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Summer 2015

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# WELCOME

## TO THE SUMMER ISSUE OF CANOE FOCUS

**S**ummer is here, and so is the summer issue of *Canoe Focus*. We hope that as the weather improves you can enjoy the water more and more and have plenty of plans to paddle throughout the fair weather months.

In this issue we share news of recent successes for our athletes throughout selection events on the #RoadtoRio, shine some light on lesser known disciplines such as Rafting and Stand Up Paddleboarding and even hear from an expert on the strain canoeing can put on paddlers' shoulders and how to prevent damage from this.

Along with the success of our athletes, Go Canoeing Week was a huge success, the biggest one yet in fact. It managed to encourage many paddlers to register miles in order to reach the goal of 24,901, the distance from the UK to Rio and back again. If Go Canoeing Week inspired you, take a look at some of our favourite canoe trails later in the issue and take the whole family out on the water.

We have also seen fantastic participation throughout our collaboration with Sport England on the #ThisGirlCan campaign. It was encouraging to see so many women and girls enjoying paddle sport, and it also supports the results of the 'Watersports Participation Survey 2014'. The survey recently released results stating female participation was at the highest it has been since the study began and delivered fantastic news for canoeing across the board with it confirming that canoeing is 'by far the most popular boating activity'.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Canoe Focus* from the achievements of our athletes, to the exciting expeditions taken by British paddlers across the world. If you have a story you would like to share, please don't hesitate to get in touch via our email ([canoeingnews@bcu.org.uk](mailto:canoeingnews@bcu.org.uk)).

Until next time, have a great summer and happy paddling.

*Albert*

**Albert Woods, British Canoeing President**

Your contributions make *Canoe Focus* happen. The quality and variety of news, articles, reports and photographs depend on the submission of material from you. Very few contributors are professional writers and photographers, so don't be put off writing because you have no experience! *Canoe Focus* is all about canoeists to canoeist dialogue, a paddler's magazine written by paddlers. Technical information: Contributions preferably as a Microsoft Word file, which can be emailed to [mel.brooks@britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:mel.brooks@britishcanoeing.org.uk). All material is accepted on the understanding that British Canoeing and its agents cannot be held liable or responsible for loss or damage, although every care and effort is taken to safeguard material. Next copy date is 10/9/15. Material arriving after this date cannot be included in the Autumn 2015 issue. *Canoe Focus* encourages contributions of any nature but reserve the right to edit and condense to fill the space available and unless otherwise stated unfortunately cannot reply to submissions or return any articles or images that are submitted to the magazine. Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the British Canoeing, its committees or members. The printing and advertisements in *Canoe Focus* does not necessarily mean that the BC endorse the company, items or services advertised. All material in *Canoe Focus* is strictly copyright and all rights are reserved. Reproduction without prior permission from the editor is forbidden.



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# CONTENTS

## 06 BRITISH CANOEING NEWS

Events, info and news from your governing body.

## 18 WHAT GEAR

Sam Ross presents the Focus guide to the essential kit that you'll need to stand up and get started in the fun sport of Stand Up Paddleboarding.

## 24 GO CANOEING

The Windermere Challenge & Latest Go Canoeing News.

## 28 FAMILY PADDLING

5 Great Paddling Ideas to Try with the Family This Summer!

## 34 FOCUS ON BRITISH RAFT RACING

Learn more about Team GBR and this exhilarating sport.

## 36 ON THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE

5 great canoe trails adventures for you try this summer.

## 40 COASTAL CONSIDERATIONS

How to plan for a successful and fun day of sea kayaking.

## 46 THE YUKON ASSIGNMENT

A once in a lifetime wilderness canoe adventure.

## 52 IN TO FOCUS

The latest winners in our popular photo-competition.

## 54 TOP TIPS FOR WHITE WATER PADDLERS

Driving Your Boat.

## 58 PERFECT PADDLING

A school sea paddling trip to the stunning waters of Sweden.

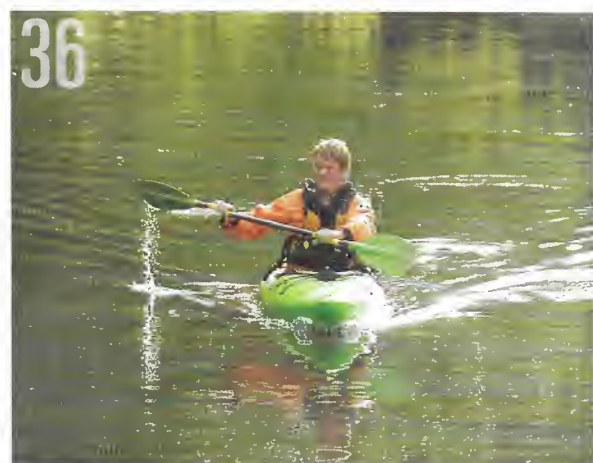
## 60 FUEL FOR FITNESS & FUN

Sports nutritionist David Dunne shares some great meal ideas and tips on food and drink for all you paddlers out there.

## 62 HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR SHOULDERS

White water paddler and orthopaedic surgeon Philip Holland provides an insight into how to prevent shoulder injuries.

Front Cover: Sweet summertime sea kayaking, Brancaster Bay, Norfolk.  
Photo by Wild Child Photography.





### TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

We are really committed to reflecting the views of our members, so we welcome all of your comments. You can also use the British Canoeing Facebook page - [www.facebook.com/britishcanoeing](http://www.facebook.com/britishcanoeing)



### HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

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

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





# RIVER CLEAN UPS ARE GO

**O**ur rivers, canals and lakes are beautiful places, which as well as being enjoyed by millions of people each year, are home to a rich array of plants, animals, insects and birds. However, they face challenges from a wide variety of sources of pollution including surface run-off, sewage issues, industrial incidents and general litter and waste.

The implications of this, if left unchecked, are as wide ranging as the causes, from visual impact through to severe issues on our wildlife, especially those living in the water. Faced with this it's often hard for paddlers, and all who love the water, to know how they can help play a role in reducing pollution.

Recently British Canoeing joined forces with WatersideCare, a Keep Britain Tidy project, and Canal & River Trust to help paddlers find ways to get involved in efforts to reduce the impact of one of these issues by putting together Canoe Clean Ups to tackle litter and waste on our rivers and canals. Litter can have a huge impact. It often deters people from enjoying their local waterways, leading to problems of anti-social behaviour and further decline in the prospects for the environment. It can also be a real issue for wildlife, from the potential for snagging and trapping birds, through to the impact of plastics on fish.

The first two events from the new partnership recently took place in the Midlands, a team from Birmingham Canoe Club tackled an inner-city canal in West Bromwich, while Holme Pierrepont Canoe Club took on the waste flowing along the River Trent outside Nottingham. In both events a huge amount of rubbish was cleared.

In West Bromwich the paddlers removed well over 40 bags of waste over two days, along with suitcases, bikes, and even a hosepipe. In Nottingham the team braved high winds on the Trent to pull out 35 bags of waste in only two hours, proof of the scale of the issue many rivers face.

Throughout both events the team were also able to talk to passers-by, commuters, anglers and other paddlers about the work they were doing, hopefully encouraging more people to have a passion for their waterways too.

We know from feedback from other clean ups across the country that they can be a great way of getting new people into the sport too. At the Nottingham event we helped one Canal & River Trust volunteer to get into a canoe for the first time in many years, and she left with a commitment to be back to the club's sessions with her partner.

We asked Lee Copplestone from WatersideCare about how these first events went, and he told us, "This collaboration has been a great success already and I hope we can do more events like this on our river and canals. Litter picking from the water is the only way to remove the rubbish that's not safely accessible from the towpath or banks so the canoeists are absolutely vital."

## PADDLE FOR GOLD

Once known for its Welsh Gold, the real treasure now lies in the natural beauty of the Mawddach Estuary itself. But where were all the paddlers? Whilst canoeing in the Montgomery Canal 'Dinghy Dawdle' 6 years ago - that's what the Mawddach Rotary Club thought too - and by the time they had reached Welshpool, the Mawddach Paddlesport Festival was born. Initially it was a rafted canoe race for charity, but over the last five years the two day Paddlefest has grown both in size and diversity - also raising many thousands of pounds for Rotary and local good causes, such as Hope House Children's Hospice, Welsh Air Ambulance and local watersports groups.

The very popular 'Have a Go' paddling sessions, held throughout the festival also present a golden opportunity to introduce the many visitors, holidaying in Barmouth, to paddlesport. This year the club plan to mark the occasion with another new event - The 20km Tidally Assisted Mawddach Marathon!

For more info on Paddling for gold head to [www.paddlewales.com](http://www.paddlewales.com) or search Facebook and Twitter for Mawddach Paddlesport Festival.

## NEW PLACE TO PADDLE

The Bristol and Bath area coaching representative, Mark-Jan Dielemans recently negotiated access to the famous Cheddar Reservoir, with the sailing club and Bristol Water, for a paddlesport trial day. The reservoir owners, Bristol Water, have not previously allowed paddlesport on the reservoir. Given the short notice to arrange the event, 23 paddlers took advantage of the opportunity to paddle at this new venue. The sailing club was very accommodating and allowed the paddlers to share their facilities. Mark-Jan, and his team, were able to put on a compact all-day paddling programme including lunch. The day was a successful trial and it is hoped the reservoir will become open to more paddlers in the imminent future, and will become another great place to go Canoeing in the future. Watch this space!





The Canal & River Trust were also instrumental in pulling these events together, and Scott Miller from the East Midlands Waterway told Focus, "The Holme Pierrepont event was a real success, it was great to see paddlers giving their own time to make the river a more pleasant, welcoming place for both people and wildlife. We'd love to see these types of event develop and to see more canoeists getting involved in helping to look after their local stretch of canal or river".

It was great to see that the volunteers from both clubs not only felt a sense of achievement from their efforts, but also had a fun day on the water too. Val Morris from Birmingham Canoe Club said, "It was great to see the impact we had on the canal – it looks much better now after the clean up. It was good fun too, and a bit different to our usual paddles! It gave us all a sense of achievement and a willingness to help again."

Holme Pierrepont Canoe Club's event attracted a range of paddlers, from relative newcomers through to long-standing club members and families. Dawn Scott from the club said, "It was great to see so many club members along today, collecting so much from the water. Despite the weather conditions everyone said they had great fun too."

We are hoping these events become a regular fixture and would love to hear from you if you would like to get involved or want to suggest a new waterway for us to get to work on.

Paddlers can contribute to the creation of healthy rivers in a variety of other ways, particularly by following the 'Check, Clean, Dry' guidelines after paddling. This is a great way we can help stop the spread of invasive non-native species, another key challenge to our water environments. All water users need to be aware of the threat of such species, which can even affect navigation on our waterways. Floating Pennywort for example can grow at rates of up to 20cm in just one day, this clogs up rivers and canals and preventing the passage of boats.

## HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

If you or your club would like to organise a river or canal clean up, contact us at [chris.page@britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:chris.page@britishcanoeing.org.uk). We have prepared a guide to help guide you through the process and will work with you to get your event up and running.

You can also join in events organised by other clubs and centres such as, Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre who run a very successful programme of clean ups throughout the year. All our events will be listed on our Facebook pages so keep an eye out there too.



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# THE CANOE SHOW

**W**ith the longer days and the warmer weather now in full swing, our thoughts at The Canoe Show have turned to the beach for some summer time adventure.

In edition four we will be exploring and showing you the magnificent views and scenery on offer along Scotland's Great Glenn Canoe Trail, one of the three coast-to-coast routes Britain has to offer, and that The Canoe Show will be covering.

At the other end of the country Helen will be taking to the sea, as she tries her hand at Surf Ski. We'll also be taking a

trip out and around St Michael's Mount, an excellent short canoe trail perfect for a mini adventure, and in an effort to keep you all safe and confident on the water this summer we will be providing short guides to sit on top and inflatable kayak safety.

The Canoe Show is excited to announce that, as well as its airing on British Canoeing TV, it now has a dedicated Youtube 'The Canoe Show' channel. Here viewers can watch individual segments from the shows as well as additional content like the recent record breaking DW run.



## NEW EAST MIDLANDS CANOEING DEVELOPMENT OFFICER!

The East Midlands has a new British Canoeing CDO in the shape of Laura Sutherland. Focus caught up with Laura, after a recent paddling session, to find out a little more about her:



I grew up in Nottingham and left the area when I was 18 to study sport development at The University of Birmingham. This helped lead me to work alongside Birmingham's County Sport Partnership focusing on working with volunteers and their programmes. After this, in 2013, I moved back to Nottingham and worked for the last two years at a Local Authority, concentrating on club support and funding. I aim to bring the knowledge and skills I have picked up over the last four years across to British Canoeing to help support canoe clubs and centres to get many more people paddling!

I have a passion for sports and enjoy encouraging people to adopt healthier lifestyles by taking part in more sports and physical activity opportunities and seeing the benefits that they bring. I attempted my first K4 race the other night and after a rather wobbly start, I now have the canoeing bug, and am keen to pass it on to as many people as possible and I can't wait to get started and to find out what projects, programmes and events are going on in the East Midlands currently in paddlesport.

If you have any questions, if you just want to say hi, or if you would like to recruit me a new paddler with 'raw talent', please do get in touch at [laura.sutherland@britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:laura.sutherland@britishcanoeing.org.uk)

## NORWICH CANOE CLUB AT SPECIAL SCHOOL GAMES

Norwich Canoe Club teamed up with Whitlingham Outdoor Centre this spring to provide a Paddle-Ability kayak challenge event at a Special School Games event at The University of East Anglia. Seven special schools from all over Norfolk came and raced against each other in relay races on indoor kayak machines during a wild and exciting hour and a half as each paddler covered 30-metres before swapping with the next Paddle-Ability member of their team. The club would like to say thank you to Active Norfolk for inviting them and congratulations to all the competitors for taking part with such endeavor, energy and enthusiasm.



## PADDLE-ABILITY IN THE NORTH EAST

Congratulations to Hexham Canoe Club who are the first club in the NE Region to be awarded The Paddle-Ability Top Club Award. Hexham Canoe Club has always been an open club that has embraced and supported many paddlers of all abilities age and gender. The award recognises this very fact as the club continues to organise many events and activities such as the Div 2 & 3 Canoe Slalom at a brand new venue in Tynedale and has already started making plans to improve the flagship Tyne Tour event programmed for 31st Oct, 1st and 2nd November 2015.







## FIRST MIXED CREW WIN DEVIZES WESTMINSTER IN 67 YEAR HISTORY OF THE RACE

Over the Easter weekend the crew of Lizzie Broughton and Keith Moule became the first mixed crew – and Lizzie the first woman – to win the 125-mile non-stop race in the 67-year history of the event. Richmond's Lizzie Broughton and Chelmsford's Keith Moule won the Devizes Westminster International Canoe Race in a time of 16 hours 40 minutes and 31 seconds.

"I still can't quite believe we won," said Broughton soon after the race reflecting on the achievement. The victory was emphatic with Broughton and Moule, both from the GB Marathon Canoe Racing squad, beating the second place team by 80 minutes.



The build-up events had Broughton and Moule as pre-race favourites. Before the race Brian Greenham, holder of the course record time of 15 hours and 34 minutes set in 1979, wished them well for the race, enthusing "they're an incredible pair". The crew produced the second fastest time this century. While both think the course record is there for the taking with the right conditions, their immediate focus returns to the European Championships in July.

Echoing Broughton's achievement, half of the ten fastest times were either mixed or female crews. Second placed James King and Thomas Diaper of the Army Canoe Union finished with a time of 18 hours, just 24 seconds ahead of Reading Canoe Club's Alexandra Lane and Radek Zielski.

In the K1 Senior race, there was a race over four days from Devizes with Samuel Plummer of Leighton Buzzard CC and Tom Sharpe of Richmond CC trading the lead. Sharpe led Plummer by half a length at Westminster Bridge with victory assured having banked a one-minute lead over the four days.

Away from the podium, DW2015 proved to be an endurance event that's open to all levels of kayaker and canoeist. Over 600 people in over 300 boats took part in the non-stop Senior Doubles and four day stages races.

TV presenter and Strictly Come Dancing competitor Steve Backshall crewed up with 2013 Junior Doubles winner George Barnicoat to record a time of 23 hours and 17 minutes. Of the 164 Senior Doubles crew to start, 46 retired.

In the Junior Doubles Daniel Palmer and Connor Peters from Fowey River Canoe Club beat Matthew Hayward and Harry Shearer from 8th Norwich Sea Scout Group into second place as they did in 2014. Across the Junior Doubles entries and quality improved as more schools and clubs link up and benefited from the National Schools Championships organised between DW, British Canoeing and Marsport every November.

The Veteran Junior class was won in 17 hours and 30 minutes by the mixed crew of Amber Owen and James Treadgold of Reading Canoe Club, while the Endeavour touring class continues to be the best way for crews to trial the course without the pressure of racing.

What next? Mark the dates for DW2016 in your diary – 25-28 March 2016. Visit [www.dwrace.org.uk](http://www.dwrace.org.uk) and get training.



## THE EASY WAY TO SAVE YOUR BLUSHES

**I**t's windy, maybe chilly too. And there are lots of people milling around to cause you potential embarrassment. You need to get changed out of your wet gear before you catch a chill and you're not quite sure how to get the job done.

If you tend to get worried about falling over and baring your naughty bits when you're trying to change, Crewroom has some great news for you. It's the new compact Crewroom Changing Kit (rrp £65), the perfect accessory to end all your problems when it comes to getting changed easily.

Ideal for a wealth of outdoor activities, including all you watersports fanatics, it's got all the tools you need to change discreetly and dry off quickly when you're out in the elements.

The award-winning Crewroom design team developed their Changing Kit ([www.crewroom.co.uk/the-outdoor-changing-kit-1](http://www.crewroom.co.uk/the-outdoor-changing-kit-1)) in collaboration with paddlers on the River Thames, who helped them finesse the technical aspects of the product.

Produced in one size, with a handy black storage bag and a blue microfibre changing robe, it doubles as a pillow and you can use the bag to store all your wet or dirty gear. The thick neoprene bag converts into a changing mat, and the mat includes non-slip foot pads. Finally, it also protects your feet from sharp objects or the dirty ground when you're changing.

Crewroom say: "At paddle events up and down the country these days, you see people hanging around half-naked after they've been out racing. They feel awkward and don't know where to change.

"But that's all a thing of the past now they can use the Crewroom Changing Kit to change discreetly and warmly with a minimum of fuss. Plus, the added advantage of this handy changing kit is that it folds compactly into a neat little pillow that is easy to transport whenever you are out and about having fun."

[www.crewroom.co.uk](http://www.crewroom.co.uk)

# MAIL BAG

LETTERS, MAIL POSTS &  
TWEETS OF THE MONTH



**Hayley Jarvis@HayleyJarvis7:** Great that u are supporting deaf awareness wk maybe canoeing could become part of deaflympics in the future?

**Sonja Jones@paddlehigh5:** We've got quite a lot of this to do on our challenge next week through many locks - 4 sea kayaks, 3 open canoes & kit. #Aargh

**James Rycraft@jrycraft01:** Wonderful to see 8 of my students and colleagues pass their @Canoe\_England UKCC L1 with flying colours today-Fantastic effort. #prouteacher

**Sam Sandwich@SamSandwich2:** I'd like to suggest canoe ownership is set to boom period. Inflatable canoes are set to take off. My friends love mine!

