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canoe focus

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF BRITISH CANOEING

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WELCOME TO THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF CANOE FOCUS

As the summer draws to an end, I hope you can all look back on a happy few months spent out and about, enjoying our wonderful waterways.

It's been another successful summer for all our GB teams, who have won over 30 medals between them so far, including an array of World and European medals and a record-breaking nine Paracanoe medals at the European Championships, in July!

Of course, back in June, we also hosted the Canoe Slalom World Cup at the Lee Valley White Water Centre, where we saw Great Britain win eight medals, including seven golds. Planning for the ICF 2015 Canoe Slalom World Championships, also at Lee Valley, is already well underway and you can register your interest via the www.canoelondon2015.com website.

At the time of writing, the slalom team are getting ready to travel to America, for the World Championships later this month and I'm sure you'll join me in wishing them the best of luck.

Although the nights may be drawing in, there's still plenty to do out on the water. This issue of Canoe Focus includes information on the great Go Canoeing Guided Tours, organised for October, November and December! And, to get things going, they've arranged a truly spooky paddle, just in time for Halloween. The Winter Club Challenge will also be back again. We've changed the dates to reflect your feedback and this year it will be running from November to February. Good luck!

As always, we've also enjoyed reading all your paddling stories which, this month, include inflatable kayaks and kayaking in the desert! Don't forget to send us your stories to the usual address: canoeingnews@bcu.org.uk

Just before I sign off, I'd like to extend a big welcome to our two new board members, Mohamed Elsarky and Denise Barrett-Baxendale who joined us for their first board meeting in June. Both Mohamed and Denise have a wealth of experience and knowledge that will help to develop our strategic development plan and further develop operations within the organisation.

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

Paul

Paul Owen, Chief Executive.



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Please also use this e-mail address as a way to submit feedback on how we're doing. We are really committed to reflecting the views of our members, so we welcome all of your comments.

You can also use the Canoe England Facebook page -
www.facebook.com/canoengland



HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

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

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



48

REGULARS

- 06 The Hub**
Interviews, info and news from your governing body

- 16 What Gear**
Olympic Champion Etienne Stott explains the essential kit for taking up canoe slalom

- 18 Go Canoeing**
Latest News

- 20 Go Canoeing**
Take on the Three Lakes Challenge

- 40 FOCUS On**
Freestyle, Boater-X and Extreme Racing- All you need to know about stepping in to these dynamic and exciting white water disciplines

Into FOCUS

The latest entries in our popular photo competition

Front Cover: Malory Franklin focussed and gunning for gold?
Image by Antony Edmonds



FEATURES

24 **Lakeland's Hidden Gems**
Canoeing and Kayaking Trips in the lake district

30 **Rising Star**
Words with slalom racer Mallory Franklin

36 **Paddling on Air**
British Canoeing member Andy Jackson shares his inflatable kayaking experiences

38 **Snack Attack**
We check out some tasty alternative snacks to help you stay powered up on the water

42 **The Power of the Paddle**
How to accelerate and travel at speed in an open canoe – a blagger's guide to looking good

54 **Five Essential Basic White Water Paddling Skills –**
to see you ripping up the rivers with style this autumn

60 **White Water in the Desert?**
Do sand and kayaking really mix?

Image: Jonathan Witherstone

IN THE FLOW – BOOK REVIEW

In the Flow is the latest book by world-leading sport psychologist Jonathan Males on performance for winning in canoeing, kayaking and other paddlesports.

Males draws upon his lifetime worth of experience coaching elite athletes, and as a canoe slalom athlete for Australia himself, to answer some long-standing questions about the connection between what a paddler thinks and feels with how he or she performs.

In the Flow gives practical advice on what recreational and competitive paddlers and their coaches need to do, to ensure a confident performance when it counts.

The book's content is easily accessible to all paddlers, coaches and parents alike whilst remaining relevant to all paddlesports disciplines including white water, flat water and ocean-paddling.

Paperback available to buy from the BCU E-Shop, RRP: £17.99, order your copy by visiting www.bcushop.org.uk/product/183/in-the-flow



CANOEING CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION

Here's a bit of festive fun, we're running a cracking Christmas competition to design this year's British Canoeing Yuletide card. As well as featuring the winning design on the card there will be great prizes for the winner and runners up.

The competition is open to both adults and children, and the design can be created in any form be it, hand drawn, digitally produced or even a photograph. We'd like you to use your imagination and creative skills- just remember to make sure it has a canoeing or kayaking related wintery twist!

Short-listed designs will be showcased for a week on the British Canoeing Facebook page for you to 'Like' before the final voting panel decide on the winner. Winners will be announced by Wednesday 19th November.

Please send your designs electronically to kimberley.walsh@canoe-england.org.uk or by post to Christmas Card Competition, British Canoeing, National Water Sport Centre, Adbolton Lane, Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham, NG12 2LU.

The deadline for receiving designs is Monday 10th November at 5pm. Don't forget to include your name, age (if you're under 16) and contact email and phone number along with your entry!

• EVENTS •

STEAM TRAIN PADDLE

On the 18th October canoeists are hoping to raise over £10,000 for Muscular Dystrophy by having a paddle down the River Dee from Glyndyfrdwy to the Horseshoe Falls and then by canal to Llangollen.

The great bit about this is the paddlers will be transported to the put-in by steam train. Veteran white water paddler Dave Manby has organised the event and booked the train to do two runs of 200 paddlers on each run up the valley. So with that in mind, tickets are limited to maximum of 400 people and you can bid on the auction for the right to drive the train too! The event is planned for open boats but there is no reason why you can't paddle your kayak, sit-on-top, duckie, or stand-up-paddleboard down the river. On top of this there will be Spikedrivers playing train inspired blues on the platform, an exhibition of vintage canoes and kayaks on the platform provided by Graham Mackereth of Pyranha Mouldings, a lecture by Phil Harwood about his full descent of the Congo River, safety cover and chaperone service for the less experienced paddlers. This will be a great weekend for reunions for just £60 a ticket... Trains don't come cheap!

More info: www.davemanby.co.uk

ENGLISH CANOE SYMPOSIUM

The 2014 English Canoe Symposium will take place from October 31st to November 2nd at YMCA Lakeside, Windermere, Cumbria. It will again be a celebration of all things open canoeing, and attractions include:

- 50 top-level canoe coaches
- A huge range of canoeing related workshops
- Trade stands and shops
- A great atmosphere

For more info please visit www.canoesyposium.com



BRITISH CANOEING WINTER CLUB CHALLENGE

Time to start planning for this year's Winter Club Challenge.

As the nights draw in, and the temperature dives, it's easy to put off going out paddling and forget how much fun we all have on the water!

So why not have a go at the Winter Club Challenge again this year, starting in November?

There are two great challenges:

- Most Miles Paddled Challenge
- Most Places Paddled Challenge

Choose to enter just one or both of the challenges, with £250 up for grabs for the winning club for each challenge.

The Winter Club Challenge will run from 1st Nov 2014 to 28th Feb 2015 inclusive, and is open to all British Canoeing clubs and affiliated groups (Affiliated groups include Scouts, Guides and Sea Cadets).

Following feedback from last year we are working on ways to make the process easier for clubs to record and submit their results so don't let last year's paperwork get in the way!

More information will be available soon on www.britishcanoeing.org.uk

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BRITISH CANOEING BACKS WORLD RIVERS DAY



British Canoeing has given its backing to World Rivers Day, an international celebration of the world's waterways. The day, which will be held on September 28th, aims to highlight the many values of rivers and to increase public awareness of the need to better care for our waterways.

Each year millions of people in more than 60 countries participate in World Rivers Day and in 2014 British Canoeing is supporting the event and will be encouraging paddlers across the country to get involved and love their local river.

British Canoeing Waterways and Environment Manager Richard Atkinson told FOCUS, "One of the joys of canoeing is that it gives you the means to explore our wonderful waterways and we're keen to do whatever we can to ensure future generations also have access to a thriving network of beautiful, healthy rivers. World Rivers Day is a great event that really celebrates our waterways and highlights to the paddling community the environmental issues and pressures that our beautiful rivers may face. So why not show your local river some love this World Rivers Day and help ensure its health in the years ahead?"

There are a number of ways you can get involved in World Rivers Day including organising a river clean up or simply spending time on your local stretch of river and enjoying the natural landscape and wildlife.

For more information about the day and how you can get involved, visit www.worldriversday.com

British Canoeing would love to hear what you've got planned for World Rivers Day, you can let us know by registering your activity online at www.britishcanoeing.org.uk



DID YOU KNOW?

Rivers in England are the healthiest they have been for over 20 years, and otters, salmon and other wildlife are returning to many rivers for the first time since the industrial revolution.

The otter is one of our rarest mammals. It declined rapidly from the 1950s to the 1970s because of dangerous pesticides and loss of riverside trees. Otter populations have now increased due to improvements in water quality, more fish and sustainable habitat management.

Otters have reappeared in places where they have not been seen since the industrial revolution, including Bristol, Birmingham and Manchester and even on the Thames and the Lea in north London.

The UK produces more than 100-million tonnes of waste every year – one tonne is about the weight of a small car. In eight months, the waste we produce would fill Lake Windermere, the largest and deepest lake in England!

Invasive non-native species are one of the largest threats to biodiversity. They out-compete native species and dramatically alter fragile ecosystems.

Invasive non-native species cost the British economy approximately £2 billion every year! Floating pennywort can choke waterways, preventing recreational uses of freshwaters.

BRITISH CANOEING COACHING CONFERENCE

The 2014 British Canoeing Coaching Conference will take place from 22nd -23rd November at Wyboston Lakes, Bedfordshire. The theme for this year's conference is Dynamic Coaching – An expanding skill set and the aim will be to turn the spotlight back on to developing coaching skills and behaviours. The event will offer a range of workshops, which will look at taking existing skill sets to the next level or applying existing skill sets into new contexts, as well as offering development in some new areas.

Booking for this event opens on the 15th September, until then you can register your interest on www.canoe-england.org.uk/coaching/coaching-conferences/ to receive exclusive updates and offers, including confirmed speakers and workshops ahead of the full programme announcement.



UNLEASHED

Olympic heroes Etienne Stott and Tim Baillie recently helped celebrate the launch of U Canoe Unleashed on a sunny day at the University of Nottingham. The pair met with students who were taking part in U Canoe activity and even got on the water to try their hand at a range of the Unleashed activities. Various partners from Nottinghamshire and representatives from other universities attended the day to find out a bit more about U Canoe and to see it in action. The aim now is to sign up as many universities as possible to start delivering the programme.

Luke from the Canoe Polo team who helped organise the day spoke to FOCUS, "U Canoe has been a great way to introduce new people to the sport without scaring them away with competition and river trips. It really helps to build their confidence and is the perfect stepping stone before joining the club".

The University of Nottingham has been running U Canoe Unleashed sessions through their NU2 Sport Programme to try and increase the number of students participating in the sport and to increase numbers at their Uni's Canoe Polo Club and Canoe/Kayak Club. In addition to the water activity the university has also made use of the indoor version of the programme - U Canoe Wired. This part of the project enables universities to loan two indoor kayaking machines for a period of 6 or 12 weeks to increase the awareness of the sport by taking kayaking to the students. The machines can be set up in the halls of residence, in the cafe or virtually anywhere the students want! Emma Baker from the university said "U Canoe was really easy to get going and since starting the programme we have seen a number of students join our Polo and Canoe club and it fits in with the NU2 Sport programmes aims very well"

To find out more information on U Canoe please visit www.canoe-england.org.uk/UCanoe or contact Jack Ford - jack.ford@canoe-england.org.uk

Don't forget you can follow U Canoe on Facebook and Twitter too [@U_Canoe](http://www.facebook.com/UCanoe)



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Bob Timms BCU Level 5 Coach.

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SUE HORNBY INTERVIEW

Words with Sue Hornby –
Director of Development



Sue Hornby first started working for British Canoeing in 1997 when she worked part time as a Paddlesport Development Officer in the London and South East Region. In 2000 she took on the role of Head of Young People's Programme and in 2007 became Director of Development. FOCUS caught up with Sue during a small gap in her busy schedule to find out a little more about her and her role within British Canoeing...

Before working for British Canoeing Sue worked freelance, which included coaching the RYA Women's Olympic Windsurf Squad, coach education and tutor training for the RYA and the NCF (now Sports Coach UK). She also ran her own business – Suzy's Sweat Shop! (Pioneering manufacturer of pogies and throw-bags, including the iconic Green Slime model.)

What does being British Canoeing's Director of Development involve on a day-to-day basis?

Each day and week can be very different, I am responsible for the English Development team so any day could involve work around Paddle-Ability, Safeguarding, Equity, English Coaching, Facilities, Volunteers, Waterways and the Environment and Participation. My responsibility involves leading the team and developing a framework for delivery to help British Canoeing achieve our key objectives and funding outcomes. How we do this has changed radically over the last 3-4 years, with a lot more research and insight undertaken to help us better understand what paddlers and potential paddlers would like from our sport. I also liaise with external partners such as Sport England who fund our participation and talent programmes and will be involved in work or projects for British Canoeing overall. My week usually involves a couple of days at our offices in Nottingham (normally packed with meetings) and also try and have one day a week from my home office.

Working with a big team must present some interesting challenges?

One of the biggest challenges is physically getting people together to discuss things. This is much easier now with telephone

conferencing and our new offices at Nottingham, but still presents a challenge. I envy businesses where you can just walk down a corridor to discuss something with a colleague and it certainly means you have to be organised to make best use of everyone's time. Another big challenge is ensuring that we are not so engrossed in our own area of delivery that as a result you miss the 'big picture'! Across the organisation every team is very passionate about their area of work – and sometimes a compromise needs to be sought. I'm keen that we support all 1.8million people that go canoeing each year – whatever way they do it!

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

All types – I think that is very important. Our focus is to get people into regular paddling – whether that is competition or recreation.

What projects & initiatives are you involved in?

Quite a lot! At present I am involved in the Go Canoeing programme, we have an excellent team delivering on this programme and some exciting new initiatives scheduled for next year. We currently have a project looking into club needs and provision and are about to start one into outdoor activity centres. We are also working with the RYA and British Rowing on a joint water sports project, which has produced some really interesting insight and we will be piloting some concepts this September.

What's your favourite part of the role?

I work with a great team – so working with people who are totally dedicated, committed and full of great ideas. It has been great developing new initiatives, but the best thing is seeing it working. Seeing people enjoy canoeing through one of our initiatives.

And any bits you don't like?

