, give you the opportunity to either rack up the miles or head off to new, exciting places and we're really excited to see what clubs can achieve.

"So if you're feeling tempted to swap your regular paddling session for an evening in front of the television, why not get motivated by signing up to the Winter Club Challenge?"

PADDLING MEANS PRIZES

As well as being a great way to keep active over the chilly winter months, there will also be some great prizes on offer for the winning club in each challenge and the male and female paddlers that clock up the most miles.



“So if you’re feeling tempted to swap your regular paddling session for an evening in front of the television, why not get motivated by signing up to the Winter Club Challenge?”

Each club can also add its own individual twist to the challenge to make it more relevant for its members. You could add a charity element with a sponsored paddle or a 24-hour ‘Paddleathon’ and raise money for a worthy cause, such as the Canoe Foundation.

SETTING YOUR WINTER SIGHTS

As part of the challenge, canoe clubs can also set their own goals and targets and keep members interested by displaying a running total in your clubhouse. You can even host your own awards evening, providing prizes for club or group age category winners, or the most obscure location paddled, for example.

Sue Hornby continued, “The Winter Club Challenge is all about keeping paddlers inspired and motivated throughout the chilly winter months. We want as many canoe clubs as possible to get involved and we’re hoping each club will put their own spin on the challenge and find new and exciting ways to encourage their members out onto the water more regularly.”

The challenge will run from 1st October to 1st January 2014, and is open to all Canoe England clubs and affiliated groups, including Scouts, Guides and Sea Cadets. Paddlers who are not yet club members can search for their nearest club on the Canoe England website.

For more information or to sign up, visit the club section at www.canoe-england.org.uk





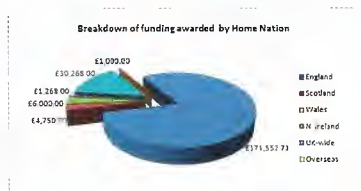
GRANT DISTRIBUTION 2003 TO 2013:

Between October 2003 and July 2013 the Canoe Foundation passed the £200,000 mark. Having awarded £214,838.71 in grants to more than 180 projects throughout the UK and overseas we continue to work towards our mission of 'positively changing lives through canoeing'.

Overall these projects have benefited some 50,000 individuals, but we wanted to go further than these headline figures and analyse the data collected from application forms to assess the distribution and impact across each of the Home Nations and English regions as well as the types of organisations and projects benefiting from our funding.

BREAKDOWN OF GRANTS AWARDED BY HOME NATION AND OVERSEAS

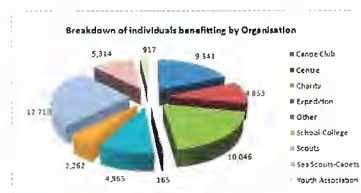
Although the overwhelming majority of grants (86%) to date have been awarded to projects from England (156 projects/£171,552.71), we distribute grants throughout the UK and overseas. In recent years there has been a steady increase in the number of applications received from organisations based in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These figures also reflect our support of UK-wide projects, which despite representing less than 6% of all projects have received £30,268.00; which is 14% of our total funding. One such example of this is the Paracanoe Programme, which was awarded a grant of £20,000.



BREAKDOWN OF GRANT FUNDING BY ORGANISATION/PROJECT TYPE:

As you would imagine the majority of projects supported by the Canoe Foundation relate to canoe clubs, which account for 56 out of 182 projects, benefiting some 9,250 individuals. The remainder of our funding has distributed amongst other paddlesport facilitators which include the Scouts and Guides; not-for-profit centres; and Sea Scouts/Cadets (each accounting for between 10% and 12% of all project funding) schools and colleges are currently receiving 8% of all funds; while there has also been an increased demand from youth associations (7%) and Charities (7%).

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



FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

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



BREAKDOWN OF GRANT FUNDING BY CANOE ENGLAND/SPORT ENGLAND REGION:

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

Region	Total Grants/Projects	Funding (£)	Individuals Benefiting
Northern region	49	£51,401.63	14,599
Central region	45	£54,978.40	9,700
Southern region	62	£65,172.68	23,773
Totals	156	£171,552.71	48,072

A further breakdown within the regions, shows that the Southern region, north west and the east midlands have seen



the largest number of projects supported, with 21, 20 and 18 projects respectively. Overall the east midlands have received a total of £26,906.22 to support these projects, equating to 48.9% of funding for the central region and 15.7% of the national total.

Further details about applying for one of our grants; case studies from some of the projects supported by the charity; and all the latest news can be found at our website www.canoefoundation.org.uk and through our Facebook Page www.facebook.com/canoefoundation and Twitter account @CanoeFoundation.

GET IN TOUCH:

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



Until next time happy paddling!