**Paul Bull@P\_Bull\_Coaching:** Ropes and sunshine... Can only mean FSRT course - what a cracking day @DoeParkWAC @CGO\_outdoors @Canoe\_England

**MND Assoc VIP Team@mndVIPteam:** Congrats to @mndassoc supporter @IanMarsdenGB who won GOLD at the canoeing #paraeuros championships @TeamGB #EveryRoadtoRio @BritishCanoeing

**Emma Wiggs@emwiggssy:** Fantastic week feeling honoured & proud to represent @BritishCanoeing We totally smashed it & I'm so chuffed with my PB! #progress @canoecol

**Etienne Stott MBE@EtienneStott:** Can't wait for some really atrocious weather to test out my new @Crewroom jacket! Thanks @BritishCanoeing & @uk\_sport

**Workplace Challenge@WorkplaceChall:** Canoeing is a great way to have fun and get active! #WorkHealth2015 @BritishCanoeing

**Roman Fonik** – In middle of restoration. Good old school FG construction with foam core. Unfortunately, suffered few cracks and holes over the years. Fortunately, got it dirt cheap. This one should be done soon, then another one to get ready before summer

**BCU Canoe Polo** – Plenty of Polo ladies in the #thisgirlcan Canoe England photo competition! Including this shot from University of London Canoe Polo's Paddlington tournament.

**John Wood** – (Bladder) Something that needs to be emptied a few minutes after zipping yourself into a drysuit



## U CANOE IN YORKSHIRE

Lots more young people all over Yorkshire are being inspired to take up canoeing on a regular basis as a result of involvement in the 'U Canoe' programme. Yorkshire universities, colleges

and centres have been actively getting involved in both 'Wired' and 'Unleashed' programmes and more groups are expressing an interest in getting involved.

Manvers Waterfront Boat Club were one of the first clubs in the country to pilot the 'U Canoe Unleashed' activities with students from the nearby Dearne Valley College being given the opportunity to try lots of fun activities on the water and many of the students involved have now gone on to join the canoe club and are becoming active paddlers.

The 'U Canoe Wired' programme is also being rolled out throughout the region giving hundreds of students the opportunity to try paddling on the indoor kayaking machines and three 'U Canoe Wired' Activator Tutor courses have been run in the region. Sheffield University and Rotherham College were first to get on board along with the Watersports Hub Schools at Wickersley in Rotherham and Rodillian in Leeds. More recently machines have gone to Dearne Valley college in Rotherham, Huddersfield University and Welton Waters Activity Centre in Hull. In all of the delivery centres opportunities for getting out onto the water are being provided and actively being taken up.

## GLOBE360 RUBBISH PADDLE

On a sunny bank holiday weekend Bristol based canoe club, Globe360, had a rubbish paddle! A small army of paddlers took to the water with bin bags and litter grabs. The rubbish paddle was coordinated by Vanessa Hiller and David Woolsey with Globe 360 members. The team focused on the popular paddling section of the river Avon, The Saltford Shallows, between the Riverside Inn and The Jolly Sailor.



Local support was not in short supply! The Riverside Inn supplied them with coffee and bacon butties. David Woolsey said, "We had fantastic support from The Riverside Inn, a visit from Phil Harding of Saltford Environment Group, Vanessa had an interview with BBC Radio Bristol and a Keynsham Voice reporter visited us to take some snaps for her article. All-in-all, a lot of good feeling was generated with the Saltford locals and the Environmental Group by the kayakers from Globe 360, Avon Outdoor Activity Club, North Avon Canoe Club and Cheeky Friday Paddle Club."

To top off all this great work, the team were raising funds for The Youth Adventure Trust ([www.youthadventuretrust.org.uk](http://www.youthadventuretrust.org.uk)), a children's charity that provides outdoor activities for disadvantaged children to help them build confidence and self-esteem.

If you would like to make a donation please visit [www.justgiving.com/riveravoncleanup](http://www.justgiving.com/riveravoncleanup)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank Mike Nicholls for his contribution in the Spring Edition of Canoe Focus magazine. The article by Mike on 'The Waterways of Birmingham' highlighted a great destination for UK paddlers.



Lifeboats

HELP  
CAN'T  
REACH  
YOU



IF YOU  
CAN'T  
REACH  
YOUR VHF  
RADIO

RESPECT  
THE WATER





# COMPETITION ROUND UP - THE SEASON SO FAR

## THE 2015 SEASON GOT UNDERWAY AS ALL EYES FOCUS ON RIO

For Britain's high performance athletes 2015 is a hugely significant year, when the battle for Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic places will largely be won and lost. There is also the excitement of the UK hosting the ICF 2015 Canoe Slalom World Championships for the first time in 20 years, while for Canoe Sprint there is the honour of competing for Team GB at the inaugural European Games in Baku. The anticipation is also building amongst the Paracanoe squad as their Paralympic debut takes shape.

### SLALOM

The first step on the journey for Canoe Slalom was in April, when Lee Valley White Water Centre hosted the UK Canoe Slalom Championships over the Easter weekend. The event incorporated the British Senior Selection Trials, with the country's best paddlers competing to book their place on the team and give themselves a chance of world and Olympic glory.

With a maximum of three places in each of the five classes (K1M, K1W, C1M, C1W, C2) up for grabs, there was some thrilling action on the Olympic course, which played host to the London 2012 Games. In addition to participation in the European Championships and the ICF World Cup series, a place on the team guaranteed athletes entry to a home World Championships and the best opportunity to secure the ultimate prize of a Rio 2016 Olympic place.

The competition format comprised of a race on each of the three days made up of two runs, with the best run to count. The best two from three race results was then used to determine the final placings and in most classes it went down to the wire, with the last run on the last day proving just as significant as the first.

David Florence (Lloyds Register) was amongst the stand-out performers of the championships, winning six out of six races in two different classes C1 and C2.

Going into the C1 on the final day, David had already qualified for the British senior team, but that didn't deter him from taking the opportunity to race hard and claim his third successive win. The battle behind him was for the two remaining places, with three athletes capable of joining Florence on the team. In the end it was his training partner U23 Ryan Westley (Lower Wharfe) who came out on top, along with fellow U23 Adam Burgess (Stafford & Stone) who will make his senior debut in C1.

A couple of hours later, Florence's 100% record was complete with another victory in C2 with partner Richard Hounslow (Independent), who was also showing he is coming back to his best in both C2 and K1, following a shoulder injury that forced him to miss several weeks training this winter.

With one remaining place to be allocated in C2 the racing between the crews continued fast and furious, before Adam Burgess with renewed confidence from his C1 result, took second place with partner Greg Pitt (Stafford & Stone) to join Florence and Hounslow and Olympic gold medalist, Etienne Stott and Mark Proctor, marking a successful weekend for the new partnership.

In the men's kayak (K1M), with Joe Clarke (Stafford & Stone) and London's Richard Hounslow (Independent) already selected by the end of day two, it was down to a battle between three athletes for the one remaining place on the team. Tom Brady (Stafford & Stone), well known for his speed, came out all guns blazing and put down the fastest first run for the field to chase the second time down the course. But with Hounslow and Clarke both relaxed in the knowledge their team places were secure, they continued to show their class and pushed Brady into third and ended his hopes of a last day comeback. For Scotland's U23 Bradley Forbes-Cryans (CR Cats) who had been sitting overnight in third selection spot, it was a question of holding his nerve and a fourth place finish in the final race was enough to see him realise his dream of competing at a first senior World Championships on home soil in September.

In the women's canoe single (C1W), which will make its Olympic debut in Tokyo 2020, there was only one place left by day three, with Mallory Franklin (Windsor & District) pre-selected and 19 year old Kimberley Woods (Rugby) sealing her place on Saturday. So it became a tussle between Eilidh Gibson (Strathallan) and Jasmine Royle (Stafford & Stone). Royle stepped up and paddled brilliantly to beat Gibson on both runs, but needed the overall win to edge out the Scottish teenager. Despite her focus on the K1W on Sunday, Woods didn't oblige and won her third successive race, ensuring Eilidh scooped the third and final spot on the British team. It was a sweet feeling for Gibson who had lost out to Royle at the U23 selection three weeks earlier and is now set to make her senior debut, despite her omission from the U23 team.

"OUR JOB NOW IS TO GO AWAY AND PREPARE THIS TEAM TO DELIVER THEIR BEST PERFORMANCES AT OUR HOME WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN SEPTEMBER, WHICH IS A KEY MILESTONE FOR US ON THE ROAD TO RIO."



The women's kayak single (K1W) was even more open than the men's event, as four women entered the final day with a one in two chance of selection, with 2014 world silver medallist Fiona Pennie already pre-selected. It was London Olympian Lizzie Neave (Stafford & Stone) who posted the fastest time in each run to take the win and put her season back on track, following a miserable 2014 plagued by injury. With her C1 place already in the bag, U23 paddler Kimberley Woods (Rugby) had nothing to fear and delivered an accomplished run to finish second and snatch the remaining place.

In the end 14 athletes were selected for the British Senior Canoe Slalom team, which includes four London Olympians and a number of up and coming under 23 athletes who have stepped up and made the grade at senior level. Impressively, four of the team will double up and compete in two events.

Delighted with the weekend of competitive racing, Paul Ratcliffe, Canoe Slalom Head Coach, said, "We have selected one of the strongest Canoe Slalom teams we have ever had, on the back of the most competitive selection series I have been involved with. Athletes, coaches and support staff can all be proud of what they have achieved.

"Our job now is to go away and prepare this team to deliver their best performances at our home World Championships in September, which is a key milestone for us on the road to Rio."

Selected athletes will now prepare to compete at the European Championships, the ICF World Cup series before a home World Championships at Lee Valley White Water Centre 16th-20th September, which is one of 30 world-class sports events being supported by funding from UK Sport as part of their #EveryRoadtoRio campaign.

The World Championships is the opportunity for Great Britain to qualify boats for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and for canoeing and Olympic sports fans alike to enjoy yet more adrenalin-pumping action and a fun family day out at Lee Valley White Water Centre.

The season will then conclude with selection trials 24th-26th October 2015 to decide which athletes will fill the boats qualified for the Games.

Tickets for the World Championships are available from [www.canoeLondon2015.com](http://www.canoeLondon2015.com) →

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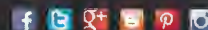
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**NEW**



## SPRINT

The target event for the Canoe Sprint Olympic programme athletes this year is the World Championships in Milan in August, which is the first of two opportunities to qualify boats for next year's Olympic Games. Traditionally, the April Regatta has played a key role in the senior team selection process, but following an in-depth review of the 2014 performances, it became clear that, in many cases, Britain's senior athletes were not improving their performances from April to the World Championships. Therefore, a decision was made to use the 2015 April Regatta as a final opportunity to register a performance for consideration for the senior team for the European Championships, World Cup Series and the European Games in Baku. However, it won't be a factor in considering who will represent Great Britain in Milan, which will be decided at the July Regatta (2nd-3rd July at Holme Pierrepont).

Commenting on the new approach, British Canoeing Sprint Head Coach, Scott Gardner told Focus: "By moving world selection later in the year we have taken the opportunity to build bigger and stronger foundations in 2015. We are focused on building the known relevant skills, attitudes and physical attributes that it will take to get on the podium in 2016. This has meant that since January we have been in heavy training foundation blocks, with the goal of ensuring optimal performance when it counts the most, July trials and Milan in August."

As a result, six emerging senior squad athletes, with an eye on Rio 2016, had the opportunity to compete at the Senior European Championships in May, whilst a further 15 paddlers from the development squad represented Great Britain at World Cup 1. Both competitions provided an opportunity for athletes to gain further international experience and in some cases, to make their GB debut.

Reflecting on this exciting new initiative, Heather Williams, Talent Pathway Manager said: "Although we are in the midst of the Rio 2016 plans, we also have our eyes on the Tokyo 2020 Olympic cycle. It is really important that there is a clear performance pathway for the sport, with training programmes complemented by national and international competition opportunities, to enable athletes to progress to the next level."

The British Olympic Association has also confirmed the Canoe Sprint athletes selected as part of Team GB for the inaugural

European Games in Baku in June. Canoeing will be sending a 14-strong team, including six London 2012 Olympians.

## PARACANOE

Following a hard winter's training, the 'road to Rio' finally got underway for Paracanoe athletes at the Senior European Championships in Racice, Czech Republic. It has been a challenging few months for the British squad, with recent confirmation by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) that only kayak events will feature when the sport makes its Paralympic debut in Rio 2016. Furthermore, changes to the classification boundaries also look likely to have an impact and together, these decisions will unfortunately rule some athletes out of contention for the Rio Games over the next few months.

However Steve Harris, British Canoeing's Paracanoe Programme Manager is determined to see the positives and is pleased to have got their 2015 international campaign underway, saying: "The last few months have been extremely challenging for our programme as we get to grips with what being a Paralympic sport involves and the impact of the IPC decisions. We are extremely excited to be making our Paralympic debut in Rio and with the events and classifications finally confirmed, it is essential that we put any disappointments behind us and work together to focus on delivering a team that will go to the Paralympic Games and challenge for medals across the competition programme."

The impressive British team line-up of seven paddlers included five European champions from 2014, three of whom went on to become world champions last year. Britain finished last year's Europeans with a record seven gold and two silver medals, however, with the standard of competition rising all the time in this new Paralympic sport, racing was significantly tougher this year and medals harder to come by.

The Europeans has provided a good early season indication of progress made over the winter and enabled athletes and coaches to assess the international competition as the classification changes take effect worldwide. The main focus for Paracanoe athletes will now turn to selection for the World Championships in Milan in August, which is the first of two opportunities to qualify boats for next year's Paralympic Games. World Championship selection trials will be held for Paracanoe on 4th-5th July at Nottingham.

# BRITISH CANOEING OLYMPIANS TO COMPETE AT INAUGURAL EUROPEAN GAMES

This month will see the first ever European Games taking place in Baku, Azerbaijan, and British Canoeing will be sending a strong team, containing six Olympians. London 2012 Olympic medal winners Ed McKeever, Liam Heath and Jon Schofield will be joined in the 14 strong team by Rachel Cawthorn, Louisa Sawers and Angela Hannah, who were all part of the women's K4 500m crew that finished fifth in 2012.

Reigning Olympic champion Ed McKeever MBE said, "I am proud to have been selected as part of Team GB again, this time at the European Games. This is a key competition for us just eight weeks out from the World Championships, which is a qualification event for Rio.

"Most of the world's top canoe sprint athletes come from Europe, so I am really looking forward to some fast racing and a chance to see how preparations are going."

The European Games is a multi-sport event designed and regulated by the European Olympic Committee and featuring a total of 20 sports, including 16 Olympic sports and four non-Olympic sports.

More than 6,000 athletes from across the continent will take part in the event, including the 153-strong Team GB, with 253 medals up for grabs. The Canoe Sprint event will take place 250km from Baku in Mingachevir, the fourth biggest city in Azerbaijan, over three days of competition from 14th-16th June. There will be 12 kayak events (six men's and six women's) and three canoe events (men only), with British paddlers taking part in 13 of the 15 events.

British Canoeing Performance Director John Anderson MBE said, "This year we decided to prioritise the European Games for our top athletes as it fits so well as a lead in to World Championships and Olympic qualification. We have selected our strongest possible team, which includes six Olympians from London and we are targeting some good performances at this important point in the season.

"We are looking forward to being part of Team GB for this new event in the sporting calendar and I would like to thank the British Olympic Association for all their hard work and support to ensure that our team is fully prepared."

The team will travel out to Azerbaijan on 10th June and stay over in the Games Village for a night before transferring to the Canoe Village at Mingachevir, known as the City of Lights.



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# FIVE THINGS TO DO AT THE ICF 2015 CANOE SLALOM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

**"THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS CANOE SLALOM EVENT OUTSIDE OF THE OLYMPICS AND WITH AN ARRAY OF FREE, FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES ON OFFER, THE EVENT IS SET TO HAVE A REAL FESTIVAL ATMOSPHERE AND BE A GREAT DAY OUT FOR SPECTATORS."**

**T**his September the eyes of the paddling world will once again turn towards Lee Valley White Water Centre as the venue hosts the 2015 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships. The World Championships are the most prestigious Canoe Slalom event outside of the Olympics and this year's competition has the added excitement of being a qualification race for next year's Rio Olympics. The event is sure to provide some thrilling racing and with enthusiastic local support and a strong contingent of international followers, the 2015 World Championships is expected to attract a large, vocal crowd. And with an array of free, family-friendly activities on offer, the event is set to have a real festival atmosphere and be a great day out for spectators. Here are five great reasons not to miss out on what will be a fantastic event.

## SEE THE WORLD'S BEST BATTLE IT OUT FOR GLORY

During the competition, 300 of the world's top Canoe Slalom athletes from 55 countries will tackle the technically demanding Olympic course at Lee Valley White Water Centre. World Champions will be crowned in five disciplines and with qualification for the 2016 Rio Olympics also up for grabs the five days of fierce competition will witness some nail-biting action. British Canoeing's paddlers will be hoping that home water proves decisive again after scooping an impressive medal haul of seven golds and one silver at last year's World Cup.

## GET ON THE WATER WITH GO CANOEING

Throughout the event, spectators will be given the chance to experience a number of canoeing activities hosted by Go Canoeing, British Canoeing's Olympic legacy initiative. Go Canoeing Starter Sessions provide a fun introduction to paddling and are perfect for children and adults who want to try canoeing for the first time or who haven't been in a boat for a while.

Those with some paddling experience will be able to tackle a series of flat water gates in a fun Canoe Slalom competition that will really test your speed and ability to manoeuvre a

boat, and those that would rather stay on dry land can take on the Kayak Machine Challenge – how quickly can you paddle 50 metres? All Go Canoeing activities will be free of charge and are suitable for children eight and over.

## EXPLORE THE KIDZ ZONE

As well as being a great opportunity to witness some world-class sporting action, the 2015 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships is also set to be a great day out for the whole family. Children of all ages will be engrossed by the thrills and spills of white water racing and there will even be a Kidz Zone available to keep them entertained. Little adventurers will be able to explore the pirate ship fun house, see how high they can bounce on the bungee trampolines and scale the climbing wall – all for free!

## HANG OUT IN THE EXPO AREA

When there's a break in racing, the Expo Area is the ideal place to hang out and grab a drink and a bite to eat. Featuring a range of attractions, including a big screen, a stage and fairground rides, the area will also boast a number of trade stands and spectators will also be able to meet British Canoeing's brand new mascot. The Expo Area will be open before and after racing each day, so why not arrive early and have a look around or soak up the atmosphere after the day's competition is complete?

## MEET THE ATHLETES

Maybe one of the most exciting aspects of the World Championships is that spectators will get the chance to meet some of British Canoeing's top athletes, from both Canoe Slalom and Canoe Sprint. At various points across the event, you'll be able to have a picture taken with some of the team, grab an autograph and maybe even get a glimpse of an Olympic medal! Where else would you have this opportunity?