Emails! I have to admit they are convenient but they do stifle communication. And seeing that my laptop crashed last week and right now I am struggling with a temporary laptop – so IT!

What motivates you?

The fact that we have such an amazing sport and there is so much more that we could do and lots to improve on!

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

I think there are many levels that someone could get involved – getting involved as a volunteer or a coach really helps you to see what people want from the sport – that gives a good background if you wanted to work full time in the sport. The really important thing is to find out what people want and then try and deliver that, rather than develop what you think is right just from your perspective.

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

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to go on an outdoor activity week at Bowles Mountaineering Centre in Kent and then to Outward Bound in Wales when I was 17. On both trips I experienced canoeing and realised I loved it. I did a summer holiday job at PGL and then came home, found a canoe club and went from there.

What attracted you to the sport?

I love being outside and on the water – it is just a brilliant place to be! Also, the fact that I was in control of my own boat and that I did not have to depend on a team of people to do it.

Can you remember your first boat?

Absolutely! A Jaycee 400, which I bought as a kit form at Crystal Palace Canoe Exhibition in February 1973. Some friends helped me to put it together for a first outing at Woolacombe Bay the next month!

What's your favourite type of paddling?

That has changed over the years – what I want to do now is very different to when I started. And that is what is so fantastic about our sport – the sheer diversity means you can keep trying new things. I used to do a lot of white water paddling, but now prefer to do that in nice warm places like India or Nepal. For me the enjoyment is the journey down the river (with a bit of stunting on the way!). At present I love outrigger and va'a paddling. I steer the OC6 (a six person outrigger canoe), which is really interesting with team dynamics and the challenge of steering a 42 foot 350lb canoe! We have just come back from doing a 65km OC6 race in France (we won the women's race) great paddling on the sea in fantastic conditions. I would like to do more on the sea in OC1/OC2 and V1's – particularly downwind with waves! Also about to set off sea kayaking in Scotland – and I'm very keen to do more of this too.

What have been your best paddling moments?

Competing for GB in WWR and getting some medals along the way. Doing the Fraser River Expedition in 1981 and being the first woman to paddle down Hells Gate Canyon in Canada. Leading the first British Women's team to compete in the Na Wahine O Ke Kai outrigger canoe race in 1994 and last year steering in the race.

What, for you, are the rewards of paddling?

You can always set yourself a challenge, so the reward of achieving that challenge, whether it is perfecting a J-stroke, putting yourself against the clock, or going into a different paddling environment. Then I'd say, paddling with some great people, whatever your background there is a common denominator that brings you all together. And last but not least, just being on the water seeing some great places, wildlife and getting life into perspective!

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

Well I would like to do the Colorado Grand Canyon. Also keen to do a lot more sea kayaking and some trips further afield.

Thanks Sue

PADDLE-ABILITY

BRITISH CANOEING LAUNCHES PILOT PROGRAMME WITH MENCAP

Through its Paddle-Ability programme British Canoeing has joined forces with Mencap, the UK's leading charity for people with learning disabilities, and Special Olympics GB to increase canoeing opportunities for disabled people.

Mencap run 46 Gateway groups across the country and the aim of this project has been to link Mencap Gateway groups with their local Paddle-Ability Top Club or Centre. Following this the Gateway group organisers and Paddle-Ability club or centre then work together to run a Paddle-Ability starter session followed by a block of five sessions.

The first centre to pilot this project has been Wokingham Waterside Centre in Berkshire. The centre already have a strong inclusive and specialist Paddle-Ability programme, which is why they have been awarded Paddle-Ability status and were selected to pilot the programme.

Seven people with a learning disability and three volunteers took part in the first pilot session at Wokingham. The participants arrived early, raring to go. Coaches kitted everyone out with buoyancy aids and paddles before they hit the water. Participants received an hour of quality coaching and time on the water in katakanus – adapted canoe boats, which are designed to be fully stable. All participants said that they couldn't wait for the next session. Bernadine, who has a learning disability and took part in the first pilot session, said to FOCUS, "I really enjoyed canoeing today because I have never done it before. It was very good exercise. I am really looking forward to doing it again".

Ian Carpenter, National Sport Manager at Mencap, said, "It's really exciting that British Canoeing are championing people with a learning disability throughout their development work; their coaches will be attending learning disability coaching workshops, their clubs are becoming much more inclusive through the Paddle-Ability accreditation process, and they are looking to create more opportunities for competition. This pilot project and future development work is a very important opportunity to get more people with a learning disability on the water".

This project has been so successful that British Canoeing is now looking to roll this project out with more clubs and centres.

If you would like to be involved with this project or would like more information email clarisse.smith@canoe-england.org.uk



CANAL & RIVER TRUST TEAM CANOE DAY

Report by Sarah Rudy, Canal & River Trust National Press Officer

As a member of the Canal & River Trust press or campaigns team, you get used to being told you have one of the best jobs in the world – promoting canals and rivers! Of course it's much easier to promote something if you have experienced it for yourself, and so we make sure we get out and about to see our waterways through the eyes of our many different visitors.

Which is why on one warm June morning this year you might have seen us out canoeing Birmingham's fabulous canals. We met at Edgbaston Water Sports Centre (a hidden gem if ever there was one), with colleagues from our marketing and digital team and Tamsin Phipps from British Canoeing.



Once on site, we were given our safety briefing by the experienced staff and then embarked for the Icknield Port Loop to launch our canoes onto the canal and set off on our adventure. Everyone was excited and so far so good - had managed to stay dry!

Competitive members of the team didn't waste much time paddling off ahead of the pack, but many of us were content to simply drift along and enjoy the fresh air and relaxing scene. Being out on the canal itself, it was lovely to see how busy the waterway actually was. Many boaters, picnickers and dog walkers were all out enjoying the summer day and tranquil water. It occurred to me how important it was in our busy lives to find places of natural beauty like this where we can unwind, chill out and spend some real time. Even after just a few minutes on the water - I could definitely feel the batteries beginning to recharge.

The Icknield Port Loop is a brilliant waterway for beginners as it's not far from the hustle and bustle of Birmingham City Centre and is a relatively short paddle for those who are new to the sport and haven't quite got the strength and stamina for a long session on the water. After about an hour and a half we had successfully paddled the loop, explored the canal around Brindley Place and the Mailbox and got back to our starting point - thankfully all still dry although feeling a little achy and in need of a cup of tea at the centre.

As a novice I found it great fun and surprisingly easy to learn to canoe, and being out on the water it was fascinating to see the canals from a different perspective than just from the towpath or a narrow boat. It was also lovely to see so many people and wildlife out on the waterway, making the most of the sunshine like we were. It was amazing to find such a serene green oasis in the heart of a busy city. A magical place for anyone that wants to discover it, whether it's to just take a relaxing stroll or have an adventure in a canoe.

Canoeing and kayaking are high up on the Canal & River Trust's agenda. Not only is canoeing the most ancient form of boating on our waterways (a Bronze Age dug-out canoe was found in the River Lee a few years ago) but we believe it has huge potential for growth in the future – for people of all ages, abilities and levels of experience. We are working closely with British Canoeing to encourage even more people to give canoeing a try. We are working to improve signage, canoe infrastructure and access to the water's edge. We are also developing canoe trails so that more families and canal explorers can explore the waterways like we did.

Our canals and rivers have so much potential for canoeing and kayaking and our trip out in Birmingham has inspired us all to tell more people!



FACILITIES

HALTON RAPIDS By Chris Hawksworth

We have many honey pot canoeing sites around the country. Most have extremely tentative land access and all are sensitive to local residents, environmentalists and vested interests. Since facilities and land ownership issues tend to be slow to change and when they do every opportunity should be grasped to buy the site or lease it long term no matter how difficult or protracted the discussions might be.

In British Canoe jargon, these sites are known as 'Occupation Sites', that is, they are sites where due to mainly geographical features canoeists want to paddle on a continual lingering basis. Not to be confused with canoe trails whereby paddles use rivers like a public footpath and simply pass along for recreational paddling.

Symonds Yat on the Wye, and the Washburn in North Yorkshire, are two such 'Occupation' sites. Both have British Canoeing ownership and leased interests.

These opportunities only arise once a generation, or, at best once a decade. Such a site is Halton Rapids on the River Lune, two miles north of Lancaster Town Centre. Here, just above the old tidal limit are a series of rock ledges and outcrops that depending on water level can be dry or horrendous and in between particularly in the winter lovely play waves and eddies are created.

In the 1970's before artificial slalom sites were created Halton hosted, courtesy of the North Bank land owner, Luneside Engineering, several Div 2 to Div 4 Slaloms, but these days it is more a play spot and coaching site of regional importance.

In 2008 the Luneside Mill and engineering works gained planning permission to be converted into houses, workshops and a community centre and was bought by a green housing co-operative. Canoe England heard about this and approached the new owners to see if they would be interested in CE joining in with their project in return for a long lease of a section of riverbank, a landing to the water's edge, toilets and changing and use of the community centre for meetings and coaching.

We already knew that Luneside had sold their angling to a private individual and access during the game fishing season, March to October was fraught and limited, but, that November to February the river was open every day and that was when the water was at its best. Yes we could be open to criticism but nothing ventured, nothing gained.

A working party of CE Northwest RDT was formed with Pat and Norman Green doing the heavy lifting, with myself and Richard Atkinson advising. This local management team would act as the interface between the landowners and paddlers. Lancs. Co. Housing subsequently agreed to a long lease and the site is now open. The car parking with direct access to the water's edge, toilets and showers are available for £10 per year to British Canoeing members and affiliates. Negotiations are in progress with the fishing rights owner to increase the number of March to October canoe days and the South Bank owned by the Environment Agency is already open all year.

From the new landing and steps at Halton you can paddle up stream to the rapids or downstream to the Lune Aqueduct and transfer to the Lancaster Canal, or paddle down to the landing or on to the sea.

Canoe England Capital Grants has supported the venture with £60,000.

Google Halton Rapids for further details and if you visit LA2 6ND is the sat nav code.

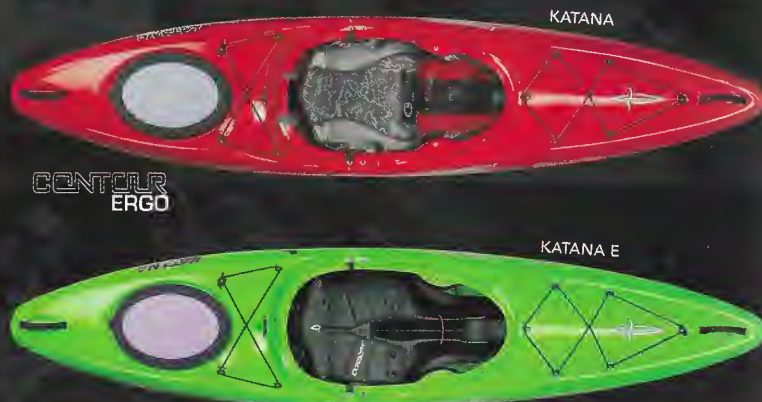
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YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS News From Your Region

NORTH

BBC FILMING ON THE TEES

by Claire O'Hara

Next year is the 50th Anniversary of the Pennine Way and as part of the celebration the BBC are filming a three part documentary and asked me to take the show's presenter, Polar Expedition and Diving Guru, National Geographic's Paul Rose, on a paddling journey down part of the route. The Pennine Way follows a good chunk of the River Tees, one of the places I paddled a lot growing up, so as soon as I got the official invite I knew instantly where to go to get some classic northern paddling.

On a beautiful British summer's day, with rain pouring heavily and not a blue sky in sight, I set off up north to paddle the River Tees with the Beeb. We set off in the rain with cameraman Phil, producer Paul, presenter Paul and my safety and logistics crew Phil and Den. Paul (my co pilot) when asked previously about his boating experience, had several times expressed his love for open boats. We didn't have any open boats to hand, so on arriving at the river we broke to him gently that it would be kayaks instead. Paul's prior kayaking experience was minimal, so he was about to be immersed into a fast track course on whitewater and drops. Luckily Paul and everyone else were up for the challenge. So together we carried all the gear into the main section of the High Force - Low Force run and set about getting some good shots.

As the weather cleared and the river levels came up we hit the river doing multiple runs down the S Bends / Dog Leg Rapid, Low Force and the Bottom Drop. The Jackson Kayak Dynamic Duo was our boat of choice and worked really well. It successfully helped us glide, bounce, drop, sink and fly of each of the drops. It was the perfect craft for this type of job. In no time at all Paul had kayaking mastered, helping expertly steer the boat around the Dog Leg, before we progressed onto the falls at Low Force! Miraculously with no swims and without dropping any of the camera kit into the drink we made it down to the final drop and out under

the bridge. The photos looked great and show us styling everything. We will have to wait until next year for the show to be aired to find out if the video tells the same tales. In true northern style, we finished the day, as every boating trip should, with a pie and a pint down at t'local pub.

The show will be aired across the UK on BBC 2 and regionally on BBC 1 in 2015. Thank you to Dennis Newton and Phil Scowcroft for the photos and all their help and handwork on the day.

ON SHORE

After nearly two years of hard work a new facility for the Coquet Shorebase Trust and Coquet Canoe Club is now open for business at Ladyburn Lake in Northumberland.

A £50K Inspired Facilities grant and further contributions from Canoe England's Facilities Fund, Northumberland CC, UK Coal and the Sir James Knott fund, all helped the project come to realisation at the Druridge Bay Country Park right next to the wonderful Northumberland coastline. Coquet Canoe Club members have worked extremely hard over the last few months on the lead up to the opening ceremony, marked by a Go Canoeing Starter Session to launch the summer season, which attracted over one hundred participants.

The new building boasts changing rooms, showers and a large boat store next to the visitor Centre (cafe!) at Druridge Bay Country Park with improved access to Ladyburn Lake. The lake has a circumference of about 2K - just a nice size for Water sports activity.

Coquet Shorebase Trust also operate a main facility in the estuary at Amble where they have been operating as a charity for 21 years. Amazingly they have been promised a new building next year further up the estuary to replace their dilapidated buildings courtesy of Northumberland County Council through their regeneration project and funding from the Coastal Communities fund.

CENTRAL

PADDLE 2 THE HEART

This summer the West Midlands RDT ran its third Paddle to the Heart event, offering people the opportunity to journey to the centre of Birmingham along various selected routes. The event aimed at publicising the sport of kayaking and canoeing, has been seen by regional paddlers as a safe, friendly experience and opportunity to network with other paddlers. It also serves to promote the extensive canal network of Birmingham.

