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Welcome

to the December issue of Canoe Focus

As we get ready to say goodbye to 2013, we can look back on another hugely successful year, for canoeing and kayaking. I hope you too have had a happy and healthy year, both on and off the water.

For our GB teams, there's been a lot to celebrate this year including over 80 World, World Cup & European Championship Medals; a record breaking 16 Paracanoeing medals; and of course Double World Championship titles for David Florence & Claire O'Hara, history in the making!

Congratulations to all the athletes, coaches & support staff involved with this year's results and, of course, a big thank you to our loyal volunteers & supporters.

This year also saw great success for Canoe England's Go Canoeing and National Go Canoeing Week initiative, with over 2,500 new participants taking to the water during Go Canoeing Week in May.

Go Canoeing has now ran over 850 Starter Sessions since the beginning of the year, with approximately 12,000 people taking part. We've already confirmed National Go Canoeing Week for 2014, from 24th of May until the 1st of June, and we're looking forward to making next year even bigger & better for Go Canoeing!

A great way to round off the year was with the Canoe England Volunteer & Athlete Recognition Awards, which took place at the end of October in Nottingham.

A rundown of all the winners, including pictures from the evening, is included in this issue of Canoe Focus.

Also included in this month's issue is a report from the Canoe Slalom World Championships in Prague and some great locations to go white water canoeing, the perfect winter sport!!

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

Happy paddling.

Paul

Paul Owen, Chief Executive.



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. There are some tips on how to write great articles and take fantastic photos at the back of this issue.

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

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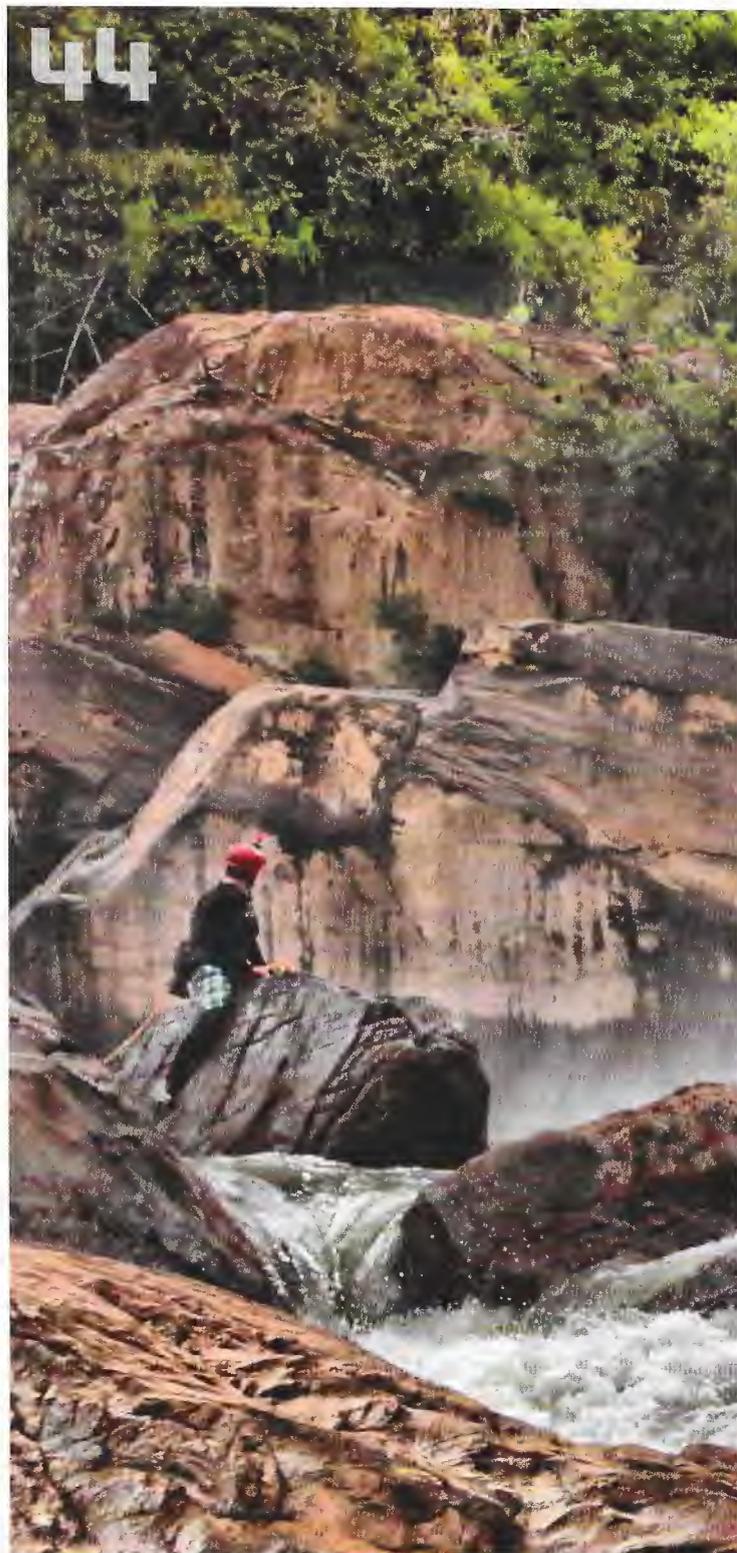
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Front cover
Autumnal river running fun on the River Usk.
Image by Antony Edmonds – www.aephotos.co.uk







SEA KAYAK CENTRE WINS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

A BCU Approved Paddlesport Provider recently received a prestigious environmental award for their environmental practices and policies. Jersey Kayak Adventures won the Jersey Electricity Environmental Award after director Derek Hairon and his five-strong team were described as 'absolute ambassadors for the environment' by judges at the Jersey Enterprise awards ceremony.

In presenting the award for the fourth year, Jersey Electricity CEO Chris Ambler said, "This is a small business that punches well above its weight in promoting environmental awareness – not just to locals, but to international visitors as well.

"With their expert knowledge and total passion for our island environment, Derek and his team

engender enthusiasm and interest in the natural world. They make it fun, interesting and a memorable experience for clients. I am delighted to recognise those efforts with this award."

The award further reinforces Jersey Kayak Adventure's 'Eco Tourism' credentials and sustainable business plan, which were endorsed in 2012 when they became only the fourth Jersey company to be awarded the UK's Green Tourism Gold Standard, having been assessed against criteria, including energy efficiency, waste management, supply chain screening and environmental activities.

"Our objective is to raise awareness of the unique beauty of the natural environment around Jersey and educate others how to protect it. To receive

BRIAN WEBB MBE – THAMES WEIR LEGEND BY SHAUN BAKER

It was with great sadness that we learned of the recent passing of a true gentleman of our sport. Brian Webb, the lock keeper at Hurley weir for 37 years recently died of cancer on the 17th October 2013.

Brian was known to whitewater canoeists and kayakers as the supremely helpful and ever jovial lock keeper at Hurley on the River Thames. He was a friend to all. His hard work at all hours and in all weathers ensuring that the weir was always set to produce the best surf and play waves truly shaped our sport. Without his selfless dedication, the history of kayaking at Hurley, and the direction of freestyle in the UK would have been very different.

Whilst some who worked on the river 30 or more years ago, saw their job as purely one of 'flood

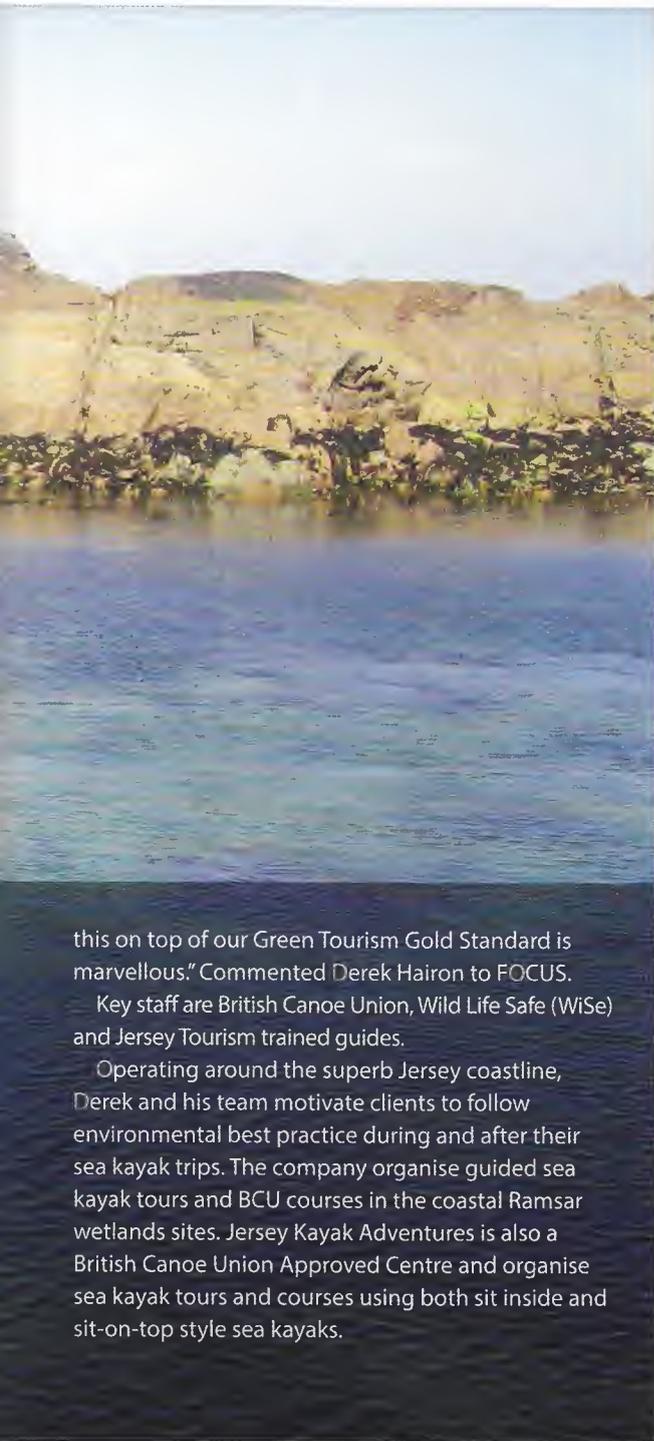
defence', Brian needed little encouragement to see the enormous enjoyment that could be delivered by just taking a little time to listen to what we needed as boaters. As far back as the 1980s Brian would keep a 'secret' drawing in his pocket of paddlers' favorite gate formations and do his best to leave gates open as long as possible just so they could have our cheeky little evening sessions.

Brian was at Hurley from 1966 until 2003. Before that he was the lock keeper at Molesey Lock from 1958.

As well as his dedicated work for our sport, he and his wife Shirley fostered numerous children alongside the full-time job of managing the lock.

Please spare a thought for Brian and his family when you next enjoy the Hurley wave.





this on top of our Green Tourism Gold Standard is marvellous." Commented Derek Hairon to FOCUS.

Key staff are British Canoe Union, Wild Life Safe (WiSe) and Jersey Tourism trained guides.

Operating around the superb Jersey coastline, Derek and his team motivate clients to follow environmental best practice during and after their sea kayak trips. The company organise guided sea kayak tours and BCU courses in the coastal Ramsar wetlands sites. Jersey Kayak Adventures is also a British Canoe Union Approved Centre and organise sea kayak tours and courses using both sit inside and sit-on-top style sea kayaks.

BRITS ENTER PADDLING HALL OF FAME

Two of the famous names of UK canoeing were honoured recently for their lifetime's contribution to the world of paddling sport. They were inducted into the International White Water Hall of Fame at a special ceremony at Paddle Expo in Germany.

Graham Mackareth, founder and CEO of Pyranha Kayaks was elected and inducted as 'Pioneer'. And Pete Knowles, expedition paddler and guidebook publisher was elected and inducted as 'Explorer'



They are the only living Brits to be elected to this elite body.

For more info see head to www.iwhof.org

GAFIRS RECEIVE BCU LIFEGUARDS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The BCU Lifeguards have awarded members of Gosport and Fareham Inshore Rescue Service (GAFIRS) their highest accolade - the Achievement Award. On the 26th May 2013 three members gave lifesaving CPR to a fisherman after he suffered a cardiac arrest on the slipway outside the lifeboat station on Sunday afternoon.

The fisherman has just returned from a fishing trip on the Solent when he collapsed on the GAFIRS slipway. His friend started CPR and called for help. The call for assistance was heard by our members who immediately went to his assistance. The three members took over resuscitation and continued to give basic life support, an AED (defibrillator) from the Lifeboat station was used to monitor the casualty and an ambulance was called.

The three GAFIRS members, Jake Robinson, Tom Clark, a Community and Joanne Young, continued resuscitation for approximately five-minutes at which point the patient started to show signs of life and regained consciousness, he then started talking to his lifesavers.

On arrival of the ambulance the casualty was handed over to the care of the ambulance crew for transfer to the Queen Alexandra's Hospital.

Pictured is Joanne Young of GAFIRS receiving the BCU Lifeguards Achievement Award for the lifesaving actions that were undertaken. GAFIRS is a member of the BCU Lifeguards who supply training and education in the skills of Cane Rescue, lifesaving and first aid to the service.

Also pictured with Jo is Andy Squirrell from the BCU Lifeguards National Committee, he said, "To witness a cardiac arrest and be in a position to provide life support and a defibrillator is a rare occurrence and shows how quick actions can have a major effect to the outcome. I'm really pleased to be able to present Jo and the team at GAFIRS with our Achievement Award".



BRITISH CANOE UNION & AMSPORT UK

The BCU has launched a partnership with AMSPORT UK, supplements for athletes. To celebrate this partnership, they're offering BCU members a Canoeing Bundle, worth £76, for just £49.99! The bundle includes an Energy Mineral (Isotonic Drink Mix) an Amino Liquid Tray for great recovery and a High Protein Powder plus Free Shaker.

Set up in 2005 by former World swimming Champion Mark Warnecke, AMSPORT UK is a German sports nutrition company, new to the UK market. Their supplements are based, strictly, on sports science and are primarily aimed at high-performance endurance athletes. They already supply several highly successful German canoeists including Max Hoff, five times World Canoe Sprint K1 Champion; Stefan Holtz & Robert Nuck, current World Canoe Sprint C2 Champions, as well as elite national rowing, swimming & football athletes.

Catering for the individual needs of elite athletes, their products are exclusively made & sourced in Germany, under strict pharmaceutical GMP procedures & are routinely batch tested by IOC/WADA accredited laboratories

Get your Canoeing Bundle from the Special Offers tab of the AM SPORT UK Website using the code CANBUNDLE or claim 10% off all products with code CANOE10 at www.amsportuk.com



GB CANOEING & CREWROOM

Forty of Britain's top Olympians and Paralympians took to the water in their canoe sprint boats to unveil their new high-performance kit range, supplied by new partner Crewroom.

The GB Squad have partnered with one of Britain's top sportswear companies, who have developed a new bespoke range of kit which includes a bold Union Jack motif covering the back of their on the water kit.

Commissioned by GB Canoeing and created by Crewroom, based in Putney, west London, the kit, named the 'Carnival' range, uses bold designs with a nod to the vibrancy of Rio. Design features are intended to maximise the athletes' speed and efficiency on the water.

The kit includes slick racing cuffs using grip silicone to avoid absorbing moisture, seamless shorts to rule out rubbing and abrasions, and 'Drywick Lite' race shirts, a super-lightweight, wicking fabric designed for comfort and manoeuvrability.

Kate Giles, Founder of Crewroom, herself a former top British athlete, told FOCUS, "We wanted to give the squads a unique, new look. The new image will be cool, functional and vibrant. Our unique products are designed to help them move to the next level, to give them an advantage on the world stage."

After paddling in her kit in the River Thames at Putney, GB Canoe Squad athlete Rachel Cawthorn commented, "The new gear will help streamline us on the water. We really like it. Kit quality is vital when fractions of a second count in the bid for a medal." Fellow Olympic Squad member Richard Jefferies, a C1 200 single-handed sprinter, added, "I love the way the new kit looks with the Union Jack on the back."

GB Canoeing and Crewroom said they expected the new range would not only make the GB paddlers look cutting-edge but would also give them an added advantage in competition.

Renowned for its innovative and award-winning performance products, Crewroom has a growing reputation for delivering bespoke kit to mass-participation sports events, including the Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon and Ultra races.

The company draws on the cream of British talent, taking on graduates and undergraduates from the internationally acclaimed London College of Fashion.

Crewroom's Kate Giles added: "We've been in business for 12-years and, with a proud heritage in the rowing world, we've used our knowledge and understanding of performance garments and the needs of endurance athletes to create our product range for mass participation events.

"We are currently trialling our designs for GB Canoeing to see if the athletes liked them and so far the feedback has been really positive. Rio de Janeiro is a vibrant city, famed for its carnival celebrations. We wanted a new image for the canoeists to reflect this and the pride with which they wear the GB colours."

LOPC GEAR STOLEN

Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre was recently a victim to a series of thefts from its stores. As well as some archery equipment, stolen from the stores were paddles (TNP), buoyancy aids (Crewsaver), and kayaks. The kayaks stolen were three yellow Dagger GTXs and three blue Dagger GTs.

The kayaks are very distinctive being centre boats with basic outfitting and they also have unique serial numbers we can trace back to the centre.

If anybody does come across these please get in contact on tel: 0116 2681426, or email: si@lopc.co.uk

NEVILLE SIMMONS BY DOM MURPHY

One of flatwater paddling's great advocates, Neville Simmons, has died at the age of eighty-one.

A mainstay of Banbury & District Canoe Club, and prior to this, of Wey Kayak Club, Neville started paddling as a boy with the scouts in Gidea Park, East London. After a few years without paddling, he took up the sport again when he joined the RAF in 1958. He was posted to RAF Melksham in March 1958 and was roped into doing the Devizes to Westminster race at four weeks' notice, replacing a paddler who had dropped out. Paddling a rubberised folding kayak, similar to the Cockleshell Heroes' boats, Neville and partner finished second in their category.

Neville, wife Peggy and their three children moved to Scotland, where Neville enjoyed building boats, and touring rivers, lochs and sea, as well as indulging his other great passion, sailing.

He joined Wey Kayak Club upon moving south again and found his niche as a coach. Inspired by David Train's placid water scheme, he promoted flatwater touring and racing with great enthusiasm and dedication and introduced many people to the sport through his courses.

After moving to South Northamptonshire, Neville joined Banbury & District Canoe Club in 1993 where he served as chairman and club trustee for many years as well as dedicating himself to repairing boat after boat and coaching person after person.

An eternal teenager, Neville treated aging as an inconvenience and something best ignored. His house happened to be next to the village sledging hill, and the white haired gentleman in his mid-seventies became a legend among the local children as he hurtled down the slope headfirst on a polythene bag.