For more information about the World Championships and to buy tickets, visit [www.canoelondon2015.com](http://www.canoelondon2015.com)

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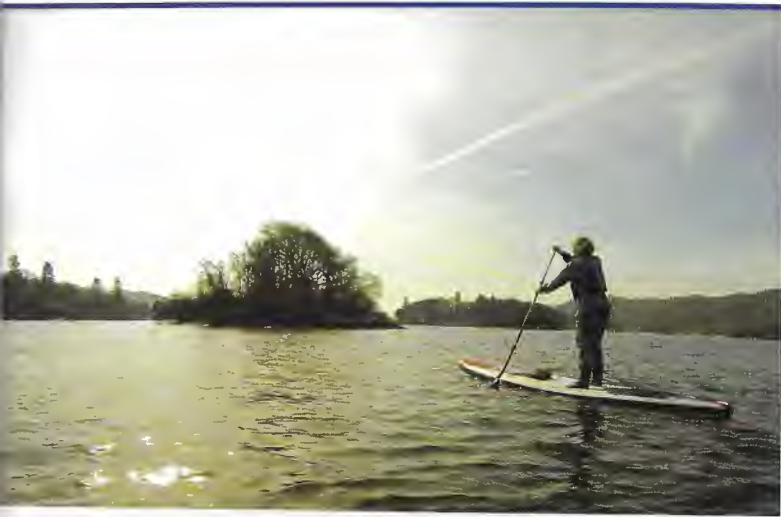
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## THIS GIRL CAN

Back in January Sport England launched an innovative campaign aimed at getting more women and girls involved in sport and physical activity. The This Girl Can campaign is based on research that shows the overwhelming factor holding women and girls back from exercising is fear of judgment in terms of appearance and ability.

To tackle that issue, the campaign has been designed as a celebration of active women up and down the country who are doing their thing no matter how well they do it, how they look or even how red their face gets.

British Canoeing is just one of a wide range of partner organisations to give its backing to the campaign and is fully committed to increasing the number of females participating in paddlesport.

Director of Development Sue Hornby said, "This Girl Can has really struck a chord with women up and down the country and the campaign is doing a great job at breaking down those barriers that hold many women back.

"As an organisation, we're keen to encourage and inspire more women and girls to get involved in canoeing and kayaking and to help those already taking part in the sport to get more involved by providing more opportunities and information.

"We've already seen some success, with this year's Watersports Participation Survey revealing that female participation rates in canoeing are at the highest they have been since the study began in 2002, a 56% increase in fact. But we're not going to rest on our laurels and, with the help of This Girl Can, we're determined to continue to grow the numbers of women and girls enjoying canoeing as a sport and leisure activity.

"A second phase of promotional activity will be running throughout June and we really hope that this will inspire more women and girls to give canoeing and kayaking a go."

### THIS GIRL CAN PHOTO COMPETITION

Throughout April, we ran a special This Girl Can photo competition alongside our usual monthly competition and asked you to send us your inspiring images of women and girls taking part in paddlesports. We had some great prizes up for grabs, thanks to our partners at Palm Equipment, and we received lots of brilliant entries.

Congratulations to our winner, Ellie Ablett and runners up, Sally Willett and Lee Royle, we hope you enjoy their photos. To see all the entries visit our Facebook page,

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# SUMMER SIGHTINGS



**A**s the days are becoming longer, and the weather is tempting us with promises of warm, hazy days on the water, we move on from the sounds of spring to what we may be lucky enough to see in the summer.

Back in the spring, when leaves were just bursting into bud, we were listening out for the sounds of birds calling out, trying to find a mate. By the time June comes around, many of our more familiar garden birds may have already had one successful brood, and could be thinking about having another. You might spot the juvenile birds, finding their wings, hopping cautiously between branches. They are distinguishable from adults as they are often a dull brown colour and their feathers have a 'scruffy' look to them. They are probably still largely dependent on their parents for food, so you might see the babies squatting at the knees, jiggling their tail feathers, fluttering their little wings, holding their beaks wide open and squawking for food!

Summer is a great time to spot our large, impressive birds of prey, soaring on the thermals, preserving their energy. Buzzards (*Buteo buteo*), red kites (*Milvus milvus*) and our other native raptors were in serious decline due to the excessive use of a particularly nasty pesticide chemical, DDT. This, once widely used pesticide, caused them to lay thin-shelled eggs that broke easily. Since the ban of these chemicals in the UK, our raptors have been making a steady recovery. Sadly though, our majestic birds have also suffered from illegal persecution; targeted with poisons and sometimes even shot. However, this is beginning to reduce through better education and tighter prosecutions.

Red kites are identifiable from their similar cousins, the buzzards, thanks to their forked tail, that can be clearly seen when in flight. The toy kite is named after these birds, rather than the other way around; the word 'kite' actually stems from the Old English 'cyta' and the Middle English 'kyte' and is imitative of the long drawn out whistling call which the birds make.

Swooping, zooming, racing and chasing alongside you in your canoe or kayak, catching emerging invertebrates, with fighter jet precision are the African migrants; swifts (*Apus apus*), swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) and house martins (*Delichon urbica*). These perfectly designed little birds Hoover up midges and mosquitoes from just above the waters' surface and take them back to their mud hut like homes, suspended under ledges or from the eaves of houses, to feed their young.

The tall, majestic, grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*) is a common sight along waterways. These large birds stalk their prey, using their large feet to creep through the riparian vegetation before standing stock-still and stabbing with their long beak into the water. Their food of choice is fish, but they have been known to try their luck with water voles (*Arvicola amphibius*),

frogs and small reptiles such as slow worms (*Anguis fragilis*). It is not uncommon to encounter 'tame' grey herons that will remain watching their prey as you carefully approach them to capture that classic waterside image.

Peer into the still, clear water of the shallows and shoals of fish might be visible, seeking safety from the cover given by pond weeds, whilst having to venture out from the shadows to find their food. Three-spined sticklebacks (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*), the small fish of childhood summers spent paddling in the village stream, are voracious carnivores. However, the males have a softer side and are role-model fathers who will build, and then guard, their nest of eggs. Another fish of childhood jam-jars is the bullhead (*Cottus gobio*). These unusually shaped fish with swollen looking heads also make an ideal father-figure. They attract females to their excavated nests by making 'knocking' sounds under large stones. They then guard their precious eggs from predators, while using their fins to fan them with fresh water, keeping them oxygenated.

Life is a constant battle when you live in our rivers and streams. The smaller fish not only have larger fish such as pike (*Esox lucius*), roach (*Rutilus rutilus*) and perch (*Perca fluviatilis*) and the grey herons to fend off, but also face terrifying, alien-like, underwater invertebrates, such as the caddis fly and dragonfly larvae. Some species of caddis fly larvae secrete a silk that acts like glue, so that they can cover themselves in a case of small stones and debris to form camouflage and armour. Their head and appendages poke out of the front of their conical shell and they drag themselves along the bed, hunting for their prey.

Dragonfly and damselfly larvae are ferocious predators, hunting anything smaller than them and sometimes even taking small fish! They have very strange mouthparts; the lower lip is a long hinged jaw, called the 'mask'. This appendage can be fired out, like a slingshot, to capture prey unawares.

When it's time for the dragonfly larvae to become an adult, which may be as long as five years after hatching from an egg, the larvae will crawl out of the water and seek out a tall piece of vegetation growing on the bank. Once the larvae reach the top of the vegetation they begin to break out of the old larval skin and the beautiful, adult dragonfly emerges. You might be able to find the remaining, fascinating, 'exuviae' still attached to the vegetation. If you do spot one, look closely and you'll see tendril like tubes protruding from the case. These tubes are the remains of the inside of the breathing tubes that dragonflies use as adults to breathe air, but had no use for underwater. During their larval phase dragonflies use a gill system in their rectum, which they can quickly expel water through to propel themselves forward!



Creatively camouflaged in the bankside vegetation and grassy verges alongside the water you may find one of our six native species of reptile. They are, on the whole, dull browns or greens in colour, which, whilst perhaps considered 'boring', sets them up perfectly for hiding in the British countryside. However, if you get to know our fascinating reptiles a little, and take a closer look, you will find that many of them have small splashes of colour. The male slow-worm, a 'leg-less' lizard, occasionally has prominent blue spots on his flanks, whilst his 70-100mm long young, look like dainty copper bracelets twisting through the grass. Grass snakes (*Natrix natrix*), both male and female, wear a bright yellow collar, visible around their neck, with a plain green/brown body, whilst the adders (*Vipera berus*) have a zigzag of black diamonds along their back. Sand lizards (*Lacerta agilis*) are extremely rare and very elusive, but the males will show-off vibrant green patterns in the breeding season to attract females!

If you're returning from a long day out on the water, or have made a very early start, you might spot something shooting overhead in the dusky twilight and shrug it off as a bird. However, chances are, it could be a bat! We have 18 different species of bat resident in the UK and all of them use ultrasonic squeaks to locate their dinner. The squeaks are so loud that the bones inside of the bats ears temporarily disconnect, so that they don't deafen themselves when they produce their shout. These sound waves bounce off of their surroundings and the bats listen out for the echoes to build up a detailed picture of the world around them; exactly like radar! One of these 18 species does a very good impression of the swifts and swallows, snatching at the insects just a few centimetres above the water; this is the Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*). This medium-sized bat would fit in a dessert spoon, weighs about the same as a big dollop of ketchup, and has large, hairy feet which it uses to catch its insect prey. The bat will then fold itself in half to pass the insect from its feet and scoop-like tail membrane into its mouth- all whilst maintaining its flight path!

Next time that you see some of our fantastic British wildlife, why not record your sighting in the free app developed by the Canal and River Trust. This handy mobile phone app is really easy to use, as it uses GPS to locate your exact position, so you can log wildlife as you spot it. The app also has a spotters guide, with photos, to help with your identification skills. You can download the app from your smartphones app store (search Canal and River eNatureWatch) or you can record the animals you've seen on their website [canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk). Your help, in mapping the precious wildlife of the waterways, ensures that the Canal and River Trust can maintain and look after the natural beauty of our historic waterways.



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# 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**IN THE LAST EDITION OF CANOE FOCUS WE INTRODUCED JOHN MACGREGOR, A CHARACTER THAT MANY PEOPLE WILL HAVE HEARD OF, BUT MAYBE NOT KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT. IN THE PIECE WE SHARED FACTS ABOUT HIM, HIS LIFE AND HIS JOURNEY TO PADDLING AND THE INFLUENCE HE HAD ON THE SPORT THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE AND AFTER. A HUGE PART OF HIS LIFE WAS THE 1000 MILE JOURNEY IN THE FAMOUS ROB ROY CANOE. THE TIMELINE BELOW HIGHLIGHTS SOME OF THE MAIN PARTS OF THAT JOURNEY.**

## THE LAUNCH

John MacGregor launched his Rob Roy and began his incredible journey in London, on the Thames. The first challenge to meet MacGregor was when, not long after launch he was stung causing his whole arm to swell. However, unbelievably this proved to be the last encounter with bugs throughout his whole expedition. He was soon after also reminded that this would be the least of his worries when on leaving the relative security of the Thames river into the harsher sea waters, he encountered a shoal of porpoises almost engulfing his small, but strong Rob Roy. Although this was just a close call, it was a reminder of the level of challenge he was embarking on.

## UNKNOWN WATERS

Further on MacGregor's journey, he was left to paddle alone as he embarked on the next section of the adventure, taking him and his Rob Roy to unknown waters. This meant preparation before he would take to the water, often stopping and inspecting possible routes before embarking on them, in many cases these routes had never been taken on by a canoe before, unlike the much paddled routes we often enjoy today. The solitude of being in a new place, surrounded by water allowed John MacGregor to 'delight in independence' and absorb the beautiful surroundings of the Rhine.



## THE DANUBE

Later along the voyage, MacGregor began the journey along the Danube River. Although even back then a popular spot for locals to explore in many different ways, he predicts in his book documenting the feat, that one spot, the Kloster at Beuron or the monastery, would one day be 'a regular place to see' for English travellers paddling down the Danube'. This we now know has proven to be true.

## DANGERS

Now into the middle of the expedition, John MacGregor and his Rob Roy have almost become one, which makes the dangers faced throughout the journey all the more challenging. In a particularly lively stretch of the journey, when he begins to introduce the Rob Roy as 'she' a companion and something he relied on heavily at this point, they suffered a serious blow when the waters threw the Rob Roy into a iron bar 'carelessly thrown into the river' nearly causing a disastrous capsizing. Although they recovered, this is still relevant today making us aware of the importance of keeping our canals and rivers clean not only for the environment and wildlife but for other paddlers.


## WIER TROUBLE

Approaching the later section of the journey, John MacGregor, now at one with his Rob Roy, says he perhaps allowed himself to become complacent. An image that is now fairly famous in reference to John MacGregor's '1000 Miles in a Rob Roy Canoe' is one of him coming over a weir, it was here he came into trouble as he found himself with just 3 inches of water on the other side. Although the Rob Roy is able to manoeuvre in only 3 inches of water, this doesn't allow for this angle. MacGregor documents that 'although a case of this sort had occurred to me before, I got again into the same predicament' which left him thoughtful on the matter. Of course he recovered and continued to the last leg of the journey, however it is a good reminder, even a canoeist such as John MacGregor completing an exceptional trip could come into trouble when getting complacent on the water.

## 50 LOCKS

Before proceeding to the final part of the expedition, MacGregor faced a big challenge, 50 locks to take himself from the Rhine to the Rhone Canal. Many systems have been put in place to make huge flights like this not only easier for canoeists, but all boat users now, however it is still something many can relate to when enjoying the waterways. At each lock having to portage, largely by himself, not only the Rob Roy but also his belonging for such a big trip. He did however have a few people help him along the way, and he states those who did felt it an honor to help carry the Rob Roy which speaks to the beauty of this canoe.

## RETURNING TO ENGLAND

Right until the last few hours of the voyage John MacGregor faced challenges, although the joy of seeing so many beautiful landscapes and the pleasure of paddling outweighs these challenges, they were there. The issues faced on the water today are hugely reduced, due the growth of the sport, which can be largely attributed to MacGregor himself. As he passed Notre Dame, he navigated his last on water struggle, in front of huge crowds he concluded his impressive 1000 mile paddle, struggling as low water levels created 'awkward rushes' under the bridges. He expresses his pride in the Rob Roy as it manages to handle the water while many other boats didn't make it. He reflects, before heading back to England, Rob Roy in tow, that no one could have enjoyed their summer as much as he did paddling 1000 miles in his Rob Roy canoe. 

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# WHAT

ARTICLE BY SAM ROSS  
IMAGES BY LUKE GREEN

# GEAR

## STAND UP PADDLEBOARDING

SAM ROSS, A UK BASED INSTRUCTOR TRAINER AND COACH HAS A LOOK AT WHAT'S AVAILABLE AND OFFERS A BIT OF GUIDANCE ON THE DIFFERENT STAND UP PADDLEBOARDING DISCIPLINES AND THE KIT YOU NEED TO ENJOY THEM

**W**e often see new sports come and go but Stand Up Paddleboarding, or SUP as it's commonly known, seems to have pushed well past a 'fad' and with its accessibility to almost every water environment imaginable, it has now been billed as the fastest growing watersport in the world. The sport, which attracts many already frequent paddlers and watersport enthusiasts, also seems to be bringing in many people who are totally new to being on the water, even starting to seep into the mainstream. So should your next paddling adventure be on your feet? Read on for a guide to what you'll need to start doing it standing up!

### SOMETHING NEW!

Does SUP offer a new challenge to the already competent paddler? Whether you are into touring, white water, racing or surf, SUP can take you there but totally refresh and re-challenge the experience. Whilst there is a huge amount of transferable knowledge and skill from canoeing and kayaking to SUP, there are also new things to learn and different ways to experience often over familiar surroundings.

### ONE BOARD TO RULE THEM ALL

When Stand Up Paddleboarding first appeared on the scene board and paddle options were limited and based around little more than catching waves and cruising. Turbo charged by its lineage, from other paddle and watersports, there is now gear so you can truly Stand Up Paddle anywhere, so lets look at a few options and the typical kit you'll need.

The Swiss Army Knife of SUPs, and where most people start and often stay, will be a board that will allow you to mix it up in a variety of environments and get the most out of every adventure, a board to start and learn is one between 10-12 foot and at least 30" wide. If you get a board shorter than this, there will be an impact of tracking, with a longer board it reduces manoeuvrability. Increased width will make a huge difference to stability with longer boards giving improved tracking.

From a safety point of view you'll need to look beyond a PFD and get a leash as well. Coiled will work best for flat water and straight for surf. A recommended leash length is at least

as long as the board. White water is still a specialist field and whilst leashes are the norm, belt, PFD and quick release options should always be used to reduce the risk of entrapment.

### SURF'S SUP

The good news is the all round board is one of the best ways into waves, with surf shape boards well up to, and including boards of 12. More dedicated surf shapes will tend to be under ten feet in length with wider and narrower options to add increased volume or performance.

It is worth honing your paddle skills on flat water before heading into the surf. If it's not an arena you're familiar with, then learning about how to handle the environment and also the rules of the road when you're in a surf situation is key to make the best progress and stay safe.

SUP removes the standing barrier for many people that try and access surfing, it also allows access to a wider array of conditions and locations to catch a bump.

In a surf environment the leash becomes the primary and often only safety mechanism as a PFD may cause restriction when diving under waves. Paddle lengths also tend to get a little shorter to aid manoeuvrability and make the most of a shorter more aggressive paddle stroke.

### EXPLORING

Cruising and exploring on an SUP must be one of its greatest advantages. From a standing position on the water, your vantage point allows you to appreciate your environment in a unique way. Whether it is cruising down your local river or exploring the coast touring on an SUP makes the most of every landscape. Whilst you might need a specific board for it there are many options to help you make the most of this aspect.

Touring boards will typically be a little thicker in volume to add the ability to load them up with gear. Whilst they may be as short as 11' the longer the board you have, the more distance you can cover with ease, so it's not uncommon to see touring board between 12-14' in length. Extra tie down points and cargo areas also allow you to make the most of any trip and carry with you all you need for good planning and in case of emergency.

## READY TO RACE

If it's a sweat you want to work up or you are feeling competitive, then the UK already has a burgeoning race scene perfect for you to explore. From local club races that range from as little as 2-5km up to races that offer events for those who want to paddle long distance or more technical coastal courses.

Whilst there is usually a class you can enter that will suit whatever board you already have, there are two principal racing classes in the UK and worldwide, these are 12'6" and 14'. The longer board is favoured for covering distance, whilst the shorter board is more at home in a technical style of race, which may include lots of turns around buoys and even running or surfing elements. Widths of race boards hugely vary with some under 23" while others go up to 30". The ideal board is one that is narrow enough to be quick, yet stable enough so you can paddle well.



**WHILST THERE IS A HUGE AMOUNT OF TRANSFERABLE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL FROM CANOEING AND KAYAKING TO SUP, THERE ARE ALSO NEW THINGS TO LEARN AND DIFFERENT WAYS TO EXPERIENCE OFTEN OVER FAMILIAR SURROUNDINGS.**



## WHITE WATER

This arena of SUP is dominated by those who have already mastered their white water skills in other craft. Like many of the SUP disciplines, inflatable boards are fast becoming the craft of choice in this area due to them offering superior durability.

