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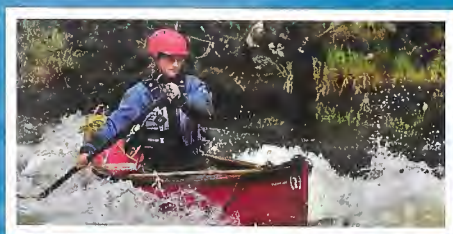
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PLAS Y BRENNIN
www.pyb.co.uk/bcu

Welcome

to the February issue of Canoe Focus

It's a little late now to wish you all a Happy New Year, but I do hope you've had a happy and healthy start to this year, with plenty of paddling too!

It's hard to believe that we're already a month into another year but, as always, there's plenty to look forward to where canoeing and kayaking are involved and a lot of it is right here, in the UK!

As we begin to look for signs of spring, we have the GB Canoeing Slalom Selection Trials at the Lee Valley White Water Centre in March, followed by the ever-growing National Go Canoeing Week in May. Throughout the summer there's the series of Canoe Sprint Selection Regattas in Nottingham and at the beginning of June, the Lee Valley White Water Centre will host the ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup.

Before any of that though, we have the BCU AGM, which is taking place on Saturday the 8th March from 2pm at the Cardiff International White Water Centre. Included in with this issue are the Agenda, the Voting by Proxy form and the Abridged Audited Accounts, for year ending 31st October 2013.

Also included in this month's magazine is a brief summary about proposed changes to the BCU Board, prepared by Andy Maxted, Canoe England Representative to the BCU Board. Please take a few moments to read through this.

We also have loads of great articles that we hope will inspire and help you get out on the water in 2014. We have a guide to some of our favourite Midlands' paddling spots, some useful technique articles and a fantastic write-up from the SAS Hurley Classic Rodeo event – Enjoy!

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue of Canoe FOCUS. We always enjoy hearing from you, our readers and members, so don't hesitate to get in touch and share your stories with us.

Drop us a line at: canoeingnews@bcu.org.uk

Until next time, happy paddling

Paul

Paul Owen, Chief Executive.

"It's hard to believe that we're already a month into another year but, as always, there's plenty to look forward to where canoeing and kayaking are involved and a lot of it is right here, in the UK!"



HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

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

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

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

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

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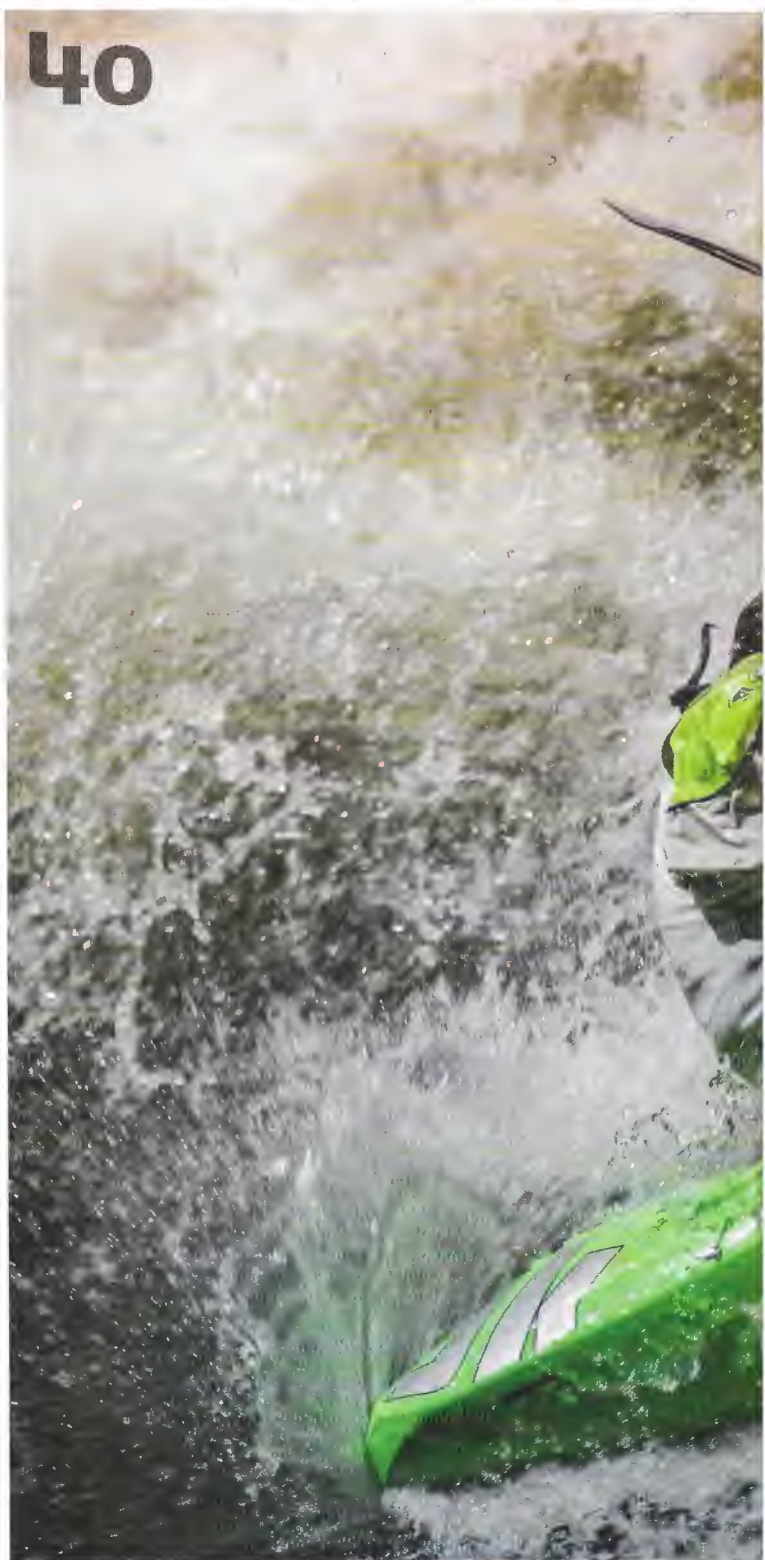


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Front cover: Spring time is an ideal time to start planning your paddling adventures, both home and away. Colin Fisher enjoys some early springtime adventure in the French Alps. **Image:** J Smith

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LEE VALLEY WHITE WATER CENTRE TO HOST 2014 ICF WORLD CUP

The world's top canoe slalom athletes will return to Lee Valley White Water Centre next summer after the London 2012 Olympic venue was confirmed as host for the first race of the 2014 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup Series (6-8 June 2014). It forms part of UK Sport's Gold Event Series, an ambitious programme to bring up to 70 world class sporting events to the UK by 2019 to help build a strong legacy from the outstanding success of London 2012.

The world class Lee Valley venue will stage the first of the five events on the 2014 World Cup calendar before the centre comes back into the spotlight in 2015 when it holds the ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships (16-20 September). British Canoe Union CEO Paul Owen told FOCUS, "Bringing major events to the UK is hugely important for our athletes, for the venue's local community and of course to inspire a new generation of canoeists.

"The BCU is delighted that Lee Valley White Water Centre is holding the 2014 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup. I have no doubt it will be a hugely popular event and I am sure it will keep alive the magic we experienced during London 2012."

The Lee Valley White Water Centre comprises a technically demanding 300m Olympic standard competition course with a 5.5m descent and a 160m Legacy Loop with a 1.6m descent. It is the base for GB Canoeing's slalom team, most notably C1 and C2 World Champion David Florence, his C2 partner Richard Hounslow and European Champion Fiona Pennie.

Since Team GB won gold and silver medals at London 2012 the centre has continued to evolve. Over £6 million has been invested into new training facilities, an elite centre, additional car parking and landscaping to enhance the experience for paddlers and spectators.

Lee Valley has developed a number of successful legacy projects and is used for a wide variety of activities involving participants from complete beginners to elite athletes. Since the London Games it has attracted some 290,000 visitors.

ICF President and IOC Member José Perurena also spoke to us about Lee Valley World Cup, "It is fantastic that we are returning to the home of the 2012 London Olympic Games for the 2014 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup. It demonstrates that our sport is truly benefiting from the Games legacy and maximising the facility's potential to host world class competition.

"I have no doubt that the event will be a huge success and that the technically demanding course at Lee Valley White Water Centre will, once again, test the world's best paddlers.

"Being able to open the 2014 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup series at an Olympic venue is special and I am looking forward to re-living the amazing atmosphere that was created during the Games."

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority Chief Executive Shaun Dawson commented, "We're thrilled to be hosting the ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup – the first major international competition since the Games – at Lee Valley White Water Centre in 2014.



Slalom Selection. Image by AE Photos

BRIGHT OUTLOOK FOR CANOEING IN ENGLAND

Evidence points towards a healthy picture of regular canoeing participation in England. Figures from a range of sources such as; trade canoe & kayak equipment sales, Canoe England membership and general participation at clubs and centres across the country, continue to demonstrate positive upward trends and little sign of slowing.

Sport England's recently released Active People Survey results reflect a testing start to the year (poor weather over the winter and the worst spring in 50 years are likely to have played a significant role in the fall of weekly participation figures), but this does not seem to have affected the long term trend of canoeing's growth with strong participation through the summer making up for the poor start.

A contributing factor has been the success of Canoe England's National Go Canoeing Week. Providing a boost to participation figures, the nine-day event backed up by a promotional campaign drove record numbers of people to the Go Canoeing website, enabling hundreds of participants to try the sport for the first time and creating opportunities for long term engagement with canoeing.

With some exciting new developments in the pipeline for 2014 it's anticipated that canoeing, the country's most popular watersport will continue to soar.

Sue Hornby, Canoe England Development Director commented to FOCUS, "We are pleased with indications that our initiatives are having an impact in increasing regular participation and that despite a disappointing start to the year, canoeing continues to be the first choice watersport for many.

"Feedback from providers and the trade show that this summer has performed strongly, that the seasonality of canoeing is extending and that people continue to regularly participate in canoeing. We have a number of exciting new developments for 2014 which we anticipate will continue to boost the sport."

"Evidence points towards a healthy picture of regular canoeing participation in England. Figures from a range of sources such as; trade canoe & kayak equipment sales, Canoe England membership and general participation at clubs and centres across the country, continue to demonstrate positive upward trends and little sign of slowing."



"During London 2012 the centre welcomed around 55,000 spectators who were privileged to witness Team GB's amazing performance in achieving gold and silver in the canoe slalom event and I'm sure this event will also be a big draw for sports fans across the country.

"Since the Games we've seen many new paddlers taking up the sport after seeing success at elite level and this World Cup will inspire even more people to come to the centre and get involved in paddle sports and other white water activities."

UK Sport Director of Major Events Simon Morton concluded, "The 2014 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup will be the first major international event at Lee Valley White Water Centre since London 2012, and we are delighted to welcome the international canoeing family back to one of our legacy venues.

"GB Canoeing has enjoyed fantastic success in 2013, including the World Championship double by David Florence, and this event will be a good platform to carry that success forward in 2014 as we continue on the Road to Rio."

Tickets for the Lee Valley World Cup will go on sale in February.

In March sports fans can see Britain's top paddlers in action when Lee Valley hosts GB Canoe Slalom 2014 Selection Trials (28-30 March 2014).

Tickets for the 2014 Canoe Slalom Selection Trials are now on sale visit ticketmaster.co.uk or GB Canoeing for more info.

GO THE EXTRA MILE 3RD MONTGOMERY CANAL TRIATHALON

The Montgomery Canal Triathlon takes place on the 10th May this year and challenges participants to cycle, canoe and hike the 35-mile length of the canal in one day. Starting in Newtown, the original destination of the canal, entrants will cycle 13-miles to Welshpool along the re-surfaced towpath. The first part of the canal is filled in, until you reach Freestone Lock after which it is in water to the Border at Llanymynech.

For canoes the action starts at the wharf in Welshpool, with entrants paddling 11-miles, and negotiating nine locks and three road crossings, before reaching the Stables at Llanymynech.

The last section of the Triathlon is over the Border into Shropshire. Walkers start along the short length used by the Duchess Countess Trust who run the George Watson Trip boat, but then the canal is dry to Crickheath. The next half mile is the subject of the second round of an HLF bid next December, followed by the newly restored pound to Redwith Bridge, which volunteers from the Shropshire Union Canal Society have re-built over the last five years, handing back the site to Canal and River Trust on the week-end of the Triathlon. The towpath has been resurfaced for most of the remaining seven miles of restored canal to the locks at Welsh Frankton where the Montgomery canal branches off the Llangollen, so entrants will come across narrowboats at their moorings and boaters exploring the canal to Gronwen.

The event is organised in support of the Maesbury Canal Festival when over 30 boats will visit the site at Canal Central tearoom on September 5th to 7th.

All entrants who complete a section will receive a commemorative medallion made from local slate. The medallions will be printed in gold for entrants who complete all three sections, silver for those that complete two, and bronze when only one section is completed.

The Montgomery Canal Triathlon is organised by the Friends of the Montgomery Canal, and the Shrewsbury and North Wales branch of the IWA, and is supported by the new Canal & River Trust.

Montgomery Canal Triathlon
Saturday May 10th 2014
LET'S GO AN EXTRA MILE
 Complete one section or attempt all three

For further details contact:-
 Peter & Judith Richards, Canal House,
 Morton, Oswestry SY10 8BQ
 Telephone 01691 831455
peter_richards42@btinternet.com

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 from
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 Welshpool to
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Bikes, Boats 'n' Boots

The first event won the Recreation and Tourism Category of the National Waterways Renaissance Awards in 2013.

Details of sponsorship, entry details and bookings for the event can be obtained from – Peter & Judith Richards, Canal House, Morton, Oswestry SY10 8BQ. Tel 01691 831455, email peter_richards42@btinternet.com or download from the Maesbury Canal Festival website.

NEW JOINT MUSIC LICENSE FOR AMATEUR SPORTS CLUBS

PPL and PRS for Music are committed to simplifying music licensing and from 1 January 2014, PPL and PRS for Music will introduce a new joint license for eligible amateur sports clubs, which will be administered by PPL. Historically, many amateur sports clubs did not require a license from PPL when using recorded music. Following a change in law, amateur sports clubs are now, in almost all cases, required to hold a PPL license as well as a PRS for Music license. As part of this process PPL and PRS for Music have been in discussions with the Sport and Recreation Alliance and have each created a tariff for the new joint license to help simplify music licensing for amateur sports clubs.

See more at: www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/news/19-12-2013/new-joint-music-licence-amateur-sports-clubs#sthash.SKv11357.dpuf

PLEASE HELP UPDATE THE MAP!

The Canoe & Kayak Map of Britain was produced two years ago with the help of many members and Waterways Advisers. It has been a big success and the publishers, Rivers Publishing, are now producing a new edition for this Spring. Please let them know of anything that needs updating - any significant contribution receives a credit and a complementary map. See www.riverspublishing.co.uk for more details



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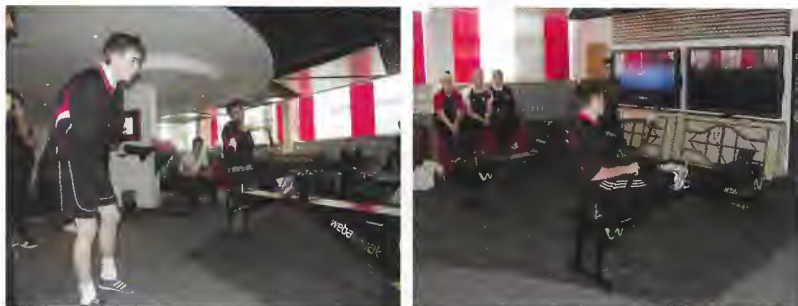
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YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS

News From Your Region

CENTRAL



CITY COLLEGE NORWICH CANOE THEIR WAY

It was Christmas come early in November, when the College Sports Maker, Chloe McMorran, took delivery of two shiny new Webakayak Indoor Kayaking Machines for the start of a twelve week period of delivering U Canoe Wired at the college.

Before the students could be let loose on the machines, Chloe, who has completed the Activator Tutor course for U Canoe Wired, handpicked a core of students from within the college and set up an Activator training course. As the whole ethos for U Canoe is for it to be run by young people for young people, all of the potential Activators were between 17 and 25, with a lot of them already attending sports related courses.

Once they had completed their safety brief and the other technicalities relating to the use of the Indoor Kayaks, the fun could begin! A team race was chosen from the activity cards supplied with the equipment, and battle commenced. The aim was to race for 10 minutes in relay, changing as many times as they liked, but everyone needed to have a go. In the end it was no contest, as the burly rugby playing lads team were no match for the finesse of the mainly female team, who had the better technique.

U Canoe is being rolled out at colleges across the country, and if your college or university in the East of England is interested in joining in the fun, please contact jeff.toser@canoe-england.org.uk . #canoeyourway



ESSEX CLUB ACHIEVES TOP CLUB

Canoe England is delighted that Tendring Canoe Club recently received their Top Club Award from Iris Johnson the Mayoress of Walton and Frinton, with Haley Chapman from Active Essex attending to represent the County Sports Partnership. Tendring Canoe Club meets at Walton and Frinton swimming pool on a Saturday evening throughout the winter and at a variety of outdoor locations throughout the rest of the year. They have worked for a year to achieve this prestigious award, which shows their commitment to the local community and the sport of canoeing and kayaking. They now have nearly 100 members from the age of 8 to 80 and run regular coaching sessions at the pool and Go Canoeing sessions outside throughout the year.

For further information please contact sandy110862@hotmail.co.uk



FESTIVE TWILIGHT FANCY DRESS PADDLE THROUGH NORWICH

Norwich Canoe Club know how to race hard, which is why they are 2013 triple National Champions having won the MacGregor Paddle, the National Marathon Championships and the Hasler Finals but they certainly haven't forgotten how to have fun as well. Over forty paddlers in twenty boats took part in their annual twilight Christmas fancy dress paddle through Norwich. Passersby were treated to the amazing sight of scores of boats decorated with a myriad of Christmas lights being paddled by elves, Father Christmases, fairies, reindeer and even some penguins all singing carols as they made their colourful way along the River Wensum past Riverside to Bishop's Bridge and back again. "It's the very, very best thing about Christmas," said Leon Symonds who is 10 and won the junior prize for the best costume.