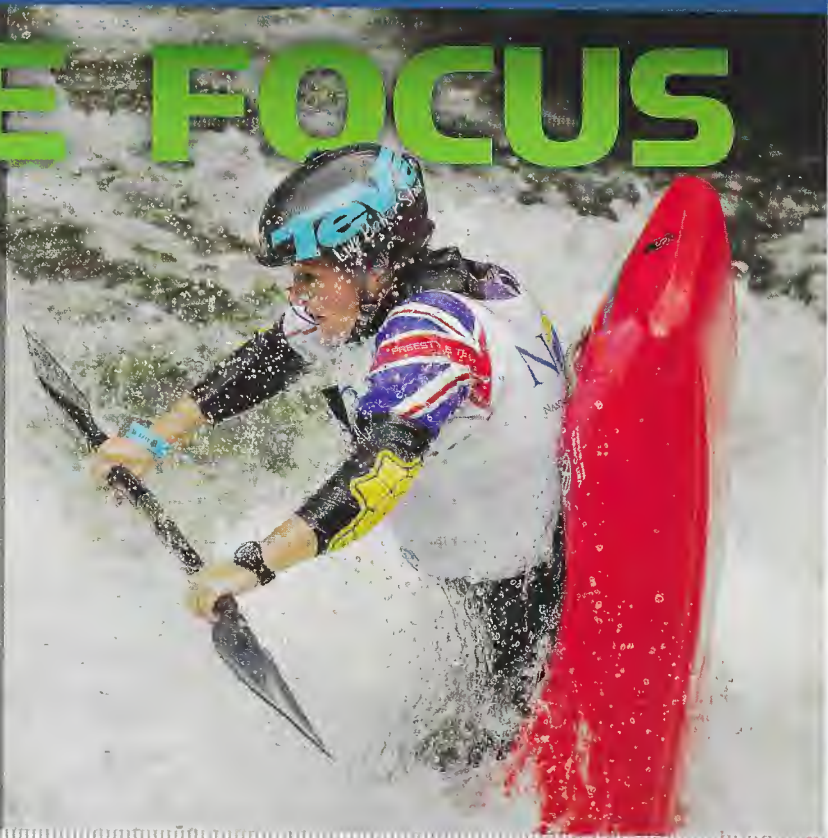
FEMALE FOCUS

DOUBLE, DOUBLE WORLD CHAMPION!

As Canoe FOCUS went to press we heard the fantastic news that Team GB Freestyle kayaker and squirtboater Claire O'Hara had paddled herself in to the history books by once again winning both the Women's K1 class and the Women's Squirtboating class at the recent World Freestyle Kayaking Championships at the Nantahala Gorge, USA. This makes Claire the first paddler ever to win both a K1 and Squirt world title in the same year and now she's gone one better by becoming the only paddler ever to win the double and successfully defend both titles at successive world champs. It also brings her world championships gold medal count to five.

Claire is now the most successful female freestyle kayaker in history and the most successful British freestyler ever! It's an amazing result and testament to the amount of dedication and training she puts in to keep her on top of the world.

To read more about Claire go to www.claireohara.blogspot.co.uk



KOOL WOMEN AT KOOL KAYAKERS



Over the last few years Kool Kayakers have taken huge leaps forward in improving the opportunities for women and girls at their club in Doncaster.

In 2009 the club had only two adult female members and now due to concerted effort to redress the balance, the club has not only seen a significant improvement in the number of women members, but has also developed a number of these paddlers to become coaches. The club now boasts 4 women who have recently qualified as UKCC Level 2 coaches all with 4 Star Leader awards and two with Moderate Water endorsements, as well as an experienced female Level 3 coach. All are extremely active within the club and acting as excellent role models for the next generation of paddlers and coaches coming through the ranks.

This year 4 members of the club attended the Ladies Paddling Symposium in April at the Glan-Lynn Centre in Bala, where they received some excellent instruction and inspiration from Lowri Davies and Fran Kohn on the River Treweryn. Following on from this the club have since arranged further sessions to pass on and develop the techniques they have learnt.

Women and girls are now actively involved in both organising and participating in all the club's regular activities and white water river trips.

The girls are doing it for themselves as well and on the 17th August 2013 a group of female paddlers from the club had a great day paddling on the river Washburn as a self sufficient group.

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GB WIN GOLD WORLD MASTER GAMES

The World Masters Games is basically an Olympics for the older more distinguished person and is held every four years and includes many sports including Canoe Polo.

Following the success in 2009 at Sydney when the GB team of over 45-year olds won gold at this event, Dave Packham and Dave Brown veterans of canoe polo, started to look for some new but 'Old Kids On The Block' to train for Turin. As experienced players and coaches they both knew that this event would need commitment, preparation, training, extra toilet breaks, Garibaldi biscuits, knee blankets and might involve afternoon naps.

CALL UPS & CARDIGANS

After many phone calls the following team was recruited: Dave Brown age 53 (and 3/4) Andy Pumphrey 51, Kevin Barnard 51, Pat Tomkins 45, Danny Gusterson 46, Dave Packham 50, and the baby face of the team Alan Neil 47.

For preparation the next six months involved a serious training program with the team having great results at international competitions including: Charleroi, Liverpool, and Hull. It soon became apparent that this team's wisdom and experience could pull something off and not their old boy cardigans. The two Dave's had selected a team that enjoyed playing together and gelled extremely well. As any great coach will know, a team that gets on well, supports each other and enjoy playing together will always have greater successes.

TAKING THE SHOT

Using planes, trains and automobiles, the team arrived in Turin with WAGS, daughters, a professional physio and the odd carer.