SUP in white water certainly 'ups the stakes' making routes that you previously may have felt you had grown out of feel highly challenging again. Under 10' in length and often some of the wider boards on the market, white water dedicated kit is now more widely available in the UK. Software and safety gear is almost exclusively similar to that used in other paddling sports and leash systems need to be quick release and well placed when paddling in this environment.

SO, WITH SO MUCH TO OFFER IN STAND UP PADDLEBOARDING AND SIMPLE TRANSFER OF SKILLS, WHY DON'T YOU MAKE IT YOUR SUMMER CHALLENGE TO TRY A NEW CRAFT AND SEE WHERE IT TAKES YOU! **CF**



# TAKING ON THE CHALLENGE

## GO CANOEING ON LAKE WINDERMERE



**D**uring National Go Canoeing Week hundreds of people descended on Lake Windermere to take part in either a one or three-mile Challenge. The Challenges, which were also held at three other locations across the country, were designed as a fun way for people of all abilities to get involved in Go Canoeing Week.

**WINDERMERE IS ONE OF THE FINEST PLACES TO GO FOR A PADDLE. WITH PANORAMIC VIEWS OF THE HIGH FELS AND SECLUDED BAYS TO SIT AND WATCH THE WILDLIFE IT REALLY IS A GREAT PADDLE.**

Throughout the week, first timers and more experienced paddlers alike set off around the beautiful lake, clocking up miles to be added to the National Go Canoeing Week total. On Windermere the Challenges were run by Go Canoeing Guided Tour Provider Windermere Canoe and Kayak and started from two locations on the stunning lake.

Chelsea Clarkson from Windermere Canoe and Kayak said: "Our three-mile Challenge took participants on a lovely paddle around the islands on Lake Windermere, starting from our store right on the lake shore at Ferry Nab. The route headed north alongside the infamous Belle Isle, Windermere's largest privately owned island. As the route reached the top of the Island, it headed along the eastern shore and around Hen Holme and Lady Holme, which are both great places to spot local birds and wildlife.

"Further round the islands the route headed south towards Thompson's Holme, Windermere Canoe and Kayaks very own sponsored island, where participants were able to stop off, stretch their legs, have a snack and meet the local swans and geese before venturing on.

"Our Challenges were a great success and we got some really good feedback from people taking part. It was great to see so many people enjoying the lake and the Challenge gave participants an opportunity to explore some of the

more scenic spots on Windermere whilst enjoying the mountainous views in the background."

As well as Challenges starting from Windermere Canoe and Kayak's shop, there were also Challenges running out of Fell Foot Park, a magnificent National Trust property on the southern tip of the lake, which boasts sweeping lawns and stunning mountain views.

Go Canoeing Development Manager Jenny Spencer said, "Our Challenges were a great, fun way to get involved with National Go Canoeing Week and explore an absolutely stunning location at the same time. If you missed out though, don't worry – Windermere Canoe and Kayak offer opportunities to get out on the lake all year round and we've even developed an 11-mile Challenge Route on the Lake for if you really want to test yourself!

"The Windermere Challenge Route has been designed for you to plan and complete in your own time, in your boat of choice and at your own pace. With careful, sensible planning and





©NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES - PAUL HARRIS

ensuring you follow safety guidance, the Windermere Challenge Route is an enjoyable intermediate level challenge set in beautiful surroundings – and if you’re the competitive type you can register your time online and see where you rank on the Challenge Route Leader Board.”

The Windermere Challenge Route provides you with the chance to escape the hustle and bustle on shore, and enjoy the relative tranquility out on the water (although it too can get quite busy in places). There are also plenty of sights and wildlife, which can be seen from the water whilst completing the challenge.

National Trust Outdoor and Sports Programme Manager Gareth Field has paddled extensively on Windermere and believes the Challenge Route is right up there with anything else the UK can offer. He said: “Windermere is one of the finest places to go for a paddle. With panoramic views of the high fells and secluded bays to sit and watch the wildlife it really is a great paddle. Along the length of the lake the shoreline offers a diverse range of sites.

“Heading from the south, from Fell Foot Park you are treated to some stunning views of the far fells and as you head up the lake, the shorelines offer lots of secluded spots and pretty bays to take a break and soak in your surroundings.

“Most of this shoreline is private until you get to Ferry Nab where the car ferry crosses the lake. At this point the Challenge Route follows the more secluded western shore passing inside the islands and along the wooded shoreline till you reach Wray bay.

“As you approach Wray bay on top of the headland is Wray Castle. If you’re not in a hurry, pull up the boat and go and find your inner child in one of the castles many rooms. From here it’s a short hop past Low Wray campsite to the finish point at Waterhead at the top of the lake.”

For more information about all the Go Canoeing Challenge Routes, visit [www.gocanoeing.org.uk](http://www.gocanoeing.org.uk) →





### TAKE ON OUR 30-MILES IN 30 DAYS CHALLENGE

Although National Go Canoeing Week is over for another year, we're hoping to keep the momentum going throughout June. It's time to get fit for a wonderful summer of paddling, and we're here to help.

Last year, we ran two Challenges with Endomondo, the global sports tracking app. As they were both successful, we're excited to announce that we're launching another challenge this month. On June 1st, Go Canoeing is launching our second month-long Endomondo Challenge. 'Thirty Miles in Thirty Days' is all about encouraging you to get out on the water and challenge yourself and your friends to paddle at least thirty miles in June.

We're offering some great prizes to the winners to tempt you to join in:

- For the paddler who clocks the most miles: Four free tickets for one day at the ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships at Lee Valley White Water Centre in Hertfordshire, September 16th – 20th.
- For five runners up: A free three-month Premium Endomondo subscriptions.
- For everyone who achieves the 30-mile target: A Go Canoeing medal.
- How Does Endomondo Work?

Endomondo is a global sports community based on free real-time GPS tracking of sports workouts. It's a really social community and is easy to use. You just download it on your phone and you are ready to track your paddling, or any other, workouts. Endomondo logs your workouts and enables you to track your speed, distance, calories burned and many other statistics over time. Signing up to a Challenge on Endomondo is a great way to motivate yourself and compare your performance with others. The element of competition a Challenge offers can be a real boost and push you to achieve even more with your paddling workouts.

Check out the Challenges section on Endomondo for more information and details of how to sign up. Good luck and happy paddling!

### NATIONAL GO CANOEING WEEK 2015 - A SPLASHING SUCCESS!

National Go Canoeing Week 2015, held from May 23rd to 31st, was a huge success. In fact, it was our biggest and best yet! Thousands of British canoeists, kayakers and stand-up paddleboarders collectively paddled a truly impressive distance in their efforts to paddle the equivalent of the journey from the UK to Rio and back.

We had lots of participants register their mileage on the Go Canoeing Week website and all of them will be in with the chance of winning some fantastic prizes in our prize draw. We'll be choosing and announcing the lucky winners soon, so stay tuned to the Go Canoeing website and social media channels.

Many people participated in National Go Canoeing Week through our Go Canoeing Starter Sessions, Guided Tours and Challenges, which took place all over the country. We are currently collating lots of information about participation, and we think that the final numbers will be really impressive. We can't wait to share them with you!

As well as the sheer numbers, we were amazed at the variety of people and boats who registered their mileage on the Go Canoeing Week website. It proves just how dynamic and varied canoeing is; there really is something for everyone.

We'd love to find out more about your Go Canoeing Week experience and see your pictures; so drop us a line via [amy.roberts@gocanoeing.org.uk](mailto:amy.roberts@gocanoeing.org.uk)

Already planning for next year? So are we! We're pleased to announce that Go Canoeing Week 2016 will take place from Saturday May 21st – Sunday May 29th, again coinciding with the Half Term holiday. Save the date and keep an eye on [www.gocanoeing.org.uk](http://www.gocanoeing.org.uk) for updates, news and views.

Once again, thank you so much for your support and help in making National Go Canoeing Week 2015 such a splashing success!

### JOIN US FOR A JAM PACKED SUMMER OF EVENTS

We supported some brilliant events in the spring, and there's even more to look forward to now that summer is here.

The Falmouth Kayakathon: Cornwall, Sunday 15th June 2015, 10:15AM - 4:45PM. Two exciting events will be running from the beautiful Gyllyngvase Beach. The first is a competitive 18-mile return route to Gul Rock passing beautiful stretches of the Cornish coastline.

The second event is a non-competitive 10-mile event aimed at various craft from sit on tops and kayaks to stand-up paddleboards. Paddlers will journey down to the iconic Helford River, stop at Trebah Beach and return to Gyllyngvase Beach.

One hundred participants are expected to paddle the Cornish coastline with the aim of raising £30,000 for their chosen charities.



Visit [gocanoeing.org.uk/events](http://gocanoeing.org.uk/events) to find out more information and to be kept up to date with all the latest paddling events.



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# KID'S

# STUFF

## 5 GREAT PADDLING IDEAS TO TRY WITH THE FAMILY THIS SUMMER

**I**t's that time of year when temperatures are rising and the sun is making an appearance a little more often! It's also the time of year when parents across the land start thinking about how they will keep their little ones amused during the six-week school summer holiday.

We all know that paddling is a great way to spend your free time, especially when the sun is shining, but just in case you need a little extra inspiration, we've put together a list of five, fun paddling-related pastimes to keep the kids entertained.





**THE TRUST HAS GOT SOME AMAZING SPOTS FOR YOU TO ENJOY, OFFERING YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE CREEKS, ESTUARIES, COAST, CANALS AND LAKES ALL AT A SWAN'S-EYE VIEW!**



### **GO CANOEING AT A NATIONAL TRUST VENUE**

The National Trust owns many heritage properties, including historic houses and gardens, industrial monuments and social history sites. It is one of the largest landowners in the United Kingdom, owning beauty spots up and down the country and many of its sites are perfectly placed for you to enjoy a paddling adventure.

However you like to paddle the trust has got some amazing spots for you to enjoy, offering you the opportunity to explore creeks, estuaries, coast, canals and lakes all at a swan's-eye view! Whether you're looking to join in with an organised activity or just a really great place to pull up and launch your own kayak or canoe, the National Trust has got some fabulous spots for you to give it a go.

To find out more about National Trust canoeing opportunities, visit:  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/activities/canoeing](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/activities/canoeing) →

### BEACHCOMBING

Beachcombing can be a great family activity that can keep you and the kids entertained for hours. It's a fascinating, totally free pastime that can easily be combined with a spot of coastal paddling and provides a great way to learn more about marine life and the UK's stunning coastline.

At first glance you might not see very much, but look a little closer and you'll find all manner of intriguing objects from shells and interesting pebbles and rocks to driftwood, sea glass and all manner of weird and wonderful objects washed up by the tide. A snorkelling mask, or swimming goggles can be great for giving the kids a sneak peek under the water to the natural treasures below.

Sea kayaks and Sit-on-tops are ideal, and the benefit of beachcombing by boat is that once you've explored one beach you can easily paddle along the coast until you spot another interesting looking spot. Oh, and there's always the chance of some surfing fun in the waves too!



### LEARN THE RAY WAY!

Since Ray Mears first hit our TV screens in the 90s, bushcraft has steadily grown in popularity with more and more people heading into the wild to learn skills such as fire lighting, backwoods cooking, tracking, shelter-building and foraging. And if you're thinking of getting the kids back to basics with a spot of bushcraft, then why not combine it with a canoeing trip? The two activities go together perfectly as a canoe provides an impact-free way to reach areas unattainable by any other means and bushcraft gives nippers the chance to explore the natural environment in a self-sufficient, low-impact way.

Combining canoeing and bushcraft can really provide an exciting, fun and educational family-friendly experience. If, however, you're not confident in your own wildness skills, there are now a number of companies running canoeing and bushcraft courses, which provide all the specialist equipment and instruction you and the kids need to go wild this summer!





## FOLLOW IN THE WAKES OF GB'S OLYMPIC HEROES

Anyone who follows canoe slalom will be well aware that in the UK we are lucky enough to have one of, if not the best, slalom courses in the whole world. Lee Valley White Water Centre, in Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire, was purpose-built for the 2012 London Olympics where Team GB scooped gold and silver in the Men's C2 competition.

And while you'll need to be an experienced paddler to tackle the same rapids as our Olympic heroes, the venue boasts a range of activities on its Legacy Loop enabling you and your children to have your own exhilarating white water adventure. As well as rafting, the centre also offers Hot Dog sessions, which provide a great introduction to kayaking as well as a thrilling white water ride. These two person inflatable boats allow you to take on the rapids as a team, experiencing all they can throw at you.

Also on offer is Hydrospeeding, a fun and physical white water challenge where you navigate the rapids on a cross between a bodyboard and the floats you use when learning to swim. The minimum age is 14 for rafting and 12 for Hot Dog and Hydrospeeding sessions. Go Canoeing sessions on the venue's lake are also available for 8-year-olds and over.

For more information about what is available at Lee Valley White Water Centre, visit [www.gowhitewater.co.uk](http://www.gowhitewater.co.uk) →



**A CANOE PROVIDES AN IMPACT-FREE WAY TO REACH AREAS UNATTAINABLE BY ANY OTHER MEANS AND BUSHCRAFT GIVES NIPPERS THE CHANCE TO EXPLORE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN A SELF-SUFFICIENT, LOW-IMPACT WAY.**



**TRY SOMETHING NEW**

There are few sports more versatile than canoeing and kayaking and, if your children have already got a bit of paddling experience, why not encourage them to try their hand at one of paddlesport's many different disciplines? As well as competitive events, such as marathon racing, canoe polo and the Olympic disciplines of Canoe Sprint and Canoe Slalom, there is also a wide variety of recreational disciplines, including touring, sea kayaking, playboating and kayak fishing.

Whatever you're looking for, there's a discipline for you. If you're looking for a test of speed and precision, canoe slalom is for you or, if you're looking for an endurance sport to test yourself, you could try marathon racing. Freestyle is like aerial gymnastics in a kayak and canoe polo combines paddling and ball handling skills with an exciting contact team game, where tactics and positional play are as important as the speed and fitness of the individual athletes.

The best way to find out more about a specific discipline is to visit your local canoe club. Most clubs will cater for a number of different disciplines and club members will have a wealth of knowledge on where to go and what to do in your local area.

To find clubs near you, visit [www.britishcanoeing.org.uk](http://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk)

These ideas are just the tip of the iceberg for paddling related kid-friendly fun this summer, so don't delay plan your family paddling adventure today. **CE**



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## FOCUS ON

# BRITISH RAFT RACING

**F**or over ten years now, British Raft Racing teams have travelled all over the world, representing GB at the highest level of the sport and 2015 is no exception.

2015 is an exciting year for GBR Men, with a brand new team looking to follow the previous success on the world stage. Five teams headed out to Bosnia for the European Championships in May, and in December will be travelling to Indonesia for the World Championships.

### WHAT IS RAFT RACING?

A typical rafting competition consists of four events, the first of which is the sprint. The sprint consists of one timed run of a set course with the fastest time taking maximum points. This race is used to rank all teams for the next event, the Head to Head. This progressive knockout event sees two teams head off from the start line at the same time and the first boat to the bottom of the course progresses to the next round. After several rounds one team will emerge the winner.

The third and arguably the most technical is the slalom event. This event works the same as canoe slalom, with a series of upstream and downstream gates that teams must navigate their way through, picking up penalties for any gates touched or missed. The downriver race is the final event with many teams heading off at the same time and starting a gruelling endurance race, normally between 45-minutes and an hour long. After all the events, the points accumulated by each team are added, revealing the top three teams over all four events.

### THE TEAM

The GBR Senior Men's was recently selected at the National R6 Selection event held at Lee Valley White Water Centre. A number of teams attended from all over the country and after two days of competition, consisting of four events the Lee Valley Team, with the home advantage emerged victorious, picking up maximum points from all events and now have the honour of representing Great Britain for the next two years at international events.

The team is made up of seven athletes, who come from a range of backgrounds, but have been brought together by their competitive nature and love for the sport. Pas Blackwell, who has a wealth of experience of competing at the top level, leads the team. The hope is that with Pas's experience and the new blood coming into the team, they can push their training on between now and the upcoming competitions and perform well on the world stage.

### THE FUTURE OF RAFTING


The Senior Men's Team, along with two junior teams, a ladies team and a master's team are currently training at Lee Valley White Water Centre every Wednesday night. There are also several other teams training around the country and the sport is on the brink of significant expansion.

These teams come together several times a year at a variety of locations around the country to compete in the British Raft Race Series, the attendance of which is higher than ever.



**SUPPORT**

At present the GBR Senior Men's is extremely well supported by Peak UK for their competition clothing however, there is very little financial support available for GB Rafting teams meaning the sport is completely self-funded by the athletes. The accumulative cost of travelling to competitions, race entry costs, equipment and training weekends, amounts to a significant sum of money that each athlete has to pay to represent their country.

If you, or your company, feel you may be able to offer any form of support then please email the team at [gbrafting@gmail.com](mailto:gbrafting@gmail.com) or visit our Facebook page by searching for GBR Men's Whitewater Rafting Team. 

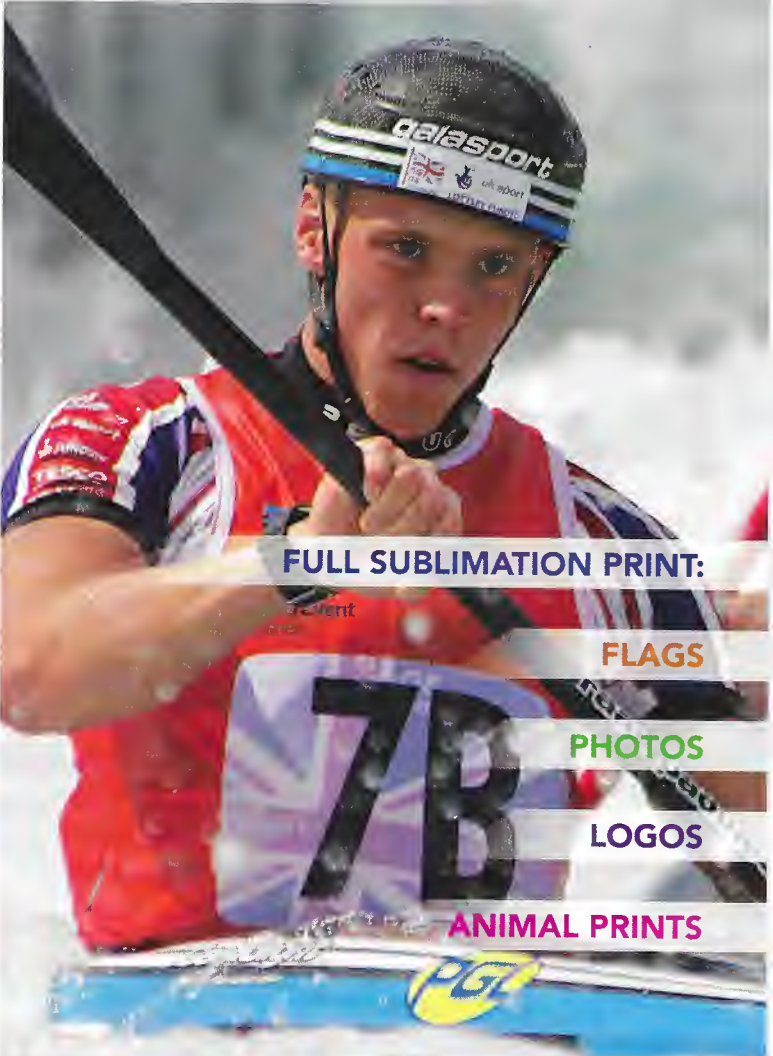
**GET INVOLVED** 

If you would like to find out more about the future of British Raft Racing or find out how to get involved visit: [www.britishraftteam.co.uk/](http://www.britishraftteam.co.uk/)



Joe Clarke - image: Heli Astiles

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# ON THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE



PEAK FOREST CANAL

**T**here is something quite magical about being out on the water in your boat, whether you are on flat water, white water, lake or the sea, when canoeing the pleasures and fun are never ending. British Canoeing Canoe Trails are a free online resource, which provide you with all the information necessary to set out on an adventure by yourself, with family or friends. They are a great way for people with some canoeing experience to find new and exciting places to paddle!