GB YOUTH RAFTING SECURE THREE MEDALS AT THE IRF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN NEW ZEALAND

In February 2013 a group of seven young paddlers were bought together from a local activity centre in Hertfordshire (the Herts Young Mariners Base) to form a Rafting Team to compete at a selection process at the Lee Valley White Water Centre. This team of seven boys aged 16-19 had never paddled together before and thought they 'would give it a go'. The team started to train together and as a result stormed the selection event by beating every other team. They then went on to compete in the final selection event, which was held in Matlock, Derbyshire in May where again they produced astounding results. They were up against nine other teams all of whom were older and just to make things interesting included the current GB senior ladies team who have been previous medal holders.

Such was the team's performance over the selection weekend they were invited to accompany the junior, senior men's, ladies and masters teams to compete and represent their country at the 2013 International Rafting Federation World Championships taking place in New Zealand at the end of 2013. They had now earned the title of the first ever GB Youth Rafting Team. The team are Andrew Skinner (Enfield), Sam Daley, Elliot Taylor, Elliott Woodman and Matt Bishop (Cheshunt), Ralph Hall and Jacob Hussain (Tring).

The team and accompanying parents were told that for the team to compete they would be looking at an approx cost of £2,000 per team member to cover entry fee, accommodation, flights and GB branded kit and they had only six months to do it in. Malcolm Ferris-Lay, the team manager and Wendy Daley, the team administrator, looked at each other shrugged and said 'that's doable' and there and then set about finding £20,000.

Initial enquiries to seek funding were disappointing as there was nothing available from either government sources or sports governing bodies. Fortunately the fund was kicked off with three donations from a group of businessmen whose interest had been tickled by the team's story and the Hertfordshire community then embraced this team, rolled up it's sleeves determined to get them to New Zealand.

The team trained hard at the Lee Valley White Water Centre for the six months up to the Championships. Again the LVWWC supported the team and encouraged them in all their training. Pas Blackwell from the Centre, who is also a member of the senior men's rafting team along with Ash Roper and Matt Blue, also from the men's team, worked hard with the boys over the preceding months to build up their stamina, fitness and strength for the task ahead.

In all five teams (Youth, Junior, Senior Men's and Women's and Masters) from Great Britain flew to New Zealand to take part in the World Championships and each team would compete in four races, sprint, head to head, slalom and down river. The Youth team's first two races were the sprint and head to head and first time out they won the silver having been beaten by the Turkish team by just 1 second. The ladies team had even greater success in their sprint race where they secured the gold. The second silver for the youth team came in the head to head again just beaten by Turkey. Finally it was the Down River race, a gruelling 45 minute slog through incredibly rough and challenging water in which no GB team had ever secured a medal. The team came third, which gave them their bronze to add to their two silvers and to declare that they were raft-racing novices no more!

FORMULA ONE TEAM HQ GET WIRED!

Our U Canoe Project Officer delivered Wired training to Northamptonshire Sport and Mercedes AMG Petronas Formula 1 at their Headquarters recently. This formed part of the County Sports Partnership's (CSP) Workplace Health initiative, engaging local businesses into logging their activity and competing in corporate challenges. The CSP hired two Indoor Kayaking Machines from Canoe England through the new Young People's Programme U Canoe Wired and will monitor all participants coming through the initiative, including those aged 16-25. A challenge of how far you can paddle in 1 minute has been set and the winner of each company plus a friend will receive a free Starter Session with Northampton Canoe and Kayak Club, which will be complemented by a number of Starter Sessions ending in a Go Slalom night as part of Canoe England's Go Canoeing programme. Signs are, the Mercedes HQ gym team are having so much success, they want to lease the machines should it continue. Let's hope Nico Rosberg and Lewis Hamilton are about to encourage young workers to canoe their way!

BISHOPS STORTFORD - WINTER SERIES MARATHON

There was a massive turnout for the Winter Series marathon at Bishops Stortford. The club welcomed 170 entrants to their race on the River Stort at the end of last year - the largest number to attend an event at this venue to date.

The race nearly had to be cancelled when the severe storms of the previous week damaged many trees along the river, in particular one at the clubhouse, which brought down the overhead power lines with it. However, prompt action by the line engineers and CRT enabled the race to go ahead with just a few extra precautions.

The paddlers competed over three distances in 16 different classes. As well as several classes for racing kayaks organised by age and sex, the series includes classes for Men's and Women's GP boats and for touring and marathon Canadian canoes.

Keith Moule of Chelmsford CC set a new course record over the longest distance (7 miles and 6 portages) with his time of 54:30 in the Men's K1 race. On the same course, the senior K2 class was particular popular, with 19 crews participating, making for a spectacular start, and this was won by Steve Moule & Peter Wilkes of Chelmsford (58:40). Vet Men's K1 was won by Danny Beazley of Leaside CC (59:46).

Chelmsford paddlers also set new course records on the short course (3 miles, 1 portage) for both the girls and boys - Emma Russell (u14 F K1, 28:09) and Tim Gannicott Porter (u14 M K1, 27:52). Toby Booth of Bishops Stortford CC won the u12s K1 race in 34:21 against a large field of 15 paddlers. Barking & Dagenham club's John Green & Almir Balla took gold in the Touring C2 class (35:59).

Eleven different clubs were represented. Whilst Chelmsford CC dominated the race and were the overall winners on total points, it was the youngsters of Kimbolton School who took the lead for the Dick Grieve trophy (based on points scored by novice juniors). There were also individual triumphs for some of the smaller teams, with wins for Leanne Brown of Maidstone CC in Ladies K1 (46:13) and Gina Guscott & Amanda Morris of Leighton Buzzard in Ladies K2 (54:33), both classes racing over the middle distance course (5 miles, 3 portages).

The race was the opening event of the Winter Series of marathon races with further races taking place at Barking, Cheshunt, Chelmsford and Cambridge. The final race, at Leaside (in the Lee Valley Park) on 9th March 2014 will also see the award of trophies for individual and club performance across the whole series.

LINCOLN FLYING THE FLAG FOR PADDLE-ABILITY

Lincoln CC is the latest club to be recognised for its efforts in making our sport accessible to all. By adding Paddle Ability Top Club to their already 'Gold' standard of Club Mark accreditation, they are setting a fine example of high standards of canoeing provision.

Lincoln now has a dedicated team of volunteers who look after the Paddle-Ability agenda, establishing links with local groups, providing representation on the committee and also ensuring the whole club is as welcoming and accommodating to people with disabilities. Paddle-Ability representatives Mark Griffin and Lisa Sumner were really pleased to gain the standard. Mark told FOCUS, "We are really proud to have been awarded Paddle-Ability status, we have lots of things planned for 2014. Paddle-Ability is now just part of what the club does and everyone is right behind it". If your club is interested in striving for Paddle-Ability Top Club status, contact your local Development Officer for more information.

PADDLE TO THE HEART 2014

Once again the West Midlands Regional Development team is organising its highly successful Paddle to the Heart event in Birmingham. The event will take place on Sunday the 8th June 2014 and it is hoped that paddlers from around the region and beyond will Go Canoeing. Details of the routes will be published in Spring 2014, but the meeting place in the centre of Birmingham at Brindley Place will remain the same. RDT Chair Clare Morgan and founder of the event would encourage clubs to get the date in their paddling diaries: "It's a lovely day out regardless of what you paddle or your ability. Last year it was amazing to see over 100 paddlers in the centre of Birmingham. Hopefully 2014 will be even better!"

MIDLANDS RDT'S RECOGNISE POSITIVE PUBLICITY FOR CANOEING

The East Midlands Regional Development team has taken a lead from colleagues in the West Midlands by establishing a new Award in the region, recognising clubs who have made best efforts in raising the profile of canoeing. The West Midlands Team has been presenting their coveted Geoff Sanders Award for a number of years, previous winners being Royal Sutton Coldfield CC, Trentham and Solihull CC amongst others. A panel of judges from the RDT decides annually on the club who has generated the most positive publicity and coverage of the sport, through newspaper and media coverage. They are then awarded the unique hand crafted trophy, which is a wooden replica of a Rob Roy Canoe. Now the East Midlands has taken this idea on themselves and will be awarding their own prize in 2014. West Midlands RDT President John Heath recently donated a copy of the West Midlands trophy to the East saying "Geoff Sanders was a real inspirational figure in canoeing and he was always passionate about doing as much as we can to publicise our sport. I'm sure he would be proud to see other regions supporting this idea and rewarding people for their efforts". The East Midlands Award is yet to be named, but further details will be available in the Spring.

OLYMPIC LEGENDS LIGHT UP COMMUNITY EVENT

Under the glow of the Gold painted street lamp in the Meadows area of Nottingham, local residents were treated to a visit from GB Olympic gold medallists Tim Ballie and Etienne Stott at the Arkwright Meadows Community Gardens in December 2013. The event, called 'Garden Lights' attracted families from all over the city to come along for an evening of music, food, fireworks and of course, canoeing! People visiting the event were encouraged to have a go on the ergo machines, which were alongside the street lamp painted Gold in honour of their local 2012 heroes. On hand to help were volunteers from Nottingham Kayak Club who are based a short distance away over Trent Bridge. Club Chairman Peter Ilett was pleased to be supporting the event and told FOCUS, "It's really nice to come to events like this and bring the canoe club closer to people who might not otherwise know we are just round the corner. Hopefully some of the young people have been inspired this evening and they might come along and have a go with us on the river in the near future".

The two young winners of the 50m challenge took home signed t-shirts by Tim and Etienne, but many more were inspired by the Olympic duo as they showed off their gold medals and signed autographs for all the young children who took part



THE NORTH

REASEHEATH STUDENTS RIVER WEAVER KAYAK CHALLENGE

Every year the Student Association at Reaseheath College raise money for a charity, this year they have chosen St Luke's Cheshire Hospice. For their first fundraising event, the students decided to use kayak ergos to kayak 50-miles, which is the length of the River Weaver, which flows through Nantwich. Reaseheath College borrowed two kayak ergos machines from Canoe England in order for the students to complete this challenge. The students set up the machines in the canteen and they had challenged themselves from 10-4pm to complete the 50-miles. There was a core team of ten students over the course of the day that did shifts on the kayaking machines as well as other students also having a go on the machines as well. In total around 25 students took part in the challenge. The students did a fantastic job and completed the 50-miles in less than 5 hours - what a great achievement.

What was even better is that the students raised just under £90 for St Luke's, which is a brilliant start to this year's fundraising. Sarah Ruff, Reaseheath College Sport Maker told FOCUS, "This was a fantastic effort from the students and they got brilliant support from their peers. The Student Association is already looking forward to their next challenge. A big thanks to Canoe England for supporting this challenge"



LIVERPOOL CANOE CLUB GAIN TOP CLUB GOLD

Liverpool Canoe Club was formed in 2008 and has grown in size ever since. In December 2013 the club achieved its Top Club Gold status. LCC now has over 500 active members paddling regularly both at their base at Liverpool Marina and at three different pools on Merseyside. They are particularly active in sea kayaking, white water, surf, open boating (canoes) and canoe polo. They also have an active BCU lifeguard unit that provides safety cover at many local and national open water swim events. The club has a very active junior section and runs many fun events and has regular talks and presentations at the conference suite at Liverpool Marina. They also support Halewood Activity Base (a local disabled group) to run paddleability sessions using club equipment in a local swimming pool.

For more information on the club look at www.liverpoolcanoecub.co.uk

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A TRIP FROM WIDNES TO GOOLE

The expedition started at the end of the Bridgewater canal in Widnes overshadowed by the Runcorn Bridge. All five of the team set off together in two tandem canoes and one solo heading towards Manchester. The day was sunny but still slightly cold as we picked up the pace knowing that we had a long way to go on our five day expedition. Our route took us past Old Trafford and through the centre of Manchester where, due to the lack of towpaths, we were forced to portage down the main roads much to the amusement of the locals. We then started out of the city and climbed up the Pennines to Summit, after ascending 535 feet and portaging 56 uphill locks! After a nights rest we started to head downhill through the valleys past Halifax and Wakefield. The scenery changed again to become more industrial as we paddled past factories and past Ferrybridge, one of the biggest coal power stations in Europe. We then picked up the pace as the locks became further apart and we finished in Goole harbour at the British Waterways Museum.



The trip took us five days and we portaged 152 locks. We paddled along five different canals and currently we have raised over £1250 for the Horstead Centre's bursary fund giving underprivileged children the chance to attend their school's residential trip with their classmates, which they would otherwise be unable to afford.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE CANOE TRIATHLON Report by Mark Benton

Manvers Waterfront Boatclub in partnership with Canoe England hosted one of this country's first Canoe Triathlons. The event consisted of 46 competitors canoeing around Manvers lake, then mountain biking on a course around the out old pit tips towards Bolton on Dearne and then running around Manvers Lake. This challenging new sport in South Yorkshire saw competitors paddle the 1.5k around the lake in waves of 16 boats, then tackled the tough 18k off road mountain bike course and finally run around the 5k trail long course run around the lake.

The Canoe leg of the event was held in perfect conditions albeit the water temperature was cold with the overnight frost. The lead was dominated by a stunning performance from Rob Jefferies completing the course in a smooth and impressive 7minutes and 2 seconds, next home was Rob Kavenagh in 7 minutes 54. Special mention must go to the Teammanvers 10 year old Blake Mawson Burren who finished 10th in the canoe section of the race.

The 20k bike section was very tough as the overnight frost and rain the previous day had made the off road route 'horrendous' said one competitor. This stage of the event was won by Lee Wagstaff in 1 hours and 2 minutes followed by a strong performance by Robert Jackson.

The run section was the 5k long loop around the lake which most competitors did in just over 20 minutes.

The winner was Rob Jackson in 1 hour 28 Minutes closely followed by Michael Flaterty 1:28 thirty two. The first female was Angela Hannon 1 hour 48 minutes second place was newcomer Sarah O Sullivan in 1hour 52. Little Blake Mawson Burren (10) completed the course in an impressive 2 hours and 46 minutes come 39th overall.

The organisers would like thank the supporters and the marshals for their support and help as well as Rother Valley Watersports for the loan of canoes.

Full results can be found: www.mwbc.org.uk/south-yorkshire-canoe-triathlon.html



RIVERSIDE CANOE CLUB ACHIEVE CLUBMARK

Riverside Canoe Club in Chester have achieved Clubmark status. The club, based out of the Riverside centre in Chester works predominantly with young people from Chester and can be found on the water most weekends paddling up and down the river Dee and further a field. Congratulations to the club and all the members of the club for their success



THE TYNE TOUR

The Tyne Tour has long been a regular favourite for white water paddlers from all over the country. The opportunity to paddle on the scenic River Tyne and challenge themselves against some classic rapids including the infamous Warden Gorge, sees upwards of a thousand paddlers descend on the town of Hexham on the first weekend in November.

The focal point for the event centres on Tyne Green where the event organisers – Hexham Canoe Club have their base and where numerous traders have pitch their temporary stands offering all the latest boats and gear to the hordes of paddlers. For the last two years Canoe England have also had a stand at Tyne Green providing advice and information and promoting Go Canoeing activities on indoor kayaking machines and on the flat water section of the river adjacent to the site.

This year also saw the provision of an 'Indoor Kayak Race' event at Tyne Green. The event took place in the marquee provided by the organisers and was generously supported by many of the traders at the event. The racing gave many of the participants the opportunity to get out of the torrential rain or a chance to warm up for a few minutes, but whatever their motivation a great time seemed to be had by all. Some great racing was held over 100m, 200m and 500m in male, junior and adult categories.

There were prizes available in all categories and the main prizes went to the overall champions:

- Adult Male:** Josh Large -Prize - Paddle donated by Border Kayaks and Ainsworth
- Adult Female:** Misha Murtagh - Prize – Rescue Throwbag and Belt donated by Border Kayaks and Safequip
- Junior:** Ben Dickenson - Prize - Vouchers donated by North East Kayaks

Thanks also to Alpkit, Wavesport & Safequip for donating further individual prizes.

BOOST FOR TRURO AND PENWITH COLLEGE CANOE CLUB

Students and members of the wider community will have the opportunity to access a raft of new canoe equipment at Truro and Penwith College Canoe Club, thanks to funding from Sport England. A successful bid for £6,790 to purchase new canoes and safety equipment means that the club will be able to offer more opportunities for people to participate in canoeing activities.

The project forms part of a much larger strategic plan to get more young people paddling at both Truro and Penwith College. Recently both campuses secured the use of two ergo canoes, which will be situated in the gyms at the college sites. The static ergos are designed to simulate the feeling of paddling on water whilst staying on dry land. The ergos have been loaned from Canoe England for a period of several months, as part of the 'Wired' programme, to help encourage new participants to the sport

Having engaged in the use of the ergo machines, participants will be signposted to the Truro and Penwith Canoe Club, where they will be able to access the new equipment and get out onto the water under the supervision of qualified instructors.

Julian Wills, Truro and Penwith College Sports Maker said to FOCUS, "We are delighted to have secured the funding from Sport England to help us create this new sustainable opportunities in canoeing. We have worked very closely in partnership with Canoe England to help make this project happen, and I am sure we will see some really positive outcomes from the initiative."

Currently Truro College offers all its students the opportunity to participate in free Wednesday afternoon canoeing activities, with the club offering weekend paddling sessions for all the community from as little as £2 a go.

Rachel Burley of the Foundation Degree in Outdoor Education, said, "It's lovely to have these new canoes, it's going to be really good. We get to try out all the different types of craft and all have different levels of balance and control, so it expands our skills. It's a brilliant idea. People who can't otherwise afford to go out can now do so, and get tuition too."

The Outdoor Education Foundation Degree, based in the Tregye campus of Truro and Penwith College, trains future outdoors instructors and students learn to handle and teach others in in sail-powered craft and paddle craft, climbing, mountain and expedition skills and the principles of coaching and learning, and has educated the majority of the volunteers who run the Truro and Penwith College Canoe Club.

WESSEX IKC

During the colder months of 2013, Wessex Canoe Clubs have been keeping warm and fit! Indoor Kayaking Challenge (IKC) was successfully showcased at the 2013 Swindon Coaching Conference. The use of kayaking machines, colourful publicity and the temptation of challenge was introduced this winter to keep warm season paddlers active through the winter. A number of canoe clubs have requested the loan of Canoe England's Indoor Kayaking machines and organised their own IKC. Canoe England provided resources and helped advertise each event to local Canoe Clubs. IKC's have included; the most number of half hour sessions, round the UK distance Challenge, head to head and team racing.