As soon as they met the other teams from around the world, long and slightly exaggerated conversations took place, mostly about the old days, previous polo successes, polo injuries and how much we were looking forward to using the new 'Shot Clock' rule (with Shot Clock a team can only have possession for one minute, this helps to speed up the game). The following day we all arrived at a new 50-metre pool and because of the lack of teams in different categories it was agreed to merge the over 30s with the over 45 teams. (Great news for the youngsters, but not so good for the GB Retro team) but after some more Garibaldi biscuits all was good again.

THE GAMES BEGIN

The games got under way and the South African team looked very strong beating two other teams by significant margins. GB Retro also had success beating Team 42 and the Canadians (even after Danny Gusterson missed a penalty and Andy Pumphrey was the first person in canoe polo history to be carded whist upside down with the ball! South Africa now came up against GB Retro and were very confident of a win until Alan Neal from GB Retro launched a missile of a shot and scored. Then it was one goal matched by another and the final score was 7-5 to GB Retro. The South African team were not amused especially as they were significantly younger than the GB team. Alan Neal was the competitions top scorer with 21 goals!

A RETRO RECKONING

Following the first day it became apparent that GB and South Africa would do battle again, and this was the outcome, with both teams meeting in the final to decide the gold medals. South Africa was still confident of winning gold and a very physical game took place. Both teams were playing it very tight however with a bit of FOC Dave Brown coaching and 341 years behind them the GB old boys passed the ball around the South African zone and in the last seconds of the game Pat Tomkins from GB scored to give GB Retro a 3-2 win and the win.

Initially we had some concerns about this event, but in the end it was a great success and very enjoyable and although we hope this write up is amusing, and tongue in cheek, to do well in this event category you do have to be a very good canoe polo player, very paddle fit and committed, so we're not as dodgy as we make out!



NEWS
EVENT REPORT
EVENT REPORT
EVENT REPORT
EVENT REPORT

WORLD SURF KAYAKING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Held every two years, the 2013 World Surf Kayaking Championships took place on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia, the first time that the competition had been held in Australia! A strong field loaded with well-known names and previous world champions assembled, in spite of current fiscal pressures. Split into two parts, the World Championships provides both individual competitions for both International (long boat) and High Performance (short boat) classes and a team competition, with team entries submitted from England, Jersey, USA, Australia and the reigning world champions, the Basque Country. Those representing England were Pete Blenkinsop (team manager), Gary Adcock (team captain), Dan Green, Andy McCulloch, Jon Mount, Dylan Petherick, James Gossan, Tamsin Green and myself, the rookie of the team, Chrissie Elesmore.

BREAK POINTS

Surf breaks are plentiful around the sunshine coast, with a variety of both beach and point breaks on offer and we enjoyed waves ranging from 2-6ft with offshore winds throughout the competition. Highlights of the individual competition include Jon and Dylan progressing to the quarter-finals of the Men's HP finishing joint 9th and joint 13th respectively, with James then progressing to the semi-finals and finishing a very credible joint 7th. An outstanding achievement for anyone, but especially a junior paddler. In his own class, James was crowned Junior World Champion in the IC class and runner-up in HP. Gary charged ahead to the Master's IC final where he finished 3rd, teaming this with 5th place in Masters HP and also showed us that there was life in the old dog yet by finishing joint 7th in the Men's IC. Likewise Tamsin made light work of reaching the Women's IC final, but didn't enjoy the mellow waves that the finals day had to offer (much preferring the sheer vertical faces that were on offer pretty much every other day of the competition!) and finished a very respectable 4th. She teamed this with joint 5th placing in Women's HP.

"Surf breaks are plentiful around the sunshine coast, with a variety of both beach and point breaks on offer and we enjoyed waves ranging from 2-6ft with offshore winds throughout the competition."

TEAM WORK

The team event consists of three rounds, with a team being knocked out in each of the first two rounds until a final of three teams was reached. The England team progressed to the final without too much trouble. The Basques had dominated the competition from the outset, so they were definitely the ones to beat. On final's day England got off to a great start and by the halfway stage were winning, but with only three points separating 1st and 3rd place, they didn't ease off for a minute. After the junior and women's HP heats England had moved down to 2nd place, but it remained extremely close until the end. By the time of the final heat the placings were decided; the Basques had triumphed, beating England by only a small margin of 6 points to retain their world title, whilst England sat comfortably in 2nd place, with the Aussies in 3rd.

To say Team England was delighted with the outcome was an understatement. On paper The English team should not have finished where they did (especially when the outcome of the individual competition is considered), but each and every member of the team dug deep, faced some terrifying waves and paddles-out and most importantly stayed calm and surfed wisely, vastly surpassing expectations as a result. This was an extremely successful and satisfying outing for the England team and an experience that will certainly stay with the team members forever.