Paddlers from as far afield as Stourbridge, Solihull, Coventry, Leamington Spa, Northampton, Sutton Coldfield, Banbury and Birmingham Canoe Clubs, to name just a few, joined one of the advertised canal trails and paddled to the heart of Birmingham.

Despite the thunderstorms and heavy showers our brave paddlers showed their resilience and commitment by braving the storms! In all, 80 boats and over 70 paddlers turned up for the event, which was a tremendous achievement given the weather conditions. Annually endorsed by CRT the West Midlands Regional Development Team succeeded in achieving their objectives of promoting the use of the canal network, inspiring others to be waterway users and facilitating the continual success of the 'Paddle to the Heart', which was enjoyed by all participants. What a great day, despite the early storms!

Planning for the 2015 event has already begun, so look out for more information coming soon! Enquiries can be made via paddle2theheart@hotmail.co.uk

SOUTH

CKT JOINS GO CANOEING

Canoe and Kayak Tours, based in Windsor, have become the latest Go Canoeing Tour Provider. Offering a unique range of canoeing tours along the Thames in Windsor, you really do get to see this historic and beautiful down from a different perspective.

More info: www.canoeandkayaktours.co.uk

YOUR CHANCE TO HELP

The Annual Consultative Meeting for the whole of the South West region, the counties of Gloucester, Wiltshire, Dorset, Bristol and Bath, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall and the largest British Canoeing region, will be held on Wednesday 17 September at the Mountbatten Centre in Plymouth starting at 7.30pm. At this meeting there will be reports on how the regional team has developed the sport in the South West in the past year, the successes of local clubs, how the regional team is working financially and to re-elect and elect new members to the team. At the same meeting the regional winners in the British Canoeing Volunteer and Recognition awards will be announced. This meeting is open to all clubs and paddlers and provides the opportunity to hear what has been going on and what is planned for the future.

Further details on the evening are available on the regional website at www.canoe-england-southwest.org.uk/region11/

MAIL BAG

LETTERS, MAILS POSTS & TWEETS OF THE MONTH!

@SportHIOW: Canoe ergo very popular at Eastleigh Community Games. Great day so far. @Canoe_England @CommunityGames

@SportBirmingham: Great meeting with @B_ROW_YouthRow @RYAMidlands @Canoe_England @BartleySailing today, discussing new links with @Newman_Uni #partnership

@PaddleplusCC: Get in your canoe & help get rid of an Invasive Non-Native Species!

@proctormark: Been lucky enough to spend some time with the @GBCanoeing Paracanoesquad this week. Very inspiring.

@VKCcanoepolo: We had 24 playing canoe polo on the river this morning: 11 seniors & 13 youth! #CanoePolo @Canoe_England @CanoePoloBCU @VikingKayakClub

@Larryharry1950: Not only was the @GBCanoeing slalom squad outstanding but the organisation @LeeValleyWWC world class too.

@KatieWarriner: After two weeks of travel, competitions & camps bring on tomorrow back with @GBCanoeing #challengingbest

David Millward: I am a member of British Canoeing, No: 116491. I am also a member of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association, and I wondered if there may be other canoe enthusiasts that might benefit from joining W.C.H.A. We have 'Paddle Days' a bi-monthly journal and quarterley newsletters. As for myself I have two wooden canoes, a John Stephenson gunwhale ribbed and a Lakefield.



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CANOE SLALOM

OLYMPIC CHAMPION, ETIENNE STOTT PRESENTS THE FOCUS GUIDE TO THE ESSENTIAL KIT YOU'LL NEED TO GET STARTED IN THE EXCITING WORLD OF CANOE SLALOM RACING.

Canoe slalom is a challenging and thrilling branch of paddlesport. It hones boat skills which can be transferred to other disciplines and has a fantastic community of paddlers who are passionate and friendly.

Beginners race on flat or placid water, but experts race on powerful and intense rapids. The idea is to be fast, yet precise. This requires a blend of patience and aggression, good planning and thinking in the moment. The mental challenge of canoe slalom is rivaled by the physical and technical challenges.

Canoe slaloms are contested in three different boat categories: Single Kayak (K1), Single Canoe (C1), and Double Canoe (C2). The secret formula that all racers are working on is how to fuse their body's own energy with the energy of the water. If you can tap into this energy, harness and direct it, you can pick up great speed, execute swooping turns and direct your momentum where you choose.

Your equipment will have an impact on how much fun you have - you can have a blast doing slalom in a general purpose boat of any description, but to have the most fun and get the most speed, you will want to get a slalom boat. If you are thinking of starting in canoe slalom, it can be a good idea to find a local club that has some slalom paddlers. They may have some boats/equipment to lend you to test, and they can give you advice on buying second hand (which is almost certainly the best idea). Also, most people start in K1, because it is forgiving and general skills transfer relatively easily, but if you fancy C1 or C2, get involved! The equipment you need for the different categories is subtly different, so I will explain each a little bit.

BOAT

A slalom boat is your ticket to fun and speed, so getting one that suits your aspirations and your budget it is worth spending a bit of time getting it right. If you are lucky enough to be able to buy a boat that was once paddled by a top athlete of a similar size, then you can be sure that the boat is well set up. Try different designs and find one you are happy with on the sort of water you expect to paddle.


Here are some things to look for when buying second hand:

DAMAGE/STIFFNESS/WATERTIGHTNESS – Floppy and leaky boats aren't as much fun, but you won't find many unbroken second hand boats. Slalom boat tails come in for the most abuse, so check any repairs are sound and be prepared to invest in some gaffer tape!

WEIGHT – Generally, the lighter, the more expensive, and light-touch skills overcome heavy boats!

SAFETY – Although the end loops on slalom boats are not really meant for hauling the boat around with, it's good to check they're in decent condition. Also, you may want to fit airbags front and back; a water logged slalom boat is outrageously heavy and tends to get damaged more as it floats down the river smashing into things.

FITTINGS – You may have to modify the seat and other fittings to get a good snug fit.



“A slalom boat is your ticket to fun and speed, so getting one that suits your aspirations and your budget is worth spending a bit of time getting right.”

BUOYANCY AID

Slalom buoyancy aids are made as small as possible to minimise the possibility of gate touches, and are designed to help you swim, not to save your life. If you buy second hand, buy from someone approximately your own size. Check the condition of the foam (if it feels like a bit of soggy cardboard, it may not float that well!) and the condition of the straps. Some racers like a tight fit for sleekness, others prefer loose for mobility. Either way you will probably be OK, just make sure that it fits well enough for it to do its job if you bail out!

THERMALS

I'd go for brand new, second hand thermals can smell a bit or be extremely ripe, no matter how many times they're washed!

SHORTS/TROUSERS

Racers tend to wear neoprene shorts or trousers, to fit snugly in their craft and to keep them warm. Hopefully you won't be swimming too much, so dry-suits/bottoms etc shouldn't be needed!



Image: Antony Edmonds

PADDLES

Slalom paddles are generally manufactured to be stiff, light and relatively durable. Proper slalom paddles will give you the leverage and power to direct your boat. Broadly, there are a few different things to look for in kayak paddles:

SHAFT DESIGN – There are straight shaft and cranked shafts available.

Internationally, you see a variety, the jury is still out. You'll be fine with whatever you're comfortable with, as long as it's set up right or left-handed.

LENGTH – Generally varies by only a few centimeters. Buying from someone similar in size and power is a good starting point.

FEATHER ANGLE – Varies from around 90 degrees, down to 'flatter' angles (approaching 30 degrees). Something around the mid-range will probably be best.

TOP TIP:

These can get a bit dog-eared and if they are too dented, they can force the paddle to split. If you buy in poor condition, it is often possible to file or sand the tips down to a decent state.

C1 / C2 PADDLES

HANDLE – Check the handle appears solidly attached. If your handle falls off or twists in action, there are unpredictable consequences!

SHAFT – Depending on the style of the person selling ('righty' or 'lefty'), there is likely to be corresponding wear on the shaft where it makes contact with the boat. Check this is not too severe, otherwise the shaft can break unexpectedly. Some paddlers use tape or shrink wrap to protect their paddle shaft (and boat).

CAG-DECKS

These days, most racers use a neoprene spray-deck which is stitched onto the waterproof cag. It's not vital, plenty of people use separate cags and decks. Providing you can find a spray-deck that fits, you'll be OK with what you already have. Second hand cag-decks deteriorate with time, so older/more well used ones are often less watertight.

SHOES/BARE FEET

A lot of racers don't wear shoes in the summer. They can be hot (and smelly) and often wear out quickly on the abrasive interiors of boats. That said, you can't do a fast race if you're in A & E with glass in your foot! A compromise is to keep some lightweight flip flops in your boat for walking around with.

Hopefully this has given you a good guide in how to select your gear for starting in canoe slalom. The best advice is to seek advice, try before you buy and enjoy the discussions with other racers about which design/style/colour is best!

See you on the water!
Etienne

BEAT THE SEPTEMBER BLUES AND HAVE FUN ON THE WATER

LOTS OF PADDLING FUN COMING UP THIS AUTUMN

Don't let the post-summer blues get you down! Autumn is here and although the nights are slowly starting to draw in, it's the perfect time to get out on the water.

The heat of summer has faded, but the chill of autumn isn't quite here yet. With that in mind, why not plan a canoeing or kayaking adventure this September or October?

There are lots of exciting paddling events taking place across England in the coming months, and Go Canoeing are looking forward to supporting them. Why not get involved?

COMING UP

The National Watersports Festival, Hayling Island, Hampshire: 5th - 7th September

Celebrate watersports with hundreds of like-minded people, at the UK's largest multi-discipline watersports festival.

Aimed at the recreational watersports enthusiast, the National Watersports Festival will be a great combination of activities with kayaking, kite-surfing, windsurfing and stand-up paddle boarding all on offer.

To top it off, the NWF's legendary beach parties on the Friday and Saturday nights give you the chance to let your hair down a little after a day on the water!

Tickets are on sale now, so visit www.nationalwatersportsfestival.com for more info.

The Plymouth Blue Mile, 13th - 14th September

The Blue Mile will be a weekend of watery fun in support of the Marine Conservation Society. With swimming, kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding on offer, it will be an action-packed event. It's all for a great cause too!

There will be something for everyone, from families looking for a fun day out to competitive sorts who like to push themselves to their limits. The event will feature timed open-water swimming, a stand up paddleboard and kayaking programme, and a gruelling aquatriathlon. There will also be "have a go" kayak and stand-up paddleboard sessions.

Visit www.thebluemile.com for more info.

The Big Sea Kayak, Plymouth, September 26th - 28th

A three-day sea paddling event with activities for all, the Big Sea Kayak is taking place at the Mount Batten Centre in Plymouth.

On offer will be BC sea kayak courses, guided trips, introductory courses, Go Canoeing tours, a kayak machine challenge and much more.

Whether you're a hardened salty sea dog going for your 5 star sea training, a novice sea paddler looking for a guided trip or a club paddler looking to improve your incident management skills, the Big Sea Kayak has it all!

Visit facebook.com/thebigseakayak for all the information.

"Don't let the post-summer blues get you down!"



Spooky Goings-on at British Canoeing

With Halloween just around the corner, we're fast approaching that time of the year when things go bump in the night and spooks and spectres come out to play.

But while ghastly ghouls and scary skeletons aren't everyone's cup of tea, it's worth remembering that during this eerie time of year, for every trick there is also a treat!

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

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

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

We're still working on the details for our Halloween Guided Tours, so keep checking back to the Go Canoeing website for more information.

GO CANOEING GUIDED TOUR PROVIDERS

At the time of going to press, the following providers were delivering Go Canoeing Guided Tours:

- Windermere Canoe and Kayak, Cumbria
- Keswick Canoe and Bushcraft
- Canoe Wild, Kent
- Shugborough Outdoor Education Centre, Staffordshire
- Venture Out (formerly Paddlesaway), Manchester
- Liverpool Watersports Centre
- Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre
- Ackers Adventure, Birmingham
- Edgbaston Watersports Centre, Birmingham
- Northampton Canoe and Kayak Club
- Leam Boat Centre, Leamington
- Wokingham Watersports Centre, Berkshire
- Dinton Activity Centre, Berkshire
- Kayaking London
- Liquid Logistics, Hampshire
- Portsmouth Watersports Centre
- River Stour Safaris, Dorset
- Studland Sea School, Dorset
- Wareham Boat Hire, Dorset
- Adventure Okehampton, Devon
- Mount Batten Centre, Plymouth
- Go Canoeing in York
- Engage Watersports, Buckinghamshire
- Canoe and Kayak Tours, Windsor ▶

“Autumn is here and although the nights are slowly starting to draw in, it's the perfect time to get out on the water.”

GO CANOEING THREE LAKES CHALLENGE – ARE YOU UP FOR IT?

Thinking about setting yourself a new challenge? Looking for some inspiration? Why not take on our unique Three Lakes Challenge? If you're someone that is always looking for an adventure and likes to have a trip on the horizon, then this is for you.

The Three Lakes Challenge involves paddling the lengths of the longest lakes in three of the UK's home nations: Lake Windermere in England, Loch Awe in Scotland and Lake Bala (Llyn Tegid) in Wales. The distance completed both on and off

the water and the planning involved makes this challenge an ultimate adventure! But you are sure to be rewarded, as the journey will take you through some of the most beautiful scenery and paddling locations the UK has to offer.

The Three Lakes Challenge is the first Go Canoeing Challenge Route to be launched, with a series of others coming soon. Challenge Routes are designed to give you all the information you need to head off and complete a personal challenge along a set route in your own time.



Once you've completed your Challenge Route, you can register your achievement on the Go Canoeing website and join the national leader board, listing all those who have taken part in the Challenge Routes. Plus you'll get a small prize in recognition of your efforts!

The idea behind the Three Lakes Challenge is to spark your imagination and provide you with a challenge to prepare for, as well as a big achievement when you complete it.

WHAT TO EXPECT

So, what can you expect if you take this on? The Three Lakes Challenge encompasses a total of 43 paddling miles. From the shortest route- Lake Bala at seven miles, to the intermediate Lake Windermere at 11.2 miles, to the biggest- Loch Awe at a challenging 25-miles; you can expect stunning scenery, peaceful

surroundings and the chance to challenge yourself in some of the UK's most beautiful locations.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

That's up to you. The Three Lakes Challenge can be completed in whatever timescale you choose, dependant on your ability and motivations. Experienced and top level paddlers looking for the ultimate challenge may want to try completing it in two days.

If you're more interested in touring and leisure, you might prefer to complete the Challenge over three days. Or, spread it out one lake at a time over a week, month or even a year. The choice is yours!