Wiltshire Youth Canoe Club are hosting a New Year's resolution Wessex IKC Team Racing Challenging. Comprising of Indoor Kayaking and Canoeing Machines. Each team will have three participants having to race a distance of 200m each. Prizes have kindly been donated by Palm Equipment.

If you would like to keep you club paddling through the cold months, please contact your local Canoeing Development Officer on how to get involved

YOUTH SPORT TRUST SCHOOL SPORT CLUBS

Canoe England are very excited to be working on a new programme with the Youth Sport Trust called School Sports Clubs. The programme will support young people and their move from school sport into community sport, by providing the opportunity for them to participate in club sport on school sites. A number of activity cards have been designed to enable young people, aged 7-14 deliver their own 'canoe club'. Activities like Polo Pass challenge, Simple Slalom and Ergo – Get Set and Sprint, will provide teaching points, learning and skills associated with the sport and encourage them to have a go. Each activity is explained in a simple and adaptable manner so it can be utilised by all abilities. On Friday 13th December, young people from Rushcliffe School in Nottingham had the chance to trial the activities. A filming crew were on site to record the activities for the online resources, which will be available soon. The students were over the moon to be joined by Olympic Gold medallist Tim Baillie who kindly came along with his gold medal to show his support the programme.

NATIONAL SCHOOLS KAYAK CHAMPIONSHIPS

The National Schools Championships Regatta took place on a chilly November Sunday at the Wokingham Waterside Centre in Reading. Jointly organised and run by the Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race, Marsport and Canoe England, the objective is to re-establish a Regatta that fell into abeyance some years ago, and specifically to encourage grass roots School Canoe Clubs and inter-Schools competition.

With several regular Canoeing Schools represented at the event, the seasonal temperatures did not cool the enthusiasm of the crews, which saw a range of abilities from novice through to experienced racing paddlers. The morning session saw a sprint competition over 500M and 200M distances, with some close racing in the respective groups, including a very competitive C2 from Bedford that was capable of mixing it with the K2's. At both distances the overall winners were Emily Dresser and Will Waters of Bryanston.

The afternoon session was the main event of the day, with a 20KM Marathon Race comprising four laps on Dreadnought Reach, each lap including the 'DW Compulsory Portage' at the Waterside Centre. A close start saw an early pack break away with Dresser/Waters accompanied by Thomas Cullen/Cameron Horn of Kimbolton, and Cameron Kerr/Edward Bourne and Will Hassell/Edward Hunkin of Royal Hospital School. Into the second lap, and Dresser/Waters asserted their dominance from the morning session to build a lead they held onto for the race win, with Kerr/Bourne of RHS in second, and Cullen/Horn of Kimbolton in third place. Royal Hospital School won the Team Trophy, with crews placing 2nd, 5th and 6th in the marathon event.

Gareth Scragg, Junior Teams Liaison Officer for the DW Organising Team told FOCUS, "There was great enthusiasm from all the crews participating in the regatta, some excellent racing and very positive feedback from coaches and teams. Our intention is to hold this on an annual basis, and we will be announcing the date for the 2014 Regatta shortly; we hope that many more Schools will add this event to their annual Racing Calendar and DW Preparation."

The 2014 Schools Championships Regatta will take place on Sunday 16th November at the Wokingham Waterside Centre. More info via the DW website at www.dwrace.org.uk



SQUIRT BOATING

WHAT GEAR?

The FOCUS guide to the kit needed to access the mysterious world of down time and the black art of squirt boating

WHAT IS SQUIRT BOATING?

Squirt boats are super low volume boats designed to allow their pilots to take advantage of the river's many currents and features to perform graceful and intricate tricks and manoeuvres including the Holy Grail of squirt boating. The mystery move, where the boat and paddler lock in to the rivers currents to disappear below the surface for a trip to the 'Green Room.' It's a niche area of paddlesport, as you need to be a pretty proficient paddler to begin with, and be prepared to go back to feeling like a beginner when you start, but those that embrace it tend to be very dedicated to the cause.

SQUIRTING ROOTS

Squirt boating originated in the US in and around the town of Friendsville, Maryland. Paddlers like Jim and Jeff Snyder, Jessie Whitmore and John Reagan began to experiment with smaller and smaller volume boats and began to play with the water's current. They took the basic squirt turn or stern dip that slalom paddlers had began to use and pushed it into a whole new arena. As their skills and confidence began to grow, they began to design their own boats.

The next few years passed in a flurry of boat designs until they arrived at the minimal volume boats such as the Shred and the Maestro, designs that are still in use by modern day squirtists.

MOVIN' AND A GROOVIN'

During the early days, many of the moves that are performed by modern day freestylers in their float boats were invented and named by the squirt boat godfathers. It is safe to say that the cartwheel, rock splat, boof, etc, have been part of squirt boater's repertoires for years. Unlike the crash and thrash of whitewater freestyle/playboating, squirt boating has always been about flowing with the river's currents and harnessing the water's kinetic energy to provide the ultimate ride. It's not about how many ends you can throw, it's more personal than that. It's about becoming one with the water and your boat and searching for that perfect moment when it all comes together in perfect harmony, and then everything just flows smoothly and effortlessly.

BIG GLITTER, SMALL CHOP!

A true squirt boat is custom built for the paddler, allowing for body weight, foot size and leg length. This means that each boat is chopped so that it will float just on the surface of the water. Squirt boats are usually constructed of fibreglass or carbon and many have personalised graphics or glittery colour schemes, often designed by the paddler. The graphics on some squirts can be very elaborate and wouldn't look out of place on a gallery wall.

Many of the original UK squirt boats were made at Valley Canoe Products by UK squirt boat pioneer, Jason Buxton. Jason's calibrated eye, attention to detail and superb artwork has made his boats objects of desire all over the world.

The padding in a squirt boat is really important as the paddler is striving to become one with his or her boat. The serious squirter will usually use what is known as a 'suicide block.' This is a custom foam block that is pushed down between the paddler's knees and thighs to really hold them locked into position. The suicide block is so named because it is extremely difficult to wet exit a squirt boat and nearly impossible when using a block! It's not as mad as it sounds though. Once you have gotten over the initial wobbles, squirts are very stable. All you need to do is sink one end and you will find that you can regain control very easily. They are also very easy to roll. Second hand boats can often be found, and there are one or two plastic versions, but although these can offer a cheaper way to try the sport neither will really offer you the performance of a true custom boat.

"Squirt boats are super low volume boats designed to allow their pilots to take advantage of the river's many currents and features to perform graceful and intricate tricks and manoeuvres including the Holy Grail of squirt boating. The mystery move!"



STRANGE STIX

Many squirt paddlers choose to use strange shaped paddles with a much smaller blade area than is usual for white water use. 'Squirt stix' as they are often called can be made from nylon or composite materials but, for the true purist nothing but a hand-crafted wooden paddle will do. Squirtists also tuned in to using a much lower angle or feather on their blades much earlier than the rest of the whitewater world. The reduced blade area and feather means that the squirtist's paddles don't jump around in their hands while getting down time on a big mystery move. Squirt boaters also need to move their blades through the water with ease, even when the entire paddle is submerged. We should also mention that squirt stix also look really cool!

GETTING HANDY

Many squirt boaters like to use hand paddles as they give better feel and the ability to use both blades at once.

SHRED HEADS

Long before every man and his dog were wearing spangly glass helmets, squirt boaters were sporting all manner of weird and wonderful lids. After all, it is usually the first thing to resurface after a mystery move. **CF**



INFO

For more info on squirt boating go to -
http://gbfreestylekayak.com/etive/?page_id=4

UK Squirt Boating Forum -
www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk/forum/viewforum.php?f=35

Grant Distribution During the 2013 Financial Year

Over the past decade the Canoe Foundation has awarded more than £214,500 to 182 projects throughout the UK and overseas. These projects have in-turn benefited some 50,000 individuals, as the Charity continues to work towards its mission of *'positively changing lives through canoeing'*.

Most grants are awarded through the charity's Small Grants Panel, which meets three times a year. Their remit is to award grants specifically relating to Young People and Disability (Equality) in line with their application guidelines and criteria. The Small Grants Panel has a budget of £25,000 per annum therefore the usual grant awarded is up to £1,000.

Utilising the data collected from the applications forms of projects supported by the Canoe Foundation during the 2013 financial year, the benefits of these awards per organisation / project type, home nation and region can be analysed in further detail.

BREAKDOWN OF GRANT FUNDING BY ORGANISATION TYPE:

The data collected from successful applicants can also be analysed in terms of the types of organisations who have received funding support. The majority of projects allocated funding relate to canoe club's (11 out of 34 projects / 32%), while the remainder of funding distributed relatively evenly across the other organisation types, such as Scouts and Guides, schools, other charities and youth associations.

GRANT DISTRIBUTION OVERVIEW:

During the 2013 financial year, the Small Grants Panel awarded a total of £24,982.55 to 30 different projects across the UK. The breakdown of the way funding was awarded, was evenly split, with approximately £8,000 awarded at each of the three Small Grants Panel meetings during the year. In addition to this four expeditions were supported on the recommendation of the BCU Expeditions Panel (£4,000), taking the total expenditure to £28,982.55 and based upon the estimates from application Forms these awards benefitted some 15,270 individuals.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF GRANTS AWARDED:

In accordance with the Canoe Foundation's governing deeds, the charity works throughout the UK and overseas. During the 2013 financial year, one grant of £800 went to a canoe club in Northern Ireland; with two awards totalling £1,500 going to two separate organisations in Scotland. English organisations were the main recipients with 27 projects supported, totalling £22,682.55.

The levels of funding awarded by the Small Grants Panel, was evenly spread across northern, central and southern England, who received £6,500, £7,780 and £8,402.55 respectively. The eastern region (£3,680), Yorkshire (£3,300) and the south west (Wessex £2,658) received the biggest amount of funding for various projects during the financial year. While neither Cumbria nor Devon and Cornwall received any awards from the Small Grants Panel during this period, this does not reflect in any way upon the positive work going on within either of these regions, but with an annual budget of £25,000 the Small Grants Panel always expects to receive many more applications than they can afford to fund.

FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

The Canoe Foundation relies on your fundraising activities and generous donations to enable them to support additional projects and continue their work *'positively changing lives through canoeing'*. Last year a number of people raised money for the Canoe Foundation through various sporting (and non-sporting) events, such as Devises to Westminster, Half Marathons, and putting on taster sessions, so why not challenge yourself and raise some money for a good cause at the same time!

NEW ADDRESS

Should you have any questions or comments then please do not hesitate to contact the Canoe Foundation at their new postal address: Canoe Foundation, National Water Sports Centre, Adbolton Lane, Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham, NG12 2LU or the usual methods e-mailing: info@canoefoundation.org.uk or phoning: 0845 370 9547

Until next time
happy paddling!



GO Canoeing!

NATIONAL GO CANOEING WEEK

24TH MAY - 1ST JUNE

EVERY MILE COUNTS

For National Go Canoeing Week 2014 we want to see how many miles we can paddle together.

Get involved during the week, register the miles you clock up and help us reach our target of

11,073 MILES

the total distance around the UK's coastline.

Visit the website for more information



➤ GET INVOLVED AND REGISTER YOUR MILES



WWW.GOCANOEING.ORG.UK



Get Ready for National Go Canoeing Week 2014

Go Canoeing's annual festival of paddling fun – National Go Canoeing Week – will be back for 2014 and we are planning to make this year's event even bigger and better. The week will run from 24th May to 1st June and in a bid to encourage more people out onto the water, we've set a unique challenge.

NATIONAL GO CANOEING WEEK

Go Canoeing Development Officer Jenny Spencer explained: "This year, the theme behind National Go Canoeing Week is Every Mile Counts and we want to see collectively how many miles we can paddle together.

"There are loads of different ways people can get involved and whatever you do during the week, we want you to record how many miles you paddle, register them on our website and help us reach our target of 11,073 miles – the total distance around the UK's coastline!"

Those new to the sport can take part in one of our fabulous Every Mile Counts Starter Sessions, which we are encouraging clubs and centres across the country to organise within the week. Starter Sessions provide an excellent introduction to the sport of canoeing and during National Go Canoeing Week, everyone taking part in a session will be encouraged to complete a mile, which they can then register to help us meet our overall mileage target. The sessions will be open to everyone and will provide a fun way to experience paddling.

EVERY MILE COUNTS

Another great way to get involved in National Go Canoeing Week is by coming along to one of our flagship Every Mile Counts Challenge Events, where

participants will be able to complete either a one or three-mile challenge. The events are open to everyone and you can complete your mile in any form of paddlesport craft, as long as it doesn't have a motor! There will be a strong focus on having fun whilst completing your chosen distance so the events will be a great day out for the whole family.

Dates, locations and more details about the events will be announced on the Go Canoeing website in the coming month, so keep logging on for more information.

GET AFLOAT AND HAVE FUN

As always with National Go Canoeing Week, you don't have to come along to one of our activities to get involved. Our aim is simply to encourage as many people as possible out onto the water, so why not let the week be an excuse to make some time for yourself and do what you love – paddling!

Why not push yourself to try something new during National Go Canoeing Week? It could be heading out to a new stretch of river, having a go in a different type of canoe or kayak or, if you're already a regular paddler, increasing your weekly mileage.

GO TOURING

If you're keen to find new and exciting places to paddle, you could book onto an Every Mile Counts Guided Tour taking place during the week or check out our range of fantastic Canoe Trails, which have all the information necessary for you to head out on an independent adventure.

"Another great way to get involved in National Go Canoeing Week is by coming along to one of our flagship Every Mile Counts Challenge Events, where participants will be able to complete either a one or three-mile challenge."

Jenny added, "National Go Canoeing Week is all about getting out on the water and having fun. Of course we'd love you to attend one of our brilliant events or activities, but our main aim is just to encourage as many people as possible to get paddling.

"So why not get the date in your diary, let your imagination run wild and start planning how you're going to make the most of National Go Canoeing Week? Whatever you decide to do during the week, all we ask is that you visit us at www.gocanoeing.org.uk, register your miles and help us hit our target because, after all, Every Mile Counts!"

FUN WAYS INDIVIDUALS AND CLUBS CAN GET INVOLVED WITH NATIONAL GO CANOEING WEEK

- Take part in an Every Mile Counts Starter Session
- Take part in an Every Mile Counts Guided Tour
- Take part in one of our Every Mile Counts Challenge Events

Or simply clock up your own miles by:

- Booking onto a Guided Tour.
- Finding somewhere new to paddle with a Canoe Trail.
- If you normally paddle 20-miles a week, why not challenge yourself to complete 30, 40, 50 or even 100 miles?
- If you're part of a club, set a target for your club members to collectively reach.
- Why not challenge yourself to organise a trip or paddling journey with friends, family or club members?
- What about some fun challenges – how far can you paddle; in fancy dress, backwards, sideways as a group, as part of a relay, in the most unusual or oldest boat, in a cardboard canoe, etc.
- If you can't access the water, why not organise a challenge on an indoor kayak machine? Set an individual target distance to complete or run the event as a relay with a group trying to reach a set target.
- Organise a river clean up and clock up some miles at the same time as doing something good for the environment.
- You can even use your challenge to raise money for the Canoe Foundation, Canal and River Trust, National Trust or a charity of your choice? **CF**



 **Dagger**

KATANA



**LIMITLESS
POSSIBILITIES FOR
ADVENTURE**

Are you drawn to the excitement of whitewater, but want the freedom to paddle further? The Katana will take on rapids and glide over calm water. Available in two sizes; 10.4 and 9.7 – and two specifications; adjustable Contour Ergo and robust Action outfitting.



THE MIDLAND'S MAGNIFICENT SEVEN





Spring is finally with us and with its arrival comes the air of opportunity, to make use of the lengthening days and hopefully improving mood of Mother Nature to get out on the water and paddle. Although the Midlands may not instantly spring to mind as a canoeing and kayaking hot spot, nestled away in the heart of England are some fantastic opportunities for paddling adventures. From rural floats to a journey through the historical centre of one of the UK's great cities you'll be surprised at the variety and quality of paddling that the Midlands can offer. Here's a Canoe FOCUS guide to our favourite magnificent seven Midlands paddle trips... ►

“With more miles of canals than Venice, there are few places where you can combine quiet green space, industrial history and a bustling city centre by water!”

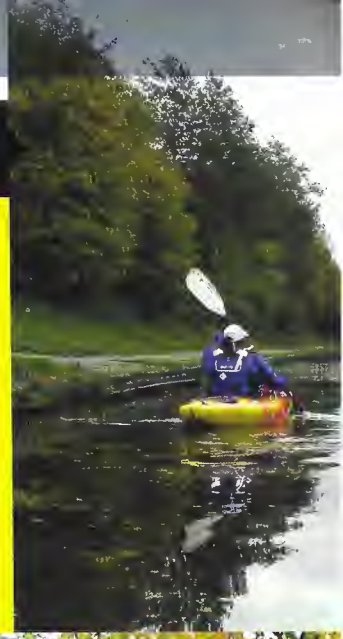
1 BIRMINGHAM'S CANALS

Far from gloomy industrial backwaters, Birmingham's canal network can provide some wonderfully peaceful and often picturesque journeys through the heart of Britain.

With more miles of canals than Venice, there are few places where you can combine quiet green space, industrial history and a bustling city centre by water!

There are numerous journeys that can be done around the canal network, but a trip along the Birmingham Canal, Birmingham and Worcester and Stratford upon Avon Canal has something for everyone. Paddlers can take in the old and the new; through the modern Brindley Place in the centre of the city, with all its bars and cafes, and then on from Gas Street Basin, through old Guillotine locks, tunnels, past historic toll houses and quiet picnic spots en route to a finish at Shirley Drawbridge.

The canals around the West Midlands can provide a real surprise to those seeking a quiet day out on the water. They are also used in the annual 'Paddle 2 the Heart' event, which is well worth keeping an eye out for, too!



HOCKLEY FORT JUNCTION BRIDGE



2 THE RIVER AVON, WARWICKSHIRE



If Shakespeare had have been a paddler, it's almost certain that he would have been inspired by a journey along the River Avon! There is a host of picturesque locations as the river winds its way through villages and open fields, through rural Warwickshire. There are plenty of options for day trips along the

Avon, but by starting at Shakespeare's own Stratford upon Avon, an enjoyable journey can be made down to Bideford, via Welford upon Avon.

After passing through Stratford and past the theatre, the route meanders past black and white timbered buildings, old bridges and secret islands of wildlife. There are several weirs and locks that must be inspected and potentially portaged, but they only add interest to what is a very peaceful and enjoyable paddle.