USEFUL INFO

If you fancy representing your country (England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland or Jersey) in the 2015 World Surf Kayaking Championships, then get involved now. The UK boasts some of the best waves for progressive surf kayaking. All home nations host regular competitions that are open to all. See the websites below for more information. If you fancy some expert surf kayaking tuition, then check these out.

www.surfkayakskills.com

www.englishsurf kayak.org.uk

www.welshsurf kayak.co.uk

www.nisurf kayak.com

www.canoesotland.org/compete/surf

[RIVERS ACCESS CAMPAIGN] & WATERWAYS



MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Canoe England (CE) has always been very clear that the confusion over access along waterways is not a canoeing v angling debate. The amenity of access to and along many watercourses is a matter of wider public interest. It also affects other recreational activities that have an interest in our inland waterways such as open water swimming and rowing; and there are the many people who simply wish to enjoy being by the water environment.



FIGHT FOR ENGLAND'S RIVERS

The BBC recently put out an article - Fight for England's Rivers - Canoeists Call for Greater Access by David Bailey. The article had some valid points as to why there is confusion over access, but as is often the case the nitty-gritty of the issue was overlooked and the article tried to polarise the issues into being a canoeing v angling problem. CE posted a reply on our website - <http://bit.ly/186TOZp> - and on our Facebook page.

There were many points that CE clarified such as: "We must once again respond to the Angling Trust and the statement attributed to their Chief Executive Mark Lloyd who said, "The law of the land is absolutely clear - there is no universal right for people to canoe on non-tidal waters." However, Defra has very recently informed Members of the BCU that, 'there is no clear case law on whether a 'common law right of navigation' exists on unregulated rivers. This is widely accepted to be an unclear and unresolved issue. 'Canoe England considers a reference to this statement would have made a useful contribution to the BBC article and discussion.

Our reply then prompted a letter from Mark Lloyd Chief Executive of the Angling Trust again stating their 'we believe' misguided information. As well as sending it to the BCU Chief Executive Paul Owen they decided to promote it all across their networks too, mainly to once again polarise the debate.

These are couple of short extracts from the letter:

'The law is clear that there is no general public right of navigation. Canoeists – just like anglers – need to obtain the permission of a landowner to use waterways, or to obtain the right to do so by buying such a right from that landowner. We have explained this to you many times. Our position has now been independantly confirmed by with Jonathon Karass QC, who expliciily states that the idea of an ancient public right of navigation is a misunderstanding of the law. This publicly and independantly discredits your position on this matter, neither Fish Legal nor the Angling Trust has had any previous contact whatsoever with Jonathon Karass QC.'

'We urge you to now accept publicly the law on navigation, and to start working constructively with other users such as anglers to draw up voluntary access agreements so that paddlers and others can benefit from increased lawful access to water in this country. You are of course entitled to continue campaigning to change the law, despite government's clear indication that it has no intention of changing it, but we beleive it is utterley irresponsible for your organisation to continue to deny that the law is anything other than clear on this matter.'

'It is our strongly held beleif that your current policy, and the behaviour of your officers, are leading directly to conflict on riverbanks, expensive and pointless legal action, unwitting illegal activity by paddlers wich is damaging the property rights of our members and, ultimately, less access to water for your members. You may not like the law, or the government's policy, but it is your responsibility to respect both.'

Our response was as follows.

Dear Mark

Thank you for your letter dated 26th July 2013 with regard to our responses to the recent BBC article.

As you saw from our response, we thought the BBC article highlighted some of the issues between our two sports. However, I felt there was a danger of polarising the debate without considering the wider range of interests of our waterways.

You have highlighted a number of extracts from the article and a couple of points you requested us to respond for you prior to your meeting with Ministers of which I am very happy to assist you with. That said, would it not be more productive to include the BCU at the meeting so there would be a fair and open debate? In the meantime our answers to your questions are as follows:

Point 1 – Our spokesperson indicated that we have attempted to work with other organisations, including the Angling Trust, for many years. Frankly, the result has been a very small number of restrictive, unworkable agreements not meeting demand, and hence the comment that we are not in favour of access agreements i.e.. River Lune at Rigmaden where only a very small number of paddlers could book in with the local Estate to use the river over a seven day period at restricted times of the year. The arrangement was not accepted by Canoe England as it did not fulfil our position statement for the shared use of unregulated waters.

Were all AA's to follow the outcomes from government sponsored research by the University of Brighton for canoe access on the Rivers Mersey and Waveney, Canoe England would support government policy. These schemes have produced principles and a benchmark for VAAs; forming the basis of government policy for the shared use and access to inland waters to be achieved by the voluntary route.

CE believes that this should be applied as the national standard for VAAs.

The research has demonstrated that it is possible to achieve;

- All year round access supported by an Access Code outlining responsibilities of all water users.
- Environmental protection as appropriate eg setting mutually agreed minimum river levels.
- Respect flora, fauna, and other users
- Identified sites for launching and landing
- Publicity and information dissemination of VAAs

Even so, the government sponsored access studies also clearly demonstrated on the Rivers Teme and Wear how the policy for Access Arrangements can be unsuccessful. Acceptable AA's are the exception and the River Greta in addition to the Rivers Mersey and Waveney is an excellent example of how organisations including the Environment Agency and National Trust can work with river users to ensure government standards to Access Arrangements/Agreement are adhered to. Paddling on the Greta takes place throughout the year but takes into account the environmental considerations such as water levels as well as other users including anglers.