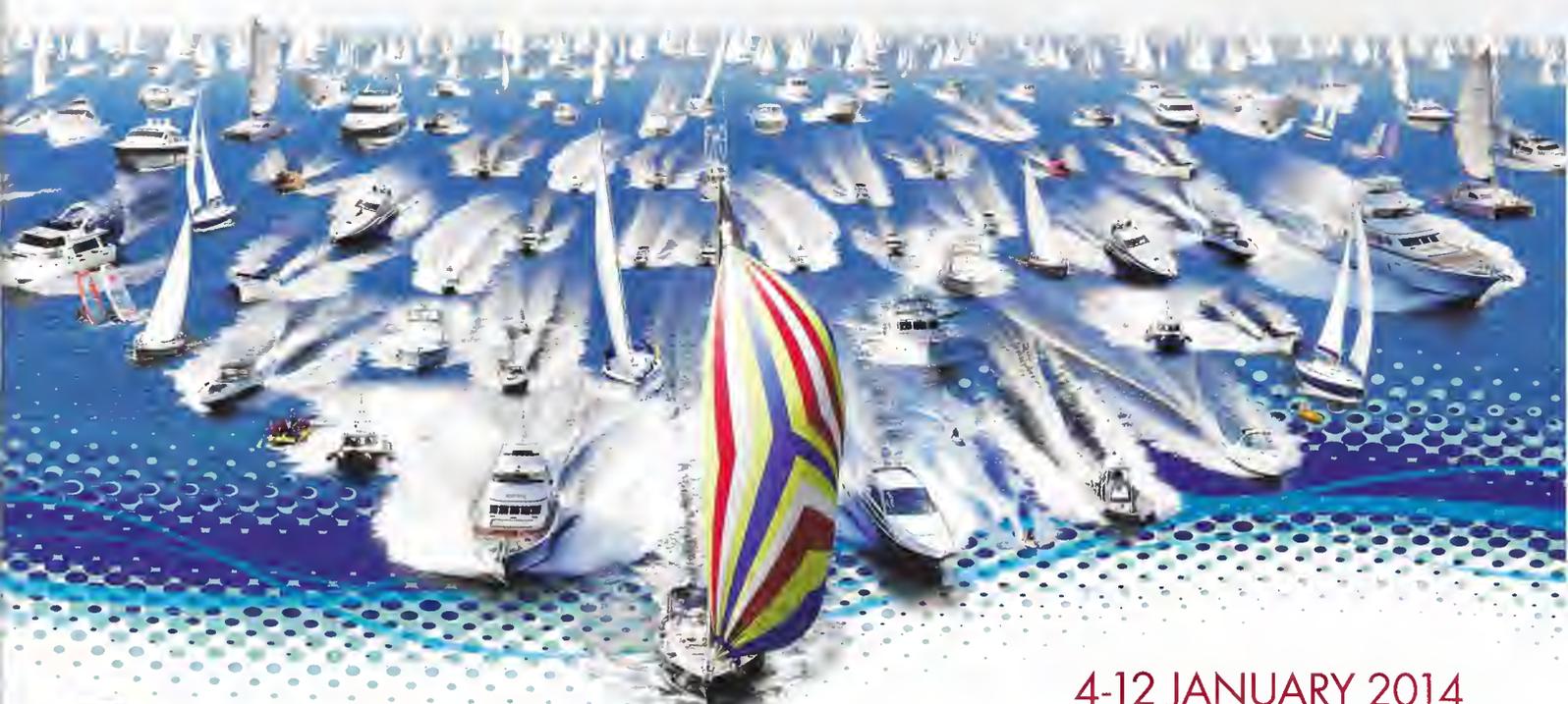
Neville was competing in marathon races up to his late seventies, even after cancer had been diagnosed, and up until the very end he was trying to wrestle the illness into submission, refusing to let it slow him down.



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TIM WINS 'GOLD' AGAIN – AT THE 2013 ECOVER BLUE MILE!

Olympic gold medallist Tim Baillie was in top kayak and SUP form at the 2013 Ecover Blue Mile in Plymouth, delighting fans who lined the city's waterfront to see him take on all-comers. Tim was scheduled to be competing in the World Championships on the weekend of the event, but he and C2 canoe slalom partner Etienne Stott had to withdraw after Etienne suffered a shoulder injury during the summer.

Tim took part in the Ecover Blue Mile with his wife Sarah, herself an international canoeist for Canada. And the couple made it a 1-2 in the Fatyak Kayak race, with Tim just pipping Sarah to the finish line!

The Naish SUP race was won by Phil Ellery from Cornwall, with Tim finishing runner-up. Tim admitted that he wasn't as familiar with sit-on-top kayaks or SUP boards as he is with his canoe, but that the two sports were great fun.

It was also an experience for the enthusiasts who got to compete against an Olympic champion. In all, 16 raced in the SUP event and a packed field of 22 hopefuls took part in the kayak race.

The Ecover Blue Mile circuit starts near the famous Mayflower Steps on Plymouth's Barbican and heads out into Plymouth Sound, before finishing back at the Barbican.

With heavy rain and high winds forecast for the second day of the event, all the major water sport events were switched to the opening day on Saturday, making for a packed day of action on the water. A record number of entrants signed up to take part in this year's Ecover Blue Mile, which was raising money for the event's charity, the Marine Conservation Society. Almost 300 people swam or paddled the course.

Thankfully, the sun shone on 'Super Saturday' as the mix of enthusiasts and serious competitors took to the water.

Saturday afternoon saw the Corporate Team Challenge, where each of the three team members takes on one of the disciplines; and the Aquatriathlon, a gruelling event

in which competitors complete a mile in all three of the sports. The winner of the Aquatriathlon was Ben Fisher.

The Corporate Team Challenge was won by the Ecover Blue Mile team! It consisted of event organiser and round-the-world racing yachtsman Conrad Humphreys (SUP), Katia Vastai (swim) and polar explorer, deep sea diver and presenter of the BBC TV series Oceans, Paul Rose.

Members of Plymouth Leander Swimming Club were the stars of the show in the Ecover Blue Mile timed swim. An amazing 64 of the club's young swimmers took part in the open water swim – and for two of Leander's swimmers, it proved a winning occasion.

With star club member, Olympic and World Breaststroke Champion Ruta Meilutyte cheering them on, the swimmers completed the mile in double-quick time. The winner, Reece Worth, did it in a time of 21:04 minutes. The first woman home in 22:45 was another young Plymouth Leander swimmer, Charlotte Hill.

With the main events all taking place on Saturday, there was an opportunity on Sunday morning for people to take part in SUP and kayak taster sessions, with a £2 donation to the Marine Conservation Society (MCS).

Conrad Humphreys said the event had been a huge success, "To see so many people enjoying the water was just great! I'd like to congratulate everyone who took part – they're the stars of the show. And it was brilliant to see so many of the talented athletes from Plymouth Leander at the event.

"I'd also like to thank everyone for raising money for our charity. The MCS does brilliant work for our seas, beaches and marine life and we're delighted to support them."

Andy Bool, head of fundraising at MCS, said: "It's been great to see so many people enjoying themselves in the sea and at the same time raising funds to protect our marine environment and helping to ensure that many more people can enjoy the sea in the future."



YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS

News From Your Region

CENTRAL

COLLEGE STUDENTS GET 'UNLEASHED' AT WHITLINGHAM OEC!

For six weeks during October and November, sixty-eight students from Easton & Otley College, split over three mornings a week, have been taking part in the U Canoe Unleashed programme at Whitlingham Outdoor Education Centre in Norfolk. The students, all from the BTEC Public Services course, have been taking to the water, trying different craft, playing games using the U Canoe Activity Cards and exploring Whitlingham Broads and adjacent rivers.

The students have had great fun whether they have had a paddle in their hand or a cricket bat and using activities such as 'Howsyak', 'Timebomb' and 'It Ball' they have been developing their paddle skills, teamwork and fitness.

As part of the programme they have been paddling a variety of craft including kayaks, canoes and katakanu's in a range of autumn conditions and temperatures, but have been coming back each week eager to get wet again and have more fun on the water!

They also took on the challenge of fancy dress katakanu racing as part of the centre's 'Pudsey Paddle' annual fun paddlesport racing event for BBC Children in Need

For further information on Whitlingham Outdoor Education Centre visit www.whitlinghamoec.co.uk or e-mail ncc.oep@norfolk.gov.uk



SCHOOL WATERSPORTS HUB LAUNCH

To help promote Paddlesport and Rowing in schools, the Youth Sports Trust, British Rowing and Canoe England have teamed up to provide one Watersports Hub School in each of nine selected regions across England.

To launch the scheme, the Prince William School in Oundle held a joint Watersports indoor regatta for teams from the neighbouring secondary schools to compete against each other. Many were familiar with the Concept 2 rowers, as the school has its own rowing section in the local rowing club, but the kayak machines were something new to them! After some brief instruction from the schools activators, most stopped trying to row the machine, grasping the new concept of paddling and started to lay down some good distances in the individual 20-second challenge. Typically, the team challenge event between the schools became a very competitive event, with some teams coming back for second and even third attempts to cover the 2km with a better time than that of their rivals! The event was organised by Matthew Peleszok from the School Sports Partnership, and supported by Dan Hetherington from British Rowing, and Jeff Toser from Canoe England. To celebrate the event, and the launch of the Watersports Hub initiative, a plaque was presented to the Head Master, Mark Taitt, which is to be displayed on the school's sports hall.



PROFILE ON INSPIRATIONAL MIDLANDER JESS BERESFORD

There are few young paddlers who can say at the age of 15 they have completed two summer paddling trips to the Alps and are currently working their way up the slalom rankings in both C1 and K1 disciplines. But for Midland Canoe Club's Jessica Beresford it is all taken in her stride as she once again picks up the Junior Paddler of the Year award at the club's AGM.

Jess began paddling with the club just a few years ago and in that time she quickly progressed through her PaddlePower Awards and developed a passion for Slalom. After completing her first Div 4 race at Stafford & Stone, she began moving up through the divisions to her current position in Div 2 for K1 and close to moving up into Div 2 in C1. Accompanied by her family, Jess is a regular at Monday night training sessions, rain or shine as well as pool sessions and a whole host of club trips.

Beyond slalom Jess has been keen to explore all aspects of the sport, from sea kayaking to open boating and river running. This year's Alps trip offered a new challenge; the rivers in the region had significantly more water running than in 2012, and more trees, meaning that everyone in the party had to up their game. So whilst some quivered by the side of the river, pondering at the speed and complexity of the water, Jess just smiled, got changed and got on with it. Not once did she hesitate or need to steady her nerve. Not once did she show a little wobble or any signs of doubt.

Jess has and will continue to be a fantastic role model for other female paddlers in the club. Having won two Junior Paddler of the Year Awards, there is no doubt she will go on to win more accolades in the future and continue to make her family and the canoe club proud.

GRANTHAM COLLEGE GO WIRED

Grantham College is one of the first colleges in England to be taking up the opportunity to be involved in Canoe England's new U Canoe initiative to attract 14-25 year olds into the sport. Students at the college have recently been getting their first experience out on water with Lincoln Canoe Club, with sessions being run by club coach Gary Quittenton. But now the students are getting the chance to run their own activity at the college as part of the 'Wired' scheme, which is based around participation on ergo machines. College Sport Maker Lynsey Coy has been leading the project and is pleased to be able to offer the students something different.

"It's great to be able to offer the students something new and exciting; we are really pleased to be able to work with Canoe England on U Canoe and hopefully some of our students will carry on canoeing in the future". Lots of other colleges are getting involved across the Midlands, including Bilborough College, Warwick, Bourneville, Central College Nottingham and many others. If you are keen to be involved with U Canoe then contact your Canoe Development Officer for more information.

MIDLAND'S SLALOM BACK AFTER 25-YEARS

For the first time in 25-years, Midland Canoe Club recently hosted a Division 3/4 Slalom, at Darley Abbey Weir, near Derby. The event, which historically was one of the most popular events on the calendar, took a great deal of time to plan and prepare but the result was a truly fantastic weekend of racing.

Preparation began on the Friday as a team of volunteers constructed the course; a delicate and time consuming process given the complexity of the location below the weir.

Saturday was the first day of racing, attracting competitors from as far afield as Brecon, Bedford, Shropshire and Sheffield. Over the two days over 100 people took part, for many it was their first experience at a slalom event. Conditions could not have been better, with beautiful autumnal sunshine creating a spectacle, which drew in spectators from around the village.

Event organiser Alan Aslin told FOCUS, "A huge amount of time has gone into preparing this event and it has been a steep learning curve having not held one for so long. I'm really proud so many people have come to take part; it has made all our volunteer time worthwhile knowing that people have enjoyed themselves."

It is hoped that given the overwhelming success of the event, the club will be back next year to host at this fantastic location.



News From Your Region

CENTRAL

KEMPSTON OUTDOOR CENTRE HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE SHINE WITH PADDLE-ABILITY

The summer of 2013 was undoubtedly been a good one, with high temperatures and plenty of sunshine, perfect weather for being out on the water, where ever and who ever you are. Each year Kempston Outdoor Centre (KOC) delivers a series of Paddleability activity sessions for young people with Cerebral Palsy, who have needs ranging from simple assistance in walking, to the more complex, which require constant monitoring.

In the last few years the centre via funding channels has gained some exciting adaptive capacity equipment, that allows these young people, suitable and dignified access, not only to the boats and river, but also to the sport and activity we all take part in and enjoy. Looking beyond their condition this is one common theme that they can now share with each other and the centre staff.

Experiencing the river environment for the first time, many of the young people engaged with skimming the surface with their hands, pointing out items of interest, or where able, took hold of a paddle. Some simply sat, and enjoyed.

For the KOC staff the work has been a revelation, and with it has brought a better understanding that for these young people, being free of a wheel chair or walking frame and simply getting to the boats and river is all part of the adventure, capped by experiencing the brilliance of summer from a canoeist's perspective.



PROFILE OF DISABLED KAYAKER BY PETER SMART- VIKING KAYAK CLUB

I have a disability I attribute to chemical poisoning during active service in the first Persian Gulf War. I have a condition called Vertical Nystagmus, which results in poor balance, memory, body weight control, time perception, mobility, hand/eye co-ordination, and repeatability of regular movement. Almost all the opposite attributes needed by a sprint kayaker! It is a significant challenge for which the club and members has provided significant support.

During the last four years I have been a single parent to two sons. In the spring of 2013, my children being old enough, enabled me to start kayaking again. The vagaries of my disability meant I was literally starting all over again learning to race a kayak. I lost 21kg in the spring and I practiced distances to suit my limitations. With loss of weight came more mobility and the ability to practice technique.

During the year I attended all the HPP Regatta's competing with paddle-ability and on the last Regatta I was also in the 34+ Masters class making the final, which I unfortunately could not attend. This year I have broken my previous sprint distance PB's three times in competition.

I have been racing an Adapted Epsilon weighing 20kg. I have now developed my own boat, a Nick Pink Stealth weighing 15kg, which I am looking forward to racing next year.

News From Your Region

NORTH

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

BY JACKIE FRIEND

Leeds Sailing and Activity Centre works with the council's disability sports network to encourage 8 – 18 year olds to get involved in watersports using full days in school holidays and a weekly after school 'disability sports club'. Rafted canoes help even the most unconfident get on the water. Every young person has a different challenge, and many who attend have a learning disability, balance issues and weak communication skills. The first challenge for them is getting into a boat- just stepping onto a wobbly surface and being balanced on a seat. ... Then using your paddle to make the boat move, getting a good grip, making contact with the water and working as a team. Games break the ice, chasing a ball around the centres small lake, pulling it close to the boat with your paddle and getting your hand wet to retrieve it; and the reward, being able to throw it away again!

David is 18 and only communicates with people he trusts, his carer brought him to the weekly group when she saw his pleasure on the activity day. He has progressed to getting in and out with minimal support, setting the paddling rate and wearing a permanent grin!

Colin is 15, very sociable and wanted his own boat, his choice was to try a kayak. The coach encouraged him to join in a paddlepower course and now he is progressing through the scheme in the centre's mainstream canoe club after school.

It's great when carers and coaches can work together to create new opportunities and respond to newfound enthusiasms of young people!



HASLER LIGHTENING FINALS AT READING (U12F LIGHTENING)

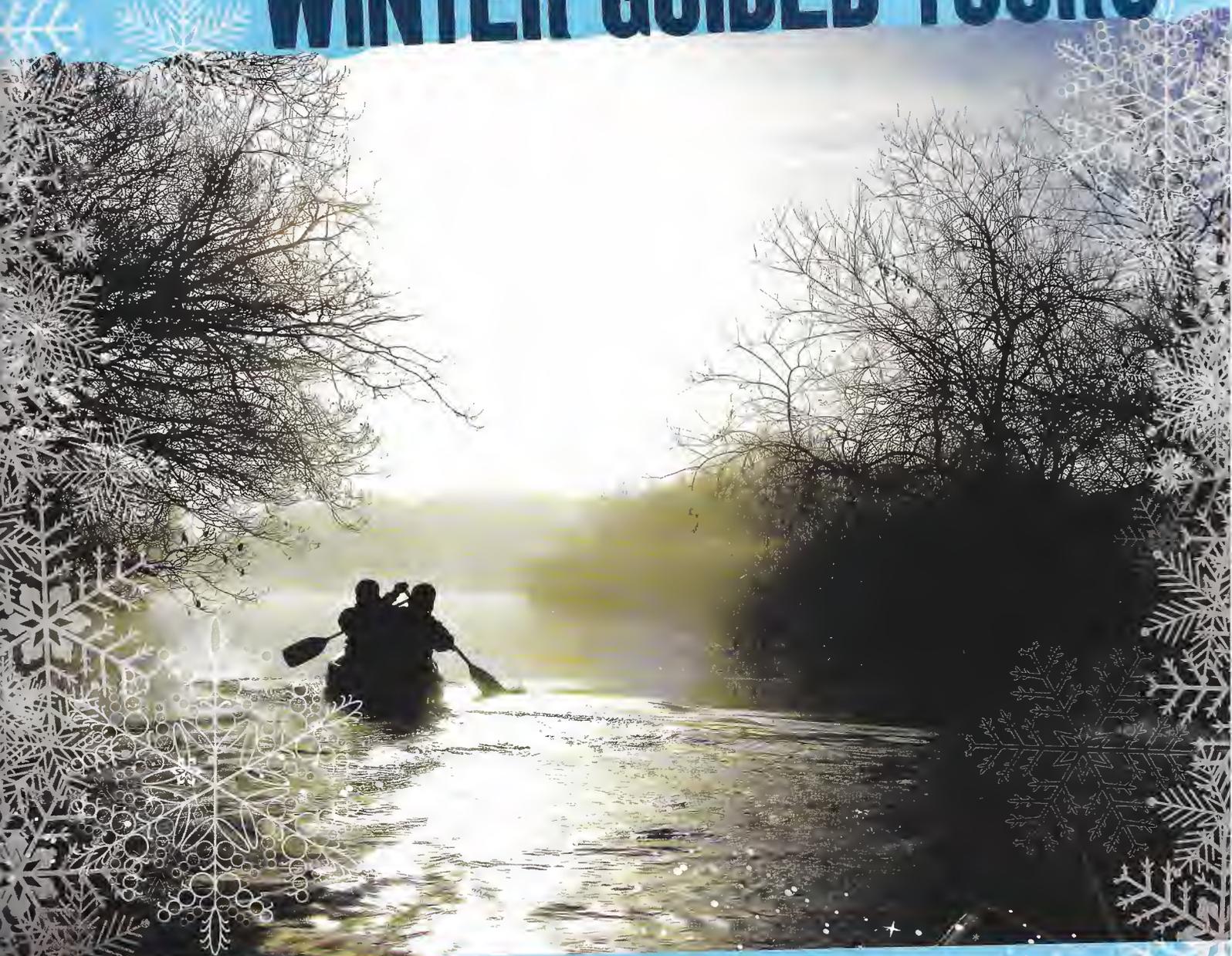
BY RUTH MCKENNY

When I first arrived at the race, the mass of people was overwhelming! There was just shy of 700 competitors and countless spectators all ready for the races to begin. At first I didn't know what to think, I could not decide whether I was excited or petrified. In fact, I was just stunned. Once we made our way through a maze of vehicles, I eventually met up with the other members from the club: Steph, Nicky and Rhiann. Before I could comprehend fully what was happening it was briefing. After briefing, it was time to prepare for the race. Once on the water, me and Steph got lined up with the under 12 girls while Nicky was further up the river with the under 12 boys. Eventually, after dodging several dive-bombing geese, it was our turn to race and no sooner was that horn blown all 28 girls shot forward; the race was on!