Challenge Route maps, descriptions and all the information you need are available on the Go Canoeing website to download and print at home, so you can head off and complete the challenge at your own pace. ▶



TIM BAILLIE - TAKING ON THE CHALLENGE

Earlier this year we challenged Olympic C2 Slalom Champion Tim Baillie to complete the Three Lakes Challenge. We had a film crew following Tim when he took on this adventure. Here is what he thought of the experience.

What was the overall highlight of the Challenge for you?

Finishing it! No only joking. I guess the whole thing was pretty much a highlight: three very different lakes but all spectacular in their own way.

What sort of preparation/training would you recommend?

It's hard to say what sort of training would be necessary. I didn't do anything specific, but then I have done an awful lot of canoeing over the years. Doing the challenge in the order I did is good because the size and remoteness of the lakes increases as you go. Lake Bala should be pretty manageable for anyone, and I think it would give you an impression of what the other lakes will be like.

Is there any kit/equipment that you found really useful?

On Loch Awe I used some extra cushioning to sit on which was a lifesaver, as my bum was getting quite numb!

You're an Olympic star so are used to big challenges. Do you think anybody could take part in this challenge?

Yeah I do actually; the really nice thing about this challenge is how accessible it is.

Did you encounter any particular difficulties during the challenge?

I guess the main challenges were a numb bum and also occasional boredom... being out on the water and moving at a relatively slow rate you can see where you are going for a long time, and it doesn't feel like you are making much progress. If you start to feel uncomfortable, and in a rush to get to the finish, then it can be a bit frustrating. Luckily the locations are so scenic that it's not too hard to chill out, enjoy the journey and just keep plodding along.

The challenge is set in some really beautiful locations. Which was your favourite?

All three locations were incredibly scenic as you'll see from the photos, but Loch Awe was a personal favourite and it is undoubtedly the most spectacular and remote.

What supplies did you take with you?

I had a good stash of energy bars and power shots for when I was out on the water and also had some good old sandwiches for lunchtime sustenance. I took a couple of bottles of water out with me as well. If I was doing it again, I'd consider setting myself up with a drinks bladder so that I could drink more regularly without stopping.

What sort of boat would you recommend using?

I'd recommend using something that is pretty quick in a straight line but also relatively stable. It really depends on your background and what you are used to. Coming from a slalom racing background, I'd have found it quite uncomfortable to do it in a sprint/marathon boat. For sure that would be the quickest way to do the challenge, but when you're in the boat for such a long time it'd be really tiring if you felt constantly unstable. Having a stable boat also made it easier to take photos, eat snacks etc.

Can you give us a random or funny memory from the challenge?

I had lots of random thoughts when I was out on the water but sadly I didn't record any of them so they are all lost. I should have made an audio book of the journey; could have been a rival for Finnegan's Wake.

Did you encounter any unusual wildlife (human or otherwise)?

Good question. I don't remember encountering any particularly unusual wildlife apart from Roger the cameraman getting surrounded by midges on the banks of Loch Awe.

Do you have any advice for someone considering taking the Challenge?

I would recommend doing this challenge with friends or at least one other person. It would make for a great road trip adventure over a long weekend with friends! If you're doing the challenge in a short time, it would be good to invite some extra people along that don't paddle. They can help with the driving and meet you at key points on the longer paddling sections to keep your spirits up and offer some tasty snacks. **CF**



"All three locations were incredibly scenic as you'll see from the photos, but Loch Awe was a personal favourite and it is undoubtedly the most spectacular and remote."

We're excited to announce we have a documentary giving you an insight into Tim's Three Lakes Challenge experience that will be launched later this year.

Don't forget to look out for the launch of the additional new British Canoeing Challenge Routes. If you've been inspired by the Three Lakes Challenge, what are you waiting for? Take a look at the Go Canoeing Website and start planning your adventure!



GO
Canoeing!

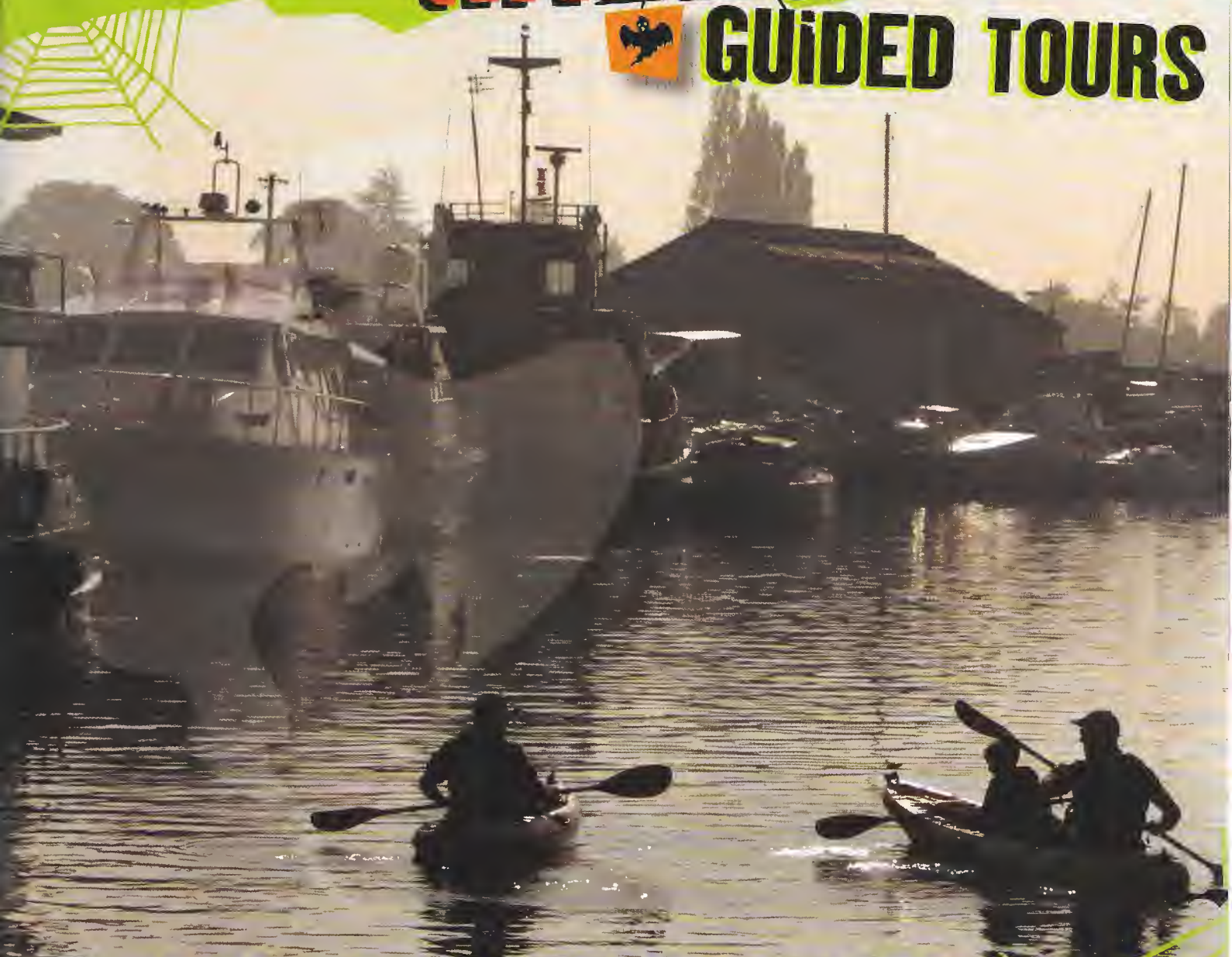


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GUIDED TOURS

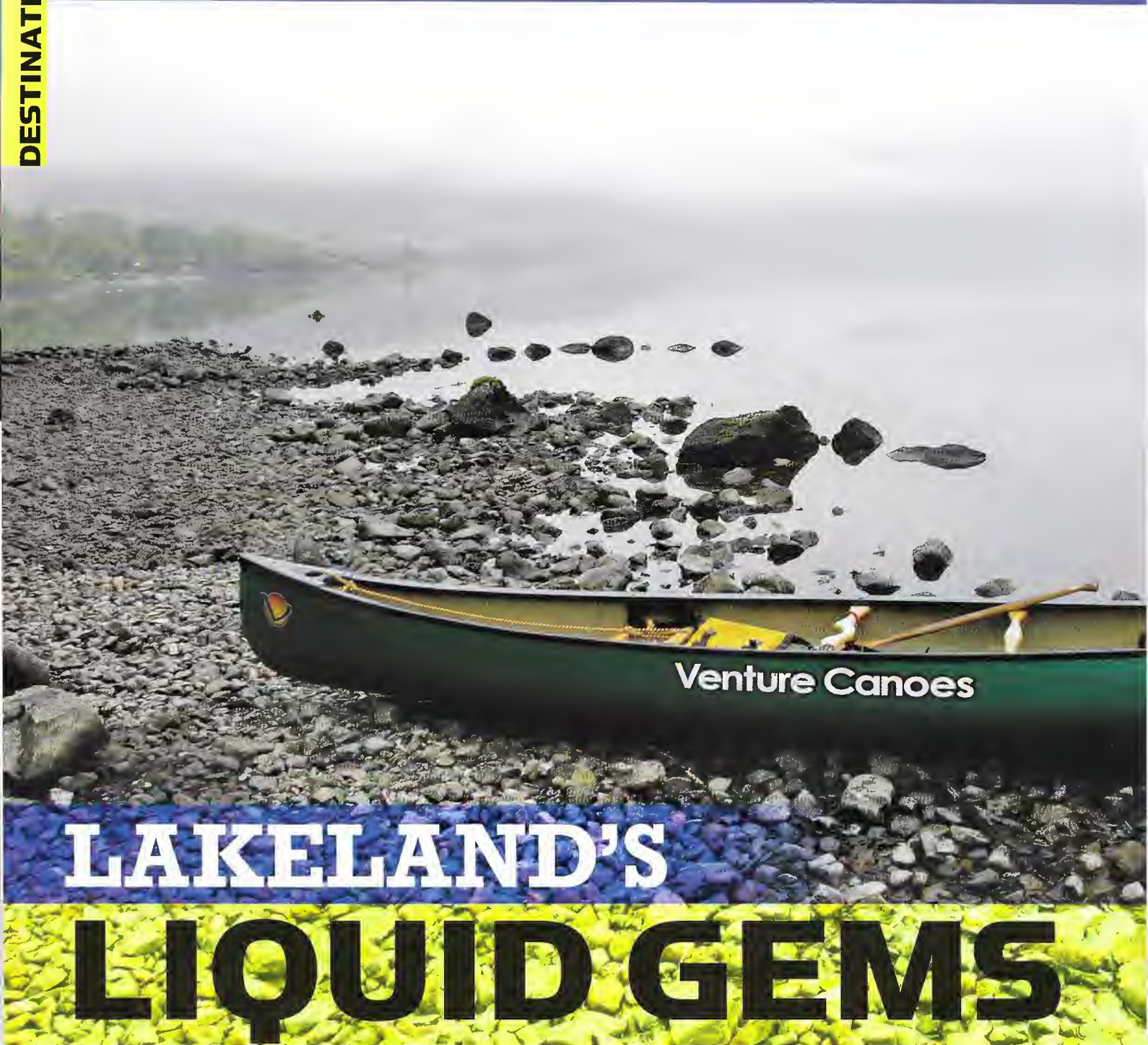


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LAKELAND'S

LIQUID GEMS

CANOEING AND KAYAKING IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

Most paddlers will have paddled in the Lake District at some point in their paddling career. Whether it was paddling from Waterhead on Windermere, blasting down the Leven or the classic Crook of Lune trip it's highly likely that most of us will have done some paddling in Lakeland. What I hope to show you in this article is that the Lakes has more to offer than the standard, well-known trips and has some real liquid gems, that are hidden just off the beaten track, but are well worth the effort and will leave you wanting to explore the paddling the Lakes has to offer even more!

Article by Gareth Field

If you have an urge to explore the open water then the Lakes has it all, from small tarns to big open water that can make you feel like you are on the sea. For those that like things flowing then there are rivers that offer great introductions to white water, right through to those that will test the nerve, and probably the equipment, of the world's best. One of the best things the Lakes has to offer though is paddling on a journey, starting in one place and travelling through a changing environment to finish somewhere completely different.

ULLSWATER

Glencoyne car park, near Patterdale, is an amazing place to start a tour of the southern end of Ullswater. Take time to explore across to the islands and around the shorelines. Going up Goldrill Beck is a great explore for the open canoeists with their pole to hand. While we are on Goldrill Beck, if the water levels are up then this is a brilliant trip down from Brothers Water for the 'explorer' paddler, all easy grade 1-2 water, but with the twists and turns that only a narrow beck can offer!



What a back drop, Catbells looms on a kayaking adventure on Derwent Water.



If you are not ready to stop paddling at the end of Goldrill, keep going out of the north end of the Lake, keep going down the Eamont, turn left or right whichever you prefer onto the Eden and keep paddling. Eventually you will hit the sea, but it will take some time!

Moving over to Thirlmere you can get to experience the vastness of paddling below the dominating hulk of Helvellyn along the tree lined shores. A circumnavigation of Thirlmere will leave you tired, but happy, having seen some great views and no doubt battling with the erratic winds of the valley.

DERWENT WATER

As you cross into the next valley Derwent Water offers a great expedition style of paddling. Starting up by Grange, or higher in the Borrowdale Valley if water levels allow, you slowly wind your way down this beautiful valley. As you head into the floodplain look out for climbers on Shepherds Crag. As you emerge into the

lake you can follow either shore or head across past the islands looking for the top of the River Derwent, by Derwent Water Marina. From here you are quickly joined by the River Greta, which adds to the flow and helps push you onwards down the river. There's a chance to savour the easy river conditions as you continue your expedition down the valley with a really noticeably different environment from the one you started in. Don't miss the get out before you get into Bassenthwaite as paddling here is by permit only. ▶

▲ Above: Exploring the inky black waters of Wastwater.

“If you have an urge to explore the open water then the Lakes has it all, from small tarns to big open water that can make you feel like you are on the sea.”



WASTWATER

My favourite open water trip has to be Wastwater, the long drive over to Wasdale is always rewarded with a great paddle. The wind can funnel up the valley creating a rolling sea that surfs you along the lake. On calmer days, the opportunity to sit below the scree and stare into the, almost hypnotic, black water of the deepest lake in England is fantastic. One thing to be aware of here is that there is limited access onto the water, with the National Trust offering the only public access points along the northern shore. Round trips are a great option on this lake.