CE takes a pragmatic view that where a public right can be disputed, AA's as on the Greta are an instrument that provides a certainty of shared use and access without conflict.

Canoe England has asked to work with the Angling Trust on a number of occasions and to identify where they see access arrangements working. We have not received a satisfactory response for further discussions on this subject.

For AAs to work they are dependent on other water users and the riparian owners commitment for secure access managed on a self-regulatory management basis. It is unrealistic to expect an organisation such as CE to have powers to enforce canoeists to abide by AA's. Many canoeists are independent of CE and we encourage all to follow the guidelines of such arrangements.

Point 2 - I read with interest the views of Jonathan Karas QC. This is the only (independent of the Angling Trust) legal challenge we have received. His comments, whilst interesting, do not include any form of evidence that would assist anyone to draw a similar conclusion to his that we are misunderstanding the law of public rights of navigation.

Once again I would like to reiterate that the law is not clear regarding the general public right of navigation. This opinion is also expressed by Defra who have recently confirmed that the law relating to the use by boats on non-tidal, unregulated rivers is uncertain. This uncertainty causes frequent disputes on rivers between people who think that they have a right to boat on a river and those who think that they have not. The government has stated that it does not intend to clarify the law. Thus this is a suitable time to consider whether the two national representative bodies with the greatest interest in this law, the Angling Trust and Canoe England, can come to a working agreement, which would end most disputes.

It used to be thought that a public right of navigation (PRoN) was created by statute, dedication or historic use. Statute is certainly one means by which PRoNs were confirmed. Since the main purpose of the Navigation Acts was to enable proprietors to modify the rivers so that they could be navigated by barges it is often not clear from the wording of the individual Acts whether a new PRoN was created or an existing right confirmed under Common Law.

Canoe England also considers that the Magna Carta and the Act for Wears and Fishgarths 1472 confirmed that there was, and is, a PRoN on all navigable rivers.

It is hoped that the Angling Trust will respond positively to Canoe England's invitation to meet without preconditions to discuss our respective understandings of the law.

I would also like to respond to the question that canoeists are just like anglers – need to buy a right from a landowner to use the waterway. May I remind you that ownership of riparian land is the bank and bed only and not the water that passes over it. Anglers pay for the right to fish as they occupy the site for the purpose of utilising a resource ie fish. With regard to licensing, I would like to again quote from the Environment Agency commissioned report 'W266 Effects of canoeing on fish stocks and angling'.

'In canoeing, with the exception of specific navigation authorities, licensing is not required'. 'Licensing of anglers is a specific fee charged in relation to the national fishery service provide by the Environment Agency, whose fisheries activities encompasses a range of statutory obligations. It is difficult to envisage how a parallel can be drawn with a national licence for canoes in relation to the service that would be provided. In the absence of an identifiable service provided in return for a licence, inevitably this would be regarded as a tax. In addition in the absence of fundamental legislative change for access, licensing as a tool to provide facilities for greater access would be nonsensical'.

It is a fact that no public funding is spent on pursuing our access campaign.

I hope you are able to inform the two Ministers of our position in the true light it is written so that we are able to take the access debate forward to benefit all rather than for one sport alone.

As mentioned in previous correspondence I do not see how we have to agree on our two legal opinions to take the matter of Access Arrangements forward. I look forward to hearing from you following your meeting in October.

Yours sincerely

Paul Owen
Chief Executive
British Canoe Union

LONDON SPRINT REGATTA 2013

A VOLUNTEERS VIEW BY FRANCES WETHERALL

The usually quiet Royal Albert Dock in London's Docklands sprang to life on Sunday as paddlers from around the region (and beyond) moved in to take part in the first London Canoe Sprint Regional Regatta. Organised from scratch by a small team, this regatta took place at the London Regatta Centre, Royal Albert Docks with no in-built infrastructure for holding canoe sprint events.

As the event drew near, buoys were laid, tents were put up and caravans, motor-homes and trailers arrived to be used as start huts, finish huts and commentators cabins. More cabling than I have ever seen was laid the morning of the event, so a 6am start was required, not my favourite time! This cabling would enable computers (and people) to speak with each other throughout the regatta and the PA system would enable the commentator to tell people what was going on.

An amazing new computer programme had been designed for regional regattas but this, like everything else on site had never been used in a real life situation. Confidence was high as the clubs began to arrive, but so was the anxiety as cables which seemed to be working fine didn't produce the results that were expected.

After a briefing the first boats took to the water, the sun had yet to burn through the mist and with a cool light tail wind all seemed set for a fine day. The first races came down the course, would everything work? Yes, after some minor tweaking of the results software and the 'cabling' team solved the hiccup in the communications system from then on, from an organiser's point of view, all was working as planned. Any queries regarding results were quickly sorted with the new mobile video photo finish system, draws and club points happened automatically. All as it should be!

Many of the volunteers who regularly work at Nottingham were there to bring their experience and expertise, alongside several new volunteers and others who had worked at the Olympics last year, (those Games-makers we've heard so much about!). Some were onsite setting up the course over the previous three days and others in delivering the regatta itself, both the technical side (timing etc) and the practical. All worked amazingly hard in the background to make the event the success it was.