What was to follow would be one of the longest races I'd done, 3km! For me it took 26 minutes 11 seconds with Steph close behind and Nicky was waiting on the water for us at the end after completing his race. Once off the water, the attention turned to Rhiann; where was she? She was lining up at the start and we got there just in time to watch her go. From then on it was a nervous wait to see who would prevail. Again, once that horn was blown they were away paddling for victory! Finally, we all ended up on the riverbank eating cake, tired yet proud. What a way to finish such a memorable day.

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WOMEN IN PADDLING AT YORK UNIVERSITY CANOE CLUB

BY FAITH WILKINSON & FAYE STARKEY

Kayaking is often perceived as a male dominated sport and hobby, but the Canoe and Canoe Polo Clubs at York University have been proving this assumption wrong for years. Women make up over 50 per cent of members, and both committees are currently led by women.

The participation of women in white water kayaking at all levels within the club is fantastic. Beginners are encouraged to push themselves on adventurous water in the UK and the Alps with the help of experienced members and safety teams. While our more experienced women continue to explore expert levels of water around the world. Alongside this the women in the club are trained to progress to the level of safety, which is always inspiring for female freshers joining the club.

The polo club have a thriving women's team, who consistently prove themselves in competitions and friendly tournaments, and continue to improve as the club expands. The open canoe polo team also regularly consists of strong female paddlers, often playing against all male teams and succeeding. Responsibility for the coaching and running of the club is largely held by women, another encouragement for new girls joining this often aggressive sport.

Having such a strong female presence in all levels of kayaking at York University encourages ever more girls to get involved in paddle sports, and continues to dispel the stereotype of canoeing as a 'man's domain'.



NEW YOUTH CANOEING PROJECT LAUNCHED IN MANCHESTER

The Newton Heath Youth Canoeing Project encourages children and young people living on the nearby housing estate to take part in fun water-based play activities, which builds their confidence and self-esteem and raises aspirations. Behind the scenes, Youth Workers provide additional support to those young people who are experiencing problems in their lives.

The project is delivered and managed by the Water Adventure Centre (WAC), a registered charity and BCU Approved Centre, working in close partnership with Troydale Tenants & Residents Association. For the last 36 years WAC, based beside the Ashton Canal in Droylsden, has successfully delivered youth work alongside canoeing and adventure play with children and young people from across Greater Manchester. This new, detached, project has been funded by Manchester City Council's Youth Fund, with Manchester Cash Grants and the People's Postcode Trust funding the equipment costs.

The project runs out of two donated shipping containers situated beside the Rochdale Canal in the Newton Heath area of Manchester. This past summer has been extremely successful and in the first few weeks the project had already been attended by over 70 local children and young people. As well as canoeing and lots of playing in the water, the project has included activities such as circus skills, outdoor cooking, adventure games and mountain biking. The local unit of the Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service has also become involved, teaching the younger children about water safety.

The project is funded until March 2015, with work taking place all year round with young people aged 13-19 years, and during the school holiday periods with children aged 8-12 years. During the dark winter evenings, Youth Workers will work with local young people off the water, encouraging them to get involved in a creative graffiti art project, workshops, trips out and a outdoor residential.

For more information about WAC visit www.wateradventurecentre.org.uk

VOLUNTEERS RECOGNISED

Coaches and volunteers were congratulated and awarded certificates for their achievements by their respective Chairs at the recent NE and Cumbria meetings.

In the North East; 'Young Volunteer of the Year' was awarded to 16yr old Tom Younger a level 1 coach from Blyth Kayak Club, Coach of The Year was awarded to Roland Redfern-Lown also from the Blyth club whilst Ann Brandon who has worked tirelessly at Tynemouth Canoe and Waveski Club for over 20 years as event organiser, secretary, role model and as a coach received a certificate for 'Outstanding Contributions' to Canoeing.

Over the other side of the Pennines in Cumbria, Joe Stalker and Alistair Yates, both from Copeland Canoe Club and both Level 3 coaches, received Outstanding Contribution certificates and pin badges for their commitment to over 60 years of being actively involved in the sport. Joe is currently Regional Chair, club coach, father to two aspiring slalom paddlers and an inspirational member of the club. Alistair has committed endless hours to Copeland as well as the scouting organisation in Cumbria with lots of paddling on their agenda.

NORTH WEST LIGHTNING SERIES

The North West Lightning Series runs alongside the Hasler Marathon races and takes in all the races in the North West - Chester, Macclesfield, Trentham and Runcorn. This year Duddon joined the region and it has been great to welcome their troop of smiling youngsters full of enthusiasm and camaraderie. It has also helped increase the numbers at the North West events, which can only be a good thing.

The winners of the 2012/2013 North West Lightning series were:

- U10 Boys Josh Gregory Duddon
- U10 Girls Jess Proctor Trentham
- U12 Boys Owen Wilson Duddon
- U12 Girls Victoria Longstaff Duddon
- Team Trophy: Duddon

Congratulations to Victoria Longstaff on winning all her races and getting maximum points, and to Jess Proctor, Lewis Proctor, Owen Wilson, Victoria Longstaff and Ruth McKenny on attending all the races in the region.

The team trophy was closely contested between Trentham and Duddon this year, with Trentham putting in a strong team at the Trentham race but Duddon managing to maintain their lead finishing with a fantastic score of 547. In total 26 youngsters competed in the events. The prize giving was at the Chester Marathon in October. 1st, 2nd & 3rd prizes were presented along with the perpetual trophies for each class and the team trophy.



CLUB HOUSE MODERNISATION LEADS TO SUCCESS

2013 has been a momentous year for Axe Vale Canoe Club. With support from Canoe England and Sport England, work was successfully completed on upgrading the changing facilities and briefing/social space. Tash Khan-Davis Club Coaching Secretary commented to FOCUS, "We have noticed in a very short space of time that attendance on club nights has gone up, particularly by female members. The larger social space also means that we can have more effective debriefing sessions."

This year also saw a record number of junior school children take part in day long paddling session organised by the Club. Over 260 nine and ten year olds have enjoyed wonderful days on the Axe Estuary and on the beach. The club is fortunate enough to be based at the mouth of the River Axe and so is able to take advantage of both sea and river environments. John Martell, a founder member of the club has been organising the school sessions for over 20 years. This year he has handed duties over to the Club Chairperson Angela Quick. Canoe Leader Geoff Hunt said, "John's hard work over the years, has allowed hundreds of children to get their first taste of canoeing and many have joined the club, some become coaches and many continue their interest at University".

The club is now looking to undertake the last phase of the modernisation, which is to reconfigure the canoe shed, so that they can minimise risks associated with manual handling Canadian canoes.

Axe Vale Canoe Club has 120 members of all ages, ranging from the age of 12 upwards and is located within the grounds of the yacht club by the Harbour at Seaton. The club offers a wide variety of activities and introductory courses are offered every summer from May.

For more info go to www.axevalecc.co.uk

LEE VALLEY WILD WATER RACE

BY MACKON KHELA

The aim of the holding a wild water race on the legacy course was to promote the sport and to do so at a warm time of year. Traditionally wild water races are held over the colder months to ensure there is water and access permission. This strategy has led to a decline in the number of paddlers staying with the sport, and many choosing other disciplines that allow easier access.

I decide to run the event as an 'all can enter' race. The result was novice paddlers racing alongside world champions, this was fantastic for those trying the sport for the first time and the experienced paddlers were happy to share the course. The feedback was everyone enjoyed the day, so thank you all for attending and making it a success.

The course is designed in a horseshoe formation with an escalator at the bottom that allows the paddler to stay in their boat as they are taken back to the top of the course. The course takes about 35-seconds to complete, and as an introduction to the sport this works well because it provides a taste of paddling in rapids, but not being overly taxing for those with less than peak fitness levels.

The design of the course also allows spectators to view the racing and practice without having to follow paddlers down the course, as is normally the case. So it is all contained within a small area, the water is at a regulated level and it was held in the summer, a winning formula for promoting the sport.

To make the event a possibility it was organised through my role as centre coordinator of the Canalside Activity Centre and the centre's aim of increasing participation in canoe sport. This was achieved and 70 paddlers paddled on the day. The event was in partnership with the Canoe England's Regional Development Team for London who part funded the course fees. The smooth running of the event was down to the professionalism of the entire Canalside team and making it a success on the day. The aim is now to run a summer series, which I am looking forward to.



THE MAYOR'S THAMES FESTIVAL

The Thames Festival is an inspiring 10-day celebration of London's iconic river through art, music, and educational events both on the water and along its banks and bridges. The Go Canoeing Stand became a part of the Blue Ribbon village which was sited at Potters Field Park next to City Hall and looking out to Tower Bridge. The village hosted many activities and a stage and with many people around the area we were able to promote all of the Go Canoeing range to a wide variety of people attending the event and give them the opportunity to paddle on the kayak ergos and take on the 20-metre challenge.



CLUB MARK FOR MAIDSTONE!

Following on from their recent Club Mark success, Maidstone Canoe Club held a celebratory evening to showcase this achievement. Geoff Orford received the Club Mark Award on behalf of the club, having been presented by Chris Edge – Canoeing Development Officer for Team South.

PADDLEABILITY RECOGNITION

Wokingham Waterside Centre and Adventure Dolphin have both been recognised as Paddle-Ability Top Centres, a reflection of the work they do with canoeing and kayaking participants with a variety of disabilities. Both centres have developed some great pathways for participation, introducing and sustaining involvement in the sport.

WINTER VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Tandridge Canoe and Kayak Club are looking for anyone who can volunteer to help support their winter program and white water paddling. If you are a Level 3 White Water coach, a UKCC L2 with White Water endorsement or a 4 star WW kayak Leader they would be interested to hear from you.

WILD WATER CANOEING

WHAT GEAR?

Wild Water Canoeing is a dynamic and exciting rough water racing discipline of our sport contested over distances from 500m to 5km. At the high end of the sport, it requires the combination of the speed of an Olympic flat-water champion with the skill of a white water expert. This in turn requires equipment that gives the athlete freedom of movement, breathability and lightweight performance.

GETTING STARTED

Even the greatest World Champion started with borrowed or second hand kit... Basically you can use any river running kit to have a go. As you grow into the discipline you will discover there are definite performance advantages and a greater sensation of speed in using specialist kit, but you can look to upgrade over time. To encourage participation there are regional fleets of Wavehoppers available to help you try a racing specific kayak.

THE FUNDAMENTALS

As wild water canoeing is dominated by control and speed where re-acceleration is critical, so lightweight equipment that allows maximum freedom of movement is highly desirable. In longer races a significant amount of heat is generated, whether you are training or competing, and racing specific clothing will look to address this.

BOATS

The entry level polythene Wavehopper kayaks gives a taste of the skills and sensations that wild water racing can offer. For the full high speed, agile experience of the sport though a lightweight carbon/Kevlar canoe or kayak will be the craft to look for.

Racing takes place in three types of craft – C2, C1 and K1, each are manufactured in a specialised structure of carbon and Kevlar to provide high rigidity, low weight and high durability. All of the racing boats are required to be equipped with flotation air bags front and rear.

Fittings will typically be custom to the paddler and fixed in place. In kayak seat, footplate, thigh-bars and hip pads are used. Whilst seat block, knee straps and hip pads complete C1 and C2 outfitting. Boats can come with standard fittings from the factory but most racers prefer to fit them out themselves for that 'just right' balance of control and performance.



CLOTHING

BASE LAYERS

Thin thermal tops and either neoprene shorts or thermal tights are commonly used. Neoprene shorts without grip prints on the outside are ideal to aid rotation. In the summer, even light thermals can still be too hot over the course of a race. If you find overheating a problem then Lycra tops and shorts may be a better option.

OUTER LAYERS

Separate neoprene spray-decks and waterproof cags can be used to keep you warm and dry, however specialist cag-decks are typically used to reduce weight and improve freedom of movement. When moving from other disciplines remember that the waist tube size for wild water canoeing needs to be significantly larger than the body to allow for unrestricted rotation. Fleece lined cag-decks are a welcome addition to the kit bag for winter training sessions on the river. Pogies are also commonly used to keep the hands warm for both training and racing when the temperature gets chilly.

BUOYANCY AIDS

Your buoyancy aid needs to allow a full freedom of rotation in the boat. If you find your existing buoyancy aid rubbing on the spray-deck, try tightening the shoulder straps to lift it up on the body away from the deck. An ideal race buoyancy aid will be lightweight and short in the body.

HELMETS

Are a must have, any current ISO/EN accredited river running helmet can be used. An ideal helmet for racing will be lightweight and allow plenty of airflow around the head to prevent heat build up.

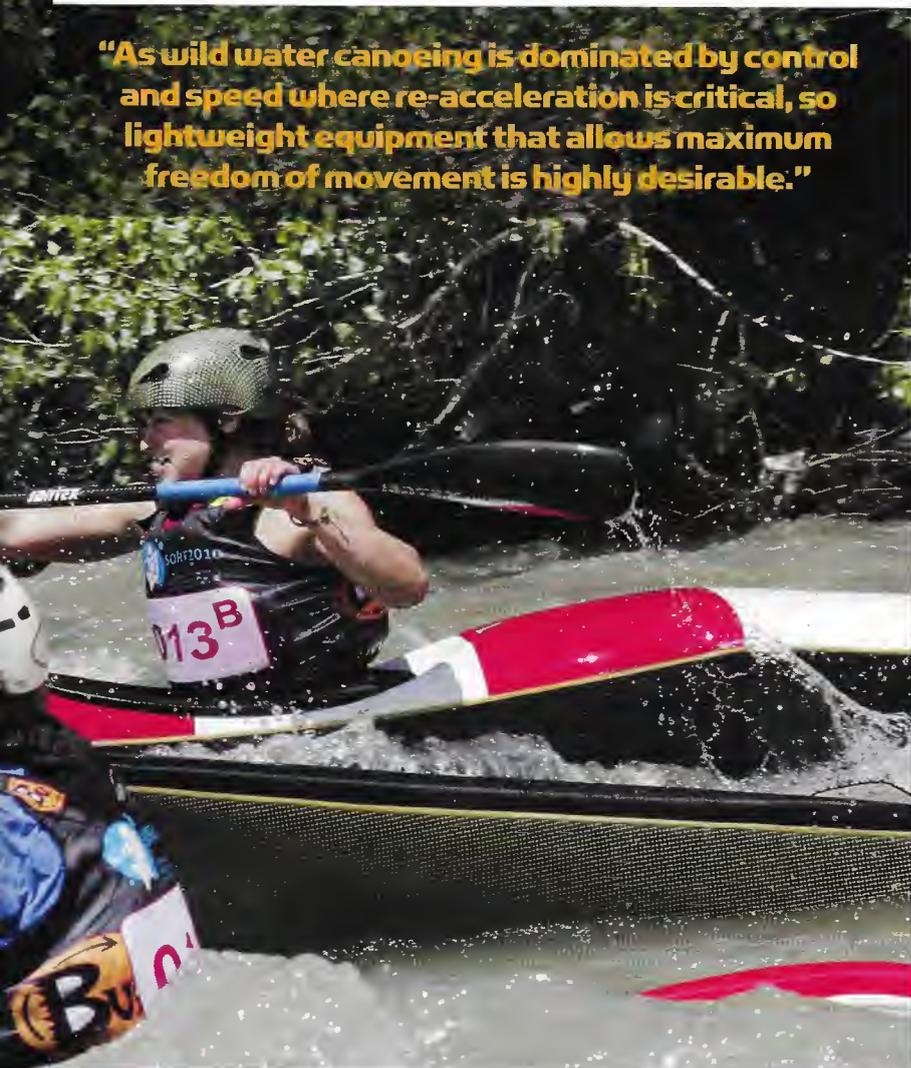
FOOTWEAR

Shoes that have soles and enclose the toes are a requirement for racing, and a very good idea for training to protect the feet. Lightweight neoprene or jelly plastic type shoes are commonly used. A slimmer construction allows a feel for the boat and greater control of the boat through the feet.

BANK KIT

Often overlooked, but can make the day much more enjoyable. Old ski trousers and jackets that can fit over your paddling kit are perfect. Just throw it over the top of your wet paddle kit to keep you warm before you are next on the water. In addition, keeping a complete change of canoe clothing ready for your race run or even in between each run on the river is a good idea.

"As wild water canoeing is dominated by control and speed where re-acceleration is critical, so lightweight equipment that allows maximum freedom of movement is highly desirable."



PRACTICING FOR THE RACE

It's a good idea to have one or more practice runs before the race to find the fastest way down the course. If you have a helmet cam you could also film when practicing to help remind you of the routes through the rapids.

For the longer distance 'Classic' format races you will need to arrange a return to the start after practicing. A shuttle driver, in the form of a helpful parent or group assistant is useful to take you back to the top of the river quickly. Be sure to thank them – they are an essential part of your paddling day!

FINAL ADVICE

You can use your current or borrowed white water kit to start racing. If you get bitten by the WWR bug you can gradually move to more specialist equipment that is lighter-weight, allows a greater range of movement and is more performance oriented. **CF**

INFO

Have a go at WWR; it's one of the greatest sensations of speed in canoeing & kayaking. For more details go to the wild water racing website at wildwaterracing.org.uk

PADDLES

Wing paddles are standard equipment for kayak racing. The older parallel edged wings are a good option as a first white water design. However, the more modern teardrop shaped blades are increasingly being used due to their better connection at the catch of the stroke. Kayak paddles are typically around 200cm with small blades for women and 206-210cm with medium blades for men.

Canoe blades are usually curved and smaller in area than slalom or sprint blades. When used with specialist racing canoes they are typically 135-147cm in length.

Winter Guided Tours



"Britain's waterways can be at their most spectacular during the winter months and all you need to do to make sure you don't miss out is wrap up warm and find a Go Canoeing activity happening near you."

This winter, forget evenings and weekends stuck in the house huddled up to the radiator. Make the most of your free time and why not make this the winter of woolly hats, coats and boats?

With the countdown to Christmas well and truly started, we're getting to that time of year when people's thoughts turn to turkey and tinsel, presents and parties.

And with temperatures falling and your social calendar filling up, it can be hard to find the time and the motivation to get out on the water. But Go Canoeing is on a mission to keep the country paddling throughout the chilly winter months.

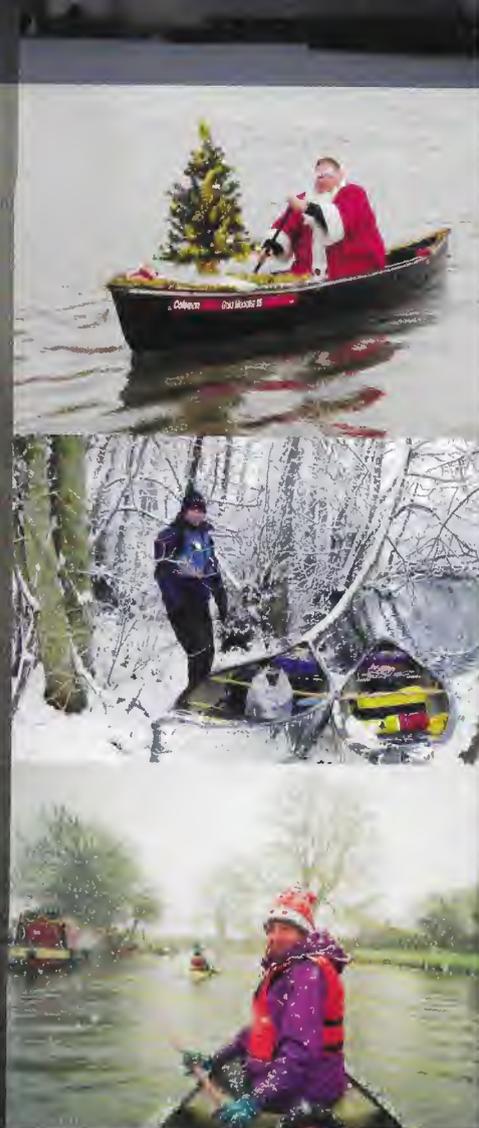
Go Canoeing Development Officer Jenny Spencer told FOCUS, "Despite a wet start, summer 2013 really was glorious and provided some perfect weather for canoeing and kayaking. But paddling isn't just a summer sport and we've got loads of activities to keep you out on the water until spring.