Onward journeys from Bideford can take in other picturesque riverside villages such as Evesham, Pershore, Fladbury and Twynning.

"If Shakespeare had have been a paddler, it's almost certain that he would have been inspired by a journey along the River Avon!"

3 RIVER CAM



As of April last year, the Canoe England licence now covers holders to paddle within the Cam Conservancy Area, between Cambridge and Bottisham Lock, where the licence already applies, replacing the need for a separate annual one from the Conservators.

The River Cam rises at Ashwell in Hertfordshire and meanders to Cambridge with picture postcard views, flows along the 'Backs' and past the famous colleges including Kings and then on to join the Ely Ouse. It is paddleable in winter from Barrington and all year round, from Byron's Pool.

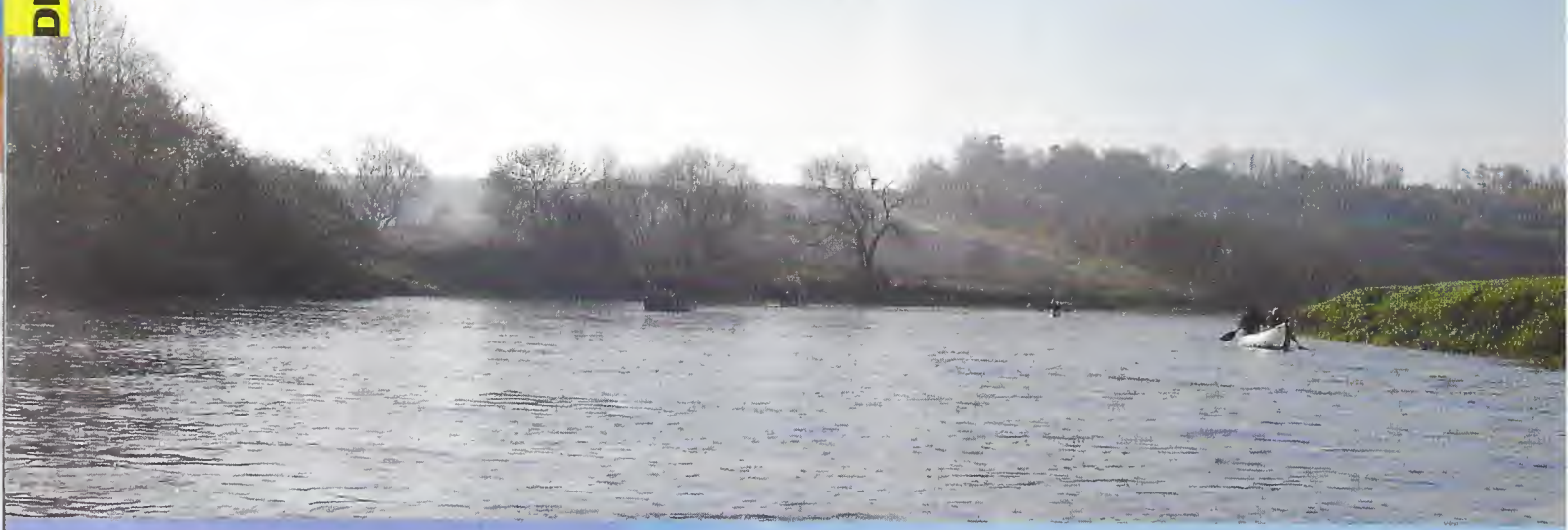
Falling naturally into three sections as the water level drops at sluices and locks, swans and moorhens are plentiful and towards the meadows, kingfishers and woodpeckers can also be spotted. Accompanied by amusing punters and college rowers, the Fenland scenery provides extensive landscapes that will offer paddlers real delight.

Suitable for one star and above paddlers and families, what really helps to make the River Cam special is the tea shops and pub eateries lining the route - fantastic for a leisurely paddle on this placid water.

If you fancy a full weekend canoeing in Cambridge, you'll find a canoeist friendly B&B in Twenty Six, which is situated next to the launch area in Chesterton. ▶

"Swans and moorhens are plentiful and towards the meadows, kingfishers and woodpeckers can also be spotted. Accompanied by amusing punters and college rowers, the Fenland scenery provides extensive landscapes that will offer paddlers real delight."

“There are many river and canal loops around the country that offer a varied day out paddling and the River Trent in south Derbyshire is no exception! It combines the quiet flowing natural river with a man made canal.”



4 RIVER TRENT, SOUTH DERBYSHIRE

There are many river and canal loops around the country that offer a varied day out paddling and the River Trent in south Derbyshire is no exception! It combines the quiet flowing natural river with a man made canal.

By starting in the small hamlet of Twyford, it is possible to wind your way along some beautiful sections of wide steady flowing river, passing by the villages of Ingleby and Barrow upon Trent. Close to the village of Ingleby, there are a series of mysterious caves cut into a limestone cliff. ‘Anchor Caves’ as they are known date back hundreds of years and are accessible along a footpath. At Swarkestone you pass over a small rapid and under a Norman bridge, which takes the main road over marshland. The river passes under an old railway bridge, where soon after there is a short portage of around 500m (marked bridleway on map) on river left which enables you to hop onto the Trent and Mersey canal to make the return leg. There is one lock that requires a quick get out and then it’s on to the finish at the Stenson Bubble pub for a well earned drink!

5 RIVER WENSUM

When Natural England and the Environment Agency completed the section of the River Wensum near Swanton Morley, under their restoration project for the river, the consequences for canoeing and kayaking were changed for the better. Returning the river to its natural chalk stream state had the effect of backing the flow of the river up, creating three play waves on the weir, where the B1147 crosses the river.

Before you set out to paddle, it is advisable to check the Environment Agency's website regarding river levels, as the waves only appear when the gauge reads around .20. However on most days throughout last year, the waves formed!

The perfect way to discover Norfolk's best kept paddling secret, and enjoy a natural asset in the eastern region! ▶



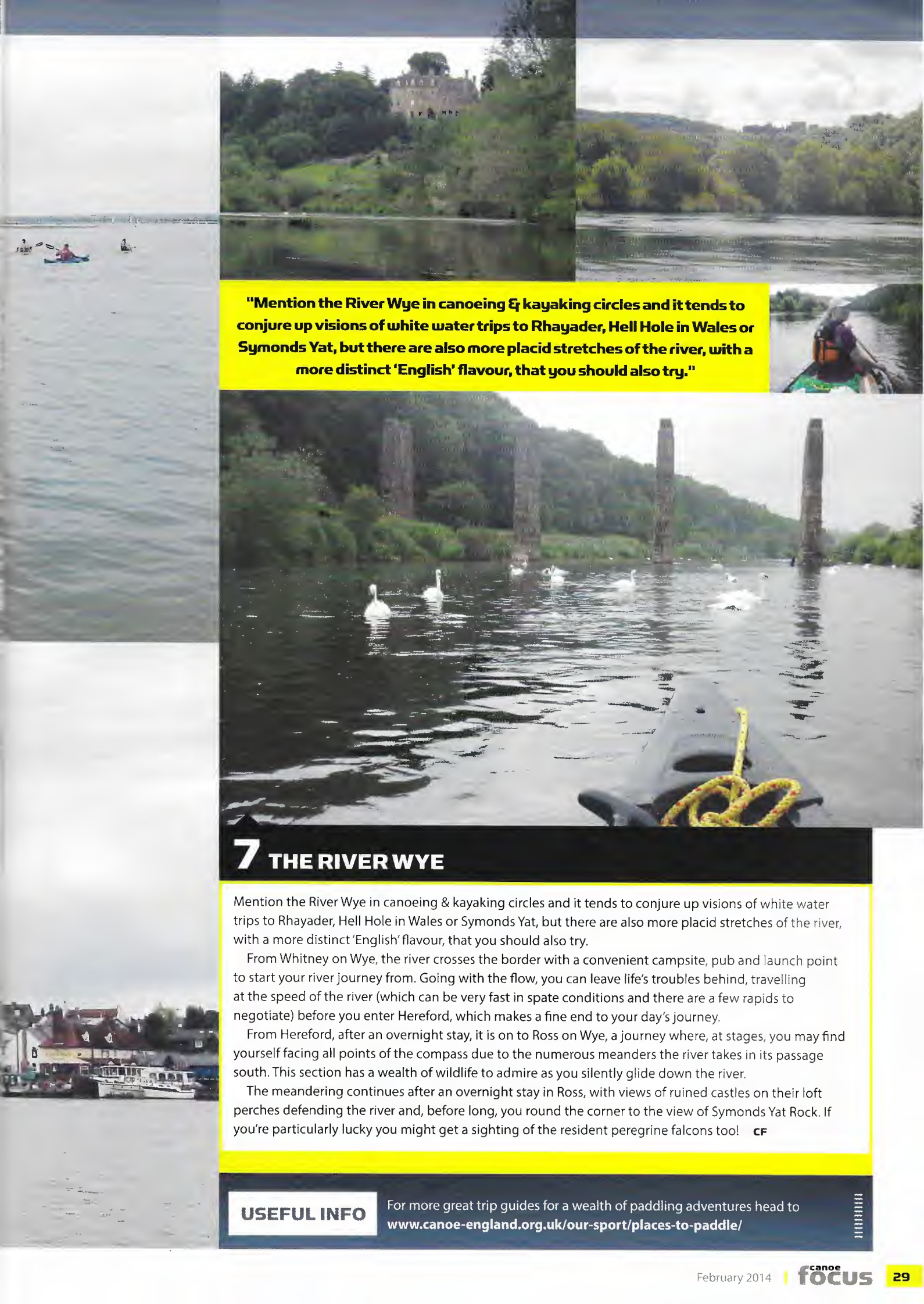
6 BIG SKY'S IN ESSEX

Sea kayaking on the east coast has been well documented of late but there are some not so well-known circumnavigations in Essex that are also worth a mention. They are also the likely destinations for the 2014 Essex Sea Kayak Meet being run by the Maldon and Dengie Canoe Club.

Wallasea Island is currently being transformed by the RSPB into a wildlife reserve (by using the spoil from the Cross London Rail Link) and a sharp lookout, kept for the large ships that dock on the north side of the island. With careful tidal planning, you can at times, paddle over the tidal causeway at the west end of the island, but the real gem of this destination is the maze of islands to the south. It is here that you can easily see seals basking on the saltings or mud flats. The area is also famous for its sailing fraternity, and racing frequently takes place near the mouth of the River Crouch, where from Wallasea Ness you can look straight down the river, back to the town.

For Osea Island, leave from Bradwell Waterside, dropping your gear off at the public slip before parking in the marina car park, this offers a different perspective of the Essex coast as you are now in the deceptively wide expanses of the Blackwater Estuary. Osea Island is visible once you clear Pewet Island and if you're lucky, so will be the spectacular sighting of a Thames Barge under sail. Again tidal planning is required.





"Mention the River Wye in canoeing & kayaking circles and it tends to conjure up visions of white water trips to Rhayader, Hell Hole in Wales or Symonds Yat, but there are also more placid stretches of the river, with a more distinct 'English' flavour, that you should also try."

7 THE RIVER WYE

Mention the River Wye in canoeing & kayaking circles and it tends to conjure up visions of white water trips to Rhayader, Hell Hole in Wales or Symonds Yat, but there are also more placid stretches of the river, with a more distinct 'English' flavour, that you should also try.

From Whitney on Wye, the river crosses the border with a convenient campsite, pub and launch point to start your river journey from. Going with the flow, you can leave life's troubles behind, travelling at the speed of the river (which can be very fast in spate conditions and there are a few rapids to negotiate) before you enter Hereford, which makes a fine end to your day's journey.

From Hereford, after an overnight stay, it is on to Ross on Wye, a journey where, at stages, you may find yourself facing all points of the compass due to the numerous meanders the river takes in its passage south. This section has a wealth of wildlife to admire as you silently glide down the river.

The meandering continues after an overnight stay in Ross, with views of ruined castles on their loft perches defending the river and, before long, you round the corner to the view of Symonds Yat Rock. If you're particularly lucky you might get a sighting of the resident peregrine falcons too! **CF**

USEFUL INFO

For more great trip guides for a wealth of paddling adventures head to www.canoe-england.org.uk/our-sport/places-to-paddle/

The Four Principles of Kayaking

Article & images by Keith Miller

In general our skills improve with practise. But not always! Throw balls to a child and they will soon learn to catch them, because it's intuitive, but put them in a pool and they are unlikely to become a good swimmer without a lot of help. They may not even learn to swim. 'Practise makes perfect' they say, but if the skills aren't intuitive it's more a case of 'practise makes permanent'! And in kayaking this means we develop bad habits, which strengthen the wrong muscles, making things even harder to put right. Left untreated this could develop into an unpleasant chronic ailment! The only cure may be to rethink things from the ground up.

So to this end I have identified four key non-intuitive skills for short boat kayakers. These have seriously improved my own kayaking and they even led to me doing my first flat-water cartwheel at the age of fifty-six! They have transformed the way I teach others and they make an excellent framework for self-teaching, or just sorting those bad habits.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE: ACTIVE FEET

If I could only offer one tip to becoming a good kayaker it would be that this is a whole body activity, not just upper body. Your legs are as important as your arms! This is so overlooked in books and coaching syllabi, perhaps because short boats turn so easily on flat water, but also because coaches can't see whether you're doing it or not. Although it may not seem to matter much up to 2 star levels, you'll pay when you get on white water, and fall flat on your face if you ever try freestyle.

So here's an exercise to try. Do a sweep stroke with relaxed legs and then repeat it pushing the bow around with the feet (or the sole of the trailing foot to be more precise). You should notice an immediate difference, with the kayak moving more positively and quickly when using the feet. You might also find that it's more controlled and less likely to trip on its edges. If you were really observant you might also have noticed that the blade moved less in the water and the kayak turned more.

This picture comprises two shots taken at the start and end of a sweep stroke. Note that the body, head and paddle hardly move, but the boat turns more than 90-degrees. The books normally describe the sweep stroke as a big arc with the paddle, implying that it's all about the arms, but I want you to embrace a very different perspective; one which is about pushing the boat around with the feet whilst holding the upper body and paddle absolutely still.

There is a very simple explanation as to why using the feet is more efficient. When using the legs you make your driving leg, torso and arms into a rigid frame

that can transmit forces better. In the first exercise your relaxed body acted more like a damper, absorbing some of the energy put into the paddle, so some of your effort never reached the boat and just moved the paddle more. Try pushing a car without tensing your stomach muscles and you'll see what I mean! You simply can't do a flat-water cartwheel without tensing your stomach and driving the bow around with your feet.

This iron bar concept is important (it's known as core stability in the trade) and it means that you need to develop torso strength before you can use your feet effectively. It's a bit 'chicken and egg' really; if you don't use your legs you won't strengthen the torso and therefore won't be able to drive the legs effectively. A good way of improving core stability is to get a Swiss Ball (£5 from most supermarkets) and just sit on it at the computer or when watching telly. It really keeps those core muscles active and if you go further and do the proper exercises (see BCU website) you'll be well prepared to develop these skills.

“Practise makes perfect’ they say, but if the skills aren’t intuitive it’s more a case of ‘practise makes permanent’!”



Sweep Stroke Layered

Using the feet also gives you better edge control, which will make so much difference on white water or surf. When in the hole try spinning by kicking the bow around and it will go so much quicker, with less likelihood to trip.

This principle is just as important when forward paddling, as pushing the kayak with your feet improves efficiency, enabling you to paddle further or faster for the same amount of work. Try driving the kayak with your feet when paddling over the back of a wave to get into a hole and you'll really notice the difference!

It is essential to have the footrests set up properly. I prefer to have them angled at 45 degrees from the heels, so that they are equally effective for turning or pushing forwards.

So the first principle is to see kayaking as a whole body exercise. I call it 'Active Feet' because they drive, turn, pitch and control the kayak and activate those vital core muscles automatically. Apply it to everything you do.

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE: STRAIGHT BACK

The second principle develops the first, as it is intended to prevent losses, maximise force and help avoid back injury. We know that the most efficient way to paddle is by winding up the torso and then releasing this energy when we take a stroke, but if the spine is bent when we do this we create the spring and damper effect discussed above.

Try holding a short length of garden hose in clenched fists. It is quite difficult to twist when it is straight and will spring back to the unwound position when released. Now bend the hose into a curve and try twisting it again - it buckles and collapses - and doesn't store any real amount of energy. If the spine bends it acts like the damper described above, wasting energy and causing weaker 'compensatory' muscles to come in to play to try and support it, using even more energy.

It's all very inefficient, develops the wrong muscles and increases the potential for back injury.

Keeping the head up almost inevitably maintains a straight back, no matter whether leaning forward, back or sitting upright, so this is an inherent part of this rule. The pelvis should also be slightly rolled forward as well. Back rests actually encourage the opposite, creating a curved back leaning back into the rest. So I always have mine pushed low around my backside, even when doing freestyle.

It is worth noting that when lifting a kayak on land the only thing you really need to remember is to look up at the horizon or above, because that makes you bend at the knees and guarantees a straight back. I'll talk about vision more in the fourth principle, but meanwhile it is important to understand this link with correct posture.

THE THIRD PRINCIPLE: THE RECTANGLE

We now get to the shoulders and arms and this rule is designed to maximise the upper body rotation and avoid the same old damper problems. I think shoulder rotation is the most difficult thing for novices and many experienced kayakers as well. It just doesn't come naturally for most of us, so we soon develop the wrong muscles, making the correct technique even harder. We need to find a painless way of forcing it to happen and I've got a lovely trick that works incredibly well - maintain a rectangle between the paddle shaft, forearms and upper arms/shoulders/chest, as in the picture below. And that means all the time, whether you're forward paddling, rolling, doing sweep strokes, stern rudders, support strokes and even draw strokes. The chest always remains parallel to the paddle shaft and the elbows are always bent 90 degrees. You can see the power in this position, especially compared to an outstretched arm, which is weak and acts like a damper in comparison. ▶

The Rectangle



Bow Stall





Forward stroke

We tend to reach to get more leverage, but all advantage is lost with the weaker arm position. Note how compact the arms are in the previous sweep stroke picture. You should apply this to all skills. You could pass your 2 star without ever breaking the rectangle and you would look a lot more professional!

The rectangle also prevents the paddle staying in the water past the hips, which wastes energy. Once behind the hips it produces little power but lots of turning, or lifting of water, so only use this part of the stroke to correct direction. The blade should therefore be sliced upward out of the water at the hips keeping the body wound up ready for the next stroke. In fact the body can continue to turn a little bit even after it comes out of the water, as shown in the picture above.