Our trails offer a huge amount of variety, from urban trails in city centres to rural routes through beautiful scenery. As well as helping you find new places to paddle, we also include all the practical information you need, such as maps and information such as where to park and the location of the nearest toilet. There's even information about the history of the waterway you're travelling on and the local sites of interest. There are trail types for all abilities and experience, from short two-mile paddles to 30-mile treks, meaning there is something for everyone. To whet your appetites here are just a few of the great trails available.

## RIVER TYNE, NEWBURN COUNTRY PARK SLIPWAY TO GATESHEAD FRIAR'S GOOSE MARINA

Trail Grading Moderate (Tidal)

Newburn is the site of an old ford where a great battle took place in 1640. Discover the engineering wonders that form part of Tyneside's history by paddling under eleven bridges. Discover the history of coalmining and river life on this tidal stretch of the River Tyne through Newcastle's Quayside, on a 10-mile (15km) canoe trail.

One of the bridges along the canal is 'The Tyne Bridge', which as well as being architecturally outstanding, is by far the best-known feature of Tyneside. Opened in 1929 by King George V and built by Dorman Long of Middlesbrough, it served as a model for the similar, but much larger Sydney Harbour Bridge, which was also built at Middlesbrough, and shipped out all the way to Australia in parts.

Newburn Swing Bridge, designed by the famous Tyneside engineer William Armstrong another sight the trail passes through, leads directly into the heart of the Newcastle Quayside below the castle keep. During the construction of this swing bridge, two Roman altars were dredged from the river dedicated to the gods Neptune and Oceanus, they would have belonged to a shrine built to protect the Roman bridge of Pons Aelius from the tidal Tyne.

The trail continues past the fantastic Millennium Bridge, an award-winning structure conceived and designed by architect Wilkinson Eyre. The bridge is sometimes referred to as the 'Blinking Eye Bridge' or the 'Winking Eye Bridge' due to its shape and tilting method.

Moving along the river you will meet the grand Sage Gatehouse building, which is an international home for music and musical discovery, bringing about a widespread and long-term enrichment of the musical life of the North East of England.

## PEAK FOREST CANAL MARPLE TO WHALEY BRIDGE

Trail Grading Easy

The Peak Forest Canal was completed in 1800, with the flight of locks at Marple completed four years later. The locks allow lime and grit stone from the quarries at Doveholes to be transported to industrial Manchester and beyond. The canal was constructed on two levels and at 518 feet above sea level; it is the highest stretch of navigable water in the whole canal system.

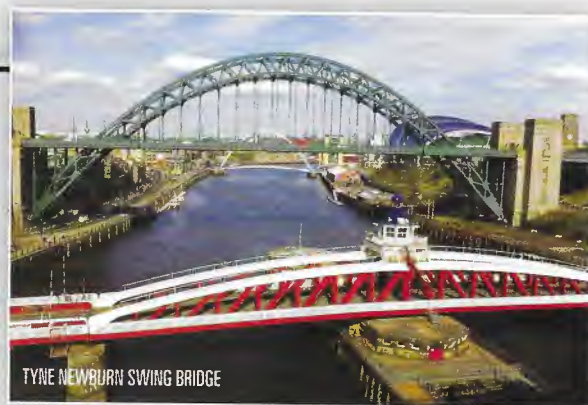
There is a lovely crossover bridge at the junction with the Macclesfield Canal and the interesting Possett Bridge, named because Samuel Oldknow promised the workmen a Possett of ale if they completed the construction by a certain date, so they did. The bridge has three arches one for the main channel, a second smaller one for the towpath where the horses passed (including a tunnel for the boatmen) and the third arch which although no longer is use, previously carried an arm around for some old limekilns.

Leaving the village of Marple there is an eclectic mix of industrial and rural scenes as the navigation clings to the side of Goyt Valley, leading to Disley where a simple timber swing bridge crosses the canal providing access to adjacent farms. Here you will need to portage it or open it up but it must be returned to its original position as the track predates the building of the waterway.

One and a half miles further, the sweet smell of sweets is in the air as you reach New Mills, the home of Swizzels Matlow, makers of assorted children's candy such as Love Hearts. Continuing toward Furness Vale past a large marina and boat builders, the canal winds its way precariously across the county boundary into Derbyshire and to Whaley Bridge.

At Whaley Bridge the branch to the left leads to Bugsworth Basin, the only inland interchange basin in Britain's narrow canal system. Bugsworth Basin, which for anyone interested in industrial archaeology is a must visit, consists of three large basins, which formed part of a large inland port built to bring the canal as close as possible to the limestone from the quarries at Doveholes.

The fabulous views continue looking across the Peak District National Park and outward to the dark peaty plateau of Kinder Scout and its neighbouring hills such as, Chinley Churn and South Head. The paddling becomes secondary to the views until you need to negotiate under a drawbridge similar to those that appear on Dutch canals.



## LLANGOLLEN CANAL ELLESMERE TO CHIRK

Trail Grading Easy

The Llangollen Canal leaves the Shropshire Union main line at Hurlleston and rapidly establishes its credentials as one of the most popular leisure waterways in the country. It moves 46-miles through Cheshire and Shropshire, entering Wales at Chirk, and joins the River Dee at Horseshoe Falls in Llantysilio.

This trail covers the lovely stretch from Ellesmere to Chirk including the impressive Chirk Aqueduct crossing the River Ceiriog. The scenery is quiet and beautiful making it hard to believe that this water way was nearly lost. In 1944 it was closed to navigation and quickly became weeded and silted up, fortunately it served another important purpose, that of transporting approximately twelve million gallons of water per day from the River Dee to the towns and villages of Cheshire, which made restoration a priority.

Setting off from the terminus basin in a southerly direction at Ellesmere, you will see an old warehouse and a small canal side crane, which testifies to the trade that was previously carried out. The countryside becomes entirely rural, gradually turning hillier as the Welsh hills approach, before the River Ceiriog opens up to beautiful views into the distance.

As you reach Chirk Bank, the canal sits half way up the flank of a hill and as you paddle the corner after bridge 21, the amazing sight of the Chirk Aqueduct appears with the equally fine railway viaduct alongside. Thomas Telford, the greatest of all canal builders, constructed the masonry and stone structure 70ft over the River Ceiriog, which spans 40ft allowing navigation from England into Wales, which opened back in 1801.

## RIVER THAMES HAMPTON COURT TO RICHMOND

Easy to Moderate Trail

This section of the River Thames, host to the canoe trail suitable for all abilities by either canoe or kayak in normal river conditions, is packed with interest en-route. There is activity on the water, mixed landscapes of parkland and city as well as historic landmarks and is packed with interest en route. The reaches between Molesey and Richmond are some of the busiest on the river with canoes, rowers, sailing dinghies, motor cruisers, hire boats and passenger launch services, especially at weekends, so be careful and keep an eye on other river traffic and comply with navigation rules.

The island by the launch point is Garrick's Ait and Hampton and its church across the river on the Middlesex bank provides a fine backdrop for the start of the trail. Setting off with Hampton to your left, almost immediately, Garrick's Temple comes into view on this bank. It was built, by the great 18th century actor and manager David Garrick, in 1756 to celebrate the genius of William Shakespeare.

A short distance on is Taggs Island, noted for the interesting design of both the multi-story houseboats and properties. These are best seen by taking the channel on the Hampton side and under the bridge to the island.

The Corporation of the City of London built the first pound lock at Molesey constructed entirely of timber in 1815 along with the lock keepers house. In 1906 it had to be rebuilt and enlarged by the Thames Conservancy. The current house was built in 1925. To the right and just before the lock gates, rollers provide a short easy portage or lock through. As you travel away from the lock the majestic towers of Hampton Court Palace come into view, it is a magnificent sight all the better from being seen from a canoe.

There are two islands in this reach. Thames Ditton Island on the right bank and you can take the backwater channel that leads to the Crown Inn and a public slipway. Backwaters are nearly always of interest. Ravens Ait sits and looks like a boat in mid-stream. It was used as a boating activity centre and has become a conference and functions establishment. If you take the right hand channel to the right is the Thames Sailing Club, home to sailing craft with high masts known as Thames A Class Raters.

Kingston Bridge now comes into view and the riverside promenade area nearer to Ravens Ait provides a stop off point for a break where the kiosk is open in summer months open in summer months. The Hoggs Mill Stream enters the river on the right just before the bridge. On your way to Teddington, look out for Royal Canoe Club accredited with being the world's oldest canoe club, founded in 1866 Teddington Lock is flanked by a continuous weir and can have a noticeable pull. Across the other side of the weir pool is Teddington TV Studios. →

## RIVER AVON (WARWICKSHIRE) STRATFORD - UPON-AVON TO BIDFORD

Moderate To Challenging Trail (In High Water)

The Upper Avon is a beautiful river, with long, slow stretches and occasional small rapids and weirs. This part of the Avon lies about 30-miles south of Birmingham, near to Warwick, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa and just east of the major fruit-growing area of the Vale of Evesham. The area is frequently visited during the spring due to the tree blossom.

The trail journeys through Stratford, world famous for its long association with William Shakespeare, and is a major tourist spot. At the start of this trail you will notice the imposing theatre, which is the large brick building on the right bank, re-built in recent years. Round a long bend about half a mile later is Lucy's Mill Weir and Stratford Lock. A disused railway bridge adds more interest, with shallow water before it, and the River Stour joins from the right, one of many Stours in England.

There are many miles of countryside before you reach Luddington Weir and Lock, the weir being well known for a rough ride. Landing can be made on the concrete slipway, but there are many rocks below and the way is down the right side in medium to high water.

Binton Bridge comes into view after a few further miles downstream, this bridge serves Welford village to the left. There are several secret green islands here and as the river winds around Welford-on-Avon, another black and white timbered house village, you'll enjoy its very picturesque setting.

## BRIDGEWATER CANAL - WORSLEY TO MANCHESTER

### Easy Trail Grading

Enjoy a trip along what is generally thought to be and referred to as, the first canal built in the UK and where canal mania started. Francis Edgerton, Lord Ellesmere, the Duke of Bridgewater wanted to transport his coal from his underground mines in Farnworth and Bolton some 10 miles away. The water here used to be a 'rusty' colour, similar to tomato soup due to the iron ore from the mines seeping it into the water. The removal of this colouration is underway at a cost of a £2.5 million.

The start of this trail is at the picturesque village of Worsley. Information plaques along the canal give an insight into the bygone days of Worsley and its buildings. The mines ceased production in 1887. But back in the 1990's however, a team of surveyors entered the mines to check for structural stability. To their surprise it was found to be in order but plans to open the mine to the public had Health and Safety implications and was thought to be unfeasible and subsequently abandoned.

Worsley Delph, in Worsley, originally a centuries-old Sandstone quarry near Worsley Brook, was the entrance to the Navigable Levels. Two entrances, built years apart, allow access to the specially built M-boats (also known as Starvationers) the largest of which could carry 12 long tons of coal. Inside the mines 46-miles (74 km) of underground canal on four levels, linked by inclined planes, were constructed.

The first landmark is the black and white building called the Packet House, one of the most photographed buildings in the Greater Manchester area. It was here that Queen Victoria took a short trip along the canal after visiting Lord Ellesmere, the Duke of Bridgewater in 1861. A little more paddling and the next point of interest are the Granary Building and Worsley Dry Dock. The 'Granary' was converted into offices back in the 1970's but retains the original architecture.

Heading towards Monton you come across a Lighthouse. Yes, a lighthouse, the only one on a canal network. It is the work of Phil Austin who built the tower 36 feet high with three floors and a 360-degree view at the top, Phil sold his canal barge to pay for his 'folly', calling it a labour of love.

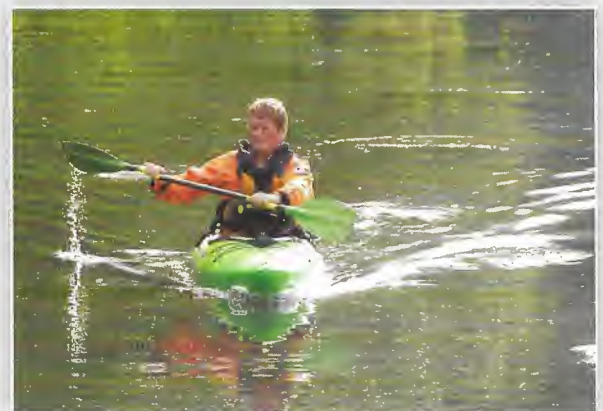
Past the lighthouse the journey takes you towards Eccles and Patricroft, and half a mile further down past the now derelict, Royal Ordinance Factory at Patricroft, which closed back in 1989. The factory was at the forefront of manufacturing rocket motors such as harpoon, sea wolf and sea dart, despite previously developing advanced engineering covering various aspects of ammunition and missile systems, parts of the buildings are now a sad site with buddleia growing out of gutters and walls.

The trail then passes the land where once stood the famous 'Talk of the North' nightclub. Back in the 1960's and 1970's the Talk of the north' hosted names like Tom Jones, Shirley Bassey, Matt Munro, Bob Monkhouse and Tommy Cooper. One story to come out of the nightclub was when Tommy Cooper was appearing he couldn't be found anywhere in the club, after a frantic search he was found two doors away in the local pub playing pool with the locals.

Moving onwards toward Manchester you cross the Manchester Ship Canal at Barton, this is the highlight of the trip. Known locally as the 'Eighth Wonder of the World' or 'The Tank' you now cross the ship canal using the Barton Aqueduct. This is a magnificent feat of engineering opened in 1893 to replace Brindley's 1761 stone aqueduct, crossing what was at the time the Mersey and Irwell navigation. The bridge swings 90 degrees and does so with 800 tons of water to allow shipping in and out of Manchester/Salford Docks, now renamed Salford Quays. Ships of up to a maximum length of 530 feet (160m) in length still use the canal, and this restriction was imposed due to the size of the lock chambers.

Immediately crossing the ship canal you come to Trafford Park. This is the spot where Barton Power Station once stood, a coal fired plant built in 1923. When built, it was one of the most advanced power stations of the time having coal delivered to the station by barges using the canal. It was decommissioned 18th March 1974 and demolished in 1979.

For the next couple of miles the canal is built up on both sides by modern day industrial units with familiar signs of industry. DHL, MERSK Containers, Soreen, SIG Insulations and Kellogg's. In fact, on certain days you can smell the cornflakes at Kellogg's since the factory is on the right hand side of the canal. You then arrive at 'Watersmeet'; the canal splits into two sections, carrying on ahead into Manchester or right towards Altrincham and the Cheshire Ring. The trails route is straight ahead into Manchester. **CF**



### USEFUL INFO



For more great canoe trails point your bow to [www.canoe-england.org.uk/our-sport/places-to-paddle/](http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/our-sport/places-to-paddle/)

### TRAIL TYPES

To help you work out what canoe trails are best suited to your ability and experience, we have graded all trails with a level indicator.

### CANOE TRAIL GRADING

Very easy	Flat water, distance up to two miles.
Easy	Flat water, distance up to 12-miles, close to urban areas.
Moderate	Flat water, distance up to 20-miles, a fair balance of urban/rural.
Moderate challenge	Flat-water distance up to 25-miles, more urban than rural can include tidal/flowing/open waters.
Challenging	Flat water, distance up to 30-miles, more rural than urban can include tidal/flowing/open waters.

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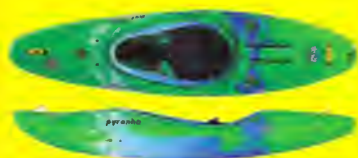
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ARTICLE AND IMAGES BY  
KARL MIDLANE, PLAS Y BRENIN

# COASTAL CONSIDERATIONS

## PRE-PLANNING FOR A DAY OF SEA KAYAKING

**I**f you get into difficulties, once you have embarked on a sea kayak trip, simply getting off the water can help solve most problems that you may encounter. Unfortunately though getting off is not usually that easy! The best sea kayaking locations often expose you to long stretches where the land is a long way,

away or inaccessible due to insurmountable cliffs, but fortunately a little prior planning can allow you to go a long way by pre-empting many of the things that may catch you out on the water.

Here are some factors that are important to consider before launch.



## WEATHER

I like to start my planning with the bit of the day that I have no control over. This will allow me to decide if I still think heading out to sea is a sensible idea, and if so where to go and what to do. Sun would be nice, rain is a little less pleasant, but not a big problem, the big issue is wind!

Wind speed of Beaufort force 2 or less would be excellent for journeying anywhere, force 3 will mean you start to notice the drag of any head wind and long fetches will start to produce a splashy chop. Force 4 becomes tedious if you have to fight into it for a significant period of time and once you get to force 6 then progress into the wind will be slow and sustainable for short bursts only. If you have to pause before finding shelter then you may well find yourself being blown back to where you have just come and without enough energy to try again.

Going with a force 6 wind is exhilarating for the expert and terrifying for most other paddlers. Even if you do have the skill and nerve for it, then there will be a limit to how long you could sustain it for. Should you need to turn and travel into the wind to round a headland, come into a bay or return to a companion that feels the need to stretch their legs and try the front crawl, life can become very hard work.

## SHELTER

If the wind is a little fresher than ideal, you may still have a pleasant day out by choosing where to go wisely. If you can find some sizable steep cliffs to hide below, then you may well be completely sheltered from an off shore force 5 but be cautious, if you move away from the base of the cliffs you can soon be exposed to the full force

of the gale you were hoping to avoid. This could lead to you being blown out to sea where there will be even less shelter.