"We've now got more than 60 canoe trails to help you get out exploring and what better way to experience your local waterways than with a dusting of snow, the backdrop of frosty trees and a crisp, bright blue sky?

"We've also got Winter Guided Tours being held across the country where our guides will be on hand to lead you through a winter wonderland of stunning scenery and to make sure you have fun on the water despite the chilly weather.

"Britain's waterways can be at their most spectacular during the winter months and all you need to do to make sure you don't miss out is wrap up warm and find a Go Canoeing activity happening near you."

Go Canoeing will also have Starter Sessions running throughout the winter, some of which will be held at indoor swimming pools, meaning there really is no excuse not to give paddling a go.



AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS, THE FOLLOWING WINTER GUIDED TOURS HAD BEEN LISTED ON THE GO CANOEING WEBSITE:

Engage Watersports, Maidenhead

AM Saturday December 7th
PM Sunday December 8th
PM Saturday December 21st
PM Sunday December 22nd
AM Sunday December 28th
PM Sunday December 29th
Sunday January 4th
Sunday January 26th
Saturday February 8th
Saturday February 22nd

Kayaking London

AM Saturday December 7th
PM Saturday December 14th
PM Tuesday December 17th
AM Saturday December 21st
AM Sunday December 22nd
PM Friday January 10th
PM Saturday January 25th

Elemental UK, Falmouth

Tours will be running throughout December, January and February. Please contact the centre for more information

Portsmouth Watersports Centre

AM Saturday December 7th
AM Saturday December 14th
AM Saturday January 11th
AM Saturday January 25th
AM Saturday February 8th
AM Saturday February 22nd

Leicester Outdoor Pursuits

AM Saturday December 14th

Wokingham Waterside Centre, Reading

PM Tuesday December 17th

Ackers Adventure, Birmingham

AM Saturday December 14th

Windermere Canoe and Kayak, Cumbria

AM Sunday December 15th
AM Sunday December 22nd

Edgbaston Watersports, Birmingham

PM Saturday February 15th

Paddlesaway UK, Manchester

AM Saturday December 14th
PM Sunday January 5th
AM Sunday February 9th **CF**

USEFUL INFO

More Guided Tours will be listed throughout the winter so keep checking the Go Canoeing website to find tours near you. www.gocanoeing.org.uk

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Front and rear buoyancy
retention pillars – so foam
cannot slip out

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also now available
(called the Veloc)

Bigger version too
(the Director)

No holes drilled
around the cockpit

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plastic

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on the outfitting

303L volume but it
feels like about 250L

2 year warranty
on the hull

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just enough edge

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European Canoe Polo Championships 2013

Great Britain sent three squads out to Poland for the European Canoe Polo Championships this year to compete in an ever-growing field of 17 nations.

By Jill Hodgson

Round 1 – the women, hot foot back from their silver medal run at the world games in Columbia, started in a group with Switzerland, Netherlands, Russia and Spain. In a squad that has been so stable for a long time there was one competition debut for Louise Saxon, up from the under 21's. Our team launched into action like a well-oiled machine beating the Swiss 10-5; the Netherlands 8-1; the Russians 11-0 and the Spanish 5-2 and easily ran out winners of the group.

The men, fielding new faces from the under 21's, Jack Robson and Ross Montgomery, and new manager, Stuart Moffat, arrived after some very successful tournaments over the past few weeks (they won in Veurne and De Paddle). Their start was impressive beating Sweden 7-2, Spain 5-3 and Russia 8-0 to comfortably win their group.

The under 21 men were an inspiring mix of experience and 'new blood' with Tom Leigh, Graham Webster and Suryan and Kartik McCutcheon, all playing for their first time on an international stage and with

their new coach, Alan Vessey, a seasoned international campaigner! Sadly on day one, with Lithuania having withdrawn, the under 21's had no game but were fiercely launched into the tournament on Friday with a match against Germany which they lost very respectably 4-3. A further loss to Denmark meant the exit from the top half of the tournament.

Round 2 – the women continued to 'wow' the crowd with their calm efficiency in defence and superior strength in attacking moves. They played Spain again and this time the Spanish women not only struggled to score goals but one even struggled to stay in her boat twice! GB girls trounced them 12-0! In their last game of the group, we faced France and though not exactly a 'promenade au parc', we did win 5-3!

“The GB women continued to ‘wow’ the crowd with their calm efficiency in defence and superior strength in attacking moves.”





The men – In one of those quirks of competition, the men somehow arrived in a group with the Dutch (current World Champions) and Germany (World runners up) and Ireland. We beat the Irish 8-2; Germany beat the Irish 8-1 and the Dutch beat them 9-3. Germany drew with the Netherlands 3-3; GB drew with the Netherlands 3-3. It was increasingly clear that there was really nothing between these three great teams. So GB found themselves in a match that if they won: heroes and off to the semis but if they lost, villains in third place and out of the glory! But that match was against Germany... by half time the Germans were winning 3-1 but canny coach Moffatt sent an inspired bunch out into the second half and with goals from the new boys, Ross and Jack, we levelled at 3-3. Unfortunately and somewhat surprisingly, Germany were then awarded and scored a penalty and then landed a further blow in the last two minutes to sink GB, 5-3 into the 5th to 8th play offs.

The under 21 men now had to battle it out for pride and experience in the 9th to 12th placings. They had moved mentally on from dejection and disappointment and seemed keen to leave the tournament on a positive note. They beat Sweden 13-1, the Netherlands 3-1 and Portugal, after a shaky start, 8-6, which left then with Belgium to play for 9th/10th place.

Round 3 – the women faced the Netherlands in their semi- final who had obviously done their homework. They were very well organised and gave GB very little space, but with persistence and those rare opportunities snatched, there was a hat trick from Ginny Coyles and goals from Pru and Zoe to put our women into the final! (5-1)

The men were now drawn against France; another team hardly expected to be in the 5th to 8th pool but such was the standard this year. Despite opening the scoring, in a very frustrating match, the French finished it as 3-2 winners leaving the men to save face by replaying Ireland for 7th place with a flurry of 9 goals. Despite their relatively young age, this is a very calm, cohesive and confident squad who can look at the Spanish, the eventual Bronze medallists and know they comprehensively beat them. Currently there is really very little between the top 7 teams in Europe and so everything to play for in the future.

The under 21's in an exciting game of end to end action against the Belgians, finished their tournament

with a hat trick from Lewis McVey (now aged 18 and one day! – it is amazing what maturity does for you!) They won 6-5 and gained 9th place. This is a very talented young squad too, who have learned a lot this summer and should be very optimistic about the future.

The Women's Final – this is where GB women met their "summer rivals" Germany who clinched the World Games title earlier in the month. Aimee Robson opened the scoring for GB closely followed by a goal from Ginny giving us a 2-0 lead at half time. However nobody can afford to give the Germans the slightest hint of a chance.....they piled on the pressure snapping up any 50/50 ball and loose pass, hitting home three goals in the second half; the actual winner scored with just 56 seconds left on the clock! Silver again and our girls seemed very down at heart but they MUST remember that their polo inspires all the squads, they fully entertain the crowd and they certainly make British canoeing very proud!

Well done to all our dedicated athletes who worked so hard for this competition and to the hardworking refs and coaches. Finally thank you to all the fantastic GB fans who made it to Poznan for their unfailing support! **CF**

FINAL PLACINGS:

Women: Gold – Germany; Silver – GB; Bronze – Netherlands
 Men: Gold – Germany; Silver Italy; Bronze – Spain
 U21 Women: Gold – Germany; Silver – France; Bronze – Poland
 U21 Men: Gold – France; Silver- Germany; Bronze – Poland

TEAMS:

Women: Aimee Robson, Pru Blythe, Ginny Coyles, Chaz Cheung, Kathryn Moffatt (Capt), Claire Mitchell, Zoe Anthony, Louise Saxon

Men: Dan Robson, Jack Robson, Olly Thomson, Ed Feltham, Ross Montgomery, James Longley (Capt), Gallin Montgomery, Will Borrett.

Under 21 Men: Tom Leigh, Suryan McCutcheon, Lewis Mcvey, Kartik McCutcheon, Ross Martin, Jamie Thomson (Capt), Pete Neal, Graham Webster.

USEFUL INFO

If you'd like to get involved with Canoe Polo head to www.canoepolo.org.uk to find out how.



“In lower water levels this section is a brilliant training ground for those wanting to develop their white water open boating skills.”



Action on the River Usk - Image by Steve Davies

Thrill of the Paddle

5 GREAT WW OPEN BOAT RUNS TO
HAVE A CRACK AT THIS WINTER

Paddling an open canoe on white water is a challenging and fun thing to do. Whether you enjoy sharing the thrill of paddling rapids with tandem partner, or take them on solo here's a FOCUS guide to six of our favourite open canoe white water adventures...

1. THE RIVER TEES (MIDDLE SECTION - BARNARD CASTLE TO WINSTON BRIDGE)

This section of the Tees begins in the scenic town of Barnard Castle. The put on is visible at the road bridge, where there is ample parking. The get out is again easy at Winston Bridge. The river here has carved through the limestone valley and creates some dramatic scenery and, most importantly, some really fun grade 3 white water. Just below Barnard Castle you'll pass a mill, which marks a river-wide reef style drop. Further down you will arrive at Abbey Rapids, a good grade three rapid, ideal to run and to play on multiple times.

The white water continues through the limestone gorge with some 'on-the-fly' waves and stoppers to keep you entertained. Once out of the gorge you'll come to Whorlton Falls, which can be easily portaged if necessary. After this drop the Tees offers one of its most playful sections. Although relatively short, the paddle between Whorlton and Winston offers superb fun for the white water canoe paddling connoisseur. Bends, rapids, weirs and playful spots litter the river every few hundred metres. In lower water levels this section is a brilliant training ground for those wanting to develop their white water open boating skills. When it has rained for a bit it becomes a challenging lead in with several tough decisions to be made. The get-out at Winston Bridge is really easy too, what more could you ask for?

2. THE RIVER DEE (CHAIN BRIDGE TO TOWN FALLS)

To get to the put in just above the Chain Bridge Hotel, and below the Horse Shoe Weir park in Llangollen and paddle up the canal, or use car park just above the weir.

The take out is river right at the Mile End Mill (car parking fee) site or carry on down Town Falls and take out river left just after Town Weir

The section above, from Corwen, is also a great river trip for anyone who wants to enjoy a few rapids and enjoy the stunning Dee Valley and a good warm up for the shorter, but action packed section below. The river begins in a wide catchment area, which gives you splendid views of the fields, before ducking away into a deeper valley. The A5 road follows the river most of the way, there are, however very few points to access the river. The wide nature of the river continues seven miles down to Glyndyfrdwy. From here on in enjoyable grade 2 rapids lead you through the valley as it narrows up slightly all the way down to Horseshoe Weir (portage on river left).

The next section of the River Dee is steeped in paddling tradition and folklore and can rightly lay claim to being one the birthplaces of white water paddling in Britain. In the early years keen white water paddlers would compete to prove their river skills at slalom races and the Dee is still home to some big slalom and wild water racing competitions. For many years it was linked with the famous Dr Mike Jones Memorial Rally. ▶



Image courtesy of JamesWeir



Canoeist reading the river below from his boat

Image by Andy Holt



It is on the rapids of the Dee that many open canoe paddlers have had their first taste of white water and, occasionally, swimming!

The usual seal launch to get in will splash away any cobwebs and the run starts off with some easy warm-up rapids, but get into the swing of things quickly because not far downstream lies the famous Serpent's Tail rapid. This is great fun for experienced canoeists, and pretty easy really, but it has unseated many a paddler in its time. You can easily inspect and set safety cover from the left hand bank. The usual line is to start right and then move diagonally across to the middle-center to punch the wave hole at the bottom.

After the excitement of the Tail things get mellower with lots of great eddy lines and river features to practice your single-bladed skills on. The site at Mile End Mill has some fun stoppers and waves for those that like to play. This is a common take out for open canoeists and it's probably time to take out and enjoy a butty and a brew in the café or maybe pay a visit to the onsite canoe shop. A little further downstream lies Town Falls but this will only really appeal if you are an adrenaline addicted expert.

"It's meandering and occasionally tumbling waters, flowing through idyllic countryside and spectacular wooded valleys are a delight to explore by canoe. It's the perfect setting for a river trip!"

3. THE MIDDLE DART - THE LOOP (NEWBRIDGE TO RIVER DART COUNTRY PARK)

Put in at New Bridge where there is a large car park. Please don't use the section of the car park reserved for non-paddlers. Carry your boat down the steps and put in from the ledge. The rake out is on river right, just past the pump house, complete with Archimedes screw, at the River Dart Country Park

You'd be hard-pressed to improve upon the Middle, or as it's far more commonly known, the Loop section of the River Dart in Devon as perfect example of a grade 3 run. It is ideal for beginner and club open canoe trips, yet still holds plenty of sport for the expert. Set to a backdrop of stunning Dartmoor scenery, the Loop starts off gently and continues to delight for its six and a half kilometres to the take out, throwing up plenty of boulder gardens, play waves and 'pool drop' style rapids that you are able to get out and look at, walk if necessary, or run multiple times if desired!

Notable highlights include drops such as 'The Washing Machine,' 'Lovers' Leap,' 'Triple Drop,' and 'Spin Dryer.' All of these present an option to walk if you don't feel ready, and all provide excellent, fun, challenges in an open canoe.

And the Loop is by no means a one-hit wonder in the Dartmoor area, either, with the likes of the Tavy, Walkham and the Lower Dart there's plenty to keep the white water open boater occupied all weekend without having to paddle the same river twice.

4. THE RIVER USK (THE SECTION FROM TALYBONT TO LLANGYNIDR)

The Usk has some brilliant sections for running in open canoes and is a reliable water source, with some playful features for open boating in all water levels, never rising above grade 2 or 3. The multiple sections offer plenty of potential for turning a short section into an all day affair. The Usk is conveniently situated in South Wales, which makes it within easy reach of many kayakers from all over the south west.

From the put in the river is very wide and a gentle float with the odd shingle grade 2 rapid to keep you interested. The river is a popular choice for clubs and introduction to moving water for canoe paddlers, so it is seldom that you will be the only paddler on the water. The wooded banks creep up on you as you reach the main attraction: Mill Falls. This ledge rapid has several lines and can be inspected river right. It offers great potential for practicing your whitewater skills, with several jets and drops to choose from.

After the spurt of excitement it is a very short paddle down to the get out bridge.

5. THE RIVER WYE (ROSS ON WYE TO SYMONDS YAT)

The wonderful River Wye is part of British paddling heritage, and is possibly the most popular river for open canoe trips in the whole of the UK. Its meandering and occasionally tumbling waters, flowing through idyllic countryside and spectacular wooded valleys are a delight to explore by canoe. It's the perfect setting for a river trip and thousands of people take their first paddle strokes in a hired canoe every summer.

For this section get in at the rowing club by the Riverside Inn or there is parking in a lay by near Wilton Bridge and the river can be accessed easily from here. This is the quintessential section of the Wye and as it flows through the steep sided wooded valley as it nears Symonds Yat it is simply breathtakingly beautiful. It is also the most popular section with canoe hire customers, so if you are planning on visiting in the summer months be prepared to share the river with a lot of other people. If you want a quieter trip then winter and autumn are also lovely times of year for a trip and generally better for more water, meaning better rapids too. Parking at the take out at Symonds Yat East can be limited at peak times and you will have to pay a fee. There is alternative parking, also for a fee, on the opposite bank at the caravan park just before the Ye Olde Ferrie Inn.

The river offers some gentle challenges in this section with a few fast flowing sections and of course the fun of Symonds Yat Rapids at the end. Keep an eye out for Goodrich Castle, built in the 12th century, now a ruin, but still an impressive sight. Soon you'll pass a three-arch stone bridge that carries the nearby road across the river. This is Kerne Bridge and a popular starting point for many trips and a good alternative if you want a shorter day on the water.

Canoe poling at the bottom of Symonds Yat Rapid



Image by Brian Saxton



Image by Steve Davies



There is a purpose built launching point on river left. There's also a good pub a short stroll across the road should you need refreshment or a spot of lunch. The river has more of a wooded feel from here on in but still flows in meanders interspersed with the odd shallow and faster flowing section of water.

A shingle island in the middle of the river signals the approach of Lower Lydbrook and the popular Courtfield Arms. The river flows fast on the right of the island and it's fun, but watch out for the trees towards the bottom.

Onwards you float passing Welsh Bicknor, its Youth Hostel and the neighbouring church beside it, and not long after passing under the arches of a disused railway bridge. The valley sides start to get closer now as you paddle onwards in to the wonderful Wye Valley Gorge. The river now bends back round a right-hand bend, and you will now pass Collwell Rocks well known amongst bird watchers as a nesting place of Peregrine falcons. You'll also see now on your left, high above you, the famous Symonds Yat Rock an impressive natural landmark of the area. Take your time on this section and it's well worth hopping out for a tea break and to take a few pictures. An iron road bridge signals that the end of your journey is not far off. This is Huntsham Bridge, which links Symonds Yat East and West by road.