The rectangle is also an excellent means of preventing injury. It is referred to as the safety box in white water paddling, as it protects the shoulders. An outstretched arm puts greater load on the shoulder and bends the wrist too much, which is why paddlers often buy cranked shafts. This is even true if you tend to reach when setting up for a screw roll. The straightened arm has a harder job twisting the blade to the correct sculling angle. This makes the sculling aspect too difficult, so the student resorts to pulling downwards instead, loading the shoulder and the bent wrist.

The last important point about the rectangle is that it also stops the upper elbow dropping when pushing the paddle shaft forward. The power of the torso should be transmitted through a high elbow with a straight forearm and wrist directly in line with the force on the shaft. If the elbow drops the arm forms a 'V' shape, which can compress acting like a spring and damper between the shoulder and shaft, wasting more energy and putting strain on the wrist.



Well setup



Low support

So, here's a question for you: What's the difference between a forward stroke and a sweep stroke? Answer: 1) the direction you push the bow with your feet 2) whether you allow the paddle to go past the hips and 3) where you look. Everything else is just the same! Don't take my word for it; go and try for yourself.

THE FOURTH PRINCIPLE: OPTIMISE VISION

This principle is subtle, but it really can split the men from the boys, so to speak. The brain needs high quality information, and it needs it fast, if it is to maintain balance and control in tricky situations, or when doing technical manoeuvres. Additionally vision helps you to control the right muscle groups and affects your biomechanics as well. Yet many of us fail to recognise how important this is and never really give it much thought.

For most kayaking it's straightforward – you look where you are going! But for everything from a sweep stroke to cartwheeling on a wave things are more

“There is a general principle ‘where you look is where you go’, and this applies in a number of sports, so experiment with looking at different parts of the horizon and you may be surprised at how much difference it can make.”

Draw stroke



Will airborne

complex. Fundamentally we should always keep the head up and look at the horizon. Now try another little exercise. Stand on one leg and look at the horizon, then look at the floor and then the sky. If that's too easy repeat the exercise in an open canoe! You should notice how much easier it is when looking at the horizon. This is because you see movements or imbalances more quickly and respond to them before it's too late.

Many of us are inclined to look at what we are doing, e.g. watch the paddle enter the water, but this is pointless. These things are done by feel and so we should strongly resist looking at the kayak or paddle at any time (except perhaps for the screw roll, where we should watch the blade to promote upper body rotation).

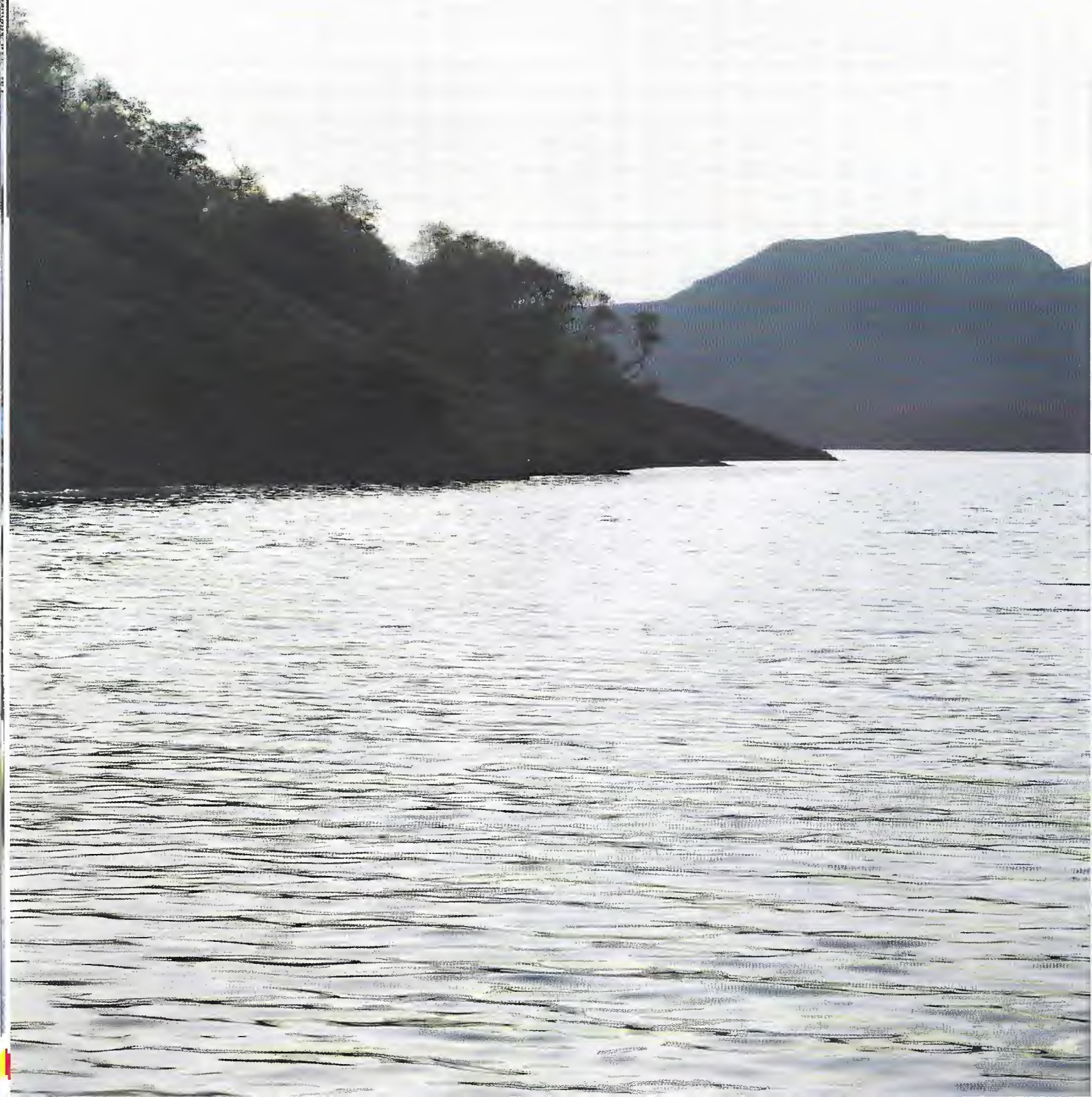
Exactly which bit of the horizon we should watch is not so clear. For forward paddling we look ahead, but when doing other things, such as a sweep stroke, this will change. There is a general principle ‘where you look is where you go’, and this applies in a number of sports, so experiment with looking at different parts of the horizon and you may be surprised at how much difference it can make. However, once you've chosen a point on the horizon it's generally desirable to stick with it as long as you can. The previous sweep stroke photo shows that the vision remains locked throughout the whole of the stroke. This constant reference point enables you to keep the kayak flat, without pitching or rolling, which might otherwise cause it to trip on its edges. The body will then rotate to set up for the next stroke and the vision will move to a new point on the horizon for that. The same principle applies when you're spinning in a hole, surfing a wave or just flat-water cartwheeling to impress the lads.

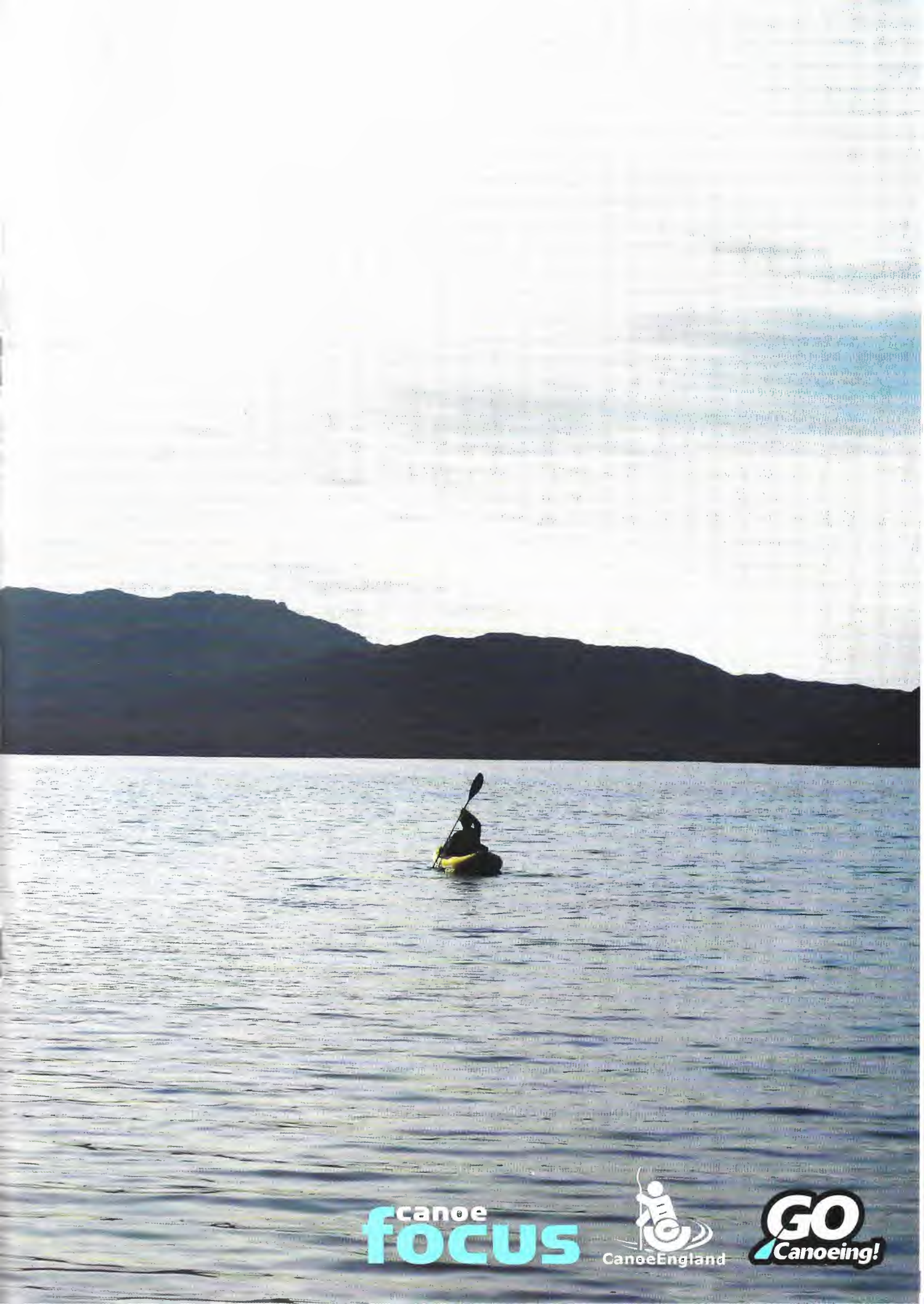
One skill that you will need is to be able to look in one direction but turn the shoulders in another. Turning the head is often used to lead the body in many sports and this is also true in forward and reverse paddling, but there are occasions that we need to turn the shoulders but not the head. This needs to be practised, such as doing stern squirts, spinning in a hole, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

So these are the four most important non-intuitive skills that I've identified for short boat kayaking. They are so important that they are the first thing that I teach anyone. In fact I don't really teach any other skills on flat water, as the students pick the rest up intuitively – just as long as they use the four principles as a toolkit to judge their own performance. They are not always fully achievable though, so don't get too purist about them. Use them as targets and challenge yourself continually, regardless of whether you're paddling down the river for a picnic, running a rapid, throwing a cartwheel, and even while you lie awake at night! **CF**

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Keen canoe polo player Martyn Williamsom, from Derby, said "they were great tasting drinks; ready mixed they were easy to use and liked the convenient sachets".



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Cherry flavoured, these single 25 ml vials of patented amino acids are available from AMSPORT, packing in 1000mg of acids into each shot. The practical on the go vials are perfect for training and busy schedules, as they are pre-mixed and there is no need to carry around any bulky tubs. Take instantly (within 5min) after training to top-up amino acid pools and prevent deficiencies (10g per shot).

Amino acid supplementation greatly lowers the risk of injuries (bones, muscles, tendons) and triggers a signalling cascade in muscle that promotes protein synthesis. If you need to put on muscle, use in conjunction with protein supplements (amino acids immediately after training, protein 30min later) to maximise strength gains. Amino acids also strengthens your immune system, particularly important during the winter months. Aminoliquids greatly improve your ability to recover from intense exercise, your levels of fatigue and tiredness will be significantly reduced and muscle soreness virtually absent. Unfortunately it is not possible to have a sufficient dietary supply of amino acids so supplementation is crucial in athletes. Lactose, Gluten and Fructose free.

GB Paracanoeist Jeanette Chippington "The amino liquid supplement is for aiding recovery from heavy exercise so I tried the product out after a hard morning paddle session. The product comes in plastic tube, a bit like a test tube with a screw lid, and is intended to be drunk straight from the tube. It taste is fruity with a strong almond flavour, quite pleasant actually. The texture is rather like a thin syrup, a little sticky but still easy to drink.

"Overall the product is easy to transport with paddling kit, and as it can be drunk straight from the tube is more convenient than having to mix with water or milk." ▶



maxifuel

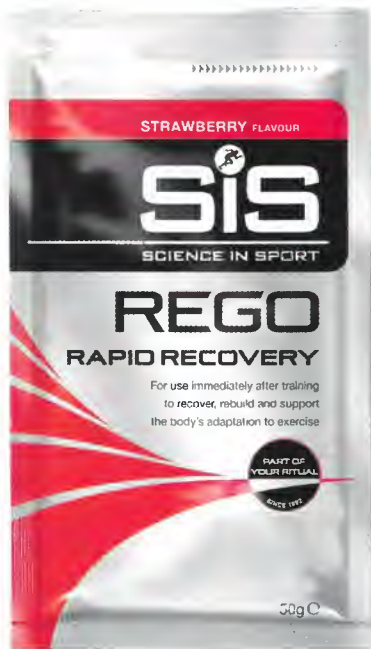
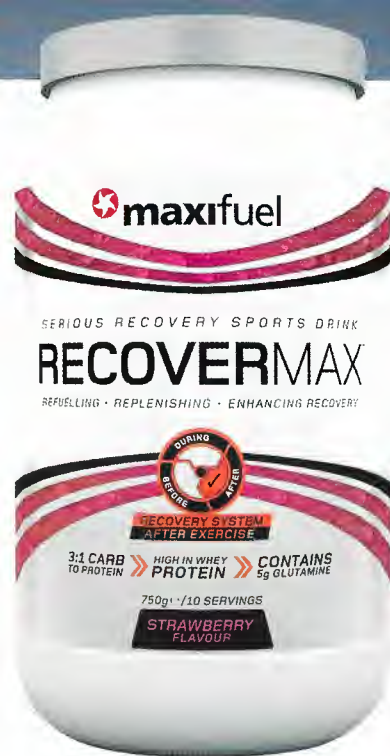
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Furthermore Recovermax aids muscle restoration and replenishment with 14.5g of BioMAX, a fast digesting whey protein, Glutamine and essential electrolytes.

Keen canoe polo player Martyn Williamsom said "Maxifuel had a great taste and was also less heavy on the stomach and tasted good. For immediate impact as soon as I'd had the shake the Maxifuel seemed to work very well so I'd put this top".



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Thomas Butt from the Nottingham Kayak Club said "I found the SIS REGO Rapid Recovery the best all rounder for its ease of use and mixing. The small sachets make it easy to carry in a kit bag with minimal risk of spillage and its ease of mixing with water. It has a good taste and is incredibly smooth after mixing. Taken after exercise, it is noticeable the recovery benefits in the morning, leaving me fresh and ready for the next session without that all too common muscle fatigue".

torq

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Racing Kayaker Jim New from Devizes Canoe Club near Swindon has said "The TORQ shake was really good, tasted really nice and went down easily, didn't really feel it sit in the stomach, which is something I prefer in a drink!" CF



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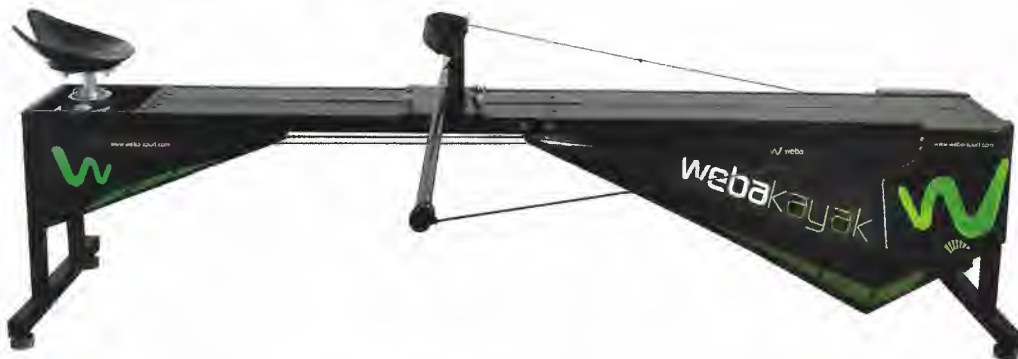
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Hallelujah for

SAS HURLEY CLASSIC 2013

24-years ago in a sleepy Buckinghamshire backwater, a group of paddlers led by the legendary Shaun Baker and Nic Mallabar (of System X) had the masterstroke of ideas. Why not bring a whole bunch of crazy kayakers together for a 'Rodeo'. As the year's have passed I can remember seeing Rodeo articles with big boats paddled by jugglers in day-glo kit that morphed into superhuman feats of Topolino cartwheeling and then later on the dawn of aerial kayaking and a new name, freestyle! That was Rodeo, and despite protestations that it's dead the Hurley Classic is evidence of a story with a beginning, a middle and no end in sight...

It might seem odd that I, a Scottish paddler, proclaim to the world that Hurley Weir saved my paddling life. I was 14 or 15 back in the time when Hurley Rodeo began. I paddled a Dancer at home in Scotland on any rivers that my club would take me to. Fast-forward several years and I was living in London and chasing a 'career' but feeling unfulfilled. Bright lights, big cities and nights out can provide a lot of entertainment but you, my fellow paddlers, you know that there is no greater entertainment than boating.

BORN AGAIN BOATER

One day I drove out on the M4 to this place called Hurley on the River Thames. If I am honest, that day re-ignited so many things in my life for which I am truly thankful. My kayaking lull was over, my pursuit of a socially normal career was fatally wounded and I started to tread a path that would take me back home and abroad in equal measure. I chose a new life, one full of paddling. Hallelujah for Hurley.