THE DUDDON

If driving from the south you will have been in the Duddon Valley. It's home to becks that will test the most hardcore kayakers with an awesome array of slides and drops. But the real gem in this valley is its namesake, the Duddon. A real liquid gem of a river that has something to offer a wide range of paddlers. For hardcore white water kayakers the upper Duddon will always inspire. With its characteristics changing as quickly as the water level, you will always see something new every time you run the river. After its initial steep nature, with steep crag sides alongside, the river grows and flows through a lovely wide farmed valley. With some great grade 3 water, great playspots and real tests for open canoes. The Duddon rises and falls very quickly, so catching it is a challenge, but well worth the risk of failing to get the water levels right.



Good sport on the Leven.





OC1 action on the Lower Duddon.

PADDLER'S TREASURE TROVE

As you head back towards the M6 there are a great number of adventures to be had. The classic Crake is a good paddle, but it can be made all the more special by starting at the head of Coniston and completing the length of the lake before heading down the river. Or if you feel the urge, why not start on foot at the summit of the Old Man of Coniston and go from source to sea into Morecambe Bay?

The Leven is a classic run, from Windermere down to Backbarrow Falls. But the section below here, although with a few weirs thrown in, offers some unsurpassed big water paddling when the river is high. Away from the mass nature of the upper Leven the lower Leven can see you paddling alone with your group away from the business off the upper section.

At the north end of Windermere you have the classics of the Rothay and Brathay, but the real opportunity with these rivers is to see how far along their watercourses you can paddle. The day you start at Old Dungeon Ghyll in Langdale and continue all the way down the system into Windermere is a day you won't forget in a hurry. Starting nestled in the Langdale Valley you head into ever widening valley, with the steep hillsides opening out into wider open valleys of the Brathay until you pop out into Windermere. Or jumping onto the river in Grasmere and heading down, then across this tarn into the Rothay till you get to Rydal then continuing on down the Rothay into Windermere. Feel free to keep going down till you join the Leven and head to the sea. Now that's a journey! ▶

“For those that like things flowing then there are rivers that offer great introductions to white water, right through to those that will test the nerve, and probably the equipment, of the world's best.”



Lake Windermere offers a wealth of fantastic paddling trip options.

KENT, SPRINT & MINT!

Continuing back towards the M6 the Kent Valley offers up a huge range of different paddling experiences. The Sprint being a real classic Lake District river, which is a steep, challenging run that rises and falls really quickly due to its small catchment area. The Mint, often overlooked as a river, offers easier paddling than the Sprint, but is a harder tree dodging river, with some great rapids and the chance to explore some great gorges and countryside on the outskirts of Kendal. With very high water levels the section below Morrisons can produce great secret play spots!

The Kent itself is known for the run below Kendal, but if water levels allow take the opportunity to explore above Kendal too, depending on how hard you want to paddle you can carry your boat up to the mountains. More normally starting around Staveley gives a trip of diverse paddling experiences, some narrow technical rapids above Staveley, long natural rapids and a range of weirs, some friendly, some not! Heading below Burneside into Kendal is a great introduction trip, with straightforward rapids and cafés lining the banks.

FULL LUNE

One of the great opportunities the Lakes has to offer is the ability to tie together three or four sections of water in a day. After trip in the Kent Valley it is a quick hop over to the Lune, which offers a real range of paddling opportunities.

I wanted to finish this circumnavigation of Cumbria by highlighting the section from Tebay. This section of river runs below the M6, but don't let this put you off the opportunity to paddle some great sections of grade 2-3 water, which when the river is high carries you down to the Crook of Lune section quickly and with a smile on your face! Either jump out at the road bridge here or continue down the river. You can even keep going till you get to Lancaster!

Enjoy your Lakeland paddling! **CF**

▼ Below: Setting out for a grand adventure on Lake Windermere.

“Why not start on foot at the summit of the Old Man of Coniston and go from source to sea into Morecambe Bay?”



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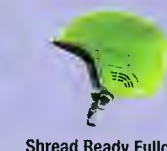
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Mallory Franklin



RISING STAR

**WORDS WITH SLALOM
RACER MALLORY FRANKLIN**

Interview by Jon Schofield,
images by Antony Edmonds (www.aepphotos.co.uk)



“I think constantly medalling or constantly being high in the final shows you off as a good paddler, rather than turning round and suddenly getting a medal at the Olympics. You get money off it, you get a lot of press off it, but it doesn’t make you a good paddler – what makes you a good paddler is being consistent.”

Aspiring slalom paddler Mallory Franklin may only be 20 years old, but after five years competing on GB Canoeing's senior team, the Windsor-based paddler has already racked up a number of accolades. Mallory, who competes in both C1 and K1 classes, has already amassed a medal collection including a silver medal at the Senior World Championships, a gold at the U23 European Championship and three golds at the Canoe Slalom World Cup at Lee Valley White Water Centre in June!

But, despite her continued success in the sport, Mallory was not necessarily expecting to triumph on what is her home course. She said: "I guess I wasn't expecting to do well because you can never expect something like that, but I knew there was quite a high chance that I'd do well partially because I'd say within the C1 at the moment I'm probably one of the stronger boats along with Jess Fox and a couple of the Chinese paddlers.

So there always a chance, as proven last year and the year before, that I was going to medal, but I guess Lee Valley was one of those races where once I'd done the semi it actually became more real that I could do well.

"So I wouldn't want to say I was expecting to do well, but at the same time C1 women is still a new class and there's still strength lacking when you go down the depth – although obviously there are girls there, as proven by the final, that do have the ability to do well."

A HOME CROWD

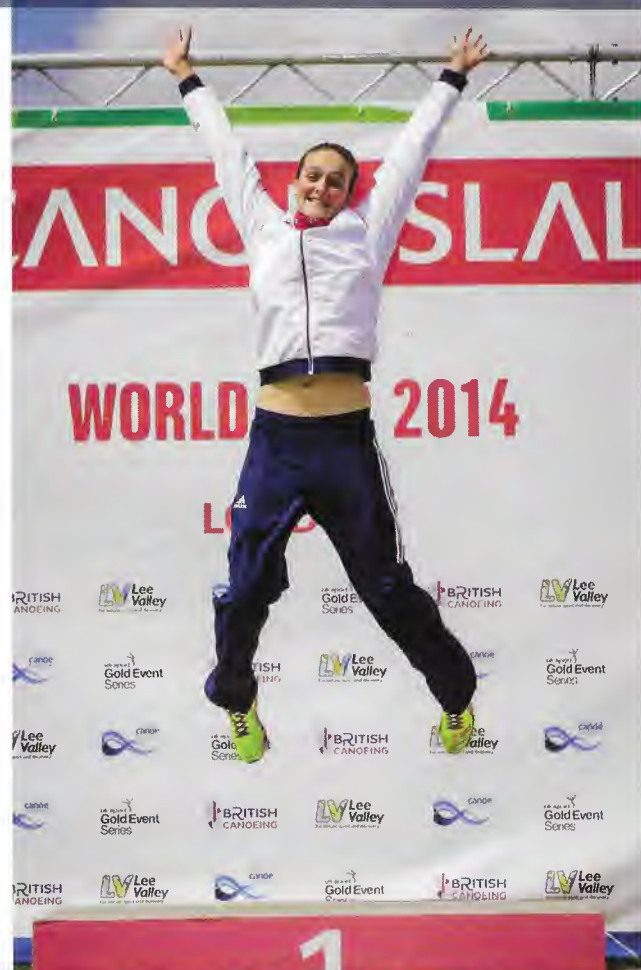
At the Lee Valley World Cup, GB Canoeing took gold in all five team events, as well as gold and silver in C1 Women and gold in C1 Men. According to Mallory, home advantage played a big part in the team's success on what is a technically challenging course.

She said: "I've been paddling on it for quite a while and at Lee Valley it's about how consistently you're hitting waves and having to do stuff that the minute you tire yourself out slightly on the course, you're going to pay for it down the bottom and I guess the fact that I've been training there for so long in C1 and kayak means I'm able to withstand it if I do badly at the top.

"Lee Valley is probably my joint favourite course with Tovsky and Pau, Tovsky being in Slovakia and Pau being in southern France. They're smaller, but I've raced very well there and the water's a bit quieter generally, so I tend to do better, but Lee Valley is probably my favourite in terms of being able to play on it and it is more constant, there are constantly stoppers, constantly waves and it's a lot more technically demanding in terms of you can't just float down it because you'd probably swim – you might be able to get through it all, but you're constantly hitting waves.

"It's probably one of the more technical courses when it comes to involving white water in the technique – there are courses that are more technical, but it's more because the water's rushing round in different directions and it's all about the lines you take, but Lee Valley is a lot more 'stopper technical' stuff, but it's such a good course I've always loved it and I raced well there at the World Cup."

"The water is one of the biggest things that can change a result and we're not in control of that."





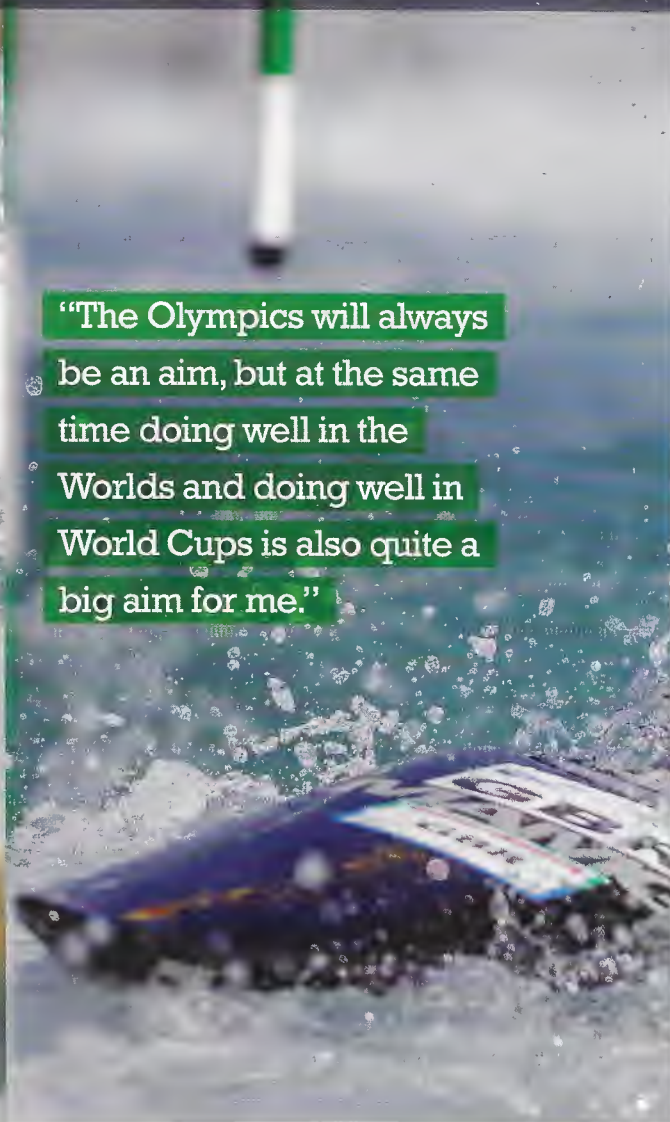
SET FOR SUCCESS

Mallory believes the team's success at the World Cup will put them in good stead for the World Championships in 2015, which will also be held at Lee Valley White Water Centre.

She Said: "Our selection is really strong, one of the strongest across Europe and I guess the world – it is difficult to get on our team. We are a strong nation and I think it will show next year in the Worlds especially as everyone has had what was sort of a warm up race this year, in a race that's not quite as important, but is the same sort of scenario.

"I wouldn't like to say we will do well, because everyone is an individual athlete and everyone has to come into that race and be able to remain calm and perform to their ability. At the same time we have spent so long on the water and we have the ability to do well, but even the best can mess up and messing up can mean that they don't even make the semis. With our team still being quite young there will always be the nervousness of racing on our home course at the Worlds and that can always make a difference to results. I'd say our older boats probably have quite a high chance of doing well!" ▶

Mallory Franklin



“The Olympics will always be an aim, but at the same time doing well in the Worlds and doing well in World Cups is also quite a big aim for me.”



THE LONG GAME

For many athletes the Olympics is regarded as the pinnacle of their sporting achievement and while Mallory will be hoping to make the team for Rio in 2016, she is keen not to let one race define her career.

“Is getting to the Olympics realistic? In some respects yes, I can only go to Rio in kayak because of women’s C1 not yet being an Olympic discipline. I was fourth in selection this year and that was fourth with a terrible first day. I guess you’ve got the boats above that are very definitely going through like Lizzie Neave and Fiona Pennie, but at the same time it is still actually quite far away and there are so many people and so many things that can happen, like injuries and people suddenly coming out of nowhere that have spent all winter and all summer training really hard and then suddenly come out next year and get in the senior team when you didn’t even really realise they existed!

“Anything can happen and I guess it is an aim and so is Tokyo – Tokyo more in both boats – so it is an aim and always will be, but I’m not going to pin my hopes on it. I don’t want to base my career on doing well in one race because I watch races where I don’t necessarily think the best person won and that will always happen because it’s slalom racing, the water is one of the biggest things that can change a result and we’re not in control of that.

“I want to be someone who is more consistent over my races, I don’t want to come out and win a gold at the Olympics, but not have made a final in every other race



Battlie / Stott, Carl / Image Peter Aistle

that I've done in the year surrounding that, because I don't agree that that shows you off as a good paddler. I think constantly medalling or constantly being high in the final shows you off as a good paddler, rather than turning round and suddenly getting a medal at the Olympics. You get money off it, you get a lot of press off it, but it doesn't make you a good paddler – what makes you a good paddler is being consistent.

"I guess you get the people that get gold medals over quite a few Olympics and I guess that would count as consistency and would be a very nice way to get that consistency! The Olympics will always be an aim, but at the same time doing well in the Worlds and doing well in World Cups is also quite a big aim for me. Getting to Rio would be a great achievement and a highlight of my career so far, because of the people that I'd have to beat to get there and because of the standard I'd then be at to have beaten them, rather than that one race itself." **CF**

USEFUL INFO

Want to follow in Mallory's paddle strokes and have a go at canoe slalom? Check out the following sites to find out how you can get involved:

www.canoeslalom.co.uk
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PADDLING ON AIR

Due to me being a non driver, having never wanted or needed to learn, I found it difficult to pursue paddle sport with anything other than the occasional hire at limited locations. That is until the new breed of inflatable craft became obtainable...