As you get closer you will see the houses of Symonds Yat West appearing on the valley side. All to soon you'll reach the caravan site or Ye Olde Ferrie Inn and your river trips end if you've opted to park there. If, however, you've parked on the Symonds Yat East side then continue down until you reach the steep concrete steps on river left. With both options if your trip is ending at Symonds Yat then you may want to continue downstream a short while and then take on the fun challenge of Yat Rapids to the right of the central island. Once you've arrived at the bottom, one way or another, it's easy to then carry your boat back up on river left back to the awaiting Saracen's Head pub! **CF**



Image by Jules Burnard



The Wye is a magnet for open boaters. For all skill levels, from experts to families out for a fun day on the water.
Image by Ross Montandon

Image by Kevin Long



Image by Barrie Foster



Image by Andrew Gibbs





Serpent's Tail on the River Dee
Image by Adam Robson



Surfing it up in an OC1 on the River Trent
Image by Nigel Willford

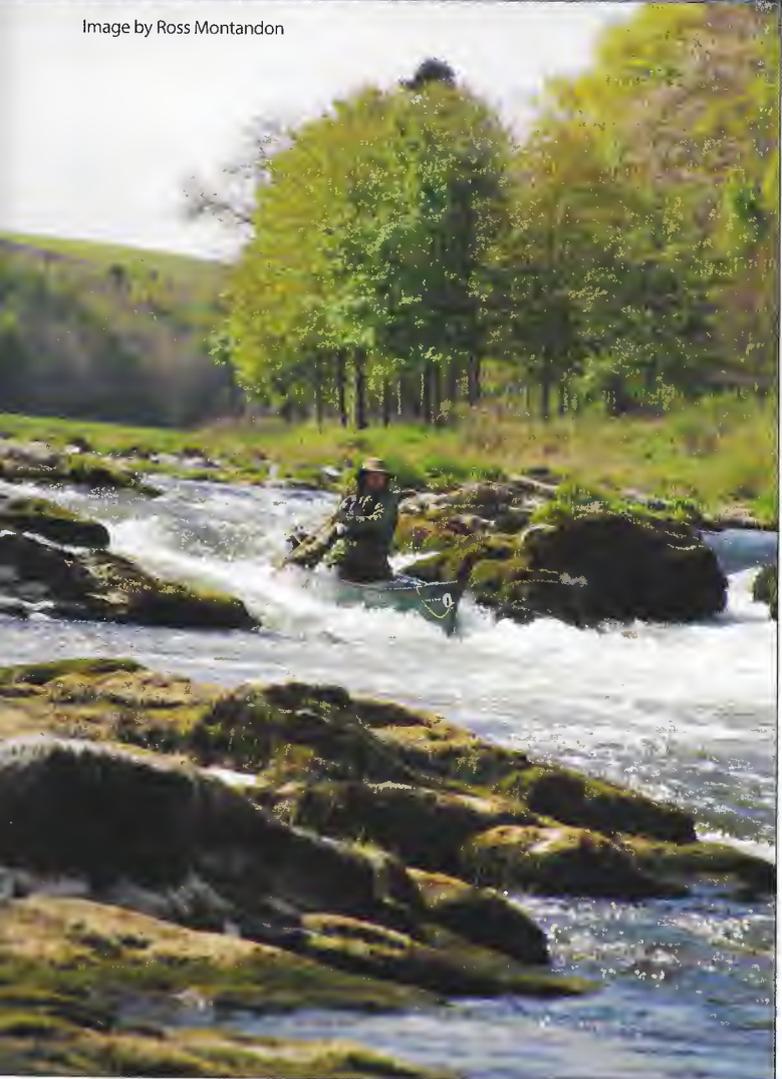


Image by Ross Montandon

USEFUL INFO
For more great open canoe adventures head to
www.canoe-england.org.uk/our-sport/places-to-paddle/

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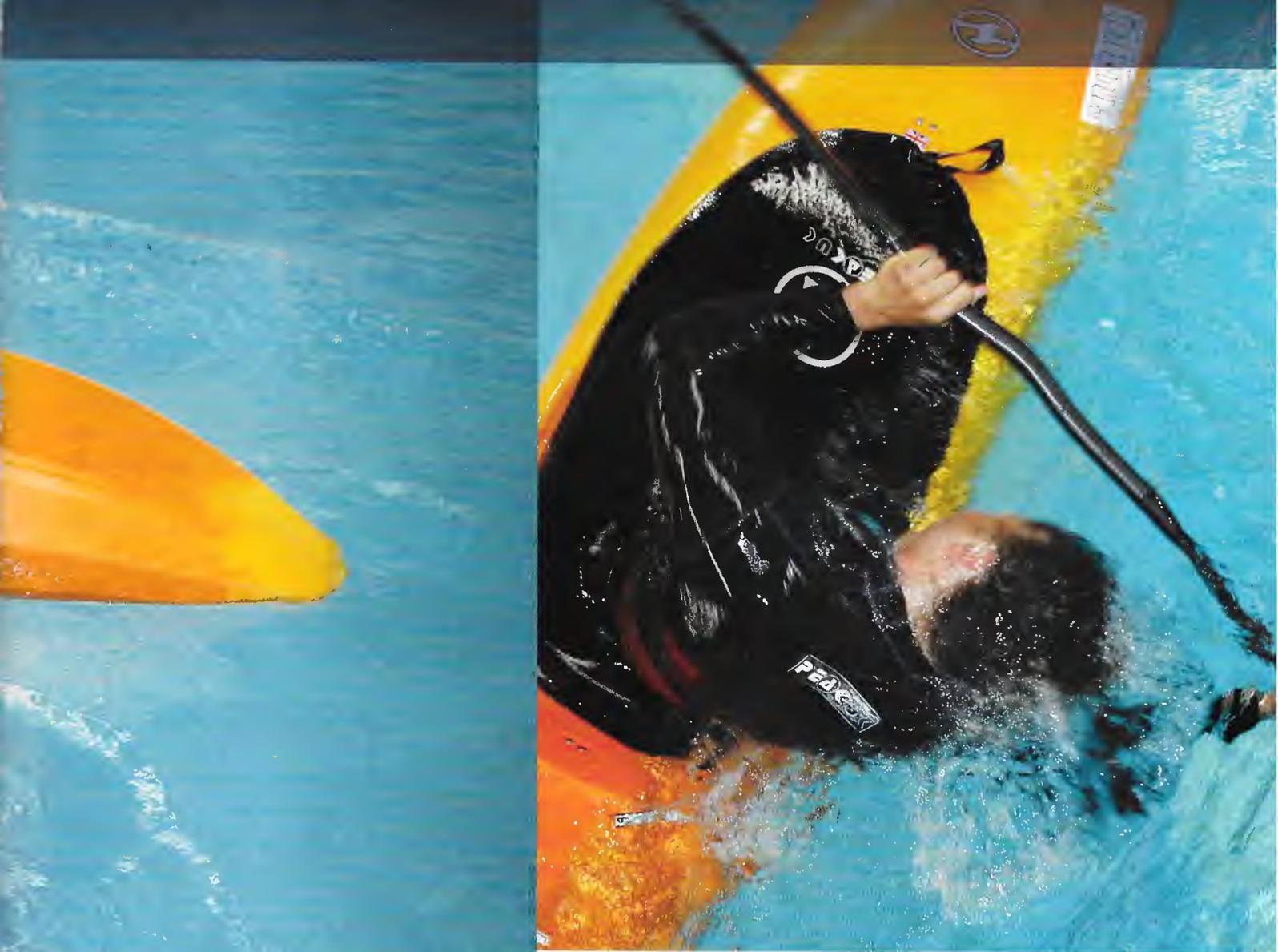
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Learning to Roll a Kayak

Being able to roll your kayak is a little like gaining your driving licence; freedom. Freedom from the inevitable swims and rescues. However, just like learning to drive, it can take some time to fully master the skill. This article* is aimed at anyone who wants to learn, is in the process of learning, or just wanting a few extra tips that may help tidy up that all important kayak roll. Whether you're a white water paddler, sea kayaker or just enjoy calm lakes and canals, a solid roll is a great confidence booster and important safety measure.



Article by Plas y Brenin
Kayak Coach Jake Holland

Learning to roll a kayak, by the very nature of the activity, is not all that easy! For starters we are wedging ourselves into a plastic box, and then flipping over into a very unnatural environment: under water! So step one, is becoming comfortable being underwater, the more comfortable you are in this environment, the better you will perform. Top tip: Buy a nose clip!

WHERE TO LEARN

Provided you own the correct equipment, the next thing you will need is a good location.

The obvious ideal is a nice, warm swimming pool. Often kayak clubs have deals with local pools over the winter months. This is a great solution because experienced paddlers and coaches are often at hand to help. Another solution is various companies (like PYB) run rolling clinics, which give you the location as well as all the coaching you need.

If none of these options are available to you, then try to find a still piece of water that is just over waist deep, with a place that's easy to empty a boat. ▶

“Learning the so-called ‘hip flick’ is a much-needed foundation for your roll. The better you get at this, the easier the next part will be.”

HOW TO ROLL

Let's get started rolling your kayak. The first thing you need to understand is a very large proportion of a successful roll has very little to do with the paddle. It's all to do with how you move your body! Make sure your kayak is well outfitted to you, this means you want to have good contact around your hips, thigh braces, foot rest, and that your back rest is adjusted so it's comfortable, you don't need to over tighten it. Sitting in your kayak, when you move, your kayak should move - be one with your kayak!

The first thing you're going to need to learn is which body parts you need to use. Sitting in your kayak, put your hands in the air (no paddle) keep your head upright, see if you can rock the boat from side to side. Which body parts are you using?

If you are using your knees, as well as transferring your weight from one bum cheek to the other, then carry on with this. If you are throwing your head from one side to the other to create the rocking motion, then try the above. You should notice that there is a separation between the lower body (waist down) and the upper body.

When you feel comfortable with the above, you can move on to the next task. For this you are going to need something solid just above water level. This could be a wall, the side of a pool, someone's hands or another boat etc.

With both hands on your chosen object, lean towards it, allowing your boat to tip over, go as far as you feel comfortable. Place your head on your hands and use the same body parts and muscles as you were in exercise one to bring your boat as far back to upright as you can with your head still on your hands. (If you have gone over on your right hand side, you will need to drive up with your right knee, and twist your hips over to the left)

Once you have achieved this you can bring your head back to an upright position. When you do this, try to imagine you are stacking each of your vertebrae on top of each other starting from the base of your spine until you are sat back upright.

When doing this exercise your aim should be to put as little force on your object as possible. Remember, it is your knee and hips that should be doing the work, not your arms. In addition to this, you can also introduce the use of your feet. When the boat is about 70% upright, try pushing on the foot that is out of the water, you should feel this helps to flatten out the boat.

Getting the boat back to upright using the above technique is broadly known within the kayak community as a 'hip flick'. Just remember, it's not only your hips doing the work, the use of the correct knee is equally important.

Learning the so-called 'hip flick' is a much-needed foundation for your roll. The better you get at this, the easier the next part will be. ►



3



PROBLEM SOLVING

If you feel that you are unable to roll your boat in an effortless style, it will more than likely be because of your head. By bringing your head up, you will block your lower body from being able to work, and as a result of this you will then be relying on the strength of your arms to drag yourself back upright. Keep your head on your hands, until your boat is as close to flat as possible.

The use of the paddle is usually found as a disorienting challenge at best! Often people will try to learn the necessary rolling stroke (of which there are many variants) sat the correct way up, and then try to apply the same action when they are underwater. The main problem this presents is that people get very confused where the water is, and where air is. Remember, what we are trying to create is enough force from the paddle so that we can initiate our 'hip flick'. The paddle is just taking over the job of your wall or other object from earlier on.

As a result of this I find it far better to learn the stroke in the 'class room' AKA: underwater! For this what you will require is a glamorous assistant and if possible a paddle float.

The roll I'm going to be talking you through is best known as a sweep roll. I personally like this one as it gives a fairly constant amount of purchase from the water for a longer period than say the 'C-C roll'. All without to many complex instructions!

*Please note that this article has not been written to replace good quality coaching, but hopefully it can act as a useful aid-memoir.

The first thing you need to do is to set up as demonstrated in PHOTO 2. The paddle blade nearest the front of the boat is the blade that will be giving us the purchase from the water that we require in order to do our hip flick, this is the paddle blade I will be talking about for the rest of this article.

Staying in this position roll upside down with your assistant holding your paddle. You should now look like PHOTO 3.

From PHOTO 3 you want to allow the paddle blade to travel from the front of the boat to the back of the boat. Try to imagine you are drawing a semicircle type shape, with the paddle blade staying to as near the surface as possible (it is near impossible to keep it right on the surface, expect it to sink to about 20 - 40CM by the end of the roll). The 'hip flick' is going to be the essential part that gets you up so you should start this when you feel you are getting good purchase from your paddle. ▶

“The roll for white water paddlers is critical for anyone wanting to step up from grade 2-3, it is a fundamental way to keep you and your equipment safe.”

4



5



“Being able to roll your sea kayak could be the difference between a great day, and a complete epic!”

You have the most purchase from your paddle when it is at ninety degrees to the boat. To begin with, this is a very difficult task to figure out whilst underwater, hence the reason for your assistant. The assistant's job here is to help guide the paddle blade, and stop it from plunging under water too far (they may also need to keep one hand on the nose of your boat to stop it from rotating in the water) Equally a paddle float here can help do a similar job. The advantage of the paddle float is it can be gradually deflated, allowing less and less support, until you're almost just rolling by yourself. Beware though; there is a point where the deflated paddle float becomes a hindrance.

Remember the paddle is just providing a platform that you can do your 'hip flick' from. Your roll should feel smooth, and be coming from within side of the boat. Just like when working on the wall/other chosen object your head should be the very last thing to come up. Think boat then body then head.

If you've reached the stage where you are rolling with a good success rate from your pre set rolling position, start to mix it up a little. Try going over in different positions, from here you can practice getting yourself set up underwater - a far more realistic event. Once you have become proficient at this, the next step is to start practicing your roll in real situations.

TIPS FOR WHITE WATER PADDLERS

The roll for white water paddlers is critical for anyone wanting to step up from grade 2-3, it is a fundamental way to keep you and your equipment safe. Being upside down in shallow moving water can be a dangerous place to be, so ideally you want to get up ASAP. Try to get in the habit of tucking forwards, with your face almost on your spray deck, this will help protect the money-maker!

Once you are confident at rolling in still water, its time to step it up. First try practicing in deep gentle eddies, which have a small amount of flow/chop to them. Once you feel confident with the above you can start to move on to features such as deep wave trains.

The surf is also another great place to practice, but make sure to find a quiet beach break in suitable condition. Remember take your time to get set up and don't make the classic error of reaching for air by lifting your head - as soon as you do this your roll will fail.

TIPS FOR SEA KAYAKERS

Being able to roll your sea kayak could be the difference between a great day, and a complete epic!

Once you have your roll sorted in still water, start to practice it out in more realistic conditions. As sea kayakers it is quite rare for us to go over in easy seas, usually you end up side down due to waves, wind or tidal flows. It makes sense to practice in these environments, but with someone ready to perform an Eskimo rescue if it all goes wrong.

Unlike white water paddlers, shallow water and rocks are generally not much of an issue (unless you are rock hopping or surfing) Use this to your advantage and take the time to get set up, allow the boat to settle, and only then initiate your roll. If the first one fails don't be scared to stick in there and try again. **CF**

JAKE HOLLAND

Jake Holland is a kayak coach at Plas y Brenin. When he is not coaching at the National Mountain Centre you'll find him travelling the world in search of adventure.



Plas y Brenin runs a year round programme of white water, sea kayaking and canoeing holidays and courses including weekend rolling clinics using their indoor heated pool and week-long rolling courses which include pool sessions, video analysis and lots of confidence-building practice on moving water. Rolling courses specific to either white water or sea kayak are available all year round – boats, paddles and kit are provided free of charge.

To find out more about Plas y Brenin and their huge range of paddling opportunities visit www.pyb.co.uk or facebook.com/plasybrenin



THE BIG CPD EVENT



In Early January 2014 we're offering a condensed two week period of CPD workshops, courses and events spanning a wide range of paddlesport related skills and disciplines. From basic first aid and coaching technique to fundamental leadership and performance coaching skills, whether you are a volunteer or a professional, there's something to suit every paddlesport coach.



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Kit Testing

LAYER UP THIS WINTER

With the winter season in full swing, it's never been more important to make sure you have the right kit! We know paddlers will brave all weather conditions for the love of our sport and good kit can make your winter water time even more enjoyable. A favourite in any kit bag is a good base layer that provides warmth, comfort and ease of movement.

“A favourite in any kit bag is a good base layer that provides warmth, comfort and ease of movement.”

Women's K4 500m sprint kayaker Hayleigh Mason and para canoeist Rob Oliver joined up with some canoeists from Nottingham Kayak Club to test out some great base layers for you this winter!

The qualities the testers looked for in the base layers tested were:

- Best versatility
- Most comfortable
- Best heat control
- Freedom of movement
- Best quality



KUKRI CORE LONG SLEEVED BASE LAYER

Tested by Jenny Spencer – Go Canoeing Development Officer



MOST COMFORTABLE

The Kukri Core includes silver technology, which harnesses the natural anti bacterial benefits of silver. Yes, I said silver! Silver inhibits the multiplication of bacteria and thus reduces odour and increases your kit life span, happy days! Also available is the Kukri thermal base layer made from 92% Poly 8% Elastane, the fabric is brushed on the inside, which creates a soft warm layer against the skin. The Core long sleeved base layer was exceptionally comfy and a great fit. I love the style and design of the top, with the high neck line and sleek fit it was like a second skin, keeping me warm but also looking great with the funky logos. Paddling in this top was a pleasure and I will definitely be using as my regular paddling layer from now on.



MIZUNO BREATH THERMO

Tested by Rob Oliver - para canoeist

BEST HEAT CONTROL

Breath Thermo's® thermal fabric yarn contains special fibres, which are activated by the sweat you create as you paddle, keeping moisture off your body, and at the same time generating heat that keeps your body warm for your best performance.

The Mizuno top offered great warmth and heated up with physicality. This top was the loosest fit and offered good movement and would be good under a lightweight cag.





CREWROOM VX SOLID BODYSHELL LONG SLEEVE

Tested by Hayleigh Mason – Team GB women's k4 500m kayaker

BEST QUALITY

Crewroom have designed this as a form-fitting garment, a contoured second skin, making this a perfect base layer for performance paddling in our cold winter months. The fabric uses bamboo charcoal technology to keep you warm and smelling fresher for longer whilst the stretch nylon shell and raglan sleeves give the ultimate manoeuvrability. Made from award winning Vapour X fabric, with carbonised bamboo.

Hayleigh Mason says "The Crewroom top provides good warmth. This top can be used for running as well as kayaking! I also love the choice of bright colours, so the Crewroom pink top is typically the colour I would choose! It's always good to stand out. We do a varied amount of land and water sessions in the winter, and staying warm is one of the most important things for me, so this top is a winner."

More details at www.crewroom.biz



CRAFT

CRAFT LONG SLEEVE V-NECK

BASE LAYER

Tested by Craig Duff - Nottingham Kayak Club paddler

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

The CRAFT LS V-neck base layer efficiently transports moisture away from the skin and distributes it on to the outside of the garment, where it either evaporates or is passed on to the next layer. It has an ergonomic fit for total freedom of movement. Provides a great soft and comfortable fit.

The CRAFT top was incredibly comfortable and did not feel restricting whilst paddling. It gave me real freedom of movement. It feels very much like a second skin and keeps you cosy. I really liked the quality of the material and felt it had a good fit.



BOATHOUSE HALF-ZIP COLD WEATHER TRAINING TOP

Tested by Russell Smith

BEST VERSATILITY

Boathouse Cold Weather Training Top is made of a Dura-Wic performance fabric that provides excellent warmth, moisture wicking and odour control. The top has a fleece lining and Zero-Friction seams.

The first thing you notice when you pick up this top is the feel and the weight of the brushed fleece material. It has a soft touch and feels substantial giving the impression that it would be heavy when you put it on, but once on these impressions disappeared and the top became light and flexible. The design and cut of the fabric allows movement and there were no signs of chaffing from the seams.