Report by Bruce Joliffe, images by
Grant Halworth & Dave Worley

Hurley

The draw for me was more than just the paddling. A real sense of community exists around Hurley and it has never felt so vibrant as right now. The 2012 Classic was a thing of beauty. There was a GB selection event and with a new Boater X ramp installed the evening entertainment was sorted. Then on the Sunday the Classic competition, the 'Rodeo', with its round robin jam format pitching the novice in with the seasoned pro. It's a competition with an egalitarian atmosphere. So much that someone should send our PM 'call me Dave' Cameron over so that he can see the meaning of 'We are all in it together'. ▶

"A real sense of community exists around Hurley and it has never felt so vibrant as right now."





"It was breathtaking, it had atmosphere and it had community."

THE BEST YET

The 2013 Classic built on the previous year's rampant success and came back strong, beating its chest like King Kong on the tear through New York, and attracting the cream of European, the UK, and even US, freestylers.

We saw the return of last year's Champ Petr Csonka, he's the man who said you can keep your second gate and showed how to do every move under the sun in gate one! On top of that we had a strong international showing of some of the best freestyle paddlers in the world.

On the Saturday of the event the lock keeper had to shut down Hurley's glorious three gate perfection, but despite the flushy two gates that appeared in its place, there were plenty signs of greatness on Old Father Thames.

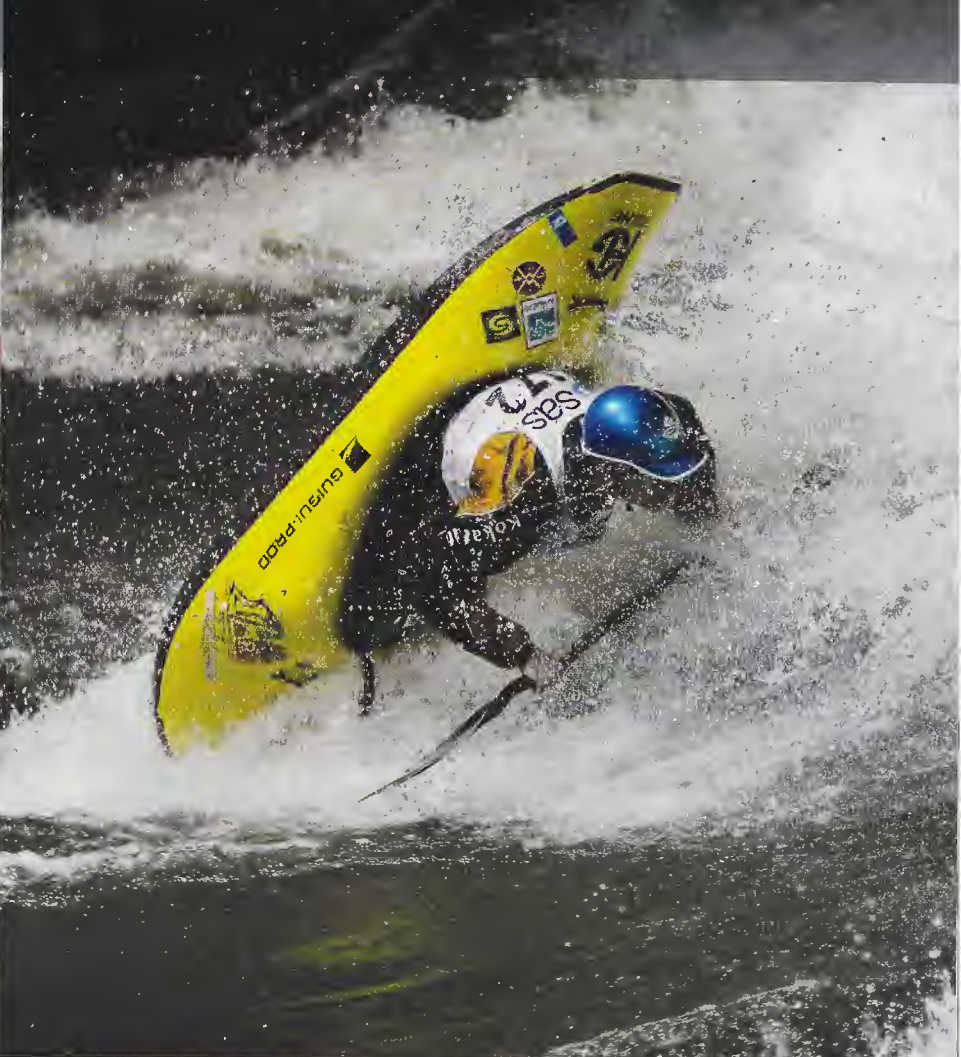
The Junior Men's class saw Sweden's Max Karlson way out in front in a show of third run strength many of the Seniors would have envied. Junior Men GB selection was impressively topped by Jake Norman who looks like he's only going to go bigger and bigger in future. In the Men's event Seb Devred kept on growing his scores like he'd planted them in a greenhouse and fed them baby-bio. In the Men's GB selection local lad and shrinking violet Alan Ward was placed in top spot. Ladies Nina

Csonkova placed first with top GB lady going to the talented physiotherapist Miss Sally Montgomery. The C1 category had Adam Ramalamadingdong convincingly out in front and then in the K1 Junior Women Nuria Fontane-Maso's consistently classy performance gave her a deserving win. Kim Aldred picked up the 50 points for the GB selection Junior Women selection event.

If you felt out of breath just reading that then consider this, as the sun went down on Saturday evening there was still the small matter of the White Water the Canoe Centre Boater X (on a steeper ramp with a wee kicker) and the Freestyle Super-Final.

X MARKS THE SPOT!

Without going into too much detail I will try to distill the essence of Boater X. Big steep start ramp with four paddlers shoulder to shoulder at the top ready to do battle across a course that takes them laterally through the outflow from the weir and round some buoys that are jealously guarded by some grumpy old men, otherwise known as 8-balls, whose sole task is to mess it all up for them. Personally I didn't need any of their help in round 2, as I managed to mess it up all on my own resulting in a poor third spot and being knocked out at the stage. The fun of the Boater X kept on giving, we had clashing paddles elbow and egos, we had a swim from an 8-Ball who got in the way once too often, we had it all going on. Nouria Newman won the Ladies Boater X and Alan Ward had it going on too as he cruised to victory in the Wavesport Ethos Nine, a long boat, but take it from me, keeping the nose of an Ethos up off that steep start ramp was not all that easy. ▶





SUPERSTAR SHOWDOWN

In the floodlit Saturday Super-Final we saw the top five ladies and the top five men from the day's freestyle shenanigans in one last showdown. The ladies were; Nina Csonkova, Nouria Newman, Marlene Devillez, Katya Kulkova and Sally Montgomery with Nouria Newman pulling out the best moves on the night to win. The Men's event saw a phenomenal battle between Seb Devred, Tomasz Czaplicki, Alan Ward, Quim Fontané-Masó and Stephen Wright. To be honest the standard was so high that I struggled to follow what was going on, thankfully the experienced judging team did and Seb Devred was declared top gun.

There was now the opportunity for a long overdue dinner in the Marquee, a quick demolition of the free keg of ale and then the awards ceremony, where half the awards unceremoniously ribbed the reputations of some of the best-known locals before other reputations were destroyed in the town of Marlow up the road!

"The fun of the Boater X kept on giving, we had clashing paddles elbow and egos, we had a swim from an 8-Ball who got in the way once too often, we had it all going on."





Baillie / Sport. Ca. Image Pete Astles

CLASSIC ACTION

Sunday arrived all too soon and the heats of the Classic got underway, juniors ladies and men all queued up to get on the two gates with many heats to get through in the day. As the heats progressed everyone kept an eye on the scoring to see who would make it into the day's big finale. As the heats finished Giles Robinson, the lock keeper, immediately started shutting one of the gates, then moved along to open another two to create the perfect three gates and a superb three gate wave for the Sunday evening climax. There had been some surprises in the last few heats that saw a Super Final devoid of British Men. Thankfully in the Ladies final Claire O'Hara shone to add the Classic Crown to her already world class year of achievements. Then in the Men's final just when it looked like Catalan Quim might be this year's champ, Stephen Wright blasted right out of Middle Earth to show just what can be done in a plastic boat against largely carbon competition.

It was breathtaking, it had atmosphere and it had community. It had obviously taken a lot of effort from event organiser Andy 'Jacko' Jackson and the Thames Valley Freestyle team. As the music subsided everyone moved back for the awards and then off to homes both near and far.

Rodeo is not dead, it's alive and well and living in Hurley and, in fact, next year we need to get it something nice for its 25th Birthday! **CF**

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To find out how you can get involved with freestyle paddling go to www.gbfreestylekayak.com



From a Parent's Perspective

A JOURNEY IN TO CANOE SLALOM

Article by
Mick Barrett

By the end of last season Jacob, at fourteen, the eldest of our two sons was planning this year's assault on the K1 Premier Division. Ethan, sixteen months younger, was reviewing a plan of his own for joining his brother in Division One. Eva, my wife, and I were checking the calendar and making the most of those rare free weekends when we could reacquaint ourselves with friends and family over a pleasant meal and bottle of wine. Two years ago it was all so different. Two years ago we had a little disposable income and a lot more disposable time. Then came that never to be forgotten, throwaway line muttered by Jacob as he set off for school on that fateful September morning. "They're doing some testing today"...

That testing turned out to be gym based exercises being conducted by Canoe England as part of a new initiative to identify children with the characteristics and potential to be world class canoe slalom paddlers. In partnership with the boy's school, Rushcliffe Comprehensive, GB Canoeing were seeking to establish an academy at nearby Holme Pierrepont National

Water Sports Centre where they could facilitate the development of a dozen or so children each year on the path to 'Olympic level slalom paddling.'

Almost reluctantly Jacob's curiosity was aroused. Never one to succumb to the allure of being part of a team despite all our encouragement, his thrills were sought in more individual pursuits with skateboards, scooters, rip-sticks and BMXs. He even acquired, and mastered, a second hand unicycle. Once invited to join the Academy however, paddling quickly grabbed his attention and has held it in a vice-like grip ever since.

To be fair our new family members, the Canoe Slalom coaches, gave us adequate warning about the degree of support and commitment we parents would be expected to provide. Initially time was the chief focus but over the coming months this expanded through including presentations on nutrition, sports psychology and even, more mundanely, boat repair!



“They have faced challenges, both mental and physical, and have grown immeasurably with burgeoning self-belief, confidence and ambition that have become evident in all aspects of their lives.”

That leisurely Sunday morning spent working backwards from the sports pages between cups of freshly ground coffee, soon gave way to shouting frosted encouragement from frozen river banks whilst endeavouring to convey the impression that you wouldn't want to be anywhere else in the world.

The enthusiasm of the kids however was infectious. Through months of pool sessions learning to roll, evening sessions at HPP mastering basic techniques and weekends at Stone and Matlock gaining experience on moving water, their hard work and dedication meant that they were ready and eager for the season proper to begin.

For we parents new experiences were becoming commonplace. However, if we were to maintain any semblance of constructive dialogue with these burgeoning athletes one of our first and most important tasks was to master, and comprehend, the new lexicon of terms with which paddling confronted us.

Stagers, stoppers, breakouts, reverse sweep snakes, bow-rudders, eddies, the list was endless, and I was never any good at languages! And finally there remained the challenge of paddling's unique vocal encouragement. Once I had mastered the art of shouting "up, up, up" in company with no hint of self-consciousness or embarrassment I knew I was in!

And talking of languages there's then the small matter of filling in the entry forms.
 HPP Div1/Prem 28/9/13 Bib 138 PU K1M J14 CE 284995
 Barrett Jacob HPP 20/07/1999 £18.50 plus address, postcode and E-mail, and don't forget to sign it if participant is U18! (I appreciate that you readers won't need a translation but the first few times it was like deciphering the enigma code!) Also, that £18.50 was the fee to race in one class on one day, and now we have two sons who race in three classes over whole weekends. I won't go into the cost of boats, paddles and kit as well as I don't like to think about it! ▶



“Once I had mastered the art of shouting “up, up, up” in company with no hint of self-consciousness or embarrassment I knew I was in!”



Whole weekends, of course, often mean finding accommodation for Saturday nights. Admittedly many race day venues come complete with camping facilities but having recently qualified for my state pension I insist that my evenings under canvas are a thing of the past! That said my 'Silver Surfer' status allows me time to scour the internet for bargain late holiday cottage deals that often turn into mini family breaks.

The most fun we had as a family was last year at West Tanfield. Friday was an inset day and I managed to secure a cottage in the village for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Jacob had the opportunity for lots of practice on Friday afternoon once the course had been set and in between the weekend's official practice and morning and afternoon runs, we had leisurely cooked meals, walks in the beautiful countryside, visits to Theakstone's Black Sheep Brewery and the Masham Sheep Fair. The latter had some of the strangest sheep I had ever seen, and it had nothing whatsoever to do with my earlier visit to the former! Early bookings of Premier Inns have also often provided excellent accommodation at a reasonable cost (No they are not sponsoring us – I've tried!)



One last thought – tying-on. It's a tribute to the technical abilities of all those paddling parents out there that the approach roads to all race venues aren't strewn with the debris of boats that have come loose and tumbled from the roofs of their cars. Clearly everyone masters the correct technique very quickly. Me, I'm at last a little more relaxed about it and no longer tighten the straps to cracking point for fear of causing mayhem on the A1(M).

Oh, and the children? I understand that they have achieved everything that was expected of them and more, and along the way we parents have had the privilege of witnessing, and sharing, their journey. They have faced challenges, both mental and physical, and have grown immeasurably with burgeoning self-belief, confidence and ambition that have become evident in all aspects of their lives.

Finally I would like to thank GB Canoeing for the commitment and considerable investment that they have made to the programme and to Rich Ramsdale Lead Talent ID Coach. At the risk of embarrassing Rich, and I know I speak for all the Academy parents, he is the real star and all the kids adore him. **CF**

USEFUL INFO

To find out more about getting involved with Canoe Slalom go to www.canoeslalom.co.uk
For more info on the GB Canoeing talent programme go to www.gbcanoeing.org.uk

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

Photo Competition

We're constantly amazed at the amazing photos that you submit each month, from the inspiring images that flood 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.



Congratulations to Caoimhe McLaughlin who is the 'Overall 2013 Canoe England Photo Competition winner!'

Caoimhe fought off some stiff competition with her image, taken last August at Leaside in East London, to win a top of the range Fujifilm Finepix XP60 Waterproof Digital Camera, worth over £130!

Well done Caoimhe! Thanks to everyone that entered the Photo Competition, last year. This year's competition is up & running, with February's competition now open.

Have you got a cracking Canoeing or Kayaking shot that might be a winner?

Send us your best canoeing or kayaking photo and Senior entrants could win a Cotswold Outdoor Voucher while Junior winners receive a WHSmith Gift Card.

There is a prize for the winner of the year selected from all the winning monthly entries.

And don't forget, as a 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 Jo McEnaney, British Canoe Union, National Water Sports Centre, Adbolton Lane, Holme Pierrepont NG12 2LU or you can email your entry 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.*



Andy Roberts

Debbie Lambert

Andrew Hargraves

David Priestley

Carol Mills

Ben Watts



Jonathan Witherstone

Eoin Ca



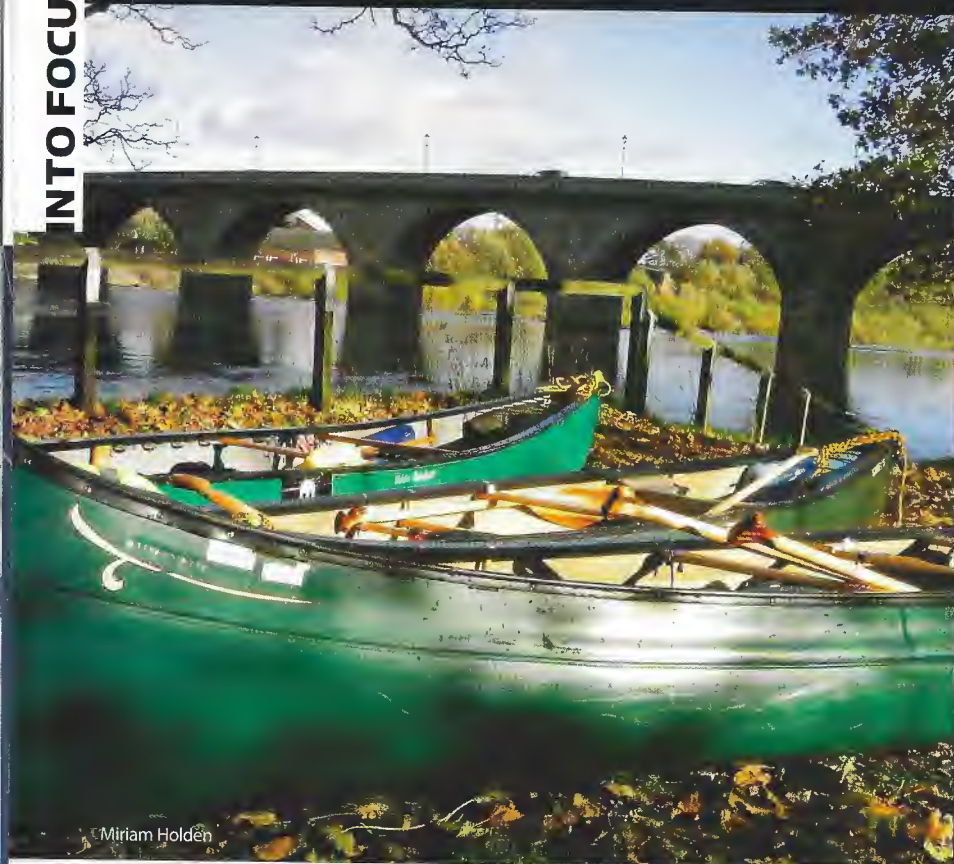
Gavin Hart



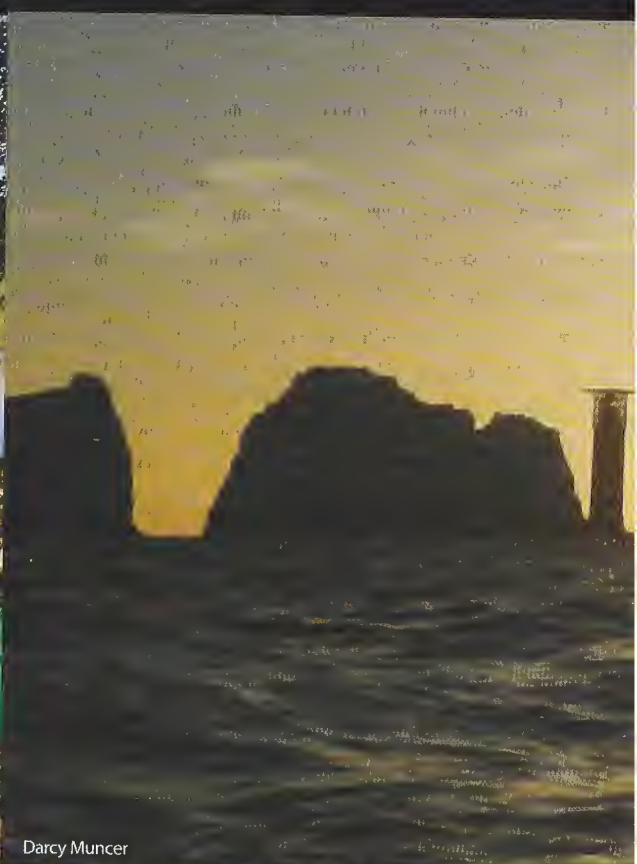
Andy

Michael Allsop NOVEMBER WINNER





© Miriam Holden



Darcy Muncer



Will Hay DECEMBER'S WINNER



Emma Case



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Simon



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OVERALL 2013 WINNER - Caoimhe McLaughlin



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Neil McAra



Andy Bond

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A Passion For Paddling

WORDS WITH JAMES HINVES – CANOE ENGLAND PARTICIPATION TEAM MANAGER

James Hinves is passionate about paddling in both his personal and in his professional life. James has been working for Canoe England for nearly a decade in a variety of development roles. Canoe FOCUS caught up with James for a behind the scenes insight in to what motivations and challenges keep him enthusiastic and passionate about our great sport.