I looked at the range of these craft and due to limited funds, I first selected a 2.5 person craft but quickly found that it needed more than just me in to be stable! I had difficulty assuring friends and family it was safe, and as I've been water borne for 20+ years on and off, I had no fear of that. I next selected a cheap but extremely cheerful Challenger K1 from Intex. I bought my first one over two years ago and have had such fun, so much so that I've just bought another one!

I still had a problem getting to and from canals and waterways with the bag and all my kit (buoyancy aid, change of shoes, clothes, paddle, drinks and other supplies - chocolate mainly!) so once again I researched and found a fantastic low cost option to suit my needs exactly... A trailer suitable to connect to my push bike! I would use the trailer eight times to do the weekly shop and save the taxi fares, which paid for the trailer. I get strange looks but with the fun I have when I'm hitting the water it's worth it.

So, where have I paddled so far? I've paddled the Peak Forest Canal from Ashton Marina to Marple Locks numerous times, I've paddled the Ashton Canal from Ashton Marina into central Manchester, the Bridgewater Canal from Stockton Heath to a Manchester centre public house

(strange looks getting served in a canoe but well worth it! Journey's end too so no risk), One day I managed 18-miles in craft#1 on the Bridgewater. I've spent many hours on the Bridgewater just 'splashing' for fun too.

I've done the Chesterfield Canal 'Cuckoo Trail' from Kiveton to the Lock Keeper in Worksop in February this year, and the same canal from the brand new Staveley Marina to Chesterfield, albeit it in three short runs due to the horrible 'work' word.

So far I've clocked up around 250 miles in the old craft, and I've just done a return trip on the Sheffield and Tinsley Canal from the canal basin in Sheffield to Meadowhall in my new one, as a 48th birthday treat to myself. Two friends walked alongside for this trip and we even went into 'Centertainment' for a halfway meal (yes with my craft still inflated and left outside), big thanks to Dave our waiter at The Harvester who was so jealous of the method of transport!

**Article & images by
Andy Jackson**

"I get strange looks but with the fun I have when I'm hitting water It's worth it."

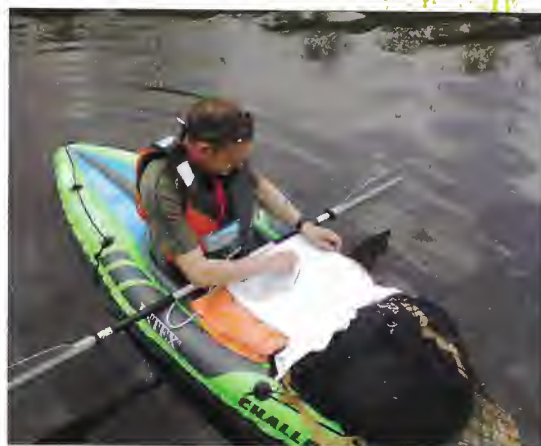


“I’ve spent many hours on the Bridgewater just ‘splashing’ for fun too!”

I completed the Bridgewater canal from Stockton Heath and had such fun I completed the remaining section in one go to Runcorn too. I then spent a weekend camping at Hayton near Retford, the weekend of the horrendous thunderstorms canal by paddling from Hayton to Stockwith Marina near to the River Trenton under canvas! On the Friday I paddled from Hayton to Worksop and completed the length of the Chesterfield the Sunday of the weekend, and yes, while the country covered up in umbrellas I came home with a nice suntan!



All this, including membership of Canoe England, the craft, kit and safety considerations, I’ve spent less than £350 over two and a half years... That’s less than a suit I have to wear for work, but it is so, so much more fun.





Snack Attack

STAY POWERED UP ON THE WATER

Keeping the energy levels high, and carrying enough snacks to do so, during long days on the water is important. But it can be tricky when you're out and about to plan a healthy snack in advance. Seems like the most nutritious foods aren't very appealing, and the most yummy goodies are nothing more than empty calories that give a short term boost before a serious low. And what about convenience? You want something you can tuck easily into your buoyancy aid, or stow in your dry bag or day hatch.

To help you stay energised and happy we've tracked down some healthy and tasty snacks that we reckon are a great alternative to the usual choccy bars and will keep you powered up and paddling for longer...

9 BAR

Seeds offer one of the most dense sources of nutrition, and we know of at least one world class freestyler that swears by them. A convenient, wholesome and delicious way to get your essential seed hit is to munch on a 9bar!

Handmade with nothing but natural ingredients and a great source of compact natural nutrition and energy from its unique blend of wholesome seeds such as sunflower, pumpkin, poppy, sesame and hemp. But what is equally important are the things that it isn't full of; things like gluten, wheat, egg, yeast, preservatives and artificial colour.

Each bar naturally contains essential fatty and amino acids, providing energy and cellular repair while helping to protect against stress and inflammation often experienced during long periods of exertion and exercise. 9bars are available from all the main supermarket chains and selected independent food shops, priced £1.99 for a box of four bars.

The great tasting nutritious mixed seed energy bar!

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BOUNCE ENERGY BALLS

These are an amazingly convenient and tasty way to enjoy great nutrition on the go, and perfect for paddling trips. Made only with premium quality ingredients, the Bounce balls are exactly the kind of fuel you need to support a healthy, active lifestyle. High protein, gluten-free, heart-healthy fats, nutrient dense and totally delicious.



There are also loads of great flavours to choose from, including peanut, almond, coconut & macadamia, spirulina & ginseng and the amazing new cacao mint.

Normally priced around £1.79, you can find Bounce Balls in Waitrose, Holland & Barrett and most good health food stores.

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We think the Getbuzzing Nut Free Banana bar is a perfect option before, during and after exercise. Containing natural banana pieces and apricots, it is 100% natural and wheat free, therefore a perfect solution around exercise, providing energy with no bloating. An oat based flapjack providing low GI carbohydrates and bananas as a high GI source, it will give you a good sudden release of energy yet a sustained release. The banana bar is available online at www.getbuzzing.co.uk and also at selected Waitrose stores.



THE FRANK BAR

This is a fruit, chocolate and cereal snack bar made with 100% natural ingredients, which is honestly good for you and, in our opinion, honestly tastes delicious.

Containing added protein and Energysmartæ (a patented combination of carbohydrates and fruit-juice concentrates formulated to provide longer-lasting energy) and at just 120 Kcals a bar and free from gluten, nuts, dairy, refined sugar and animal products, we think these make an incredibly sustaining on the water snack.

The Frank is available from ASDA (75p/bar) or www.thefrankfoodcompany.com/shop-online/frank-snack-bars/ (£16.00/box of 20 bars) in a choice of five flavours.



Do you have a favourite paddling snack? Why not share it at www.facebook.com/canoengland

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FOCUS ON FREESTYLE, BOATER-X AND EXTREME RACING

Stepping into the world of white water kayaking is simple, and the satisfaction of a fast, adrenaline fuelled progression through this exciting area of paddlesport can turn into a real addiction; and as you progress and hone your white water skills there are some dynamic and challenging white water competitive disciplines where you can test your skills against fellow white water enthusiasts. Freestyle, Extreme Racing and Boater-X are all born from the same desire to master the art of ultimate control and performance within the chaotic white water realm!

FREESTYLE

Modern Freestyle kayakers explore a dynamic, aerial world, driving their boats to perform impressive tricks. These are the acrobats and gymnasts of the paddling world, paddling the shortest of kayaks, with flat hulls and sharp rails that allow them to pull huge aerial moves. Surfing big standing waves or holes, freestylers pitch their skills against each other in competition by accumulating as many points, scored by performing as many different tricks in forty-five seconds as possible.

EXTREME RACING & BOATER-X

Extreme racing brings competitive kayaking back together with its roots of exploration and river running. Held on sections of natural rivers, varying in length, the objective of extreme racing is to get from the top to the bottom of a section of very difficult white water as quickly as possible. The fastest paddler on the day wins. Seems simple, but negotiating dangerous and technical rapids requires balancing finesse and technique with power and aggression. Looking into this part of the sport as a prospective newcomer, it will most likely appear to you that just surviving down some of the courses is enough of a challenge, without the added pressure of racing against the clock! But time is of little concern in the discipline of Boater-X when four kayakers are lined up against each other, racing head to head down a section of white water river, and all wanting to take the fastest route down the rapids to get to the bottom first. It's practically a contact sport and body armour and full-face helmets are not uncommon. Hustling for first place inevitably means that

"All these modern forms of competitive white water kayaking stem from the early days of river exploration and a thirst to explore, conquer and play on the dynamic white water river environment."

▲ Above: GB freestyle and extreme racing star Bren Orton going big & clean

at least one of the four person heat is pushed off course, immediately changing their focus from getting to the bottom first, to getting to the bottom in one piece. It demands fitness, sharp river skills and a burning desire to win! It is also very entertaining to watch and easy for spectators to follow.

ROOTS

All these modern forms of competitive white water kayaking stem from the early days of river exploration and a thirst to explore, conquer and play on the dynamic white water river environment. The use of fibreglass boats in the early seventies created a new spark of exploration, fuelling the progression of white water racing and slalom kayaking, as white water's first true competitive disciplines. While slalom kayakers threaded between the added obstacles of gates, which could not be touched without penalty, and river racing events stayed close to the middle ground of the white water grading system, the beginning of freestyle, or 'rodeo' kayaking as it was called then was formed when



Ed Smith gunning it at the Morriston race in Scotland



▲ Above: The start of a Boater-X heat. Image courtesy of Pyranha Kayaks

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

Extreme kayaking and Boater-X would have made slow progress if it weren't for the development of plastic kayaks in the early eighties, which could withstand hard impacts with rocks, and helped developed a confidence in equipment, which allowed the limits of what could be run to be pushed. Boat designs became more manoeuvrable and safer and many rapids previously felt impossible were suddenly being repeatedly, and successfully, run. It's human nature to compete, so it was inevitable that sooner or later the modern white water paddler would seek ways of doing that in the environment that they were comfortable in, steep white water.

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

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

Extreme racers and Boater-X racers sought out fast boats, some even going back a few years to older longer boats until modern boats that combined the speed of a longer waterline with the handling and safety features of a modern river running boat started to appear.

DEVELOPMENT

With the arrival of boats designed for specific white water purposes these new competitive disciplines developed a focused following, but in doing so also broadened the skills and experience of the vast majority of white water kayakers. It's now just over thirty years since the dawn of plastic boats and with many top white water paddlers competing in all three disciplines the sport has progressed at an exponential rate. This level of progression becomes clear when looking at waterfall decent records; In 1996 the waterfall record stood at 65 feet, which was achieved by British kayaking legend Shaun Baker, today the record stands at 186 feet, a record that was set by Tyler Bradt of the U.S.A. in 2009, and its inevitable that extreme kayakers will push that yet higher in the near future.

COULD I EVER DO THAT?

When you're just starting your journey in the fantastic world of paddling just stepping on to your path towards becoming a white water kayaker can seem a challenge, but with practice and the right training there's no reason that you can't try your hand at these exciting and fun disciplines. There's lots of opportunity and many low level fun events that are accessible to all. As a newcomer, the cheapest and easiest way to start your progression is by joining a local club. Joining a local club will give you access to equipment during training sessions and also proficient kayakers who will push you towards your desired goal. Depending on what time of year you have joined, your club will either have pool-training sessions or outdoor flat-water training, both are great environments to start learning the basics, such as the roll and an efficient forward stroke. From day one your confidence will increase as you learn the strokes to control and keep your kayak upright. It goes without saying that from picking up your paddle, it will take a little time before you fancy signing up for your first competition, but don't be put off checking out events to see what it's all about in the flesh, whether you're a seasoned pro, a beginner or a weekend warrior, the various events, which take place across the UK are not just a platform for progression but the social backbone of a very inclusive and unique branch of the sport.

We are lucky in the UK to have five artificial white water courses, all of which provide reliable sites for freestyle and even Boater-X events. There are also numerous world class waves that pop up around the UK when the rivers rise, and there have been some notable extreme races held in Scotland.

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

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THE POWER OF THE PADDLE

Article by Karl Millane

HOW TO ACCELERATE AND TRAVEL AT SPEED IN AN OPEN CANOE - A BLIGGER'S GUIDE TO LOOKING GOOD



PIC 01



PIC 02



Whether your canoe preferences are flat water touring on the wilderness of your local canal or hoping to survive chaotic white water rapids, being able to generate, and maintain, forward power at a variety of speeds is going to be useful. And, if you're like me, it would probably be nice if you did not embarrass yourself in the process by doing something that just screams novice. Here we look at a few key concepts for generating forward power in a straight line and give you some top tips on how to 'blag' that you really do know what you are doing.

FORWARD POWER CAN BE BROKEN DOWN INTO SEVERAL DIFFERENT STAGES:

THE CATCH

As you cruise past less competent paddlers they will look at you envious of your speed and skill and may even be reminded of long past days in primary school when everything seemed to revolve around the alphabet! Most canoe coaches have apparently not evolved far since then as many key aspects of forward propulsion are still related to letters. So let's begin with the letter A. Right at the beginning of the stroke the catch resembles the letter 'A'; [pic 1] rotating your upper body so that the shoulder on the paddle side is forward, the paddle is stabbed in to the water just enough to fully immerse the blade. The top hand marks the top of our 'A' and should stand up proud and tall with a comfortably straight arm for that nice neat handwriting effect. Our letter also needs to stand up vertically, so this top hand is not over on its own side of the boat, but over the water above the blade. This is often referred to as having stacked hands. If looked at from the end of the boat the paddle would appear to be vertical. [pic 2] This verticality is often missed by less competent paddlers with a lot of people holding the paddle at an angle, the more horizontal the paddle becomes the more it resembles a sweep stroke that wastes some potential forward power and turns it in to more of a turning stroke. The lower arm will be the horizontal cross part of our A and also should be comfortably straight.

Once your paddle is in the water best not to delay as it will be killing the glide you have generated from previous power strokes, move swiftly on to the power phase.

POWER PHASE

To generate the power we are going to use our core muscles by unwinding the forward rotation of the shoulder. This is not the same as switching from a forward to backwards lean as this will generate an inefficient bobbing of the boat. The straight arm that forms the horizontal part of the A is going to remain straight during this unwinding motion. Bending the elbow to pull with your biceps utilises much weaker muscles and is another sure giveaway that you don't know what you are doing in a boat.

The idea with the power phase is to propel the boat forward past the paddle rather than use the paddle to shovel water in to a large heap behind you. A simple self-check to look for would be the whirlpools that appear off the edges of the paddle as you pull, ideally if the blade is sticking rather than slipping the whirlpools will stop being generated after a few strokes when the boat is up to speed. With some slower hull designs though this may not be completely achievable.