The width of this oasis of calm will depend on the height of the cliffs and strength of the wind and may be as little as ten metres, which is sufficient, but if the cliff diminishes or changes direction, areas without shelter will be encountered and even tucked in under dramatic towering rock architecture, unexpected downdrafts can randomly be experienced. Gentle sandy beaches make it easy to land and escape but offer no shelter from offshore winds. Two particularly good sites for hour-by-hour predictions of wind speed and direction for hundreds of useful locations all over the country are [www.windfinder.com](http://www.windfinder.com) and [www.xcweather.co.uk](http://www.xcweather.co.uk) →

**“GENERALLY THE COASTLINE OF THE UK WILL EXPERIENCE TWO HIGH AND TWO LOW TIDES EACH DAY. AS EACH TIDE TAKES ROUGHLY SIX HOURS FIFTEEN MINUTES TO GO IN OR OUT, HIGH WATER WILL BE AT A DIFFERENT TIME EACH DAY.”**



### SWELL

Waves generated by winds on the other side of the ocean, will continue to propagate until they crash into land and spill their energy. The stronger the wind or the longer it blows over the water [the fetch] the larger the swell will be. A long fetch also allows the swell to become more organised with cleaner, more regular waves. A small swell can add a little spice to the rock hopping on a coastal trip whereas larger swells may be smashing into the rocks forcing you to stay further out to sea rather than exploring inside caves. Big swell days are still a viable option for those with the skills to handle it, as long as you have suitable launching and landing possibilities at the ends of your trip and do not suffer from sea sickness.

For those that would rather avoid swell then a different choice of venue may be the answer. Swell is broken up by off shore islands, so picking something that is not exposed to the full force of the open ocean may provide some protection. Waves can still bend around islands though, sacrificing only some of their energy to get to seemingly sheltered locations, sometimes you will not know what the swell will really be like until you are there, remember standing on a headland looking down at the waves will make them appear a lot smaller than they will feel when you are sat among them and staring up at the next crest rolling towards you!

In general the sea kayakers in Cornwall will frequently experience large swell, this becomes less likely as you move into the Irish Sea. Ireland takes the onslaught of most of the swell that would otherwise be careering in to the classic venues of the North Wales coast. The West coast of Scotland is inundated with islands to hide inside, if you wish to avoid the worst of any swell or explore outside if it is calm, or you just prefer a little more movement in your ocean [www.magicseaweed.com](http://www.magicseaweed.com) is a site aimed at surfers that will give you a feel of just how lumpy you can expect things to be.

### TIDE

The tide can have a huge influence on the sea kayaker but it generally only spends just over six hours going any one direction before it turns and goes



the other way giving us a choice of start time to allow for the most favourable tide at key points. Starting just as the tide turns will give you maximum time to reach to the other end of a long trip, or the tide may conveniently change in the middle of the day allowing you to return to the start and alleviate the need for a shuttle. If the tide timings are not as convenient as you might like, you could always consider an early or late start to make the trip more efficient.

Here are some key factors that will influence what part of the tide I choose to use:

### WIND AGAINST TIDE

The stronger the wind blows over the surface of the water the larger the waves it produces will be. If the water itself is moving, this will also change the size of waves the wind produces. Wind and tide both moving in the same direction will produce smaller waves as the difference in the speed of the wind compared to the water is they are moving in opposite directions, this would exaggerate the effects of the wind on the water's surface and can produce large rolling waves. This effect is not confined to the main tidal flow but may be experienced in back eddies where flow and wind interact. What may look like a calm passage now may provide significantly more excitement once the tide has changed.

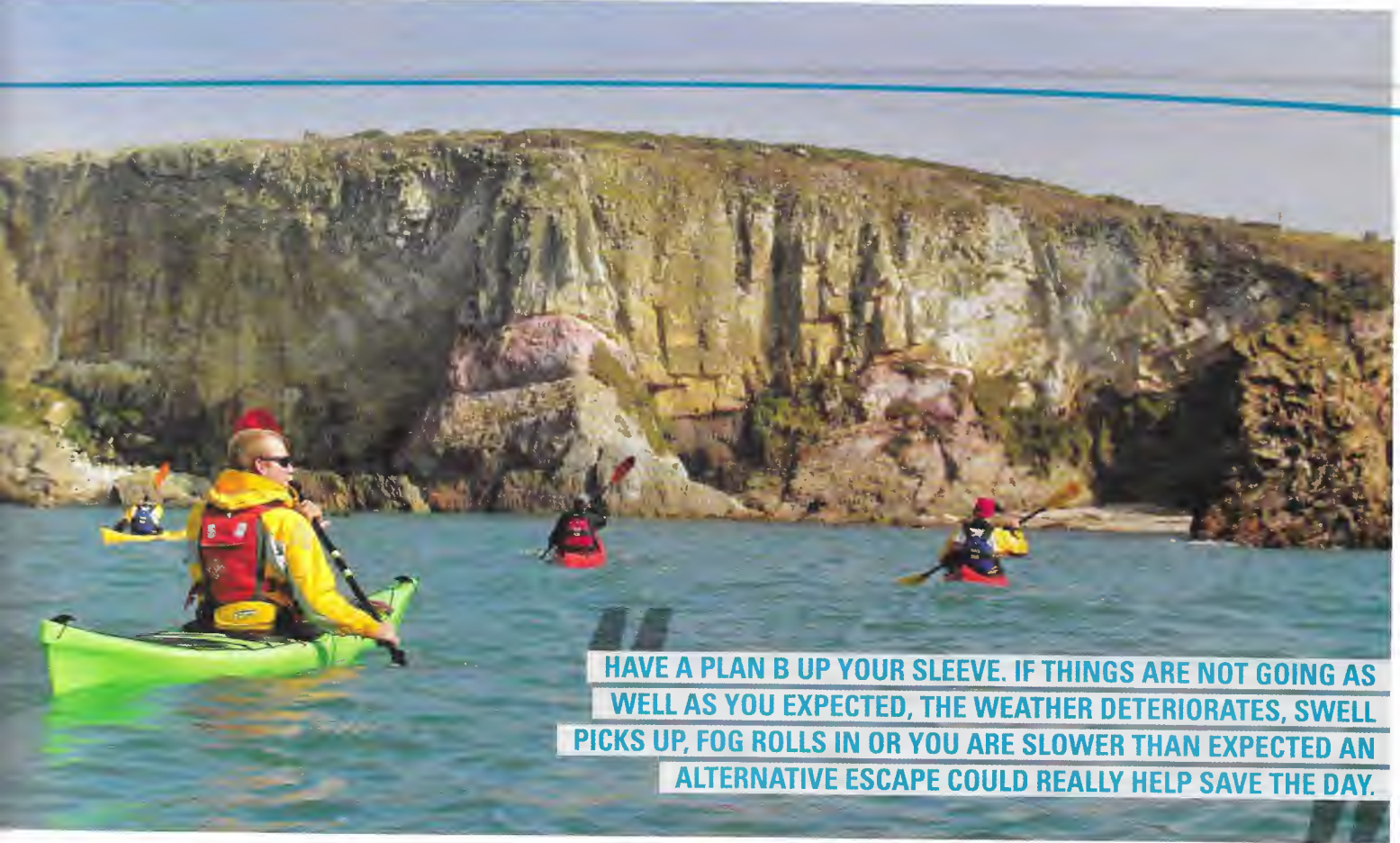
### RATE OF FLOW

As the tide changes direction every six hour or so the speed it is flowing at will slow down to virtually nothing just before it changes and then builds rapidly to flow at its fastest during the middle portion of the tide. There are plenty of anomalies around our coast that adds interest to our sea kayaking, but mostly slack water occurs at approximately the same time as high or low water and will be travelling at its fastest three hours later, before spending the next three hours slowing down again.

If you are going with the tide then speeding along with it at its maximum can allow long distances to be covered with minimum effort. If you fancy crossing the tide to visit an island off the coast you may prefer to look for a slower rate to reduce the amount you drift, or try to time the crossing so that the tide changes while you are half way across so that drift in the first half will be cancelled out by drift in the opposite direction in the second half. Long serious crossings may involve calculating precise rates and directions of tide so that a course can be shaped using a compass bearing to follow a sophisticated ferry glide. If this sounds like something that might float your boat then *Sea Kayak Navigation* by Franco Ferrero would be an excellent addition to your library.



**“JUST HOW FAR CAN YOU EXPECT TO PADDLE IN A DAY? THIS WILL DEPEND HOW MUCH WIND AND TIDAL ASSISTANCE YOU ARE GETTING AND WHAT SORT OF A DAY YOU FANCY.”**



**HAVE A PLAN B UP YOUR SLEEVE. IF THINGS ARE NOT GOING AS WELL AS YOU EXPECTED, THE WEATHER DETERIORATES, SWELL PICKS UP, FOG ROLLS IN OR YOU ARE SLOWER THAN EXPECTED AN ALTERNATIVE ESCAPE COULD REALLY HELP SAVE THE DAY.**



### **TIDE RACES AND OVER-FALLS**

As the tide is squeezed over shallow areas or through narrows between islands or around headlands tide races and over-falls can form, these are similar to rapids on a river and may provide exactly the sort of excitement some people are looking for. Others may choose to avoid them by timing their trip to arrive at that point at slack water when the tide is hardly moving. Some tide races only appear when the tide is going in one direction so crossing to travel on the opposing tide can give access to a stretch of coast under friendlier conditions. Whether you have the skills to play in a tide race or not it would be prudent to know if you are going to encounter any before you find yourself in it.

### **PREDICTING THE TIDES**

Generally the coastline of the UK will experience two high and two low tides each day. As each tide takes roughly six hours fifteen minutes to go in or out, high water will be at a different time each day. The size of the tide will also vary each day. Every 14 days we will get a spring tide when the high water is particularly high and the low water particularly low. Seven days after this things will have gradually changed to see a neap tide when there is a lot less difference in the range between the high and low tides. These predicted times of high or low water can be looked up in the appropriate tide timetable available in a paper booklet for those more traditional or downloaded from a choice of apps for the more technologically literate.

These high tide times will often be calculated for a major port that sees a lot of commercial shipping and do not normally appeal to recreational kayakers, some simple arithmetic can be used to convert them to the idyllic bay you have chosen to start your paddle from, you just need a little more information and this can be in several different forms.

Co-Tidal Chart - This is the mini-map of the UK found at the front of Laver's tide tables. They show lines with numbers 0 to +/- 6 that represent how many hours before or after the chosen port high tide will arrive along those lines. Simply estimating the position of your stretch of coast along the map can give you an estimate of tide times to the nearest half hour. →

## SEA KAYAKING TECHNIQUE

**Tidal Constants** - For a little more accuracy you could look up the tidal constant for your chosen location. This will tell you precisely how many minutes to adjust the major ports time by. They are often listed in tide timetables; nautical almanacs and guidebooks aimed at sailors and sea kayakers.

**Tidal Stream Atlases** - These series of twelve or thirteen maps feature arrows showing the direction of tidal flow for each hour of the tide at different locations. They are usually accompanied by two sets of figures that give an idea of the rate that the tide could be expected to flow at. These figures may need a little more explanation as the format they are written in is not necessarily intuitive, for example if a figure reads 15.23 it means that on an average neap tide it is expected to be flowing at 1.5 knots and on spring tides 2.3 knots. [A knot is a nautical mile per hour; a nautical mile is 1852 meters, approximately 2 kilometres]. Usually a tidal stream atlas will refer to high water Dover and the six hours leading up to and following on from this. They give a pictorial feel to how tides in the chosen area will interact with the coastline but will not necessarily represent all the back eddies that can be experienced close into the cliffs where larger shipping dare not venture but is enticing for kayak exploration.

**Tidal Diamonds** - Nautical charts will feature tidal diamonds. These are strategic points on the map where detailed measurements have been made to allow hourly predictions for tidal flow direction in the form of a compass bearing and the two figures for speed in knots for average spring and neap tides.

Whatever your source of tidal information it can only ever be a prediction, actual tides on the day will be slightly modified by the weather. Strong winds or extremes of atmospheric pressure can have a noticeable influence on the tide but not normally to such an extent that it will cause issues to the average sea kayaker going out in sensible conditions.

### OBJECTIVES

Just how far can you expect to paddle in a day? This will depend how much wind and tidal assistance you are getting and what sort of a day you fancy. Exploring



every cave and zawn and getting intimate with each indentation of the coast can mean that 6km takes all day. Alternatively sticking out in the tide cutting across the entrances to bays in a direct line and 30km is easily achievable in one cycle of the tide. As a rough guide for planning I work on a competent sea kayaker being able to cover 3three nautical miles an hour [approx. 6km/hour] before I add in any tidal assistance.

If you want to calculate the exact theoretical maximum speed in knots you could achieve then you just need to multiply 2.43 by the square route of the effective water length of your boat in meters.

### CONTINGENCIES

Occasionally you will be really glad to have a plan B up your sleeve. If things are not going as well as you expected, the weather deteriorates, swell picks up, fog rolls in or you are slower than expected an alternative escape could really help save the day.

However much time you have invested in the planning of a trip, always be prepared to let it go and start again if the conditions you encounter when you actually get to the coast do not match what was originally predicted. Having a plan and throwing it out is definitely preferable to being out there and wishing you had thought slightly harder about it first. [CF](#)

### AUTHOR



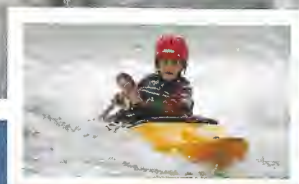
Karl Midlane has paddled on four different continents and is a level 5 coach working for Plas Y Brenin, where the fast tides and stunning scenery of the Island of Anglesey are never very far away.

### USEFUL INFO



For more information on sea kayaking courses go to [www.pyb.co.uk](http://www.pyb.co.uk)

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ALL MEN DREAM: BUT NOT EQUALLY. THOSE WHO DREAM BY NIGHT IN THE DUSTY RECESSES OF THEIR MINDS WAKE IN THE DAY TO FIND THAT IT WAS VANITY: BUT THE DREAMERS OF THE DAY ARE DANGEROUS MEN, FOR THEY MAY ACT THEIR DREAMS WITH OPEN EYES, TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE.

TE LAWRENCE

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY CHRIS LUCAS

# THE YUKON ASSIGNMENT

## A WILDERNESS CANOE ADVENTURE

**W**ith a sickening jolt we dropped in free-fall. The tops of the spruce trees rushed up towards us. The pilot feathered the throttle, and showing his understated mastery, banked the tiny plane hard right using the thermal from the hillside as a pillow wave, to bounce us into a perfect line up with Lake McClusky. Lightly touching down we had finally arrived. We must have

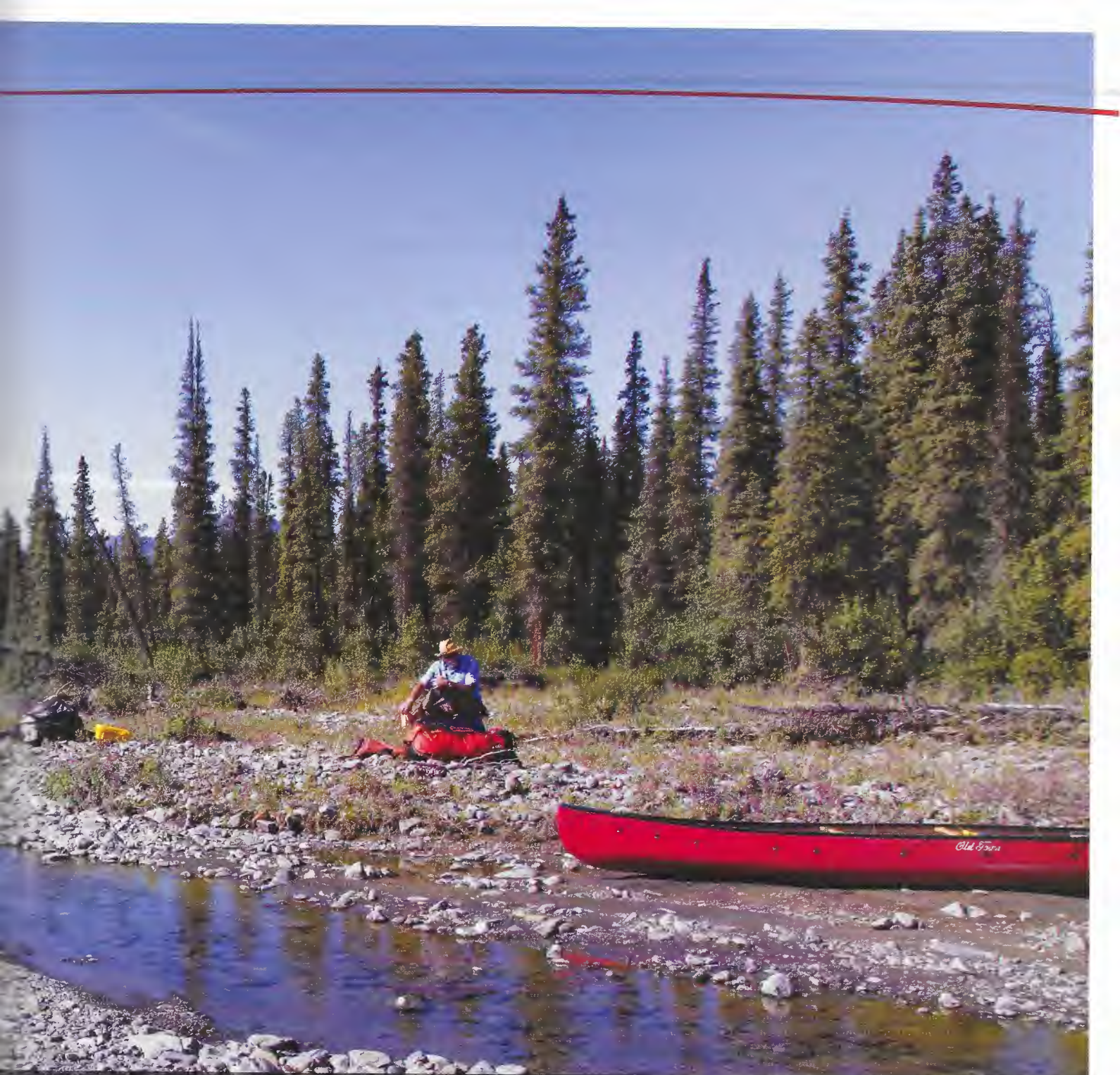
looked a state - a bundle of colourful kit bags strewn across the beach as the plane took off leaving me, my dad, and a canoe... all alone in the wild!

### PULL OF THE NORTH

It had started simply enough. My dad and I had been talking about a sea kayaking trip he had planned as a teenager across Norway but at the time he got distracted by an epic long distance hike across the Alps. The comment, "I don't suppose I'll do anything like that now", is what lit the touch paper. Almost immediately we began to dream of a paddling trip.

I thought something like a Spey descent might be a good starting point,

particularly as we share, let's say, a passion for good whiskey. My dad liked that idea but it didn't seem big enough. So I turned to my Bill Mason collection and suggested a nice two-week trip through the Algonquin National Park. Official campgrounds and easy logistics, stunning surroundings and amazing paddling. Great! It is not the Yukon though is it. This is the response to most of our initial plans from one or other of us. So without pinning down exactly why, the Yukon became the dream. There is something about the 'ultimateness' of it, the unadulterated wilderness, the inaccessibility, the romance of the 'pull of the North'.



My dad only had one day of moving water experience in an open boat on an Outward Bound course in 1968. So I looked into something I felt would be a challenge but would provide a better than fair chance of coming back in one piece. For this, the Peel Watershed in Canada's Yukon and North-West Territories is a wonderland. Clear water mountain rivers drain North to the lumbering Peel River that ends at the Arctic Ocean. We would have to get ourselves to Whitehorse, get a boat, and drive along the 'Road to the Roof of the World' to Mayo where a Beaver floatplane would take us deep into the McKenzie Mountains. From there we would be unsupported and

unencumbered by the modern world for 28 days with no good options for rescue, until we emerged North of the Arctic Circle at Fort McPherson, hopefully un nibbled by bears!