How long have you worked at CE, and what roles have you held in that time?

I started for CE nearly ten years ago – May 2004 as Paddlesport and Coaching Development Officer for southern region and West Thames, but at that time I was the only officer based in the south so my travels were many and varied. The team tends to be restructured to meet the needs of the organisation every four years, so I progressed to become a Senior Development Officer for Team South and I'm now the Participation Team Manager, helping to support the Canoeing Development Officers and Senior Development Officers across the country.

Can you share an insight in to your life away from work?

I live between Southampton and the New Forest with Tina and our three boys, all of the family paddle with Southampton Canoe Club so most of our weekend time is taken up paddling or working for paddling. The only member of our family who is not keen on the water is Theo the cat!

What does being Canoe England's Participation Team Manager involve on a day-to-day basis?

Day-to-day there is no similarity, for example today I'm speaking to you and ensuring the team is reporting on time, tomorrow I'm meeting a national partner in Central London, followed by meeting a canoe club in the evening, Wednesday we are meeting the BCU insurers, Thursday is a meeting in Nottingham and then an evening meeting the South West Regional Development Team in Somerset, then Friday is talking to the team helping them, trying to follow all the actions up and prepare for next week.

Working with a big team must present some interesting challenges?

Yes, the team are spread across the country and each has a different area to support, and different solutions to find, to help people paddle regularly. We try and get the team together three or four times a year to ensure that we are able providing a core of activity and purpose.

Are you just competition focused or does your role take in all types of paddling?

The team and I are there to get people paddling and the type of boat is not important. We have focused in the past on a paddler's first two years of participation, but now it's all about getting paddlers to paddle more regularly – once a week if possible and the promotion of events and activities to help this to happen.

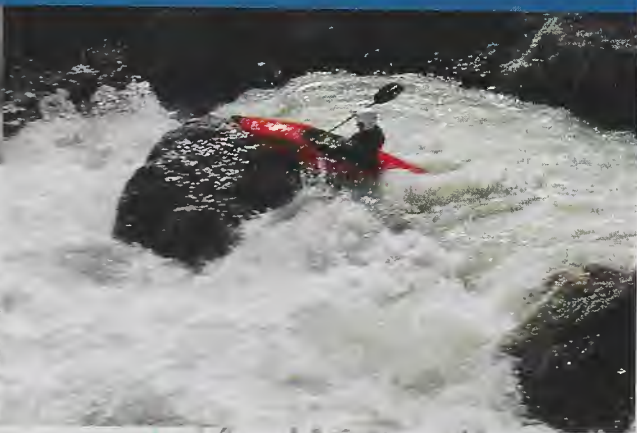
What projects & initiatives are you involved in?

We currently have a great range of programs to help and inspire people to go canoeing and the market research that we are able to access now helps a lot with designing and then promoting the programs to the right areas of the public. Working with the Go Canoeing Quality Mark providers to ensure a great offer for the touring paddler, or helping canoeing get in to schools through programs such as U Canoe or School Games is a great boost and the success that Indoor Kayak Race and the Club Winter Challenge, to help clubs and centres keep paddling over the winter, are having seem to show that we are moving in the right direction.

What's your favourite part of the job?

My favourite part of the job is the variety and the ability to see what we are achieving, whilst its different to helping an individual to get on to the





water and starting their paddling ambition, the results are the same but on a grander scale

And any bits you don't like?

The travel is an essential part of my job but it can be dead space between getting stuff done, it's great to get and see people, but also the team and I try and support through advice and equipment rather than needing to put wet boots on the water.

What motivates you?

I really enjoy the bits of canoeing that I get out and do and the wanting to enable more people to have some of the opportunities that I have had is a real motivator.

What advice would you give to someone thinking about becoming more involved in the development and delivery of Paddlesport?

As you can see from above the job has changed hugely since I started; now the ability to work with partners to achieve both of our aims is key. It's not enough to sell canoeing and kayaking we now need to identify the benefits and where these overlap with our partners. The market has also changed and being able to determine through insight what people want rather than what we have always done is a key skill.

When, where & how did you first get into paddling?

I did a course with Tony Webster at Woodmill as a Scout and did several courses with Dave Evans at Calshot. I then progressed to Bicton College and did a lot of outdoor skills, but I would not really class myself a paddler until returning to Woodmill as staff I was helped by Phil Quill, John Smith, Barry and Steve Rance to really enjoy the sport.

Can you remember your first boat?

I chop and change boats as the next best deal comes along but my first was a wooden Ottersports tourer that my uncle had built as a school project and my father and I restored to put back on the water. It still hangs in my father's garage should it be needed again!

What's your favourite type of paddling?

I am not a great repeater, so I like the challenge and push of what we do, last Autumn my son and I paddled the Stour Descent that this year featured roped access portages and lots of mud it was great!

What have been your best paddling moments?

I'm going to sound really old here but, over the years, I have really enjoyed lots of bits of paddling, but it's the people that motivate me to get back out and do more, Paddling the Gyr and Ubye in the Alps, the Start of the Sella Descent, paddling to the Isle of Wight with my wife for a wedding anniversary as part of our DW preparations, or a night time epic on the rivers close to college they were all great.

And any paddling-related ambitions that you're still hoping to realise?

This is the tricky one for me, there is loads that I would love to do, and so little time to achieve it, but overall I guess my main ambition would be to help the BCU achieve getting more paddlers on the water and keeping them there regularly – preferably including me!

Thanks James

“My favourite part of the job is the variety and the ability to see what we are achieving, whilst its different to helping an individual to get on to the water and starting their paddling ambition, the results are the same but on a grander scale”

BCU BOARD LOOKS AHEAD

By Andy Maxted

Canoe England Representative to the BCU Board

Ensuring the BCU is responsive to its members' needs, acts in the best interests of the sport as a whole and meets its many stakeholders' expectations is a big task and one entrusted to the organisation's board of directors and senior management. The BCU is also a significant business, with an annual turnover of around £8 million, and the board members, all elected representatives of canoeists in each of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, bring a wide range of business and canoeing skills and experience to that task.

The current governance structure has served the BCU well since it was adopted in 2003 under an agreement made between the BCU and the national canoe associations. Circumstances and concepts of good practice do however change and the BCU Board has reviewed its governance arrangements in consultation with the home nations and proposes a number of changes to ensure the organisation remains fit for purpose over the next decade, as it has over the last.

First and foremost the BCU Board wishes to ensure that as well as promoting the interests of members in each of the home nations, the organisation continues to properly represent the many disciplines, both competitive and recreational, that make up our sport and that canoeing can take full advantage of the funding, sponsorship and other commercial opportunities that are available to successful sports.

The BCU is not alone in this and is working closely, as are other sports, with its principal funding partners UK Sport and Sport England to develop a governance structure that reflects modern practice and provides transparency and accountability to all of its stakeholders.

A key challenge is to balance the breadth of interests that have a legitimate expectation to be represented and the necessary operational, marketing, financial and other business skills expected of board level directors without creating an unwieldy and over large body. The BCU Board is therefore proposing a structure that combines effective representation for the sport of canoeing while taking advantage of the wider business and commercial experience that independent directors can bring.

The new BCU Board is proposed to comprise six directors appointed from within the sport who will be joined by three new independent directors. The BCU Chief Executive will also join the new board which will continue to be responsible for setting the strategic direction of the BCU and for oversight of its two operating divisions: GB Canoeing (responsible for our Olympic, Paralympic and GB teams, international liaison and UK Coaching) and Canoe England (responsible for access, participation, club and coach development in England).

Under the proposed arrangements, the six 'sport' directors will consist of three members appointed by the BCU's English Council and one from each of the Scottish Canoe Association, Canoe Wales and the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland. The three independent members may or may not be canoeists but will be individuals appointed for their specific skills and experience and who do not have any other staff or officer positions within the BCU or any of the home nation management structures. Both the sport and the independent directors will, as now, continue to serve in a voluntary capacity and will not receive any remuneration for the time they give to board matters. All appointments to the proposed new board will be competency-based and limited to a maximum of two four-year terms.

Improving women's representation in our sport is an objective that will be reflected in the BCU's new governance arrangements with a commitment to ensuring that at least 25% of board members are women by 2017.

The proposed new governance arrangements have been discussed and agreed by the English Council and the executive boards in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and will be put to the BCU AGM in Cardiff in March. Creating the proposed new board will be an important step in underpinning British canoeing's standing as a leading and effectively governed sport and demonstrating further progress to realising our Vision 2020 strategy.

PADDLE-ABILITY

BACK IN K2 AFTER 14 YEARS

Mark Griffin was left with a number of substantial injuries following a car accident; here he tells us his story of how he overcame the challenges thrown at him to get back into a racing in a kayak.

"Kayaking was a sport in which I'd like to think I excelled. Regularly training was preparation for the Devizes to Westminster Race. In July 1999 I had no idea I wouldn't step into a kayak again for many years to come.

14 years ago I was involved in a car crash in which I suffered a fractured skull leaving me in a coma with severe brain injuries. What followed was the most traumatic period of my life, months of rehabilitation relearning basic skills from eating to standing and sitting whilst dealing with huge memory problems. I was paralysed down my left side and, still left with weakness on that side, double vision and poor balance. I was forced to take early retirement. My career and active lifestyle snatched from me, I truly felt my life wasn't worth living. I needed to rebuild the life I once had, or as much of it as possible.

After watching the kayak racing in the Olympics I wondered if I would ever have the chance to enjoy kayak racing again. So I bought two plastic kayaks and took them out with my support worker. It was great fun having a splash around, but to me it just didn't have the same thrill of serious racing. I went on to a K1 racing boat, which was unstable, sitting in it was similar to balancing on a knife-edge, not the best starting point considering my poor balance and limb weakness. Even with the help of my support worker it was a few seconds before I capsized and was swimming to the riverbank, I was soon on my way home feeling totally deflated. However, I wasn't prepared to give up yet, so I strapped foam pipe insulation to the sides to make it more stable, allowing me to paddle the boat without assistance.

I decided to join Lincoln Canoe Club where I met Gary Quittenton, he watched me on the kayak ergo machine, which allowed him to assess my balance and technique then putting me in a very stable racing/touring kayak, I asked 'should I try to improve or just give up?' Gary encouraged me to stick with it, which gave me the confidence I definitely needed.

I am now a full member of the club. My hope was always to compete in a kayak race again and I have now competed in many races moving up to division 7 in regional kayak racing to compete in a K1 at the national sprint regattas and in the 2013 national marathon championships where I won bronze in K1. Within my club I have also now been appointed joint Paddle-Ability committee member and my intention is to gain BCU 1&2 star awards and move on to become a level 1 coach."

For more information about Lincoln Canoe Club visit www.lincolncanoecub.co.uk



U CANOE

CANOE YOUR WAY

Canoe England's young people's programme, U Canoe, is continuing to go from strength to strength. Still in its first year over 70 delivery centres have now signed up to deliver either U Canoe Wired or U Canoe Unleashed over the course of 2013-14.

The hiring of indoor kayaking machines in the U Canoe Wired programme has proved to be extremely popular, especially amongst colleges and universities. The use of the indoor machines over the winter months will enable young people to experience canoeing in a comfortable setting before progressing onto the water in the spring. Our team of Canoe Development Officers are on hand to help support delivery centres with receiving the indoor kayaking machines.

Although the weather has been cold in recent weeks there has still been plenty of Unleashed activity happening across the country with over 800 young people participating in sessions to date. The participant-led, fun and informal approach to the sessions is proving popular and most importantly many young people are joining their local canoe club or paddling regularly through other means with their friends. U Canoe Unleashed will have its official launch in April 2014.

To see what's been happening recently please visit the U Canoe Facebook page www.facebook.com/UCanoe and follow us on Twitter @U_Canoe
To find out more information about the programme and how to get involved please contact our U Canoe project officer - jack.ford@canoe-england.org.uk



AN OLYMPIC LEGACY DREAM

By Sam Jackson, Jackson Kayak Coaching



In the late summer of 2011, Luke Smyth had his first experience in a kayak during a 'taster session'. He enjoyed it so much that his parents started looking into opportunities for Luke to be coached and have more opportunities for kayaking.

Luke joined Jackson Kayak Coaching in October 2011 and became a regular participant in pool training and river trips. In December 2011 Luke was awarded his British Canoe Union (BCU) 1 Star Award, and from there, Luke progressed to achieve his BCU 2 Star Award in April 2012, and his BCU 3 Star Whitewater Kayak and Canoe Award in May 2012. In June 2012, he passed the BCU Foundation Safety & Rescue Course, and in August, the BCU Aquatic First Aid Level 1. Continuing his development with Jackson Kayak Coaching, Luke sought his next challenge, and in February 2013, just two weeks after his 16th birthday, Luke qualified as a Level 1 BCU paddlesport coach.

Later that month, inspired by the Olympic Legacy and a chance meeting with London 2012 Olympic Champion Etienne Stott, on the riverbank in Bedford, Luke had a try at the sport of canoe slalom. He enjoyed it so much, that he took every opportunity he could to train, and again he was supported in this through Jackson Kayak Coaching with the loan of a slalom boat.

In June 2013, Luke entered the competition of the national canoe slalom league (a combined league for juniors and seniors), and he won his first race. The 2013 competitive season ended on 3rd November 2013, and in just nine months, Luke made a big impact. He won five ranking races and three other competition races; he was additionally awarded the trophy for 'Best Junior' on two other occasions; and, through his success was promoted three times. His wins included the Division 2 race at the Inter-Clubs Championship held at Cardington.

Luke's amazing season was capped at the British Open Slalom Championship on 2nd November when he was awarded the 'Peak Junior Award' for the highest ranking male newcomer to Division 1 of the slalom league. The following day, he notched-up his eighth win of the season in the Legacy Open at Lee Valley. Finally, his dedication and success over the summer saw him selected for the GB Canoeing Southern Super Regional Squad for Autumn/Winter 2013/2014.

As well as developing as an athlete, Luke has continued to develop as a coach. During the summer months he supported

Jackson Kayak Coaching as an Assistant Coach, and he added to his coaching portfolio by completing the Level 1 Coaching Module for Canoe Slalom. In September, Luke became a student at Shuttleworth College where he is studying Outdoor Adventure Sports, which will give him the opportunity to gain further coaching and leadership qualifications.

Luke trains six days a week except when there is a race weekend which is four or five days of training plus the competition.

After all his hard work and training over the last two years, I nominated Luke for a Rising Star award at the Bedford Sports Awards to be held on Dec 9th 2013. They agreed and he won the trophy. He was shaking so much with excitement when they called his name out and was shell-shocked to have won and to make the event even more exciting his inspiration to get him into Canoe Slalom Etienne Stott was there to greet him and have a chat with him too, which made his night complete.

Luke's goals for the winter are to gain a minimum 10% performance improvement through increased speed, strength and stamina, combined with technical stroke improvement, and better reading of the water. Then, next season, his goal is to continue his level of improvement, setting competition goals each month and by the end of the season to be a contender for the national team qualifying competition in 2015, and at a minimum, to be the most improved junior of the season.

His longer term goals are to gain a regular GB selection at Under 23 level, before gaining a senior place and representing his country at World Championship and/or Olympic events. His goal is to have a career as an athlete and paddlesport coach.

For my part I just wanted to say super well done to Luke and thanks for all your hard work this year that you have given us at Jackson Kayak Coaching and for all work and training you put into get this far, You are now a inspiration of your own to our younger paddlers getting into the sport.

"He was shaking so much with excitement when they called his name out and was shell-shocked to have won and to make the event even more exciting his inspiration to get him into Canoe Slalom Etienne Stott was there to greet him and have a chat with him too, which made his night complete."

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WATERWAYS & ENVIRONMENT

TRANSFORMING CANOE FOR CANALS JOINT PROJECT



CANOE ENGLAND AND CANAL & RIVER TRUST

For many years the former British Waterways really overlooked the fact that canoeists outnumbered the powered boaters on their waterways. Whilst recognising the fact that the power boaters do pay a considerable amount for licences, pumping out etc canoeists have a real role to play not only in enjoying the waterways, but also in helping to promote their use and support for them. Canoeists were certainly part of the work to keep the canals alive in days gone by.

However, the new Canal and River Trust (CRT) has certainly taken a very positive approach to many things including the willingness to promote canoeing on their waterways. Canoeists are recognised as having a real role to play in helping to sustain the waterway and to develop the future of the sport so everyone can enjoy it.