By the time your boat has moved forward enough for your hips to be level with the blade not only has the power phase finished but it should have been over long enough for you to get the blade out of the water. Trying to apply power with the blade behind you is inefficient as it lifts up on the water, which pulls the boat down deeper in to the water and increases the drag, slowing you down. Trying to apply power behind you is another thing to be added to our growing list of ways to demonstrate your incompetence to the world.

Having applied power what do we do next? ►

“To generate the power we are going to use our core muscles by unwinding the forward rotation of the shoulder. This is not the same as switching from a forward to backwards lean as this will generate an inefficient bobbing of the boat.”

BOW PADDLERS

Well if you are paddling as the bow [front] paddler of a tandem pair just go back to the start and do it again. There is nothing else you can effectively contribute to going forward in a straight line from your position in the craft. Whilst you are going through the repetition, check that the power you are applying is running parallel to the centre line of the boat rather than following the gunnel through its gentle arc. This would be like adding a hint of sweep stroke to every repetition and that would detract from the straightness of your course and therefore comes in as the fifth thing on our list of ways to advertise your general cluelessness to the fellow paddlers.

The bow paddler should also be taking advantage of the good visibility they get from that end of the boat to keep a look out for any obstacles that may need manoeuvring around. A sudden change of direction is the speciality of the bow paddler as being in front of the pivot point of the boat gives them a wide selection of options for initiating a change of direction, the details of which will have to wait for a different article.

STERN PADDLERS

If you are the stern [rear] paddler of a tandem pair most of the time you too could have your blade out by the time your hips are level with it as matching strokes with your partner should keep the power balanced in the boat and running in a straight line. Periodically you will need to let your paddle go past your hips to the rear of the boat where you have a selection of options available to you that work well to maintain a straight line. The only effective stroke in the stern paddler's repertoire that does not happen in this rear quarter of your boat is the forward power phase, so if you are trying to blag competency don't try strokes in any other region.

**SOLO PADDLERS**

Paddling on your own in the boat will mean that you'll be generating power on one side of the boat, so it is inevitable that the boat will start to turn away from the paddle. To fix this consider better personal hygiene, it will make finding friends that are willing to join you in the boat much easier! Failing this you will have to make frequent use of the stern paddlers steering options listed below.

STEERING PHASE

If you need to add some corrective steering to the end of your stroke then allow the blade to go past your hips, but resist the temptation to try to add extra power, instead rotate your wrists so that the blade is vertical in the water with the shaft running parallel to the boat and now much closer to being horizontal, both hands are still over the water on that side of the boat [pic 3]. Allowing the paddle to trail in the water for a few seconds should stop the turning of the boat. Kayakers will recognise this as being a stern rudder, in a canoe it is done with the drive face of the blade orientated towards the boat, this means that the thumb on the T grip of the paddle will be pointing up in the air.

For solo paddlers this is an effective way of keeping the boat running in a straight line but it is fairly slow as you have to pause long enough between strokes to allow the boat to come back into a straight line. The steering phase can be sped up pushing on the water a little with the back of the blade, not so much that it resembles a reverse sweep stroke as that would kill all the speed of the boat we have worked so hard to generate. A lot of the effort of this can be counteracted by using the gunnel of the boat as a pivot point to leaver off just below the lower hand. This mini pry stroke will eventually wear point on the varnish of your finest wooden paddle, this is perfectly



PIC 03





PIC 04

normal and I have paddles that even after twenty-five years of wearing away at them, are still perfectly functional. This levering off the gunnel converts our stern rudder into a stern pry, also known as a goon stroke. Using a goon stroke does not appear on our list of ways to demonstrate your ineptitude, but thinking it is a stroke only for the novice definitely gets you on the list.

The stern pry is a fast way to add steering after power has been applied and a valuable addition to your repertoire. If you paddle OC1 [very short and manoeuvrable canoes with thigh straps that allow you to roll them and tackle rapids normally the domain of extreme white water kayaks] the stern pry is probably the stroke you use the most. However there comes a point when going faster will require you to change up a gear and use a different option.

THE J STROKE

The J stroke [so called because the paddle makes a J shape in the water] should probably not be considered as just one stroke but as a family of strokes that all have common fundamentals, but with subtle variations that can be advantageous at different times.

The catch and the power phases of the J are identical to the stern pry the difference comes in the steering. As the blade is being moved to the back of the boat the wrists are rotated in the opposite direction to before, so that the thumb on the T grip points down to the water and when the blade approaches vertical the drive face now points away from the boat. This means that when you do the small push to correct the turn instead of the back of the blade pushing against the disturbed water of those whirlpools you hope nobody had noticed you were still generating, the drive face steers by pushing on the undisturbed area of water that you have been pulling against during the power phase. [pic 4]

“The J stroke should probably not be considered as just one stroke but as a family of strokes that all have common fundamentals, but with subtle variations that can be advantageous at different times.”



This is hard to do from a standing start so I tend to think of the stern pry/goon stroke as being a good second gear and once the canoe is moving fast enough I change up to the J stroke for third gear. Knifing J's, Short J's and hunting/Indian strokes make good forth and fifth gears once even more speed has been gained, but the cost of paper and the probability of your waning attention span dissuades me from going in to intimate details of these here, instead I will take the opportunity

to plug my friend Ray Goodwin who has written a perfectly adequate book on the subject of canoeing.

If the stern pry was the second gear what was the first?

If you are paddling tandem pulling away from a standing start is not too much of a problem, but if you are solo then you will need to generate a little speed before any of the rudder style steering strokes become effective. Here are three options:

AIM OFF

First consider if you can use the turn caused by forward power to your advantage. Don't point at your target but aim off by forty-five degrees and just do a couple of power strokes without any correction, by the time your boat has swung around to the point where you want to go it will have picked up enough speed to make adding a stern rudder or pry to the next stroke effective. ▶

CROSS DECK POWER

Kayakers have fewer problems with their directional stability when they apply the power as they can apply it on both sides alternately. In a canoe we can adopt the same principles, not by swapping hands to switch sides as this is slow and inefficient unless you have a boat that tracks extremely well in straight lines. Simply reach your blade over to the other side of the boat [you may have to shift a knee to reach] and take a nice vertical paddle stroke. Getting the blade out at your hips on that side would require you to be a contortionist so don't, just leave it in twist your wrist to change the paddle angle by ninety degrees and slice it forwards where it is easy to get it out. As this is a slightly less powerful stroke than you get on the normal side I usually do two or three of these in succession with the paddle staying in the water before coming back to my on side. Unless you are battling strong winds or current one set of these cross bow strokes should get you going enough to go for second gear.

C STROKES

If you have not got the flexibility for the cross-bow strokes consider the C Stroke [This not surprisingly draws a C shape in the water]. This involves a bow draw [a pull with the drive face towards the front of the boat] that then rotates to convert into a power stroke before adding a J stroke on the end. This gives us steering at the start and finish of the stroke.

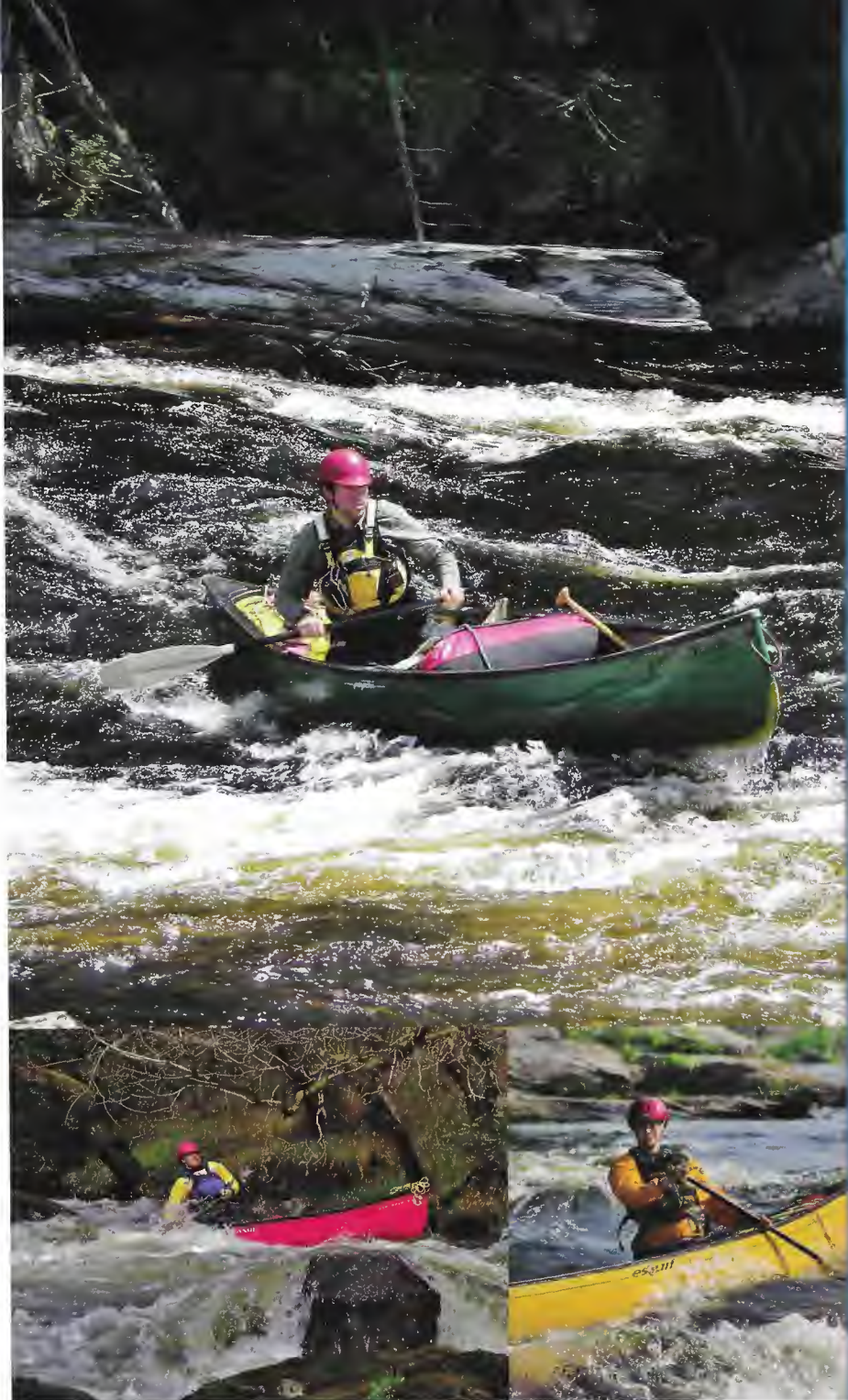
You probably won't need to do any of these strokes for long, just enough to get the boat moving fast enough to change up to the next gear. Typically if I want to go from a standing start to cruising at speed I will start with one C stroke before doing one or two goon strokes then move into three or four J strokes, followed by half a dozen Short J's followed by endless hunting strokes before dropping down the gears again if I need a change of direction or speed.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS FOR SOLO BOATS

Solo canoes will never travel in a truly straight line. The power and correction will always lead to slight zigzag. Try to arrange the power so that as it finishes you point at your destination and use the correction to aim off again rather than power off line and correcting back to the target.

Tilt [what kayakers call edging] can also be used to your advantage; tilting the boat to one side will usually encourage your boat to turn one direction when it is moving. Utilising this turning effect can help reduce the amount of correction you will need to apply. Which way your boat turns when tilted will depend on the shape of hull you have but most canoes will turn towards the direction they are tilting, so try adjusting your position in the boat so that it is tilted slightly towards the paddle and it should help with your straight lines.

If your day in a canoe is going to involve paddling long distances in a straight line then clearly forward power will be important. If your day involves short straight lines like generating speed in an eddy before you cross an eddy line then it is probably even more important that you are good at it as you may well have space for just a couple of strokes to generate that speed before you need to be going as fast as you can. **CF**



The Expert



KARL MIDLANE IS A LEVEL 5 COACH WORKING FOR PLAS Y BRENNIN

During his competitive paddling career Karl paddled slalom C2 with Tim Pryor. Karl always knelt at the front of the boat and provided vast amounts of power whilst Tim lounged at the back where the steering phase occurs; therefore any occasion they did not keep the boat running in the intended straight line must have been as a result of Tim's ineptitude not Karl's.

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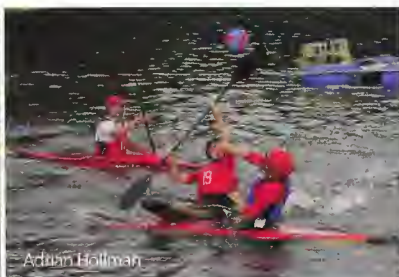
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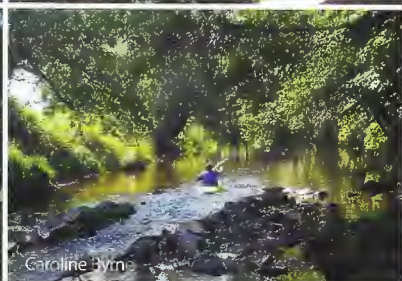
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5 Essential Basic *White Water* Paddling Skills

Image by New Wave Coaching



White water paddling is an exhilarating, challenging and, most importantly, fun part of paddlesport. Once you become even slightly proficient at white water kayaking you'll find that it's capable of taking you to parts of the UK, and the rest of the world, that you wouldn't, or couldn't, otherwise have visited. As autumn traditionally heralds the start of the UK white water season we've put together 5 useful skills to help you get started on your own white water paddling adventure...

“White water paddling is similar to cycling in that you are stable when you're moving; and specifically to paddling, you're most stable when moving at the same speed as the water.”

Recreational white water kayaking is so much more than a bit of fresh air and exercise, it's adventure personified and the more rivers you paddle, the more amazing places you go to here in the UK, the more your skills will improve and the more white water you'll want to paddle. However, like most paddling disciplines, though, before you can run, you have to learn to walk. The following five skills are absolutely essential to you being able to run white water successfully, but are, rather handily, also very easy to get the hang of too! With some practice and good instruction, you'll be cruising down those rapids in no time, and we promise you won't look back. ▶



1. SEPARATION OF BODY PARTS

Don't worry! This first skill sounds a lot more gruesome than it is, but we're not talking amputation here, it simply means that to paddle white water you need to be able to get different parts of your body working independently of each other. This skill really represents three for the price of one, because once you have your body parts working independently, you'll in effect be using three important techniques.

The key separation you need to master here is learning to allow your top half, or trunk, to rotate independently of your bottom half, which has its own job to do!