USEFUL INFO

BASE LAYERS

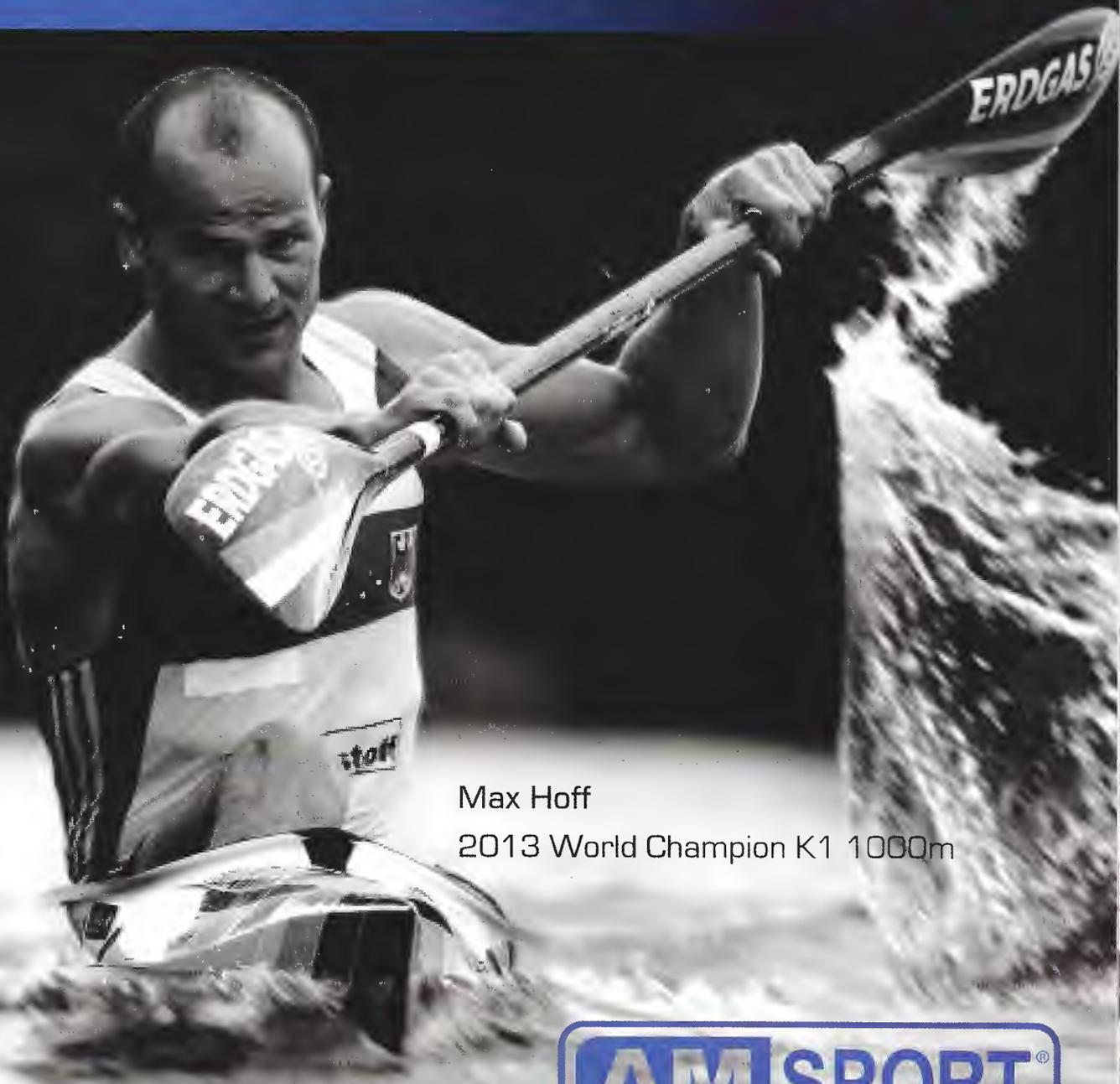
It goes without saying the base layer goes next to the skin and for winter conditions having a thicker skinned thermal can work really well. Your base layer needs to wick moisture away from your skin and out through your other layers. Avoid cotton as it won't do this and will stay damp, which means that as soon as you stop working you'll cool and get cold very quickly. Manmade materials and natural materials like merino wool are ideal for base layers.

“Paddling in this top was a pleasure and I will definitely be using as my regular paddling layer from now on!”



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2013 World Slalom Championships

As far as Canoe Slalom World Championship results go, those of David Florence in Prague this summer rank as little short of remarkable... ▶



“This also made Florence the first ever British paddler to win a C1 World title, the first in fact to win an individual World’s slalom title since 1995.”

By Rob Eyton Jones, images by Balint Vekassy



“Florence and paddling partner Richard Hounslow also became the first British C2 boat to win a World Championships.”

The twice Olympic silver medallist became the first slalom paddler in 60 years to win both the C1 and C2 categories in the same World Championship.

This also made Florence the first ever British paddler to win a C1 World title, the first in fact to win an individual World's slalom title since 1995. Florence and paddling partner Richard Hounslow also became the first British C2 boat to win a World Championships.

FIRST AND FOREMOST

Indeed it was a weekend in the Czech capital where the word 'first' seemed to reverberate through the British team. And of course it was the first year of a new Olympic cycle with all the uncertainties that brings. The superlatives just don't do justice to these achievements.

“To come to the World Championships and win both races is just amazing, something I thought would never be done by anyone,” said a slightly stunned Florence following the pair's 114.10 seconds winning run, which beat Jaroslav Volf and Ondrej Stepanek of the Czech Republic (114.14) and Slovaks Ladislav and Peter Skantar (115.63) into second and third places.

On a difficult course Florence and Hounslow agreed on what they considered a safe plan for the final. Although they got down the course second fastest they had a clean run but the faster Czech pair, Jaroslav Volf and Ondrej Stepanek, picked up two penalties.

“It was a very, very tricky course but we had a solid plan,” said Hounslow. “It wasn't the fastest way of executing the course but it was what we felt was a safe, good risk to reward plan and it paid off for us in the end.”





SINGLE & DOUBLE GLORY

Florence had just the day before added C1 World Championship title to an incredible resume. His final time of 102.53 seconds beat Slovakia's Alexander Slafkovsky (103.36) and Slovenia's Benjamin Savsek (105.79).

"I was pretty happy with the C1 result, but for it all to go so well two days in a row and get on top of the podium again with Richard in the C2 is unbelievable," he continued.

"It's just gone so well the last couple of days and obviously a massive thanks to Richard as well. I'm very pleased for him to have joined me only 24-hours later as a World Champion."

NATIONAL PRIDE

Pride, professionalism, precision and displaying an attacking style had been GB Canoeing's Slalom Podium Head Coach Paul Ratcliffe's mantra since he took on the post this season; and the message has really been embraced by every level of the team, its coaches and support staff.

Prague saw an exciting GB team of youth and experience with only the Olympic C2 Champions Tim Baillie and Etienne Stott absent as Stott recovered from shoulder injury. The newcomers included Joe Clarke, Tom Quinn and Kimberley Woods, and all rose to the task.

Woods finished seventh in the Women's C1 final whilst Quinn came fifteenth in the Men's C1 semi final. But for two touches his fast time would have put him into the final.

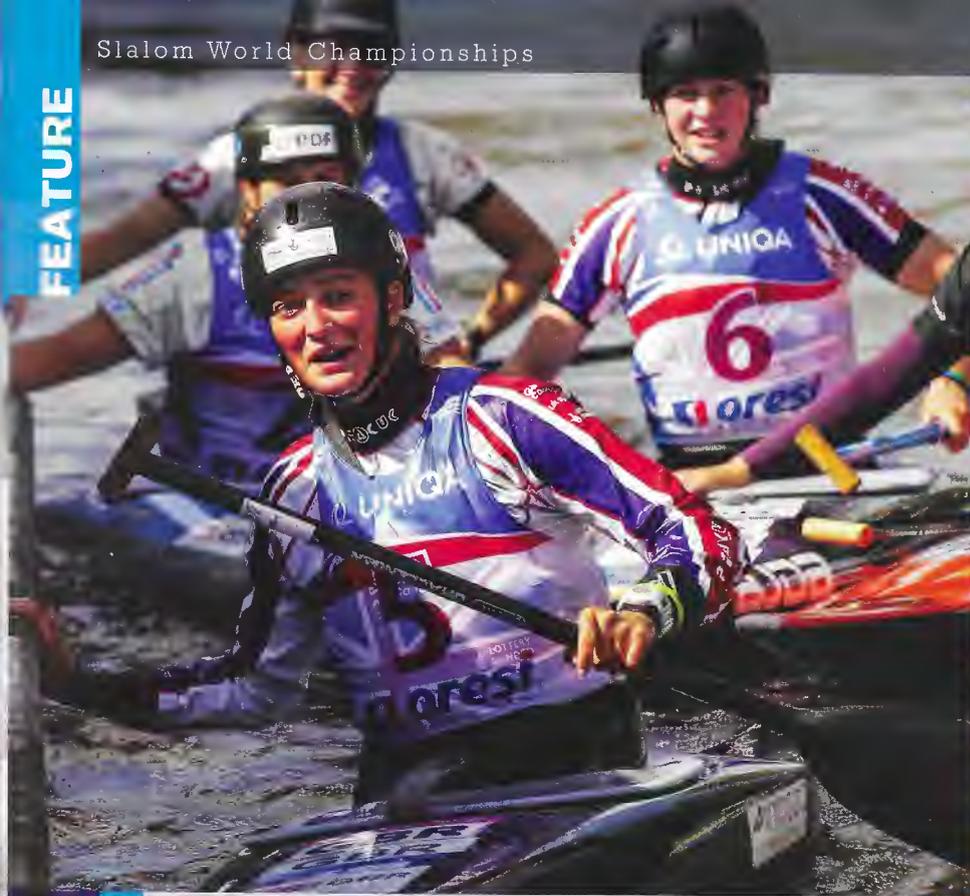
YOUNG GUNS

Twenty-year old Clarke had earlier this summer made his first senior final at the European Championships. In Prague he became the first British paddler since 2009 to reach a World Championships Men's K1 final where he finished sixth.

"It was absolutely phenomenal and I couldn't have wished for any better," said Clarke afterwards. "I knew that if I paddled like I know I can paddle then good things could happen, but knowing you can do it and actually doing it are two different things."

In a great weekend's results for the GB team, 19-year old Mallory Franklin won a confidence building silver in the non-Olympic Women's C1, adding to her two silvers and bronze medals in the World Cup series this season.

"It's good to get a world medal and to finish the season on a high," she said. "I guess you believe you can win a medal when you have medalled at every World Cup. You start to realise that actually a lot of the people that are here are people that I have beaten in the World Cups."



"Twenty-year old Clarke had earlier this summer made his first senior final at the European Championships. In Prague he became the first British paddler since 2009 to reach a World Championships Men's K1 final where he finished sixth."





A GREAT FINISH

Rounding off a highly successful Championship for the GB team, Florence and Hounslow led Matt Lister and Rhys Davies, Adam Burgess and Greg Pitt to the bronze medal in the C2 Team event.

Said GB Canoeing Performance Director, John Anderson MBE, "Well done overall to the team for a very successful World Championships

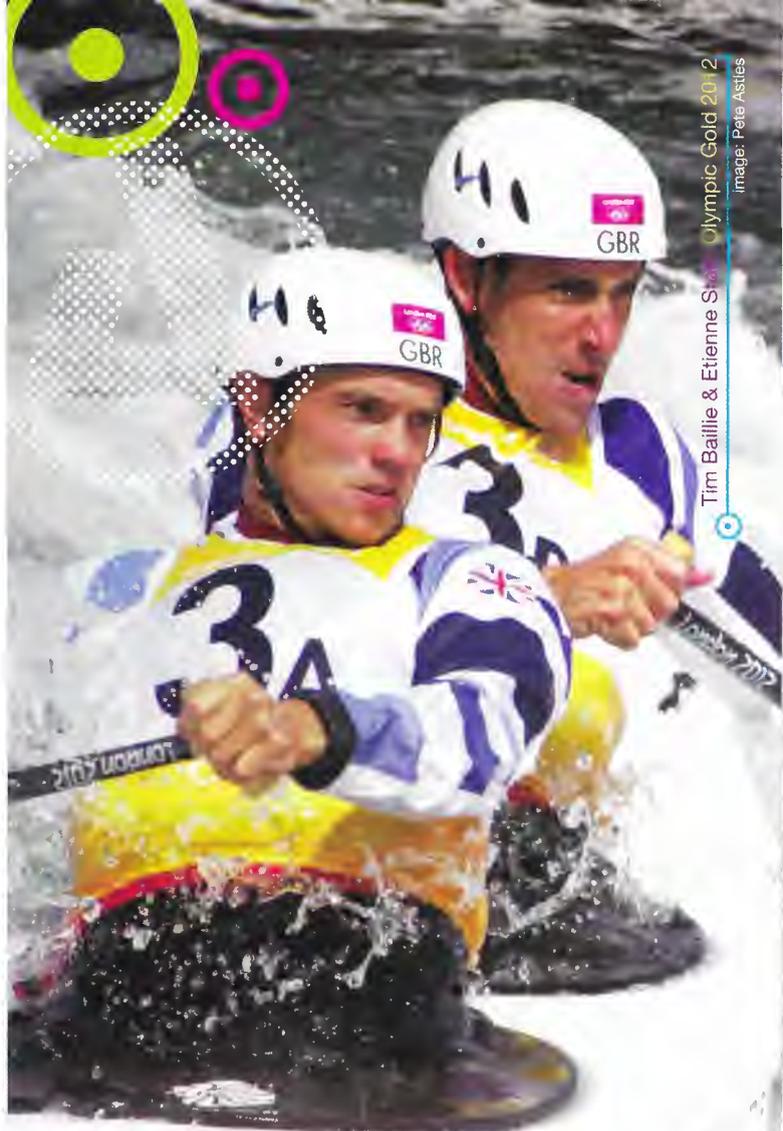
"Absolute congratulations to David for a hugely significant result of becoming our first World Champion in an Olympic slalom boat class since 1995 and to both David and Richard for winning the C2 race on a tough course with the Czechs breathing down their necks.

"No athlete has won two individual classes at the same World Championships for 60 years and we've never won a gold medal at the Worlds in C2. We have now and I'm delighted for David and Richard.

"It was fantastic to see Mallory on the podium with the silver medal after a very competitive women's C1 final and it was a great championships for Joe and Kimberley, both competing well in their first senior World Championships.

"We haven't made a men's K1 final in the World Championships since 2009, so Joe's sixth place is a cracking result for a 20-year old.

"Kimberley has only just turned 18, so a seventh place finish in her first senior World Championships final is a great result." **CF**



Tim Bailie & Etienne Stuck Olympic Gold 2012
image: Pete Astles

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www.canoeslalom.co.uk

Article by Rhodri Anderson. Photos by Rhodri Anderson, Daniel Crowley, Josephine Meares

Madagascar

WHERE THE RIVERS RUN WITH GOLD!

We were a group of six white water paddlers, experienced, but hungry for something different. Half of us had paddled white water multi-day trips before, but none of us had ever paddled anything we considered a first descent (that consisted of more than a single rapid). In Madagascar we were hoping to change that. So, how did we set about going off the beaten track, what did we find there, and how could you do the same... if you wanted to?

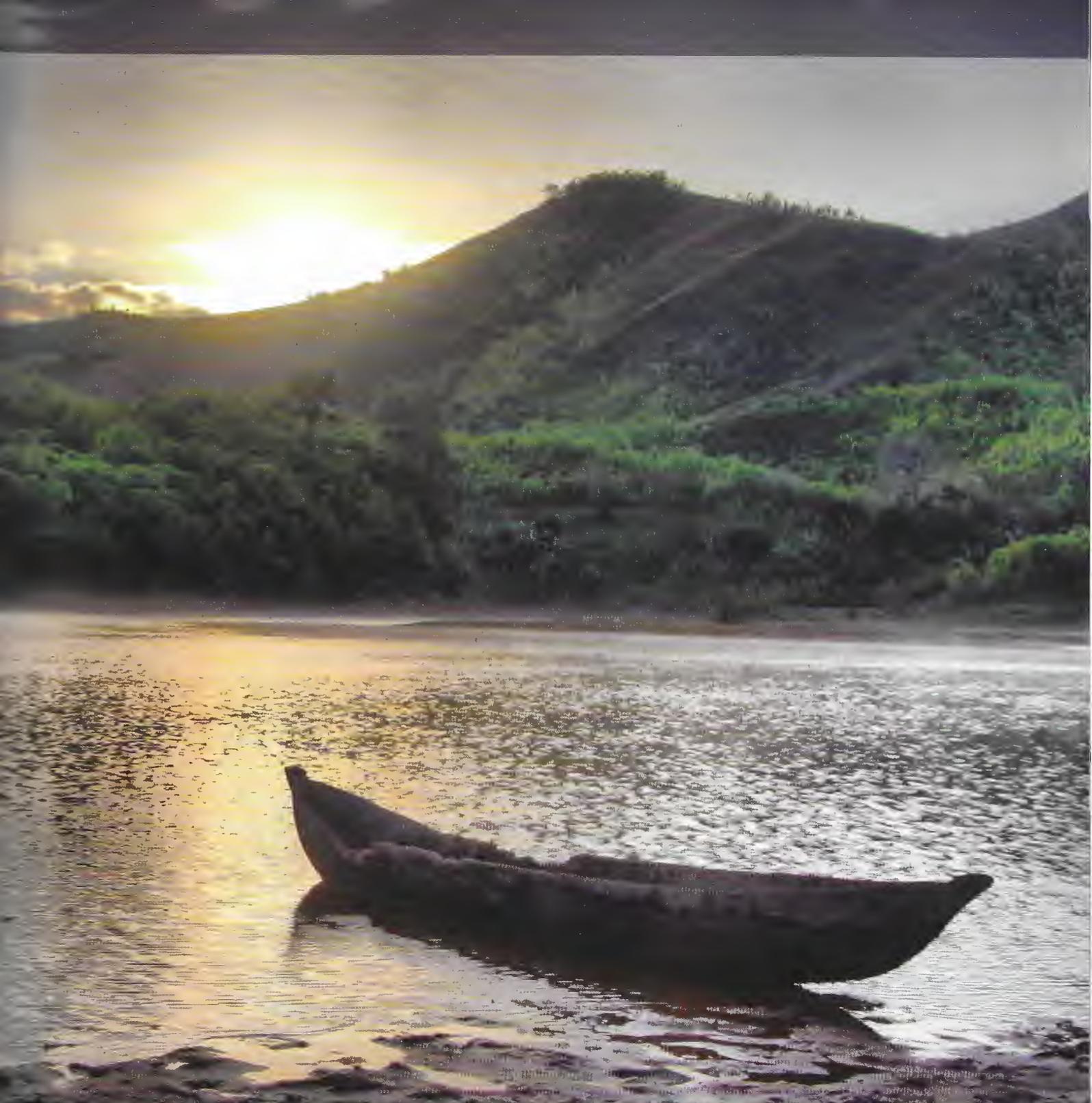
THE ISLAND, AND WHY GO THERE?

Madagascar is amazing. On an island about four times the size of the UK, there is massive biodiversity including lemurs (a cousin of us humans found nowhere else on Earth), lots of chameleons, large bugs, and many other exciting creatures. Madagascar hosts 5% of all life known to man! A strong memory for me is cooking dinner on the riverbank whilst watching fireflies dance.

The road networks are poor but, if you are willing to spend time travelling, there are plenty of rivers that are either paddled very infrequently, or have never been paddled. July is in the dry season so roads become passable allowing access and then egress much further downstream.

We were in contact with a French raft guide called Gilles who runs an adventure sports company on the island. He has a fairly good idea of what has and has not been paddled and could help us with logistics. We did have some concerns about the expedition; Gilles mentioned 'a crocodile issue' in an e-mail, which was a frequent talking point amongst us before we set off! Couple this with the threat of a military coup, as a result of a lack of promised elections, and the idea began to seem quite silly. After the first person booked his flight, one by one, like dominoes, we followed and, by the end of that week, the full team had committed to the trip. It was happening. ►





“We were cold, our sleeping bags and skin were saturated with water. I remember looking at my watch, thinking it must be nearly time to get up? It was 9.15pm - it was going to be a long night!”





THE RIVERS

July being the dry season, creeks are out of the picture but the bigger volume runs are in. The three rivers I paddled during my time there took three or four days each to paddle and at least a day or so to drive into. Gilles organised a bus and driver for us so that we could gain access and so that we had somewhere safe to put our off-the-river kit. Although two of the rivers we intended paddling had been done before we knew nothing about them other than the altitude at the get-ins and get-outs. We did know that they were going to be an adventure!