It was a long, hot and eventful day but speaking to paddlers and team leaders the overall feeling I got was that people were enjoying racing on a laned course without traveling long distances in a friendly and relaxed fashion including races for regional and novice competitors. Hopefully this is an event that we can run again with more clubs able to enjoy sprint racing near to home.

VOLUNTEERS

Club Leaders is part of the Sport England Olympic Legacy programme, Places People Play, and provides free training and support to those doing the day-to-day running of community sport, helping create a robust, economically sustainable and enterprising club network.

Club Leaders is being delivered by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) who are working with Sport England and Canoe England to help improve business skills in sports clubs by bringing their knowledge and experience to the programme. To receive access to the learning, support and networking opportunities you will need to register on their website (www.sportenglandclubleaders.com)

Training is offered in Business and Financial planning, Marketing, Governance and Facilities management.

Training and support will be delivered using the following channels:

Online - Online modules, news, forums, events and a dynamic networking platform to help clubs communicate with each other and share ideas!

Seminars - Face to face seminars led by subject matter experts across the country.

Mentoring - One to one mentoring available to focus on those clubs most in need.

Their aim is to achieve a strong sporting network, by assisting clubs to adopt a fresh and modern response to the wide range of challenges in the business of club management. Supporting sports clubs to overcome these challenges, will help to ensure that a robust, economically sustainable and enterprising community sports club network can thrive. Ultimately this will enable clubs to focus on existing and future participants and further embed them and their sport in the communities that they are part of.



PADDLE-ABILITY

Canoe England is working in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust on Project Ability, which aims to have more young disabled pupils taking part in competitive sport. Delivered through the Youth Sport Trust, School Games and a network of 50 lead Project Ability schools in England (each selected for their established expertise in engaging young disabled people), schools can improve the quality, and extend the provision of physical activity for disabled pupils.

Project Ability is delivered as part of the School Games, and includes: bespoke training, developed by the Youth Sport Trust, to provide local advice and guidance to School Games Organisers and host schools; the establishment and implementation of even more local competitive opportunities for young disabled people; and the development of school club activities.

In order to run inclusive sporting activity schools are encouraged to work alongside national governing bodies including Canoe England to establish inclusive formats with tips and advice on how to adapt activities as well as specific impairment formats. Guidance on inclusive formats is available from the School Games website. Schools can use these inclusive formats in their School Games intra- and inter-school competition (Levels 1 and 2), while including disability events within the Level 3 county events. The best pupils can aspire to compete at the Sainsbury's School Games final.





CANOE ENGLAND WINTER CLUB CHALLENGE

Most Miles Paddled...

Most Places Paddled...

TAKE ON CLUBS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Beat the winter blues by visiting your local club and keeping active till spring. Come together with other club members and tackle one or both of our challenges:

1. Most Miles Paddled
2. Most Places Paddled

The challenge runs from 1st October to 1st January 2014, and is open to all Canoe England clubs and affiliated groups.

For more information or to sign up, visit the club section at:
www.canoe-england.org.uk



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

Photo Competition

We're constantly amazed at the beautiful 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.

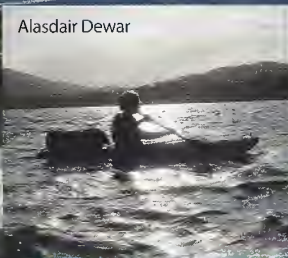


Have you got a cracking canoeing or kayaking shot that might be a winner in 2013? Send us your best canoeing or kayaking photo and senior entrants could win a Cotswold Outdoor voucher while junior winners receive a WHSmith Gift Card. There is a prize for the winner of the year selected from all the winning monthly entries.

To enter simply send a large photo (at least 5 megapixels) on a CD along with your contact details and a few words about the photo to Jo McEnaney, British Canoe Union, 18 Market Place, Bingham, Nottingham, NG1 8AP or you can email your entry jo.mcenaney@bcu.org.uk. We can only allow one entry per person per month.



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Alec Ferris



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AUGUST WINNER



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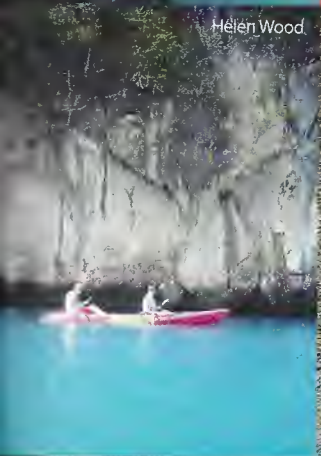
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Claire Newman