First to your legs! It is important that your white water kayak is fitted out so that as much of your lower half as possible is in contact with the boat, and as a minimum your hips, thighs/knees and feet should be pressing up against plastic or foam. This contact will allow you to raise the edges of the kayak by lifting your knee on the corresponding side to the desired edge. This technique is called edging.

Edging is essential for control and stability on white water: when crossing the flow, you must always lift your upstream edge, allowing the water to flow beneath the kayak. Failure to do so will result in that upstream edge 'catching' and you'll end up looking at the river bed!

To edge successfully you need to train your hips to be 'loose' and flex with the oscillating movement of the boat, so however much the kayak edges to one side or the other, your upper half doesn't follow, but stays upright.

Which brings us neatly on to your top half. While your hips and legs are working away below you, edging the boat as required to keep you upright, your top half should be upholding its end of the bargain by propelling the kayak in the right direction. It will be doing this by paddling, obviously, but there's more to your trunk's job than simply statically allowing your arms and legs to do the work. While your bottom half is rotating up and down, your trunk should be rotating from side-to-side in a sort of counter motion.

Trunk rotation has all sorts of important applications and is essential for good paddling technique and for helping to direct the kayak across the flow. Which leads nicely on to your head, which should also be rotating



Image by: New Wave Coaching

"Always be aware of where your blade is, and make sure you have it positioned so that it does what you want it to do, slice or pull. And don't allow the blade to drift under the boat, that's a sure fire shortcut to getting wetter than planned!"

independently of the rest of your body, and always pointing resolutely at where you want to go. This mantra will no doubt become quite familiar as your paddling career progresses, and deservedly so. Look where you want to go,

▲ TOP: At the end of the day it's all about having a great time on the water. Pic New Wave Coaching.

and your rotating trunk and loose hips will naturally follow and everything will fall into place.

Effective use of loose hips and edging with trunk rotation, good position (see skill number 5) and looking where you want to go combines to be what is called dynamic paddling by kayak coaches, because your whole body is moving and engaged in leading your kayak in being controlled and stable on white water. Dynamic paddling is an extremely important skill, but it is one that you'll probably continue to improve upon for as long as you're a kayaker, and will one day become instinctive rather than something you have to think about all the time. Don't get frustrated if it takes some time, just focus on the key points of loose hips, and separation of movement between bottom half and trunk.



Keeping an active blade to drive and control the boat through a significant drop



2) KEEPING YOUR PADDLE BLADE ACTIVE

White water paddling is similar to cycling in that you are stable when you're moving; and specifically to paddling, you're most stable when moving at the same speed as the water. In fact, the only thing that causes you to be unstable when on white water in a kayak is encountering water either travelling at a different speed to you, or in a different direction. This could be in the form of an eddy line or a stopper, but either way ensuring that your blade is constantly in action will greatly counteract the effect of passing from water travelling at one speed to water travelling at another or a change in direction.

The vast majority of the time, a positive forward stroke is what's needed to power over an eddy line or punch through a stopper; if in doubt, always fall back on paddling hard in a forward trajectory! The mere presence of the blade in the water, though, increases your stability, so as you get a feel for what you're doing, experiment with other types of blade activity: leaving the blade planted near the bow of your boat in a bow rudder in fast white water both gives you the option of making subtle changes in direction, but keeps the boat tracking well, too, and it means that you're already in the position to react quickly to a change in water speed or direction with a powerful stroke.

Always be aware of where your blade is, and make sure you have it positioned so that it does what you want it to do, slice or pull. And don't allow the blade to drift under the boat, that's a sure fire shortcut to getting wetter than planned! The key is to ensure that your paddle is engaged in a never-ending sequence of linked strokes, as they are called in the trade, with one blade in the water as much as possible.

3) SUPPORT STROKES

Cutting-edge kayak coaching theory views support strokes, as they're called, as somewhat redundant to the white water paddler: effective dynamic paddling removes the need for them, it is said. And for improving and experienced white water paddlers this is true. There's a lot that can be gained for your white water technique, though, by continuing to practice a low bracing stroke on the flat.

Low bracing involves getting your elbows at 90 degrees over the paddle shaft, forming a rectangle shape with your body, arms and paddle. As the boat overbalances (you'll have to cause this yourself when practicing on the flat!) you slap down on the water with the broad side of the blade, which will give you a moment of resistance and flick your hips to guide the boat back into an upright position. Practicing low braces will help your posture (see skill 5) and get your hips working in the right way. ►

▲ BOTTOM: Key stroke to drive high and dry!

4) THE ESKIMO ROLL

An Eskimo roll, or roll as it is more commonly called, is simply a stroke that rights your kayak from being upside-down. It's often viewed as something akin to magic by the beginner white water kayaker, but it's really not that hard to learn. However, everybody takes a different amount of time to master the roll, and learning can cause delight and frustration in equal measure, it is a very proud moment in a kayaker's career when they perform their first ever roll in anger on white water, but mastering it isn't always instant. It's a skill that comes to everybody eventually, and is best started practicing early.

There is more than one type of roll, although the most commonly used is the forward-sweep, or screw roll, and many recognised approaches to learning and teaching it, too many to go into detail here about, but the bare bones of an effective roll fall into two stages.

The first stage is the sweep. Set up by leaning forwards, and position the paddle parallel to the boat off to one side, make it so the blade nearest the bow has broken the surface and is sitting just above it. You then engage the sweep, drawing the blade across the surface of the water to gain a little purchase, rotating your torso but maintaining your forward position. As you do so, the motion will start righting the kayak.

The second stage is simply a high brace, which if you've been practicing diligently, should be a breeze! (see skill 3). Remember that the hip flick is the most important element. In this regard, allow your body to follow the boat up.

5) GOOD PADDLING POSTURE

This skill ties into every other skill you'll need for white water kayaking. Without a good upright or forwards posture – depending on the situation – you won't be able to get the kayak to go where you want it to, you'll constantly be capsizing and won't have a chance of rolling up. Remember to always start from an upright position, never slouch or lean back, and be prepared to put your weight forwards where necessary to allow for a bigger stroke or to maintain speed over a change in water momentum or direction.



Nothing beats a great day on the river with your paddling mates.

“It is a very proud moment in a kayaker's career when they perform their first ever roll in anger on white water, but mastering it isn't always instant.”



Setting up for a roll on white water



◀ LEFT: This paddler is separating his upper and lower body and holding his boat on a guard edge

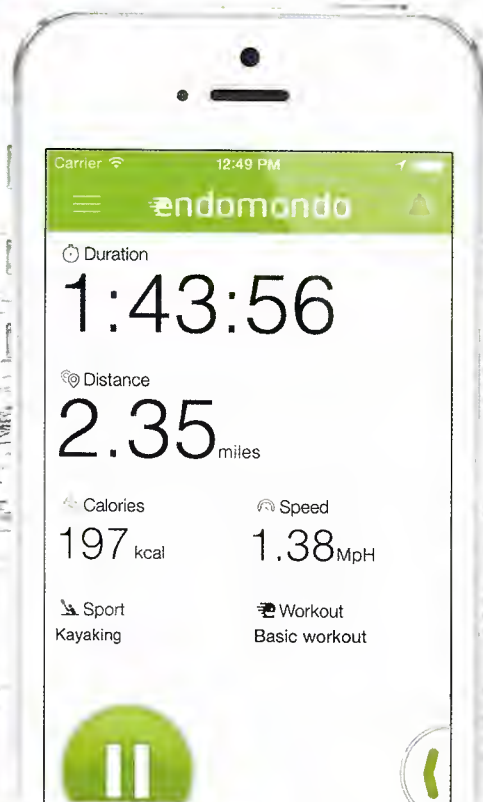
AND FINALLY...

The most essential skill really is learning that all white water kayaking is really about is enjoying yourself! Whether you're running grade 2 or grade 5, the pleasure is in experiencing the river and the outdoors with friends; the adventure in what lies around the next river bend. **CF**

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Article & images by Ian Bailey

WHITE WATER IN THE DESERT



Our story begins in Dubai, back in the spring of 2011. Fresh out of university, I was working in the United Arab Emirates on my first overseas contract in the outdoor industry.

“The first thing that struck me was how impressive the artificial surf wave was. I was expecting to find an indoor FlowRider type surf wave, but instead found an outdoor wave pool that created large, clean waves.”

An odd choice you may think? For a paddling outdoor enthusiast to go to a country known mostly for being a sprawling urban mass and a playground for the uber-wealthy.

Away from the shadow of the skyscrapers though, the U.A.E offers endless

opportunities for the outdoors adventurer in the form of trekking, climbing and sea kayaking. The Arabian Desert isn't exactly known for its abundance of white water rivers sadly, with a sum total of...well, none. There are rivers elsewhere in the region – Iran, Israel, Lebanon and Turkey spring to mind, all of which were a little too far to go on a day off. Three months in the desert was a long time for a white water addict.

RISING FROM THE SAND

In my free time I would sit glued to the kayaking forums, keeping up to date with the paddling scene back in the UK. Then came big news: there were plans being made for an artificial white water course in Al Ain, on the border with Oman. Yes!



Dubai has a reputation for going one better than anywhere else, aiming to build the biggest, most impressive attractions in the world. I was keen to take a look at what that meant for all of the white water paddlers out there... Would this be the new go-to destination for winter paddle training?

I scoured the internet looking for information, but found very little. As it happened, 'Wadi Adventure' opened in 2012, when I was back on British soil. With no less than three white water courses, an artificial surf wave and a high ropes course, it looked set to be a major tourist attraction. Two years passed. Contracts in Ireland, Finland, Iceland... and finally a job back in the Middle East, based in Muscat, the capital city of the Sultanate of Oman. This time, I would not miss out! ►



A MIDDLE EASTERN ROAD TRIP

Getting there from Muscat was to be the first obstacle. I'm more than used to making the long drive to North Wales at the weekend to get my paddling fix. However, the four-hour drive, plus the time spent waiting for U.A.E. tourist visas is probably the longest I've spent trying to get to a river, just for a quick afternoon blast. The good news for those holidaying in the U.A.E. is that Al-Ain is roughly only an hour and a half hour drive from either Dubai or Abu Dhabi, the two main tourist areas.

On arrival at the centre I paid my 200 AED fee (£32) and made my way out into the park. The first thing that struck me was how impressive the artificial surf wave was. I was expecting to find an indoor FlowRider type surf wave, but instead found an outdoor wave pool that created large, clean waves. The regulars were being put through their paces, carving slick looking top and bottom turns on the wave face. Very cool!

Heading over to the white water park, there were slalom paddlers as far as the eye could see. It turns out that there was a training camp on, with paddlers from all over Europe descending upon the centre to train during the winter months.

I was greeted by the staff working at the centre, a team made up of all Nepali raft guides and safety kayakers. I found them to be very friendly, helpful and professional, as I've come to expect from Nepalese guides. I had my own personal kit with me, but for those without, it was possible to borrow all the essential items from the centre, as well as a boat of course. The equipment is adequate, but was, however, showing signs of heavy use. The guides had obviously done their best to repair the boats in the rental fleet, but due to the shallow nature of the course, they had taken a hammering over the past few years. It was possible to rent Pyranha Inazones, TG masters and an old favourite of mine, the Molan playboat.

WARMING UP

The slalom teams had booked out the hardest course, the 'black run' for their training session, so I warmed up on the two easier courses, which were roughly class 1-2 and class 2 respectively. I couldn't get over how nice it was to paddle in just a rash vest for once! With the temperature up to nearly thirty degrees centigrade, wearing much more would have been unbearable. What a change this made to my normal paddling back in the UK, where nearly all year round is dry-suit season!

A series of drops and eddies created many features ideal for the beginner and intermediate kayaker to train on, with plenty of surfing opportunities. Like many artificial rivers, the course was fairly shallow in

places, so playboaters should pick their features carefully when thinking of initiating freestyle moves. I played my way down both of the easier courses and took the conveyor belt back up to the top to go again. No portaging here!

"I couldn't get over how nice it was to paddle in just a rash vest for once! With the temperature up to nearly thirty degrees centigrade, wearing much more would have been unbearable."





HITTING THE BLACK RUN

Once the slalom paddlers had moved on, it was time for my first session on the black run. For my first run down, I was joined by one of the guides from the centre, to check that I was competent enough to be on the course. It was great to have a watchful eye, looking out for me, as well as being shown where all the best playspots were. As the guide started throwing down endless cartwheels and flat-spins, I started to get the impression that he didn't mind going to work in the morning...

One thing that became immediately apparent though, is that the black run (which is roughly class 3 - 3+) is pretty continuous at the grade. There was no let up between the features, with plenty of holes to punch through and waves crashing down on you from all sides. I found the course to be far more like a natural river than most artificial courses, which tend to be pool-drop in nature. Even the boulders in and along the riverbank were made to add to the appearance of a real river, as opposed to a man-made concrete ditch.

There are many eddies and those that paddle comfortably at the grade should have no trouble catching them. The eddies aren't as big as you will find on some courses though, so chasing swimmer's boats can be a tough, but luckily everything collects in a large flat pool at the bottom. There are several good play holes to throw ends in, but this is definitely a course for plastic boats and you won't be able to plug too deep when looping.

Dotted around the course were a number of 'river guards' with throw bags ready to fish out any rafting clients lucky enough to have the full experience... They stayed on duty between sessions, keeping an eye on the kayakers, which I thought was a nice touch. ▶



THE NEXT WINTER TRAINING GROUND?

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Wadi Adventure and would become a regular, were it not for my imminent return to the UK and on to pastures new. The centre is geared up for both expert kayakers, looking to hone their skills, as well as beginner kayakers wanting to get on to the water for the first time. Whilst there I saw a number of training sessions being taught on the flat and progressing on to the moving water, with all the clients looking like they were having a great time!

So will the U.A.E become the go-to destination for winter paddle-sports training? For the British, probably not! Even though the rivers can be brutally cold in the UK during winter, we are 'blessed' with rainfall. This means that, as well as a selection of excellent artificial courses, we also have the option of getting out on natural rivers. For those on the continent that rely mostly on snow melt for their fun, it makes perfect sense. Luckily for them, Emirates will accept kayaks and paddles on their flights with the minimum of fuss, taking some of the stress out of flying with a boat.

Wadi Adventure is easily the best artificial white water course that I have paddled so far and made a nice change to be paddling somewhere warm for once! If you're heading to Dubai, definitely check it out:

www.wadiadventure.ae CF

“There was no let up between the features, with plenty of holes to punch through and waves crashing down on you from all sides.”

Ian paddles for Team Canoe Kayak Trader and keeps a blog of his adventures at www.iboutdoor.com

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