Canoe England is working with the CRT to look at ways to do this. This will be via:

- Canoe Trails
- Go Canoeing events
- Partnership with local authorities and other organisations
- Canoe Club development
- Making it easier to travel along certain routes.
- Involvement with existing canal based canoeing events
- Provide opportunities for people to learn about the natural environment through guided canoe wildlife safari tours

Canoeing is one of many activities that take place on our waterways. We are keen to work with other users of CRT waters, which include angling, walkers, cyclists and narrow boater groups. Working in partnership will help ensure a good understanding of each other's needs and reduce potential confrontation. It will also help us to protect and enhance the natural environment through joint canal/river clean ups, the reporting of pollution and fish deaths, and reduction in the spread of non-native species. Ultimately we would like to see a mutual respect between everyone who uses the canals and the sustainable use of our waterways for all.

By providing information as to where paddling opportunities exist in the form of canoe trails CE and CRT would not only promote the sport to recreational paddlers, but will be encouraging non-members and potential paddlers to take up their paddle and get out and active, safely and responsibly. At a time when the government is keen to reduce obesity and improve the nation's health, canoeing can give people the opportunity of getting active in a safe, diverse and enjoyable environment such as CRT's fantastic canal and river system.

It appears that many people are unable to work out where they can go canoeing for themselves. This could be due to things such as lack of time or knowledge about how to go about researching places to paddle. This difficulty is not helped by the uncertainty of the access situation.

Society has also changed and in many areas there is the expectation that the information is to hand on the internet, in a book or another publication.

Canoe England are developing canoe trails through their volunteers for the Canoe England and Go Canoeing Websites. www.canoe-england.org.uk/our-sport/where-to-paddle/canoe-trails/ & www.gocanoeing.org.uk/go/index.cfm/things-to-do/trails/ and Canoe England has shared some with the Canal & River Trust, <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/features/canoe-trails>

Canoe England recognises that the wildlife and landscape of Britain is a part of our common heritage, and that we all have a vested interest in its survival. It acknowledges a clear duty to concern itself with the care and conservation of the environment where canoeing takes place. Canoeing does not have a significant effect on the environment. Research work has shown this to be the case too. Canoe England are in fact planning an exciting project with the CRT in the north west to provide opportunities for people to enjoy the natural environment from the 'comfort' of an open canoe through a programme of wildlife tours in and around Lancaster in Summer 2014. A wildlife expert will be on hand to provide expert knowledge of what you may see throughout the trip.

Canoeing is the most popular water sport and has been so for the last 10 years according to the BMF/RYA Water sport Participation figures. With two million people canoeing each year and with an increasing number of sit-on-tops being sold (including to anglers) the numbers of canoeists are ever increasing.

The more the project can make the waterways easier to canoe on either through infrastructure or the provision of information will certainly increase the numbers of canoeists using the waterways. The project is targeting areas of large populations such as London and Birmingham and will certainly make the waterways more inviting to the surrounding population.

One area that has been worked on is the Kennet & Avon Waterway. With thousands of people using the route for training for the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race during the winter months and large numbers of recreational paddlers enjoying the waterways in the summer a close look has been taken at accessibility of portages. To this end some work is being planned for a few of the portages and greater use of signage is also being considered.

Several canoe trails have been written for from Devizes to Reading and in 2014 the list will include trails from Bradford upon Avon to Devizes too!

To help promote the strategic Partnership between the two organisations a Memorandum of Understanding has been written.

Members of Canoe England have a licence for some navigations and canals, which is fantastic but which bit of the river, canal or area of sea makes a good trip? Where can I park? What is there to see on route? Is it accessible for those with limited mobility? Is it suitable to go canoeing with children? These are many of the questions we get asked and for most the answers are held within a canoe trail.

We are writing canoe trails to suggest places that can be canoed. However, this is only the tip of the iceberg as there are so many different permutations in terms of places to canoe and different variations of routes on the waterways to do!

We would really like to continue to add to our portfolio of trails on our website and need your help! If you can assist us in identifying and writing a canoe trail, please contact: tamsin.phipps@bcu.org.uk

We would also love to receive your photographs showing interesting images of wildlife, the urban or natural environment that may attract people to the trail. We will be building this up over many months and long into the future so as we can ensure people all around England (and further a field) have an opportunity to paddle the waterways, which are on their doorstep!



Canal & River Trust



FEMALE FOCUS



GO CANOEING GUIDED TOURS - CLOSING THE GENDER GAP!

The fantastic new Go Canoeing Guided Tours have really taken off over the last year and are proving to be attractive for both men and women; closing the gender gap in participation.

Over the years many sporting organisations, including Canoe England, have been looking at how they can tackle the gender inequality in participation and attract more women and girls to their sport. Research has consistently shown that there is the latent demand for women to take part and do more sport. Despite targeted initiatives and new 'offers' many are still struggling to increase their female participation figures by significant numbers.

Without being a specifically targeted programme, Go Canoeing has got it right! Go Canoeing Guided Tours are offering what women want and this can be seen in the participation figures.

Since April 2013 44% of Go Canoeing Guided Tour participants were female. When you compare this to current CE membership figures, which are at their all time high for the percentage of female members at 25%, this shows just how fantastic the Guided Tours participation is and something which the Go Canoeing team hope to keep improving on in the future.

SHOUT OUT TO THE GIRLS IN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

As coaches at one of the top centres in the country, for Kayleigh Nicholson and Cheryl Jenkins, there is never a dull day at Whitlingham Outdoor Education Centre. Kayleigh was introduced to the industry through an Outdoor Adventure course, ran by City College Norwich. Adam Williams, the Course Lecturer, told FOCUS, "The outdoors is one of the fastest growing industries in sport now. The rise in female students and coaching is really coming at a positive time. Females are becoming very employable, down to their drive and commitment to the sport. Watch out boys they're coming to get you."

For Kayleigh and Cheryl working at Whitlingham brings new challenges; socially, physically and mentally. Kayleigh's passion for the industry has increased, being driven and supported by her colleagues at Whitlingham, to achieve new skills and abilities to further her career.

Cheryl has been working at the centre for some years now, which allows her to achieve a good life work balance, fitting in around school runs, and be a working

mum, whilst pursuing a career in outdoor adventure. As well as coaching for the centre, Cheryl also works for Go Canoeing as a tour leader, guiding customers on the River Wensum and the Norfolk Broads.

At present the outdoor industry is male dominated, however more females are choosing this career path, and both Kayleigh and Cheryl believe that there is a strong need for more female coaches and that young girls need more women role models, to help encourage them to pursue careers in different occupations.



VOLUNTEERS

CANOE ENGLAND LONG SERVICE AWARD

The CE Long Service Award recognises those volunteers who have dedicated 25 years or more to volunteering in paddlesport in England, from coaches and committee members, to those behind the scenes.

Congratulations and thanks go to the following volunteers who were added to the Roll of Honour in 2013:

Jane Edwards	Crewe & Nantwich Canoe Club
Phil Edwards	Crewe & Nantwich Canoe Club
Ian Greenwood	Oldham & District Canoe Club
Alan Fisher	Kingston Kayak Club
Peter Arter	Lower Wharf Canoe Club
Jeff Asplin	Rugby Canoe Club
Mike Nicholls	Royal Sutton Coldfield Canoe Club
Mike Robards	Tiptree Scouts
Roger Harris	Surrey Scout Water Activities Club
Geoffrey Orford	Maidstone Canoe Club
Brian Day	Tamar Canoe Association
Keith Chant	Avon Outdoor Activities Club
William Hill	North Cotswold Canoe Club
Michael Crispin	Exeter Canoe Club
Brian Kelly	Wokingham Canoe Club
Adrian Cooper	Marlow Canoe Club
Linda Clark	Adventure Dolphin
Peter Crago	Tamar Canoe Association
Richard Ward	Exeter Canoe Club
Tim Ward	Marlow Canoe Club, Nomad Kayak Club
Deborah Wilkinson	North Yorkshire Scouts Water Activities Team
Philip Hadley	North Yorkshire Scouts Water Activities Team

If you, or someone you know, has completed 25 years or more as a volunteer, nominate them now! Volunteers will receive their gold Long Service pin badge and certificate and will be added to the Roll of Honour.

www.canoe-england.org.uk/volunteers/recognition-and-reward/long-service-award/

PADDLESport REWARDS SCHEME GOLD AWARDS 2013

Congratulations to:

Kieran Manning	Thornbury Sea Cadets
Trevor Coldron	Manvers Waterfront Boat Club
Nigel Parkes	Manvers Waterfront Boat Club
Liz Murnaghan	Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club
Julian Brown	Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club
Derek Henzell	Spelthorne Kayak and Canoe Club
Pam Dixon	Frome Canoe Club
Anne Biffin	Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club
Kari-Louise Martin	Leighton Buzzard Canoe Club
Samantha Derrick	Spelthorne Kayak and Canoe Club

MAIL BAG

LETTERS, MAILS POSTS & TWEETS OF THE MONTH!

Tynewearsport: Ever wondered what a #canoe paddle looks like after 2,300 miles?



Ianwilkes66: My @Fatyakkayak arrived today! Have also joined @Canoe_England

lee33htzdisco: Just cracked a 40k Endurance Session on the River Trent #PerfectWeather #OnMyChinstrap!

AndyMaxted: Great day @Canoe_England Coaching Conference.

Isabella_ENDS: @Canoe_England has poor approach 2 #riveraccess. But I bet @AnglingTrust has no proof of "widespread upsurge in unlawful canoeing&trespass"

Mike Harrison: Two Hours paddling and coaching in a swimming pool all mixed up with a few daft games. Should be fun with the Potters Paddlers

Nik Williams: I wonder what the AT would make of me; an angler who fishes exclusively from a canoe and hasn't fished from the bank for many years.

Andrew Baker: Best place to paddle? Anywhere, when I'm with good friends and family!

spogoUK: We loved our beginner @G0Canoeing kayaking session at @LeeValleyWWC and can't wait to try it again #kayak #canoe

Nsport: Excited to be using the new Canoe Ergos from @Canoe_England

Afrivet: started kayaking with my daughter in Poole. Love it. Whole family involved and met lots of super people.



Recovery

KEY TO GOOD TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT



Recovery from exercise is essential to ensure continuous physiological improvements in response to training. Exercise is only going to be beneficial in the long run if athletes:

- Refuel the energy they have spent in a timely manner
- Repair muscle and tissue damage
- Provide enough nutrients to enable physiological adaptations to training (e.g. muscle growth) and
- Restore endocrine and immune functions

Recovery should be approached from many different angles simultaneously. Most importantly, you should follow a training programme that factors in rest times by cycling through different training intensities.

Recovery also includes activities like stretching and other forms of physiotherapy. Taking mental breaks from training is also vital to restore motivation levels.

Nutrition forms an integral part of recovery. Many athletes focus primarily on their diet post-exercise in order to recuperate from training. However, the food you take in before and during exercise also affects your ability to overcome fatigue greatly. Recovery should be facilitated before training has even started, as well as throughout and after exercise. Steps to a successful recovery should include the following:

A good hour before exercise, ensure that you are well hydrated and fuelled with enough carbohydrates (and protein in case of strength training) to see you through your session. Aim to take in about half the fuel you are about to spend in your workout. For an average endurance session, this means eating about 20g of carbohydrates (the equivalent of one banana) and 10g of protein (about half a pint of milk).

During training, focus on rehydration. Drink approximately 1.5 times the amount lost through sweating. Begin to replenish energy, ideally a mix of carbohydrates and amino acids. This could be in form of isotonic sport drinks and by eating bananas or energy gels or bars. Recovery is primarily about avoiding nutrient deficiencies, which could trigger catabolic processes in your body. Waiting too long to refuel increases the likelihood of your body entering a catabolic state because you might start to break down muscle tissue to generate energy. To avoid this, we recommend replenishing 40-60g of carbohydrates and 10-15g of amino acids per hour of endurance exercise, depending on training intensity. Most of it can be consumed after exercise but you can speed up the recovery process significantly if you are taking in about a third of these nutrients whilst exercising.

Following the steps outlined above will maximize your ability to restore bodily and psychological functions as quickly as possible and set you up well for the main part of recovery: post-exercise nutrition. Here, the timing of your nutrient intake is crucial.

ATHLETES SHOULD:

- Continue to replenish carbohydrates (until 40-60g carbohydrates per hour of exercise are reached) and rehydrate
- Take in protein to repair muscle damage and promote muscle growth
- Most importantly, refuel amino acids

Within minutes of finishing a workout, take in 10-15g of amino acids. Amino acids act as building blocks for muscle and connective tissue. Unfortunately, amino acids are also used as an alternative energy source to sugar during exercise. Once an athlete's training load exceeds seven hours per week, the body's pool of amino acid is diminished significantly because they are increasingly metabolised to meet higher

“Properly recovered you will have minimized your injury risk and overcome fatigue.”



“The food you take in before and during exercise also affects your ability to overcome fatigue greatly.”

energy demands. In our experience, increasing your dietary protein intake cannot restore amino acid deficiencies, making amino acid supplementation essential for athletes. In a best-case scenario, the consequence of an amino acid deficiency is just muscle soreness but over time, it can result in muscular, joint or tendon injuries. Amino acids should be a key ingredient to any successful recovery strategy: (i) They repair muscle damage and help protect from injuries, (ii) restore hormone levels and promote immune function to keep you healthy, and (iii) switch on a programme in your muscle cells that stimulates muscle growth. Once this programme is active, any protein consumed for recovery will be used much more efficiently for muscle growth and your body will respond to training better, with improved performance.

Within 20-30 minutes after exercise, eat high-quality protein to help repair muscle damage and promote muscle growth. For endurance exercise, you are looking at 20g of protein; for weight training, you would want to take in 30-40g. Aim to take in protein from a variety of sources: Some of them should be easily digestible to aid immediate recovery and muscle growth, like whey protein (found in most protein shakes). For the repair of muscle damage on the other hand you need proteins that are released

slowly, like milk protein or various meats. They provide a steady supply over hours and help prevent or stop catabolic processes in muscle tissues.

Continue to rehydrate and fill up your carbohydrate stores by eating a mix of fast-acting sugars and more complex, unprocessed slow-release carbohydrates. Muscle cells take up carbohydrates best within 2 hours after exercise but the sooner you replenish your glycogen stores, the quicker your recovery.

This would conclude a typical recovery protocol, assuming you are following a well-balanced, protein-rich diet. Properly recovered you will have minimized your injury risk and overcome fatigue so that you will be able to follow your training programme day in, day out. Recovery is one of the areas where nutrition can have a considerable impact on performance development by facilitating and optimising the body's adaptations to training. **CF**

USEFUL INFO

If you have any further questions about recovery or how sports nutrition can help improve performance, please contact bodo@amsportuk.com or visit www.amsportuk.com for more information.

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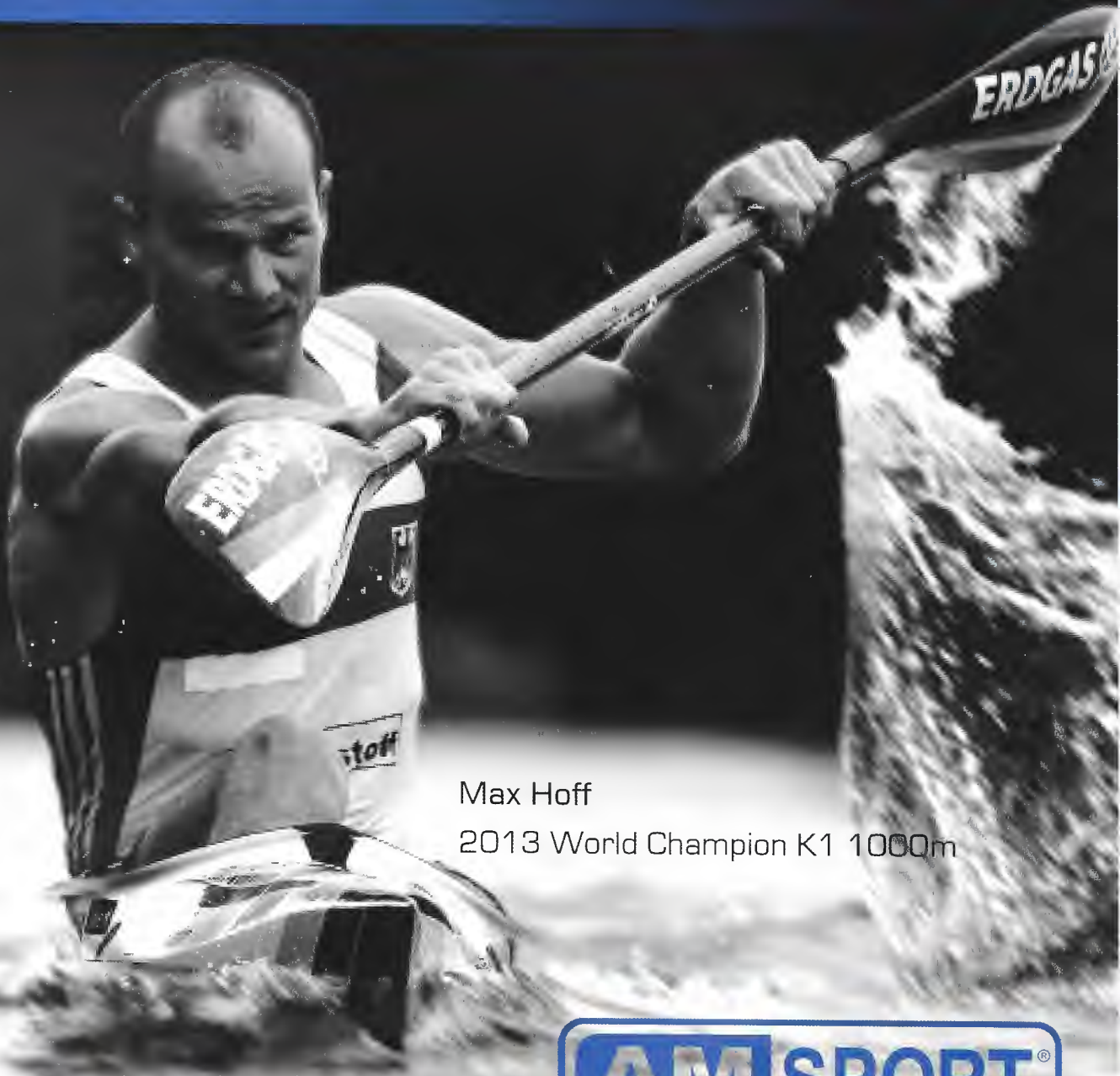
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