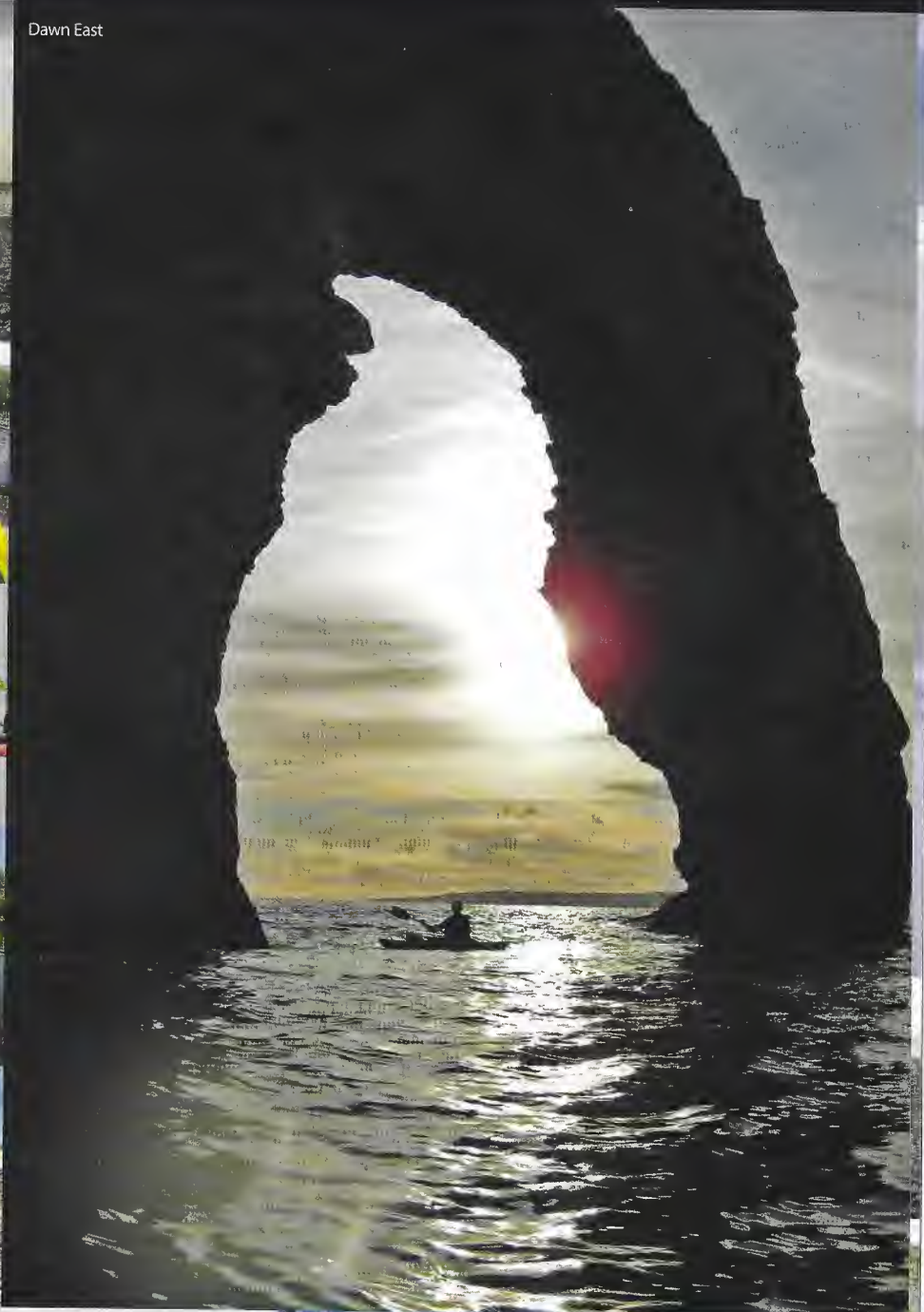
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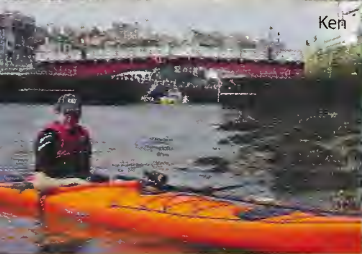
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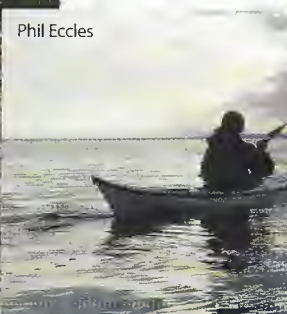
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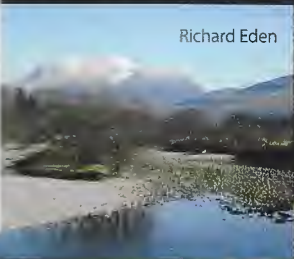
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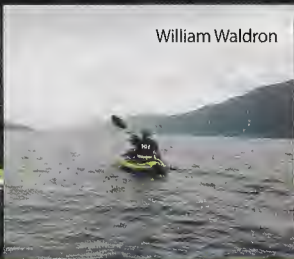
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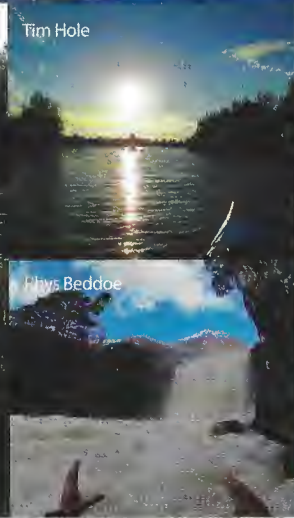
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PLUGGIN!