As an outdoors professional I knew our success would rely on a performing team, imbued with trust and skills acquisition within a supported safety framework. With that in mind I skipped a few stages and somehow we found ourselves on the Dart Loop in January following snowmelt. Probably not the greatest lead in and certainly not something I would recommend to others. It was quite a paddle though with a good capsizing training opportunity.

Despite common sense saying we should throw in the pack-towel I felt confident that we would be OK in the Yukon. Our families and supporters however, were not so confident!

So as we waved the little speck of a plane goodbye and the silence of the Yukon descended, our team experience amounted to two days of the river, and a chat about emergency procedures over a glass of red. I was still confident, but there was a nervous tension between us. At least now we were committed and didn't have to worry about flights and packing. We had what we had and the only way out was to paddle down river! ⇒

**THE FROG  
DOES NOT  
DRINK UP  
THE POND  
IN WHICH  
HE LIVES**

**NATIVE AMERICAN  
PROVERB**

## TRADITIONAL SKILLS

Having expected to have the place to ourselves we actually met another paddler on the dilapidated pontoon at Lake McClusky. The poor guy had tried to solo the river and had only got a couple of kilometres before surviving a nasty capsize, but had lost half his kit in the process, including his satellite phone and passport. He managed to drag his boat back to the lake and had been waiting there in the hope that another plane would come in. His story was sobering. If a similar thing had happened a few days into his trip the chances of rescue would be unlikely. Whilst he was obviously glad to be alive it was a real shame because his misfortune had been avoidable. Between the Wind River and the lake there is a short but tough portage and

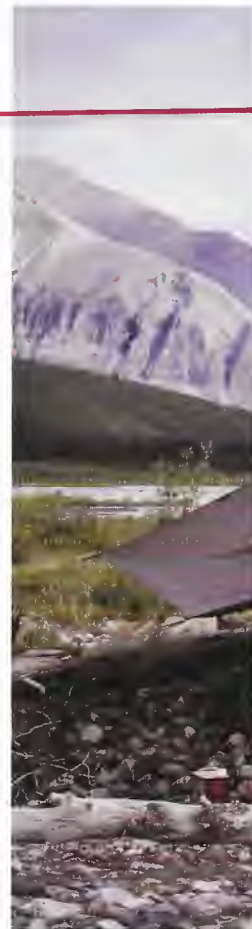
then a few kilometres of fast moving creek festooned with strainers. Our friend had attempted to paddle a fully laden open boat down it and unable to stop was at the mercy of the current bouncing off trees and rocks as he went. We went for the more relaxed approach, lining the boat down. Taking half a day over it, we enjoyed the stunning vistas and maximised our chances of reaching the Wind in good condition. This country was opened up by early pioneers using these traditional canoe skills. It might not make for exciting GoPro footage but the pleasure of being able to connect with our paddling forebears in this environment was splendid. Having everything you need to survive on the end of a 10mm float-line is enough to get the heart pumping anyway.

## PEBBLE GAZING

The Wind River is fast moving, shallow and widely braided. This made the paddling completely absorbing. If I let up on concentration for a moment we would find ourselves stuck on a gravel-bank or veering perilously close to the frequent fallen trees on the bank. The canoe weighed the best part of 250kg with us, and the kit, so we had to think far ahead of the game to perform manoeuvres. In those early days I spent much of my time standing in the front looking for the deeper channels. The water was so clear and the pebbles so vibrant, in about every colour going, that it felt like stargazing. I found myself getting lost in the patterns beneath sometimes struggling with my balance. Then there were the mountains. In a scale hard to comprehend by a couple of Brits these peaks rose up around us. Every corner we turned opened up a stunning new view and the round the clock sun meant we were treated to some beautiful lighting on the hills.

## NOT ALONE

We had swung left on another river bend and had quietly as possible broken out into an eddy on a gravel island in the middle of the river. Ahead down river a large male caribou was standing looking back at us. Excited to be in our own personal nature documentary we got the camera rolling.



**THIS COUNTRY WAS OPENED UP BY EARLY PIONEERS USING THESE TRADITIONAL CANOE SKILLS. IT MIGHT NOT MAKE FOR EXCITING GOPRO FOOTAGE BUT THE PLEASURE OF BEING ABLE TO CONNECT WITH OUR PADDLING FOREBEARS IN THIS ENVIRONMENT WAS SPLENDID.**







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Something wasn't quite right. I couldn't place it at first then with a sinking feeling everything connected at once. Why would a caribou just pose for us in the middle flow of the river? Oh look, there are blood splatters all over these rocks at our feet. Ah there is a grizzly bear chasing down the caribou! With nowhere to retreat to we huddled and popped the safety catches off our bear sprays. With fascination and horror we watched the bear's attempts to catch his quarry swimming across the river heading back towards us. The caribou was too strong despite his injuries and the bear gave in, disappearing into the bush. We braced ourselves, under no illusions that we were a softer option on nature's menu! Sure enough the bear appeared not more than 10-metres from us! Initially he swam towards us to then veer off at the last minute. Trying to remain calm and assertive, but not aggressive, we talked to the bear as he walked between us and the boat bearing his teeth. We can't have looked that appetising as with a snort he vanished into the scrub and was gone. A very exciting moment that was as much life affirming as it was life threatening.

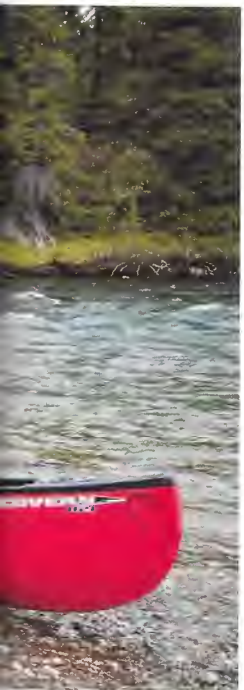
### **GOLD IN THEM THERE HILLS**

Such a beautiful landscape; Awe inspiring actually! Sadly this pristine wilderness is under threat. Something

like 18,000 mining claims are held over the Peel water-shed and at the time we were paddling the Yukon Government intended to turn over 70-80% of the land over to mineral exploitation. Thanks to the excellent work of the Protect the Peel movement and Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society who fought the Governments decision, the potential damage is much reduced for the time being. It is estimated that 600 million tonnes of coal sit beneath the lower Wind River. One can see the appeal to the policy makers! Perhaps even more concerning is the search for Uranium. Some of the old trappers winter roads have received approval to be developed to reach these distance lodes of radioactive material. It is truly horrific to think of the wild spaces we travelled through being bulldozed, and hard to believe that the natural environment and the Native American heritage wouldn't be adversely effected by Uranium mining! I'm a realist, I get that mining is how we have the things we all use daily. I get that there will be ever increasing pressure to tap these resources. The cost in my opinion is too high. As paddlers we incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to travel long distances through wilderness at nature's pace. The more we can highlight the importance of preserving these special spaces to the wider community the better!

### **IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE WEATHER, WAIT 10 MINUTES**

Our lowest point on the expedition followed one of our highest. We had parted company with the sub-alpine mountains by attempting to climb Mount Royal. It didn't quite go to plan and we were beaten back before the summit, but had an amazing experience and some stunning views from up high. That night the sky smouldered pinks and purples as the sun went down on the last dry day we would see for two weeks. The Yukoners say, "If you don't like the weather, wait 10 minutes". Well, several hours in the lashing rain and sleet it was not letting up. We were heading out of the mountains into the Tundra, but we couldn't always see to the riverbank, so navigating was hard. Without realising it our conversation had stopped. Shoulders hunched against the cold and hoods firmly locked down around our heads we retreated into our own little worlds. We paddled 70km that day, we had forgotten to eat or drink, and were in a sorry, hypothermic, state when we reached Deception Mountain (a distance that should have taken two days). We spent the next day licking our wounds and trying to dry some of kit out. We had come close to misadventure and we resolved to be more careful from there on. →



## OPEN CANOEING

### ROOF OF THE WORLD

Before joining with the other tributaries of the Peel River the Wind has one final show stopper. The Peel Canyon. In accounts of previous trips, we had regularly read that the Wind was a steady Grade 2 with the exception of the canyon that often catches people out. Boxed in by 300-foot cliffs on both sides and dense Taiga forest there are no real options for portage. This was the bit that had been concerning us as we were still a good week of paddling away from Fort McPherson and a capsized canoe could mean a couple of kilometres of swimming, as there is no good place to break free of the current. We got lucky. Maybe because the levels were up, or perhaps the gravel bank on river left had shifted, but on the day we ran it was possible to hug the left bank. If we had drifted right the considerable flow would have first smashed us into the cliff where the river sharply runs 90 degrees to the left leaving in its wake undercut caves filled with splintered spruce tree trunks and recirculations. Enough to give a paddler a few nightmares! The final part of the journey was much slower on the Peel River providing time for reflection. Passing the Arctic Circle was a particular highlight and then having to part with our boat at Fort McPherson where we had just about run out of river to paddle before the Arctic Ocean came around so soon. Whilst you can't enter into a trip such as this lightly, with proper preparation, it and others like it are well within the average paddlers grasp. I heartily recommend you start planning now! **CF**



### THE AUTHOR



#### CHRIS LUCAS

An avid lover of the outdoors, happiest journeying through the natural landscape on foot, by paddle, mountain bike or ski. Passionate about introducing people to the joys of wild country and the wonders to be discovered, he has spent many years honing his outdoor skills, taking groups to wild places all over the world.

[www.chrislucasproadventure.com](http://www.chrislucasproadventure.com)

The Yukon Assignment is about reflecting on the incredible landscape and the special experience of canoeing these remote rivers. Through talks, books, and a soon to be released film, Chris hopes to invoke the spirit of the land, adventure, and the joys of embracing the importance of family. For more information check out the expedition website and Facebook page at:

[www.yukonassignment.org](http://www.yukonassignment.org)

[www.facebook.com/YukonAssignment](https://www.facebook.com/YukonAssignment)

### COSTS

- Flight to Vancouver then internal to Whitehorse or fly direct from Frankfurt. £800-1000
- Outfitters for canoe and transportation at either end £3000
- Food £200
- Kit £0-£1000s! We were very lucky to be supported by Outback Trading, Visual Impact Rental, Mountain Hardwear, Light My Fire and Alpkit.

### FOOD

Approximately 60kg of it for the two of us. Worked out using the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) formula Pounds Per Person Per Day at 3000 calories a day supplemented by fishing. Due to the cool temperatures in the early days we could have bacon, steak and fresh vegetables gradually reducing to your normal pasta based fare.

### COMMS

We used the Delorme inReach SE device with coverage from Global Telesat Communications. This excellent text only satellite communicator not only provided us with a safety net but also meant that we could keep supporters posted on our progress through Twitter even plotting out our locations on a map on the website.

### NAVIGATION

Canada has excellent maps and because we didn't need too much detail we got away with 1:250000 scale. You can also download all Canadian maps for free and I stitched these into Google Earth in order to fully research the route.

### CAMERAS

We were keen to document the journey photographically and were also making a film (check the website for updates on this) so we ended up with about 10kgs of camera kit! This we kept water tight in Pelicanses and dry bags. We made the most of the round the clock sunlight to keep it all charged using Brunton Impel 2 power packs and large 26 Watt Solaris solar panels spread out on the deck of the canoe.





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WERNER  
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# PHOTO COMPETITION

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**Y**ou're constantly blowing our minds with the amazing photos that you submit each month, and it's a hard job to choose the winners. From all inspiring images that flood into the Focus office and inbox it's pretty clear that, not only are you paddling in some fantastic locations, but you have a great eye for capturing the spirit of our brilliant sport.

Have you captured a perfect paddling picture? Think you may have a winning shot? Then get it in to Focus!

Send us your best canoeing or kayaking photo and Senior entrants could bag a brilliant Cotswold Outdoor Voucher, while junior winners will receive a WHSmith Gift Card. There is also a prize for the overall winning shot of the year, which we'll select from all the winning monthly entries.

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

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To enter simply send a large photo (at least 5megapixels) on a CD along with your contact details and a few words about the photo to Mel Brooks, British Canoeing, National Water Sports Centre, Adbolton Lane, Holme Pierrepont, Nottingham NG12 2LU. Email [Mel.brooks@britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:Mel.brooks@britishcanoeing.org.uk)



LEFT: MARCH 2015 WINNER – STEPHEN SCARRETT WE FELT THAT STEPHEN'S SHOT REALLY CAPTURED THE SCENIC SERENITY OF A DAY SPENT EXPLORING THE NORFOLK BROADS BY KAYAK.



ABOVE: APRIL 2015 WINNER – ADAM FINDLAY  
THIS PLASTIC FANTASTIC PADDLER ENJOYING THE RIVER  
THAMES, NEAR HAMPTON, MADE US CHUCKLE AND WE  
LOVED THE WAY IT HAD BEEN FRAMED AND EXECUTED.

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# TOP FOR TIPS

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# WHITE WATER PADDLERS

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



# KEEPING ENERGY IN THE BOAT

**“LET IT FLOW AND LEAVE THE EDDIES ALONE! THEY WILL BE THERE WHEN YOU NEED THEM!”**

**W**e’ve probably all seen it on the water, paddlers drifting down a run at the whim of the currents. Floating down the river as opposed to carrying speed and driving. Bobbing along like a discarded pop bottle! In this article we’re going to look at some ideas to keep you and your kayak energized, put you in the driving seat on the river, techniques that will enable you to keep your boat ‘live’ and carry your speed, momentum and style down the river!

## WHAT DOES KEEPING ENERGY IN THE BOAT MEAN?

OK so before we start let’s make sure we are all on the same page. What do I mean when I say keeping energy in the boat?

The way I look at it, it’s a little like driving a car. If we constantly keep stopping and starting we have to use more energy to get going again. Driving around town in our car is less economical than driving on a motorway right? In terms of white water kayaking if we can carry our energy down the river, we, in essence, do less work. Allowing us to carry that speed into a key move, or smash a hole or eddy.

If you watch good skiers you can see them link turns and moves all the way down the slope, keeping their speed for key moves and jumps. They don’t stop at every turn, re-set and then go again. They keep the flow all the way down to the ski lift at the bottom.

How many times have you been that paddler, or watched a fellow boater, bouncing down the river just going with the flow? They set up at the top, point down-stream and off they go! You can see it all the time. The next time you’re on the river, especially popular runs and man-made white water courses

keep and eye out and you’ll almost certainly see examples of what I mean. So what happens by just drifting? The culprit will generally bounce off river features like cushions, radials and boils with no real direction. As this usually takes them by surprise they correct, possibly with backwards strokes (a big no, no!) Battling their way down the river, spending more energy and time correcting and less time styling!

## DRIFTERS AND DRIVERS

Drifters will generally point downstream break into the flow and off they go! Bimbling their way, with no real plans, hopefully, to the bottom of the rapid.

Drivers will read the water to maximise their descent down the river. They will have in their mind where they need a key paddle stroke, or to put in a key move and where they need to be on the river to make it. Their boat will be live! Using the river’s features and energy and carrying their speed all the way down the river, making it look effortless and stylish.

## KEEPING THE BOAT LIVE

We are striving to keep our, and the rivers energy in our boat, allowing it to flow, to link moves into sequences, keeping the boat hot, as opposed to the commonly used stop-start method of paddling. A good example of the latter is going from eddy to eddy. Which while is fun, and occasionally necessary to scout or to take a break, doesn’t flow or link, into energy efficient, stylish boating.

## SO HOW DO WE MAKE IT HAPPEN?

OK, so you’re keen to feel the energy and no longer be a ‘floater’. Here’s a quick list of ways that you can develop your paddling to allow you to power up with flow and style. →

### 1. IMAGINE HOW THE 'PERFECT PADDLER' WOULD RUN THE RAPID?

Have a think about what your model paddler would look like. Maybe it's a top pro like Evan Garcia, or Ben Marr. Maybe it's an Olympic slalom racer like Rich Hounslow, whoever or whatever works for you. Now imagine what would happen if they were paddling with you on that section of white water. Visualise how you think they'd run the rapid. Would they be bouncing and bumbling around? No, didn't think so! The first step to styling lines with style and energy is to emulate style from others.

Another useful tip, for when you're out on the water, is to keep an eye out for really smooth, graceful paddlers, that use very few paddle strokes, but when they do they are at the right place and time. Dissecting the white water to maximise the rapid's potential (maybe you already have a paddling pal that paddles like this). Watch them closely and then try to incorporate that style in to your own descents.

### 2. STOP MAKING EDDIES

We have a bit of an 'eddy hopping' addiction in the UK. With a penchant for hitting every eddy, the tighter the better, on the rapid. Sure identifying crucial eddies and being able to hit them is an essential skill, but, in my opinion so is free riding a river with powerful, flowing lines. Hitting lots of eddies slows us down, which means to get out of them again we have to hit the gas and use up energy. It's just like a car, if I pulled into every lay-by I saw it would use up so much fuel. It's one of the biggest reasons why UK boaters sometimes struggle when they hit their annual boating trips abroad to places like the Alps and Norway. The problem is that they are constantly looking for eddies to hit and are not used to, or using, the speed and power of the water of the water.

Loosen up on the hitting eddies front and look for down river moves to keep the boat flowing. Plan and time your paddle strokes to keep your kayak driving to really maximise the river's features. Let it flow and leave the eddies alone! They will be there when you need them!

### 3. STOP POINTING STRAIGHT DOWNSTREAM

Many of us are taught this on our first whitewater experience. Point straight and paddle and off we go! But as you've no doubt realized by now, if we only point downstream then we can only go downstream in a straight line. To use the car analogy again, it would be like driving but not being able to turn the steering wheel. That would be terrifying right? By using a 'point and shoot' technique we limit what we can do. Like a plumber who fixes everything with a hammer, what if the problem requires a different tool?

Let's get that boat moving, don't be afraid to drive across the river, change your angles and mix it up. This will allow you to ride onto cushions, take advantage of stoppers and flair off rocks. Why paddle in a way that limits the potential for free energy, and an awesome time!