RIVER 1 - THE IAROKA (50KM)

We paddled this one as a pair before most of our group had arrived. We travelled to it on public transport, which was an adventure in itself! The first section was very easy, which was a relief! In the evening we made camp and slept on an island under the most awesome stars.

It was on this island that it first became apparent that these rivers are not remote, not really. People used our island as a bridge to cross from one bank to the other, saying hello then stopping to stare. All three rivers glistened with gold and were busy with people panning, or farming.

At about lunchtime on the second day we were noticing lots of siphons. The rivers carry massive volumes during the monsoon season and so few rocks are bedded in. Boulders the sizes of buses look fresh, with significant amounts of water flowing beneath them.

We stopped above a gorge section to inspect. The entire river disappeared under boulders. The portaging may have been easier if we had known how far we had to walk, but each time the river came up for air and we put on, it disappeared back underground slightly further downstream. So began a seven hour portage fest. A local man helped us, showing us the best way and helping carry the boats. I think he must have felt a little like people who rescue beached whales. Every time he helped us back to the water and waved us away, he would see us get back out just downstream! We gave him some money for his help, for which he was very grateful.

The Iaroka was a river of mixed character, mainly boulder garden style rapids with long sections of flat. It delivered on adventure but lacked a little on quality white water, we were hopeful for a better experience on the next river.

RIVER 2 – THE FARAVOY (50KM)

We knew this river had been paddled once before, but that the first decent was solo; so much of the white water was left to be run. For this river our group was complete. Our Malagasi, off-the-river-guide was entirely essential, but often frustrating. He was quite adamant that we should be doing the normal rafting run and not the river that we wanted. It was with great relief that we finally got on to our chosen river.

Like all of the rivers it started off flat and easy. It picked up eventually to Grade 2/3, then pool-drop 3/4. We had a cracking first day's boating.

On the river, we would greet people with 'Salam!' Malagasi for 'Hi!' In general people would shout it back, some leaving what they were doing to follow us down the bank and watch us paddle. Some would be visibly frightened, but would laugh when they realised we meant them no harm. Occasionally, especially if people noticed us before we noticed them; they would run in fear, leave their pots and pans and just run away. Apparently, in very rural communities, stories of white men are told in a similar way to our stories of the bogeyman i.e. 'behave or the white man will get you!' I can't know how much truth there was in this, but I do know that frightening people was not part of our plan.

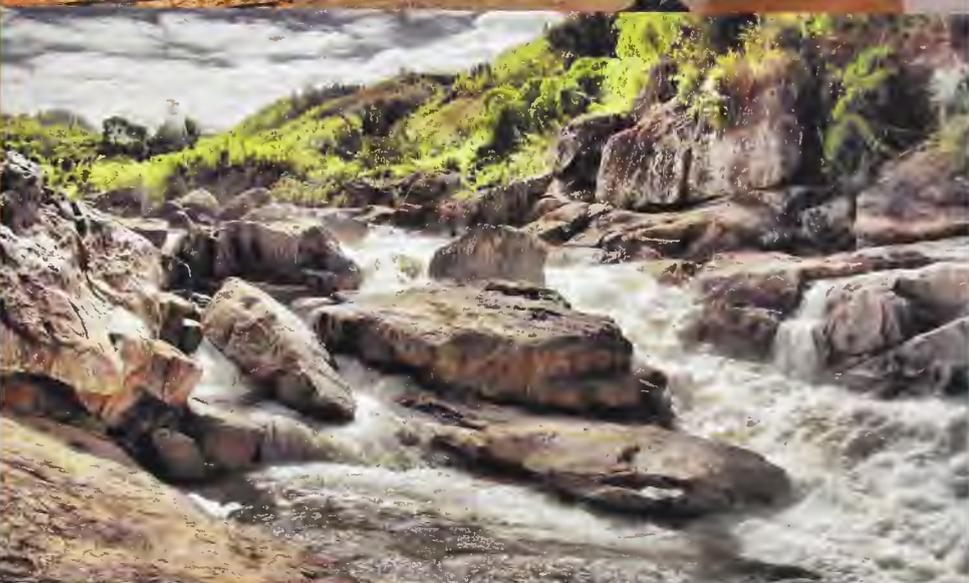
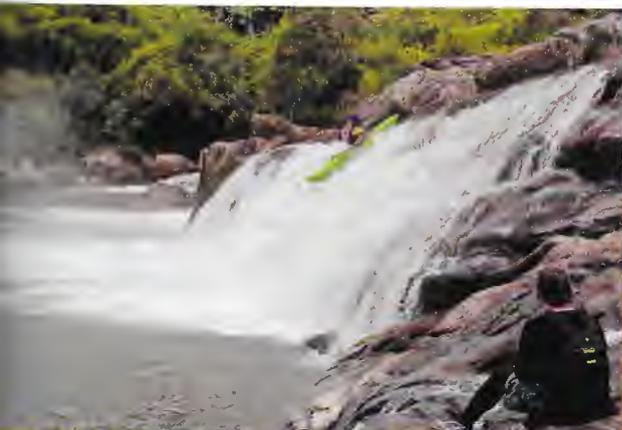
The other, more usual end of the spectrum was the interest. In general we would eat lunch as discreetly as possible on an island. People would paddle over in dugouts to look at us. On one occasion a person swam over to us, fully clothed! Our French was weak, as was theirs, and we didn't speak Malagasi. For this reason

these exchanges quickly grew quite tiring. When we pitched our tents, got changed, cooked, pumped water, chatted, even did nothing, there would be a group of people about 5m away watching us.

This river had some good quality white water, including some long, more-continuous sections. Many of the rapids were more bedrock in nature than we had encountered on the previous river, though siphons were still ever present. On the second day we arrived at a massive horizon line. Knowing the nature of Madagascan rivers, full of siphons, I said to another member of the group, 'what do you think it is?' The sarcastic reply was 'a 20-foot clean waterfall with a rainbow at the bottom!' We laughed. Turns out she wasn't far off, except there wasn't one waterfall... there were two! We rock, paper, scissored for the top one. My brother was the only member of the group who fancied going first on the second. It was exciting running waterfalls with a boat full of kit, so far from the road!

We continued for another two days with easy portages around three boulder chokes, including some good fun, reasonably continuous, read and run sections. One of our team ran a particularly rocky section on his head, but rolled up at the bottom with only a couple of grazes. All in a days work and all part of the fun.

"This was a river with high-quality white water, really good fun. We finished the river a day early, having made only two portages, one of them very run-able."



RIVER 3 – THE SATAHANDRA

Getting to this river involved another couple of days travel, 100Km down a dirt track, in a 4x4. Unlike the other two rivers, as far as we are aware this had never been kayaked (I say kayaked rather than paddled because there are many dugout canoes on the flat sections of all of the rivers). It fell about 200m over 60Km, so we were not expecting anything too difficult. Airing on the side of caution, we thinned out our kit, preparing for the possibility of long portages. I left my tent in favour of sleeping under a tarp; this would allow me to take a bigger share of the group kit. We had four days to paddle this with a day's leeway before the first flight home.

We set off from the road at a small ferry crossing, with a massive crowd watching. Many followed us a long way down the river. People were amazed to see us, and our unusual kit. The river began at about a grade 3, similar in character to wider versions of the Welsh Dee, or low/medium Upper Dart. Everything was inspectable from the boat, there were fewer siphons and we were making great progress.

It gets light at about 6am and dark at about 6pm in Madagascar. There was not much to do on the riverbank, so we often went to bed early. Just after cooking dinner on this first night it began to rain. We sank into our sleeping bags below the tarp and the rain continued. The tarp leaked, it kept leaking all night. Like sleeping under a tap, any exposed skin was dripped on. We were cold, our sleeping bags and skin were saturated with water. I remember looking at my watch, thinking it must be nearly time to get up? It was 9.15pm - it was going to be a long night!

In the morning I put on my wet paddling kit and walked over to look at a more significant rapid. It was a two-metre drop into a collection of holes and stoppers. Multiple lines were possible and by the time I got back I was a little warmer and ready to run it. The morning audience came over to watch and we were on our way. Luckily it was a sunny day so a combination of hanging things out at lunch and an early finish meant we managed to mostly dry off our sleeping kit.

During the day we paddled past a village. 100 people (I counted) left and followed us down the bank along flat water. We arrived at a massive double drop. The first went, but the second was silly. None of us fancied them. Portage. An English speaking local arranged some porters for us in exchange for some money, which made the process much easier.

Further downstream, a local man was frantically shouting at us. He jumped into a dug out and paddled quickly over. He was snarling and clapping his hands together with a worried look on his face. We established that there was either a massive rapid downstream or a crocodile. We had to finish so all I could say was



'Pas de problème' – No problem! With an interested look he must have said something along the lines of 'can I watch?' and followed us 500m of flat further downstream. We soon arrived at the narrow grade 2/3 shoot that was causing all the fuss. He rallied up spectators from the bank who were all suitably impressed when we ran through. Towards the end we also emptied a school, which all came out to watch us paddle a boulder garden grade 4.

This was a river with high-quality white water, really good fun. We finished the river a day early, having made only two portages, one of them very run-able. We waited a full day for our guide to arrive. We ran kayak lessons for the village at the take out, and gave the older ones plenty of opportunity to practise their English. It must have been very confusing to have five strangers turn up in your village from the river and then not to leave for 12-hours!

SHOULD YOU GO?

If you want to go somewhere cheap and good, go to France, Scotland or Italy. If you want an adventure, off the beaten track, go to Madagascar. All three of our rivers had long sections of flat, portages and siphons, all three of our rivers were packed full of memories, stories and adventures.

Madagascar is a country with major rivers that have yet to be paddled. Even some relatively easy rivers are still left to be done. That said, in Madagascar there was always a sense of going into the unknown. Even on a 'classic' river, it is likely that you will be paddling new lines, as you may be only one of a handful of groups to have ever paddled it. It is also quite likely that you will be the only group to paddle it that year - rocks move in the monsoon season, and with them the lines.

"If you want to go somewhere cheap and good, go to France, Scotland or Italy. If you want an adventure, off the beaten track, go to Madagascar!"



ADVICE

Take someone who speaks French - that would help, also take a Malagasi phrase book.

Be prepared to spend a lot of money, flights are about £800, added to insurance, transport, malarials and vaccinations, the costs come thick and fast. Petrol costs the same as in the UK, and the country's biggest bank note is worth £3. It takes some getting used to how quickly a massive wad of cash will disappear!

Be prepared to spend a lot of time travelling. As mentioned, the roads are slow. Even when paddling on the 'beaten track', it is quite beaten. Going anywhere is a slow process.

Use Gilles (www.madamax.com) for logistics and boat hire (10Euros a day), but be very clear on what you want. Plans have a habit of changing, with very little communication. Inspect any repairs made to your boat thoroughly.

Pack for warm weather, a cheap summer sleeping bag was fine to sleep in. Shorty/thermal was fine to paddle in. Be aware the weather is changeable!

Don't worry about crocodiles. Paddling on the east we did not see any (though we are told they are more prevalent on the west).

Go with good friends and be prepared for good times! **CF**

USEFUL INFO

PADDLERS

Rhodri Anderson, Geraint Anderson, Mandy Chan, Daniel Crowley, Josephine Meares and David Sifford.



CHECK OUT THE BEST CANOEING & KAYAKING IMAGES FROM THE SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 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?
Have you got a cracking Canoeing or Kayaking shot that might be a winner in 2014?

Send us your best canoeing or kayaking photo and senior entrants could win a Cotswold Outdoor Voucher while junior winners receive a WHSmith Gift Card. There is a prize for the winner of the year selected from all the winning monthly entries.

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

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 Josephine McEnaney, British Canoe Union National Water Sports Centre, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG12 2LU or email josephine.mcenaney@bcu.org.uk

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

**Not to be used in conjunction with any other offers or discounts. Offer expires 31.01.14. Valid only on production of a BCU membership card at the till point or discount code online.*



SEPT WINNER - Paul Simmonds



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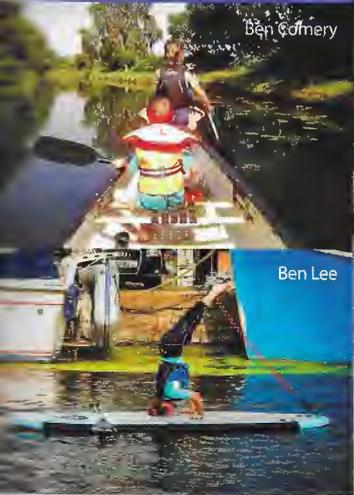
Andy

Andy Kettlewell

Andy Bond



Arran Stephenson



Ben Comery

Ben Lee



Alex Kay



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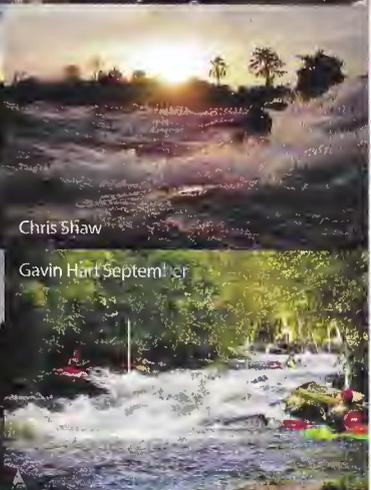
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Gavin Hart September



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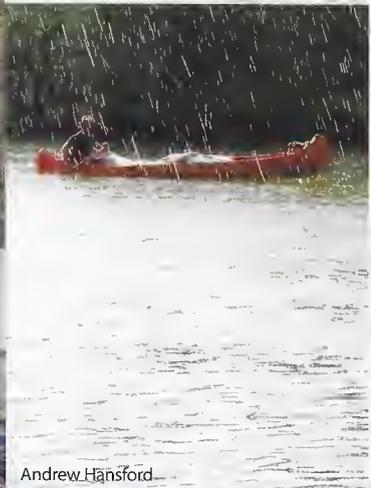
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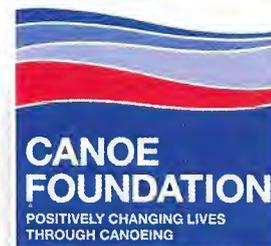


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CASE STUDY: 13TH EASTLEIGH SEA SCOUTS PADDLE FOR GOLD

Water activities have always been a major part of the 13th Eastleigh Sea Scouts program. last year Team GB won Gold and Silver in two Olympic disciplines, Slalom and Sprint, new aims and goals were identified.

“As a group, we wanted to be able to offer a wider range of BCU and Scouting qualifications to demonstrate progress within paddlesport to the young people we work with” said Chris Fawcett, Group Skills Instructor. “From there encourage interest in taking the sport further with day trips, competitions and expeditions. The changes to the BCU 2 Star syllabus meant that access was needed to open canoes and equipment more suited to smaller paddlers, something lacking with our current boats, to allow members to achieve the revised qualification.”

With a grant of £1,000 from the Canoe Foundation, topped up with fundraising efforts from the Scout group and Eastleigh District Scouts, we have been able to make an initial purchase of five new boats, paddles and safety equipment as part of an ongoing development plan. The new equipment includes two dedicated boats for junior paddlers, paddles specifically for smaller paddlers and an open canoe to allow the development of new skills and bring the water more accessible to members of all abilities within the group.

The boats have been put through their paces this year with a busy program allowing the first group of paddlers to achieve their BCU 1 Star awards, with others gaining their Paddlepower Start awards and working on attaining the next level.

“The new shorter boats and paddles made it easier to paddle and less tiring” said Scout, Emma Kane. “This year we started building on various skills and ended this year with a kayaking expedition down the river Hamble. I really enjoyed this expedition as its harder kayaking on a flowing river rather than still water. Overall I really enjoyed this year as it was a change to previous years, learning new skills and improving on our paddling technique and I have now gained my BCU 1 Star.”

Simon Hitchcox, Canoe Foundation Development Officer said, “It gives everyone involved with the charity, great pleasure to get feedback from those who have received grants and hear how our awards have benefited both young and disabled people in the community. Such feedback, coupled with the data from the number of grants awarded, highlights the contribution that funding from the Canoe Foundation can make and I am delighted to see and hear about how groups and individuals have benefited. 13th Eastleigh Sea Scouts is yet another example of the charity’s positive work and therefore it is great to be able to say that through grants such as this we have helped more people access canoeing and enjoy our wonderful sport.

Plans are also in place to allow the Scouts and Cubs to achieve a range of BCU paddling awards, experience paddlesports and to build upon our current coaching team to allow us to provide higher standards and levels of training. In addition to this 13th Eastleigh Scouts are looking to purchase additional equipment through continued fundraising enabling the group to reach its new goals over the coming years.

All the latest news as well as further case studies and details about applying for a Canoe Foundation Grants can be found on the website (www.canoe.foundation.org.uk) while you can also get involved through the CF social media accounts; on both Facebook (www.facebook.com/canoe.foundation) and Twitter (@CanoeFoundation)



RIVERS ACCESS CAMPAIGN

WATERWAYS & ENVIRONMENT

COACHING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

One of the pleasures of paddling, whether it's fast running white water, lowland canal/river/lake systems or the open waters of the coast, for the canoeist is the sheer pleasure of being out amongst our beautiful natural and historic industrial environments both inland and coastal.

As coaches you are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that newcomers and experienced paddlers are trained to a sufficient level to ensure they have the skills to enjoy the sport safely and responsibly. However, ask yourself this, does this extend to teaching people about being environmentally sustainable?

With paddling now becoming more popular, the need for a better understanding of our natural waterways and coastlines has never been greater. With more environmental awareness and knowledgeable coaching team, we can inform others of the fantastic world we paddle through and ensure that they have a responsibility to protect and enjoy the environment.

Not only do we have a responsibility to protect the natural environment and save it for the future but we also need to demonstrate to other users that canoeing is an environmentally benign sport when carried out responsibly. Our leaflet 'You and Your Canoe and the Environment' highlights Canoe England's position for environmentally sustainable paddling.

At Canoe England there is a Waterways and Environment team and part of their role is to promote environmental matters. Their environmental role can be divided into two categories:

1. Protecting and respecting the environment whilst paddling in the natural environment
2. Greening canoe clubs – making canoe clubs think about how they run their clubs in an energy efficient manner.

This can be further broken down in to inland and coastal waters.

Canoe England (indeed canoeing & kayaking in general) has been challenged from a number of different areas in that canoeing can damage the environment, whether it's through seal launching or paddling down a river when water levels have been too low. To defend sustainable paddling it is important that everyone associated with paddling including our coaches has a good understanding of potential environmental issues as it could well impact on where and when you can paddle!

Seal launching is an age old activity however recently we have come to realise that seal launching can potentially do huge damage to banks, vegetation and lichen on rocks.

Why not build your own seal launching point as has been done in partnership with Canoe England, North Pennine AONB and Natural England

Alien species, also known as non-native species, are becoming more and more of an issue as the water in and

around many other countries/continents can contain a number of non-native, or alien, species of plants and animals. Some of these can cause problems to our native species and importantly for us, prevent the use of some waters for recreational purposes as they literally clog up and block the waterway. It costs navigation several million pounds every year to remove and dispose of plants such as Floating Pennywort.

Canoe England has been actively involved in the 'stop the spread' campaign in partnership with a number of environmental and boating organisations. The campaign aims to counter the threat to Britain's economy and wildlife posed by the spread of invasive non-native species such as the 'Killer Shrimp' and the American Signal Crayfish, which have been introduced into the UK from other parts of the world.