Article by Sonja Jones



Double World Freestyle Champion and ear plug advocate Claire O'Hara says ear plufs are their sensible choice for whitewater paddlers.

Bioscientist and Audiologist, Sonja Jones set up Plugged Audio a brand new independent business, whose core aim is to protect and prevent against hearing health problems. She explains why all whitewater canoeists and kayakers should consider wearing earplugs as a precaution against the dreaded Surfer's Ear.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT TO THE KAYAKING COMMUNITY?

Each time you chase your next white water adrenaline rush; as your head plunges below water your lugholes are having some fun of their own. They are creating Surfer's Ear (Exostoses). If cold water repeatedly floods into your ear canals over time, your body fights to protect your eardrums from being damaged by making their very own personal dams. Underneath the thin skin layer in the ear canal (external auditory meatus) there is a bony lining. If the bony lining is

repeatedly exposed to cold water and wind, blood flow is increased to the area, raising an alarm to bone cells. This triggers an over-production of bone cells in an effort to protect your eardrum from being damaged. The osteoplasts begin to layer up, forming bony lumps, which can eventually close up the ear canal. The good news

is that your ear drum will no longer be pounded by cold air and water. The bad news is... Well, potentially quite a lot. Surfer's Ear may result in decreased hearing or even deafness, recurrent ear infections and blockages and difficulty clearing your ears of water, wax and debris. Suffering from Surfers Ear can leave you feeling like your ears are plugged up with something, with itchiness, pain, and discharging (infected) ears and hearing problems. Not nice!

This year we at Plugged Audio have been overwhelmed by the support of the kayaking

“Their ears were getting so bad it was affecting their balance, they would be in a lot of pain from ear infections, regularly have water caught in their ears for hours and sometimes days even from as little as just a shower and they could hardly hear people talking.”

community in our quest to get people protected against Surfer's Ear... and for that we want to say a huge thank-you. A special thank-you to fellow audiologist and kayak coach Clare Morgan of Birmingham Canoe Club for helping us make new friends within the community and build some real momentum for the cause.



The inside of a 'surfer's ear'!

ON, AND UNDER, THE WATER EXPERIENCE

Now welcome to the ring, one of our very own Surfer's Ear Ambassadors, fresh from successfully retaining her double world freestyle kayaking titles, Britain's most successful freestyle kayaker ever, Claire O'Hara.

Claire has been playboating since 1996, entering her first freestyle competition in 2001... Since then, she's never looked back. When asking Claire about her favourite achievement to date, it was no surprise that she replied "competitively it has to be winning both World Championship titles (Freestyle and Squirt Boating) in the same day in the 2011 ICF World Freestyle Championships and then successfully defending both titles again this year!"

We are so pleased to have Claire on board with our campaign and Surfer's Ear is an issue that is only too familiar to her: "I remember a number of my friends having so many problems that at some freestyle events they almost had to withdraw from competing. Their ears were getting so bad it was affecting their balance, they would be in a lot of pain from ear infections, regularly have water caught in their ears for hours and sometimes days even from as little as just a shower and they could hardly hear people talking. My coach is currently having a lot of problems as a result of having not worn ear-plugs until very recently. His ears are so bad that he needs to wear them in the shower and when we were recently training in Africa on the White Nile he had to miss several sessions because of problems and pain caused by Surfers Ear.

"My advice is get ear plugs. If you can't hear the buzzer, the crowd, your coaches, friends or the river you're not going to be able to perform or paddle to your best. Plus why destroy your body when you don't need to? There's nothing at all to be gained from not wearing them especially now you can easily get them custom made, so they fit and work really well. But if you don't... The damage that can be caused will be with you a very long time. They may take a few sessions to get used to but they're definitely worth it. "In the Youth Freestyle series it's a requirement alongside a buoyancy aid and helmet and rightly so. Being able to hear is really important." **CF**



Pro Freestyle kayaker & former World freestyle Champ James Bebbington also swears by custom-made ear plugs

USEFUL INFO

ABOUT PLUGGED AUDIO

Prevention is better than cure, which is why PluggedAudio offer water-sport lovers affordable custom-made and generic solutions to prevent Surfer's Ear development.

Throughout the year, you will find PluggedAudio at watery festivals across the UK in an effort to get as many H2O lovers as possible plugged up to reduce the development of Surfer's Ear. They are also very happy to visit your water-sports club in order to get as many of you as possible plugged. If you would like more information about our PluggedAudioH2O campaign and how to get plugged, please drop them an email info@pluggedaudio.co.uk

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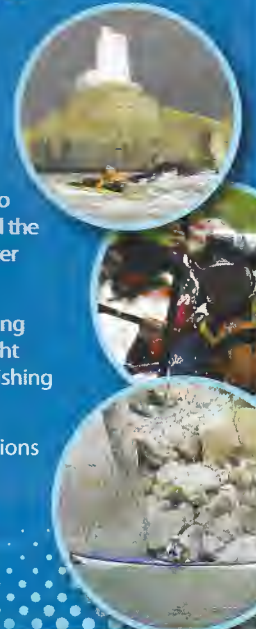
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