Coaches can help pass this message on by promoting the following information. All recreational water users can take some simple steps to help prevent the colonisation of these harmful organisms into our healthy waterways:

- Check equipment and clothing for life, particularly in areas that are damp or hard to inspect.
- Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothing thoroughly.
- If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.
- Dry all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT... INLAND AND ESTUARIES

By following the simple steps below you can ensure your presence is not detrimental to the freshwater environment and minimise and avoid accidentally disturbing wildlife and their habitats. Find out about the area before you go, noting its sensitive places, species and breeding seasons. Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home with you. When clearing litter left by others, handle it with care.

Leave the environment as you find it. Keep noise to a minimum. Do not 'seal' launch or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks. Float your boat for launching, lift out when landing and carry it to and from the water. Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing.

Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points. On rivers, avoid paddling over gravel banks in low water conditions as they may contain fish spawn.

Constantly assess wildlife. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly and clean and dry all your equipment when paddling on different watercourses to stop the spread of alien species.



FEMALE FOCUS

GB CANOEING LAUNCH GIRLS4GOLD

GB Canoeing has launched Girls4Gold: Canoeing, the first in what will be a series of Girls4Gold campaigns, with the aim of discovering athletes who have what it takes to transfer into a new sport and compete in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Girls4Gold: Canoeing is aimed at athletic females aged 15-17 who compete at regional standard and motivated, high-performing women aged 18-25 who compete at national standard, in any sport, and believe they can achieve Olympic success.

GB Canoeing Performance Director John Anderson commented to FOCUS, on the launch of Girls4Gold: Canoeing, "Girls4Gold is an exciting opportunity for GB Canoeing to work in partnership with UK Sport and the EIS to capitalise on the successes we had at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

"Whilst we have some outstandingly talented women already in our sport, as we look beyond Rio and onto Tokyo we want to build greater strength and depth in our talent pool so we can challenge for more medals in more events by 2020.

"Our aspiration is to be the number one Olympic and Paralympic canoeing nation by 2020 so there is no better time to get involved with Sprint Canoeing."

The Performance Pathway Team has run nine national athlete recruitment projects assessing over 7,000 athletes who were previously unknown to the UK World Class system. These projects have resulted in over 100 athletes transitioning into the World Class system, achieving 302 senior international appearances and 100 senior international medals, 38 of which were gold.

Nineteen identified athletes from previous campaigns represented Great Britain at the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games.

For further information and the application form visit: www.uk-sport.gov.uk/talent, with the application process closing at midnight on Sunday 15th December 2013.

WOMEN AND GIRLS INTO SLALOM

Frome Canoe Club noticed a gap in the canoeing market. They decided to plan a women and girls slalom training day and invited all women and girls in the south west. The club were nervous a week beforehand, Would it work? Would it be what the participants expected? Would any ladies come? They needn't have worried!

Twelve participants from around the south west turned up, from far-away Cornwall, through Devon, Somerset and Gloucester.

The day started with a video of the Olympic Women's K1 final. They watched Hannah Craig battle with the water and the gates. Everyone was relieved to know that the River Frome was a gentle, almost flat stretch with only the occasional hazard in the form of a submerged shopping trolley or a stray bramble at the edge to avoid.

There were three groups on the water, each group was tasked to work on a different skills. The focus on the day was to challenge and increase each ladies skill level.

Everyone had opportunities to have a go in slalom boats, including a variety of K1s, C1s and C2s from the clubs fleet of boats.

The day consisted of training all morning, a break for lunch, more training in the afternoon and then finished with a team race. The team race proved to be the highlight of the day. Participants were able to utilize their newfound skills in a competitive environment.

Comments came from many of the participants including 'I wouldn't have come if it had been a mixed gender course!' Frome Canoe Club achieved one of their criteria: Women into Paddlesport!

Three separate ladies asked if the club could do the same day for the men? Apparently their husbands were jealous that the wives were on the course and they wanted to have a go too!

The day was a positive success, and they have already been planning next year's course. Pam Dixon from Frome Canoe Club told FOCUS "The smiles on people's faces told us that this event is worth all the effort."

Several participants left talking about the next slalom competition they were going to enter. For more information about future women and girls events, please keep a keen eye on Frome Canoe club's website.

www.frome-canoe-club.org.uk/

If you feel your club/centre could run a similar women and girls event, please visit www.canoe-england.org.uk/our-sport/women-and-girls/ for resources and ideas.



FOUR NEW AWARDS FOR THE LEE VALLEY WHITE WATER CENTRE

Lee Valley White Water Centre has picked up four new major awards. The centre, which attracts visitors from across the country received the top accolade of Attraction of the Year at the 2013 Essex Tourism & Hospitality Awards as well as winning Small Attraction of the Year.

Since opening in April 2011, the centre has attracted around 290,000 visitors with over 25,000 participants having tried canoeing or kayaking.

Lisa Bone, Visit Essex Strategic Tourist Manager said, "It is great that Lee Valley White Water Centre won the Small Attraction of the Year award and the overall Attraction of the Year award.

"It recognises the hard work that has gone into the venue and acknowledges what a fantastic experience the venue provides."

Having been recognised as the top Attraction in Essex the centre will now compete against other regional winners in the national 2014 Visit England Awards for Excellence.

The design and accessibility of Lee Valley White Water Centre has also been recognised at the IOC/IPC/IAKS Architectural Prizes 2013 in Cologne.

The centre, which was designed by Faulkner Browns Architects, picked up an International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Distinction Award for Accessible Venues as well as an International Olympic Committee (IOC) Bronze award for design and legacy.

The accolades, which are awarded by the International Association for Sports and Leisure Facilities (IAKS) together with the International Olympic Committee

(IOC) and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) are the most important international architecture prizes for sports, leisure and recreational facilities.

Lee Valley White Water Centre Manager Simon Ricketts, who collected the awards said, "We are delighted to receive these accolades. We have worked hard to ensure that our London 2012 venue is accessible for everyone to enjoy white water activities and we're very pleased to have been recognised in this way."

The £6.3 million development work at Lee Valley White Water Centre will be completed by January with new offices, gym facilities and storage for GB Canoeing along with expanded changing & catering facilities to cope with high visitor numbers.

Landscaping work around the courses will also be ready for the start of the 2014 white water rafting season in March, while paddlers will be able to enjoy the improved appearance over winter.

If you're planning a visit why not stay locally at Lee Valley Caravan Park, Dobbs Weir which is surrounded by the tranquil and peaceful Hertfordshire countryside.

For more information on Lee Valley White Water Centre and surrounding accommodation opportunities go to: www.visitleevalley.org.uk or call 08456 770 600.



U CANOE TRAINING

Canoe England ran their first U Canoe Activator Tutor Training course at Nottingham University on 7th October. U Canoe is the new young people's programme for 14-25s that aims to plug the gap in current provision, encouraging new participants to the sport. The programme offers two different ways to achieve this, U Canoe Wired (indoor) and U Canoe Unleashed (on the water) using fun, participant led resource cards.

U Canoe Unleashed can be delivered anywhere where there is access to a suitable waterway for beginners including clubs, centres, uniformed groups and leisure centres. Our indoor kayaking machine based U Canoe Wired sessions can run in virtually any setting including schools, colleges, universities and youth clubs and are led by 14-25 Activators.

The first training day included representation from a wide range of partners and delivery centres including colleges, universities and SteetGames.

Candidates learnt how to use the indoor kayaking machines, the Wired resource cards and opportunities to continue. Comments included, 'I'm hooked' and 'Who knew canoeing could be so fun?'

These enthused tutors are now able to deliver Activator training to selected young people within their delivery centres, by hiring indoor kayaking machines from Canoe England, inspiring them to encourage more to go canoeing, leading onto participation for life.

To find out more about the programme, please contact jack.ford@canoe-england.org.uk or see www.facebook.com/ucanoe or #canoeyourway on Twitter.



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PADDLE-ABILITY

NEW TOOL AVAILABLE FOR COACHES WORKING WITH HEARING IMPAIRED PADDLERS

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) in partnership with Canoe England and several of the UK's leading sports organisations have released a set of British Sign Language video clips to help canoeing become more accessible for deaf children. Featuring key sport words and phrases that have been signed in British Sign Language (BSL), the short films are designed to help coaches communicate with deaf children during training sessions. The video clips can help paddlesport coaches and leaders learn basic, sports related British Sign Language (BSL) to support children with hearing loss were launched in October.

Hayley Jarvis, Head of Inclusive Activities at NDCS, told us: "It's fantastic that the UK's leading sport organisations have supported our ongoing work to break down barriers in sport for children with hearing loss. Involving deaf children in sport is brilliant for their confidence and self-esteem."

"Deafness is not a barrier to taking part in sport. By following simple steps like learning basic BSL signs, leaders and coaches can create a welcoming, deaf-friendly atmosphere in their club. We urge all sport clubs to have a go at learning the signs and create equal opportunities for deaf children to enjoy sport."

There are more than 45,000 deaf children in the UK. With the right support in place, deaf children can thrive and achieve as well as other children. However, without the right support, deaf children are vulnerable to social isolation, low self-esteem and underachievement in school.

NDCS runs the Me2 Deaf-Friendly Project, a project aimed at supporting sport and leisure organisations to include deaf children in their activities, delivering training and offering resources on deaf awareness.

To find out more visit www.canoe-england.org.uk/paddle-ability

GUTLESS KAYAKING

Back in 2010 Canoe Focus included an article about Justin Hansen who paddled from Manchester to London to raise money for St Marks Hospital Charitable Foundation to help raise funds for research into the early detection and treatment of bowel cancer. This year Justin and his team wanted a new challenge paddling from North Yorkshire to Bristol. Due to Crohn's disease Justin had his intestines removed, and since 2007 has been attached to a life support system, which supplies him with intravenous nutrition at all times, even while paddling!

Starting in Skipton on 7th September the challenge took 32 days, Justin wanted to show that it is still possible for a person with a disability to set and achieve personal goals, despite what may appear to be insurmountable obstacles. Highlights of the trip included paddling in a K4 with Olympians Tim Baillie, Liam Heath and Abi Edmonds as well as completing 27-miles in one day on the River Trent with his friend Terry Oliver.

Justin spoke to us about his challenge, "I consider Gutless Kayaking 2013 a success even if it just encourages one person to re-evaluate what is important to them, to reassess what they are capable of and then set about achieving it."

420-miles and 280-locks later in Bristol Justin felt that having the swing bridge on Prince Street, Bristol, opened for his team, disrupting all the traffic, was a great way to complete his challenge. To date Justin and his team have raised £8,250 and are looking forward to their next challenge.

For more information visit www.gutlesskayaking.com



THE CANOE ENGLAND VOLUNTEER AND RECOGNITION AWARDS 2013

The Canoe England Volunteer and Recognition Awards 2013 took place at the East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham on the 12th October. Over 170 volunteers from across the country attended the event and celebrated their achievements together.

There was an extra buzz surrounding the event when the guests were treated to a special surprise when GB Canoeing heroes Etienne Stott, Tim Baillie and Ed McKeever joined in with the celebrations. The three Olympic medallists were also joined by eleven additional athletes from Paracanoe, Slalom, Sprint, Freestyle, Canoe Polo and Wildwater Canoeing, who all managed to make the night even more special.

Comperer for the evening, Mark Shardlow from BBC East Midlands and BCU President Albert Woods OBE welcomed guests to the evening and officially kick started the awards to announce dinner was served! Throughout the meal there was plenty of time for the volunteers to discuss what was happening in their club and to share examples of the many wonderful projects and initiatives that are happening across the country.

The many guests and volunteers were entertained through their supper with a sporting quiz and the excitement didn't stop there, The Canoe Foundation offered raffle tickets for a chance to win fabulous canoeing prizes and raised a spectacular £350. When all the desserts had been cleared and the guests replenished, it was time for the much-anticipated awards to start.

David Gent, Chair of the English Council and Vice President of the BCU, Jeanette Chippington and Nick Heald presented the first set of awards, and with no one knowing who had won any of the awards, the anticipation continued to grow as each nominee was read out by legends of our sport.

David Gent brought matters to a close and afterwards the volunteers were able to complete a magical evening by having their photos taken with the GB Canoeing champions.

A big thank you from Canoe England to all those that attended the event, nominated volunteers for the awards and contributed to making the night so special.

"The three Olympic medallists were also joined by eleven additional athletes from Paracanoe, Slalom, Sprint, Freestyle, Canoe Polo and Wildwater Canoeing, who all managed to make the night even more special."





Canoe Foundation Young Volunteer of the Year - presented by David Gent, Jeanette Chippington and Nick Heald

Jack Luckhurst - Tamar Canoe Association

Runners up: Kayleigh Nicholson (City College Norwich) and Tom Leonard (Pathfinders Youth Canoe Club)

Canoe Foundation Impact on Disability - presented by David Gent, Jeanette Chippington and Nick Heald

Peter Mansell - Basingstoke & Dean Canoe Club

Runners up: Colin King (Basingstoke & Dean Canoe Club) and Tim Scott (Norwich Canoe Club)

Ruth Holdway Community Volunteer of the Year - Presented by Dave Whiston, Jon Schofield and Liam Heath

Helen Hoskin - (Birmingham Canoe Club (BCC))

Runners up: Julie Hicks (Norwich Canoe Club) and Claire Milner (North Avon Canoe Club)

Performance Coach of the Year - Presented by Jon Schofield and Liam Heath

Dyson Pendle - (Norwich Canoe Club).

Waterways and Environment Volunteer - Presented by Claire Mitchell

May Block (Cambridge Canoe Club)

Coach of the Year - Presented by Hannah Brown

Liz Murnaghan (Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club)

Runners up: Catherine (Rebecca) Jones (Kool Kayakers Canoe Club) and Paul Tuffin (Holme Pierrepont Canoe Club & Nottingham Scouts)

Education Award - Presented by Clare O'Hara

David McCarthy (Viking Kayak Club & Sharnbrook School)

Runners up: Paul Meares (Manvers Waterfront Boat Club)

Event Volunteer - Presented by Rachel Cawthorn and Ed McKeever

Colin Woodgate (Proteus Canoe Club)

Runners Up: Martyn Setchell (Canoe Slalom) and Vicky Metcalfe (Pangbourne Canoe Club)

Club of the Year - Presented by Nigel Mills, Rachel Cawthorn and Ed McKeever

Shropshire Paddlesport Club

Runners Up: Lincoln Canoe Club and Falcon Rowing & Canoe Club

Centre of the Year - Presented by Nigel Mills, Etienne Stott and Tim Baillie

Whitlingham Outdoor Education Centre

Runners Up: Canoe Kayak Trader at the Leam Boat Centre

Outstanding Contribution - Presented by Etienne Stott and Tim Baillie

Winners: Raymond Bond, Alan Fisher, Alastair Yates, Joe Stalker, Anthony Morgan, David Perry, Alexandr Nikonorov, Peter Thorn, Tashfeen Khan Davis and Mark Delaney

BCU Award of Merit - Presented by Albert Woods

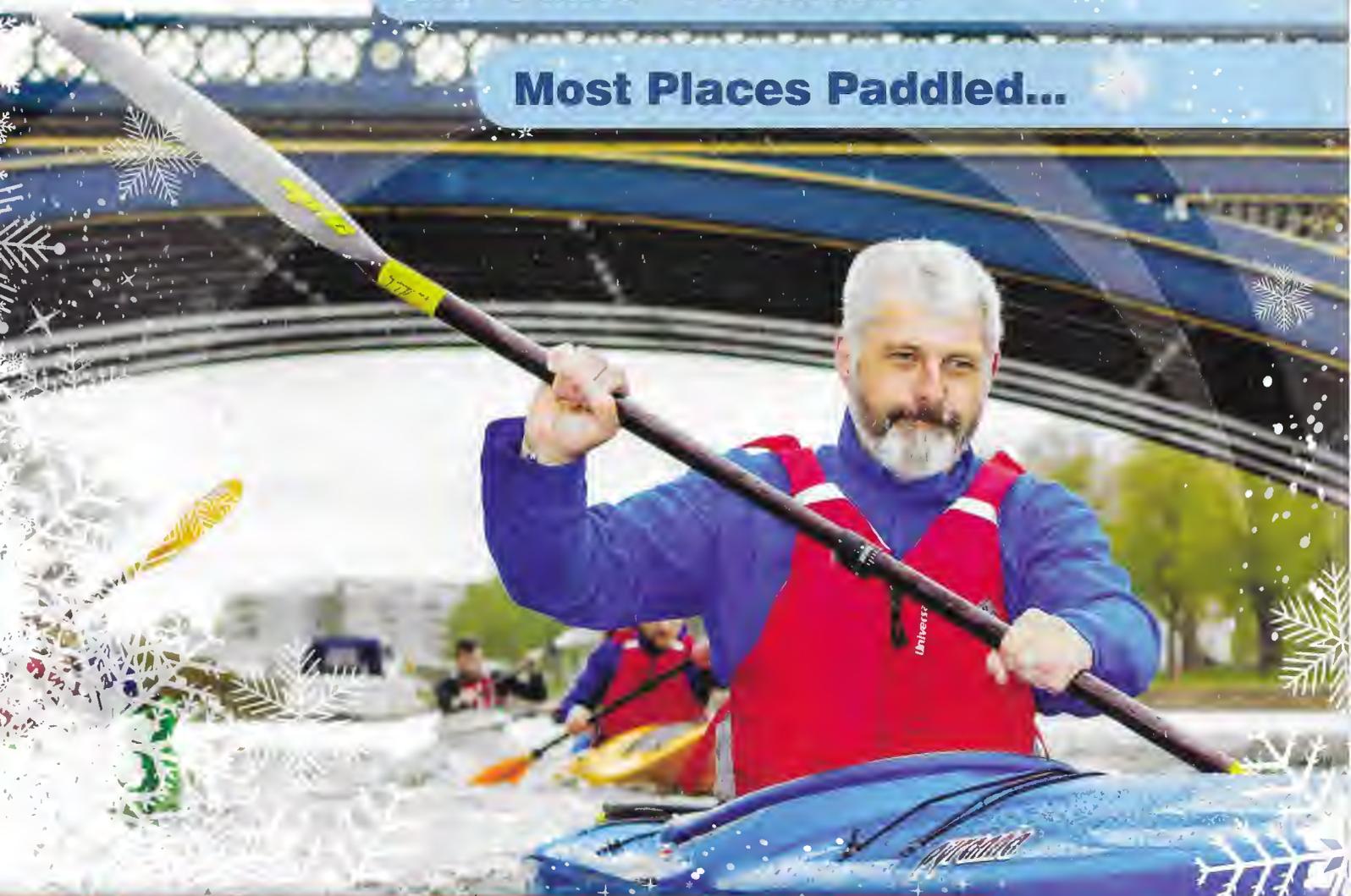
Christine Laws



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Most Miles Paddled...

Most Places Paddled...



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2. Most Places Paddled

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For more information or to sign up, visit the club section at:
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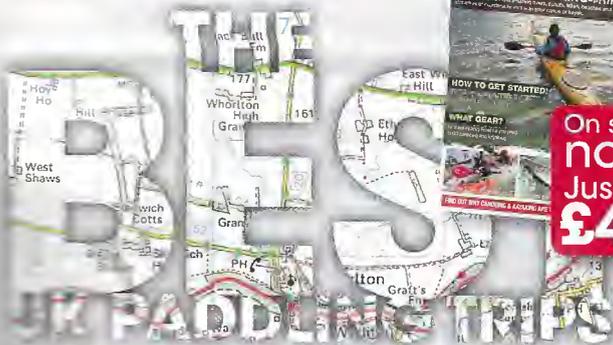
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