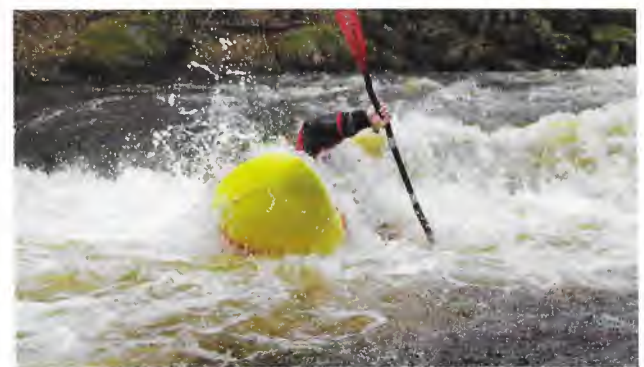
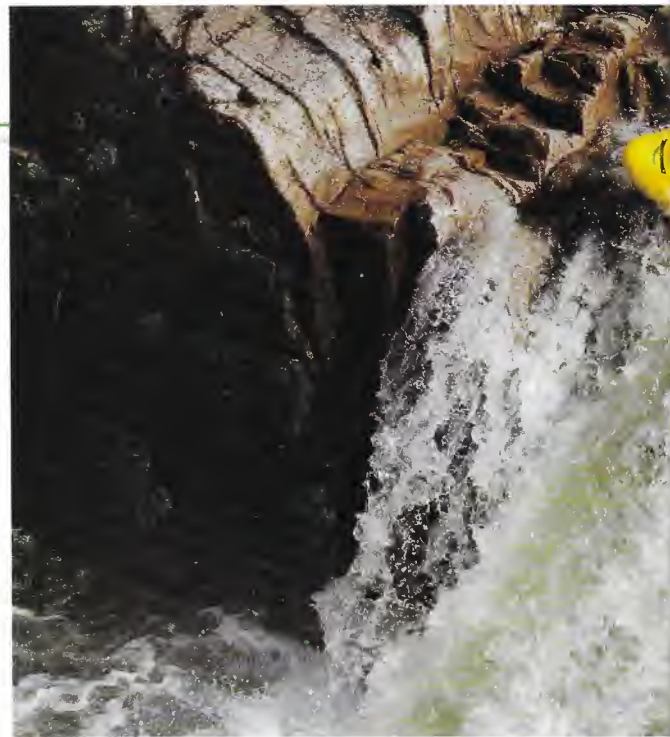
### 4. USE THE WATER TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

River tactics are essential for the modern white water paddler. Reading the river will allow you to decide where you need to be on the water! Learning to read whitewater takes both time and experience. How do we know that what we are looking at will act a certain way? How can we be sure to trust our own judgments? That what we see is what we will get?

Time spent with a coach can really help you fly for this. As they will have a wealth of experience and knowledge that you can tap into, and help fast track your own learning. A good coach can help you layer up the tactical understanding to where you need to be on the water. As opposed to your boating buddies just telling you.

### 5. CREATIVITY IS THE ESSENCE

I call it creativity; others may call it trial and error. It doesn't really matter, but if we don't try new ways and new moves, we will never know. Are we just paddling the same river the same way each time because we know we can make those moves? The top of the Tryweryn for example, hitting all of the eddies on the way down. What's that about? It's because we know we can do it. It feels good when we



succeed at something hence we enjoy it. But if all we do is copy and paste a technique, on to the same rapid each time, are we actually developing our personal style as a paddler? Practice makes perfect for sure, but if all we do is repeat the same moves by rote, are we actually still learning at all?

I would say think outside the box, but really I'd actually like to remove the box altogether!

So the next time you climb into your boat, get into the driving seat, try to ignore those superfluous eddies, remember less is sometimes for when it comes to paddle strokes, use the river and feel that energy flow! **CE**

**"THE WAY I LOOK AT IT, IT'S A LITTLE LIKE DRIVING A CAR. IF WE CONSTANTLY KEEP STOPPING AND STARTING WE HAVE TO USE MORE ENERGY TO GET GOING AGAIN."**



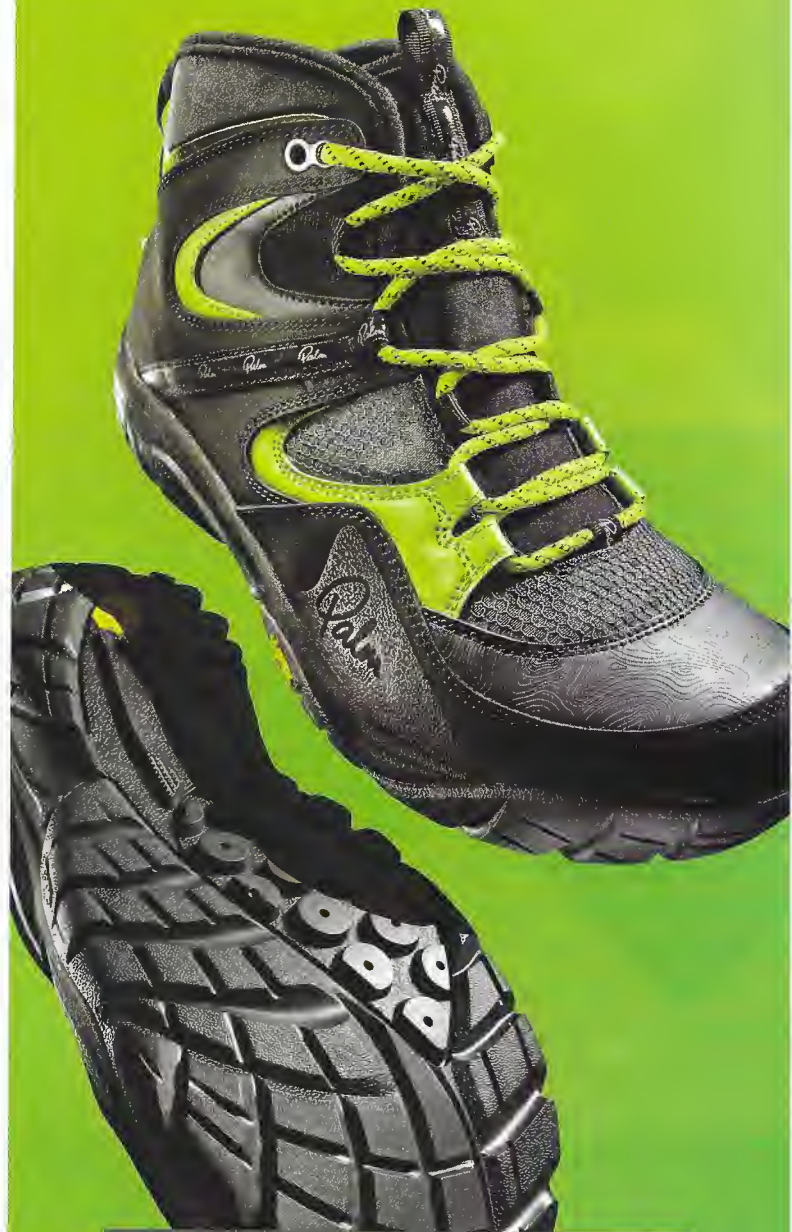


## ROSS MONTANDON

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



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



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# PERFECT PADDLING

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS: IAIN FISH

## MOUNTS BAY ACADEMY SEA KAYAK EXPEDITION TO SWEDEN

**H**aving the waters of West Cornwall on our doorstep our school has a strong core of water lovers: surfers, sailors, rowers and paddlers. The school canoe club has grown and progressed well in recent years and I wanted to give pupils something other than star awards to aim for. A sea paddling expedition seemed the order of the day, but where? A select group of Year 9 pupils (14-year olds for those of you long out of the education system) were up for the challenge. They signed on, mostly as novices, and trained at a weekly club session and attended a training expedition in the months leading up to 'Activities Week' at the end of the summer term. They were then ready for the trip of a lifetime!

The Saint Anna archipelago is a two hour drive south of Stockholm, which itself is a quick flight away from Stansted. Easy! Taking only hand luggage and hiring all kit from a local company called 'Do the North' this was looking logistically easier than a trip to the Hebrides or even Wales! There was also the prospect of sunshine, warm water and calm conditions that helped really sell the destination to us. We were met at Skavsta airport, taken to the put in, given heaps of equipment and far too much food, briefed on the local environment, access laws, weather etc and 12-hours after leaving Penzance were on our way out into the Swedish wilderness.

### TEAM WORK

With the nine pupils, and Joanna Simpson, one of the leaders, in expedition double kayaks and myself in a single kayak we made a tidy little team. We were totally self sufficient for seven days of paddling, eating, camping, eating, exploring and eating. The doubles made good load carriers and enabled the pupils to really paddle as a team, and allowed for partner swapping, in order to keep boats at similar speeds and just to mix things up a bit. Each boat had its quota of food, pots, pans, fire grills, camping stuff and personal equipment to carry. For camp activities the pupils were divided into pairs and each day they had a different job to do - cooking, washing up, fire duty and the 'camp

THE PADDLERS WERE:  
ELLIE BROWN,  
HARRIET RADFORD,  
ABI RICHARDS,  
ZEEV COHEN,  
TOM PROSSER,  
TOM BERRY,  
JAMIE TREDINWICK,  
NAT DWELLY AND  
JOE TWIDDY.  
SPECIAL THANKS TO  
JO SIMPSON FOR  
COMING WITH US AND  
BEING AN AWESOME  
LEADER AND COACH.



**THIS WAS A PERFECT LOCATION FOR A FIRST EXPEDITION FOR THESE YOUNG SEA PADDLERS. IT WAS ALL THERE: A DIFFERENT VISTA ROUND EVERY CORNER, WILDERNESS AND SELF-RELIANCE, BEAUTIFUL SCENERY, REASONABLY GOOD WEATHER, SAFE CONDITIONS.**



slaves' who were in charge of setting up the tarp, collecting firewood and any other tasks we could think of.

### ISLAND LIFE

The thousands of islands of the Saint Anna and Gryt Archipelagos provided an ideal venue for our trip. The water in the Baltic is brackish, about 50/50 sea and fresh. It is also very sheltered and in July the weather is warm and never windier than F4. The sun shone brightly for the first few days then settled into sunshine and drizzly showers, but the occasional bit of rain never dampened our spirits. There are no tides to speak of. Very few of the islands had houses on them and those we saw were quite plush looking holiday homes. Other than right on

their front lawns we were allowed to camp pretty much anywhere we could find. Most camp spots were idyllic, if sometimes a bit cramped, as the glacially smoothed granite refused to provide us with much horizontal ground. There were one or two settlements in amongst the islands, which were old fishing villages but these days seemed to be sustained by local yachties and tourists coming out to the islands for a day trip on a ferry.

DO THE NORTH  
WERE FANTASTIC  
OUTFITTERS WHO BENT  
OVER BACKWARDS  
TO MAXIMISE OUR  
ENJOYMENT ON THE TRIP.

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### PERFECT PADDLING

With the risk of using the word 'ideal' again this really was a perfect location for a first expedition for these young sea paddlers. It was all there: a different vista round every corner, wilderness and self-reliance, beautiful scenery, reasonably good weather, safe conditions. We could challenge ourselves as much as we felt up to each day. As it turned out, we paddled a total of 55km in seven days. Thankfully there were no mishaps beyond a few mosquito bites, splinters and a couple of close calls with adders. We boarded the plane home with grins on our faces and a huge sense of satisfaction from doing something really quite special in a beautiful and amazing environment. **CF**

# FUEL FOR FITNESS & FUN

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY DAVID DUNNE

## THIS SUMMER WHY NOT TRY THESE GREAT MEAL IDEAS PERFECT FOR WHEN YOU'RE OUT PADDLING?

SPORTS NUTRITIONIST DAVID DUNNE SHARES SOME GREAT MEAL IDEAS AND TIPS ON FOOD AND DRINK FOR ALL YOU PADDLERS OUT THERE. DAVID WORKS WITH THE BRITISH CANOEING ATHLETES ON HOW TO IMPROVE THEIR DIET DURING TRAINING SESSIONS AND BETWEEN COMPETITIONS TO GET THE BEST PERFORMANCE AND ENERGY.

**E**veryone should aim to eat a healthy balanced diet whatever their activity level. This will provide you with all the nutrients you need and with paddling being a great low impact activity that can improve your aerobic fitness, strength and flexibility, it is a great way to live a healthy lifestyle.

The physical and mental stresses of paddling can all make withdrawals from your 'body bank account.' The level of withdrawal is dependent on the intensity of the paddling.

Quality nutrition coupled with both physical and mental rest and recovery are essential to deposit back into that bank account. Restoring this balance and paying these 'debts' ensure you are maximising your performance whether in training for a competition or enjoying some recreational paddling.

### PADDLING RECOVERY SMOOTHIE

The carbohydrate content of your smoothie can be manipulated based on your choice of fruit & should reflect the duration, volume and intensity of your session. Examples of this are berries, which are great by themselves for lower

volume lighter sessions, and banana and mango are better for longer heavier sessions. Ginger, berries, green leafy veg, cherries, turmeric & pineapple have been suggested to be particularly beneficial for recovery. Elite athletes should aim for, and have no issue hitting, 8-10 servings of fruit and veg on a daily basis. With this in mind let's take a look at the three 'R's' of recovery and gain a greater understanding of the basic principles:

#### RESTORE

Elite athletes regularly take part in multiple strenuous training sessions. The high intensity, and often intermittent, nature of the training depletes energy stores, particularly glycogen, the body's stored form of carbohydrate. A post session recovery smoothie is an ideal choice to restore this energy and is great for athletes and paddlers alike as it can provide fast digesting carbohydrates, depending on the fruit chosen, to replenish the stores. For those who have trained to a high level or enjoyed a particularly strenuous paddle, this should later be followed by a balanced meal of slow digesting carbohydrates such as sweet potato and a quality protein source such as steak.

**Summer Recovery Smoothie**

- Optional 1/2 Avocado
- Small Banana
- 1 Kiwi
- 1/2 Cup Blueberries
- 1/2 Cup Raspberries
- 1/2 Cup Strawberries
- 1 Scoop Whey

**REPAIR**  
Rich in protein & antioxidants to repair damaged muscle tissues & support the immune system

**RESTORE**  
Nutrient dense carbohydrates to replenish glycogen stores & quality fats to aid inflammation & restore energy balance

**REHYDRATE**  
Aids replenishment of fluid & electrolyte loss through sweat


**MACROS with Avocado**  
Kcal 460 Pro 29g Carbs 39g Fat 16g

**MACROS without Avocado**  
Kcal 296 Pro 27g Carbs 36g Fat 1.4g

## REHYDRATE

Sweat rates can vary greatly between individuals and can also be influenced by training intensity and environmental conditions. Generally athletes lose between 1 & 3 litres during a high intensity session, so a more leisurely paddle would not be quite as much as this. The fluid loss must be replaced in a ratio of 1 litre of fluid for every 1 kg lost and this can be done gradually throughout the remainder of the day. When training is in the evening, try and replace fluid after the session but prioritise your sleep above forcing down litres of water, instead, continue the rehydration process the following morning. The inclusion of electrolytes from fruits and coconut water in your smoothie or meal can help to rehydrate more effectively by replenishing the salts also lost through sweat.

## REPAIR

High training volumes or high impact paddles can result in a significant amount of muscle damage. Protein is the key nutrient responsible for the repair of the damaged muscle fibres. Including protein in your post session smoothie or snack will supply amino acids, the building blocks for muscle tissue and aid the recovery process. Micronutrients can also assist with tissue repair and also support the immune system. Ginger, blueberries, green leafy veg, cherries, turmeric, pineapple and garlic in particular are particularly good anti-inflammatory foods that can assist with muscle recovery and should be included in post session smoothies as well as follow up meals. 

**RESTORING THIS BALANCE AND PAYING THESE 'DEBTS' ENSURE YOU ARE MAXIMISING YOUR PERFORMANCE WHETHER IN TRAINING FOR A COMPETITION OR ENJOYING SOME RECREATIONAL PADDLING.**

## USEFUL INFO



David Dunne – Performance Nutritionist  
Twitter – @Dunne\_Nutrition  
Instagram – @DDunne\_Nutrition

### Chicken, Mango & Curried Cous Cous



**INGREDIENTS:** Serves 2  
2 Large Cooked Chicken Breasts, Sliced  
2 Handfuls Spinach  
1/2 Mango, Diced  
1 Cup of Wholewheat Cous Cous, Dry  
Handful Slivered Almonds  
Tsp Curry Powder  
Tbsp Chopped Parsley  
1.5 Tbsp Balsamic Vinegar  
2 Tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil

#### PREPARATION:

1. Pan fry the diced onion in the tsp curry powder, 1 tsp olive oil & 1/2 tsp balsamic vinegar for ~3 mins.
2. Add boiling water to cous cous in a side bowl & leave cook for 3-4 mins. Once cooked, drain (if required).
3. Mix cooked chicken, remaining oil & vinaigrette, cous cous, mango, parsley & almonds in a Tupperware, stick the lid on & take to training!

### Protein Snack Pot



Tsp Honey

Tsp Peanut Butter

Handful Berries

Tsp Chia

Tsp Flax

250-300g Greek Yoghurt

### Satay Beef Stir Fry with Rice Noodles



**INGREDIENTS:** Serves 2  
2 Large Lean Steaks, Sliced  
1 Red Onion, Sliced  
1 Red Pepper, Sliced  
1-2 Blocks of Rice Noodles  
2 Tbsp Peanut Butter  
Tbsp Soy Sauce  
Splash Boiling Water  
Optional Veg: Baby Corn, Courgettes, Broccoli.

#### PREPARATION:

1. Pan fry the steak for 3-5 mins in a tsp coconut oil.
2. Add the veg & continue cooking for a further 3-5 mins.
3. In a side bowl mix the peanut butter, boiling water & soy sauce until you get a smooth consistency.
4. Add sauce to the pan & stir through thoroughly. Continue cooking for a final 3-5 mins.
5. Serve with boiled rice noodles.

Handful Spinach

Top with 150mls Milk

Clementine

6 Grapes

1/2 Cup Berries

3 Tbsp Greek Yoghurt

**Vit C Recovery Smoothie**

# HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR **SHOULDERS**

**WHITE WATER PADDLER  
AND ORTHOPAEDIC  
SURGEON PHILIP HOLLAND  
PROVIDES AN INSIGHT INTO  
HOW TO PREVENT  
SHOULDER INJURIES.**

**THE SHOULDER IS  
MADE OF A BALL  
IN A SOCKET. TO  
ALLOW LOTS OF  
MOVEMENT THE  
SOCKET IS VERY,  
VERY SHALLOW.  
IN FACT, THE  
BONY SOCKET IS  
ALMOST FLAT!**



THE LARGE RANGE OF MOVEMENT POSSIBLE AT THE SHOULDER BECAUSE OF THE FLAT SOCKET (SHOULDERDOC.CO.UK)

**N**umerous paddlers injure their shoulders every year and many of these have gone on to need surgery.

Some of these paddlers used to paddle several times a week and now don't paddle at all because of their shoulder problems. The few minutes it takes you to read this will hopefully help you look after your shoulders and keep you paddling for a long while to come!

### WHY IS THE SHOULDER SO COMMONLY INJURED?

Shoulders are designed to move through a large range. To allow them to do this they are not very robust. This is great for most people, but paddlers are not like most people. Paddlers often push their shoulders to the limit.

### HOW IS THE SHOULDER BUILT?

The shoulder is made of a ball in a socket. To allow lots of movement the socket is very, very shallow. In fact, the bonny socket is almost flat! A cartilage like rim makes the socket deeper, however, this is weak and it can get torn.

To keep the ball on the flat socket there is a group of muscles called the rotator cuff. These muscles are constantly stabilising the ball onto the flat socket. The rotator cuff muscles are also prone to injury.

### HOW DO SHOULDER INJURIES HAPPEN?

Shoulder injuries tend to occur when the shoulder is in an awkward position. The 'at risk position' is when your arm is out to your side and your hand is behind your head. If you put even a small force through your arm in this position you are at risk of injuring your shoulder.

### HOW DO I AVOID INJURY?

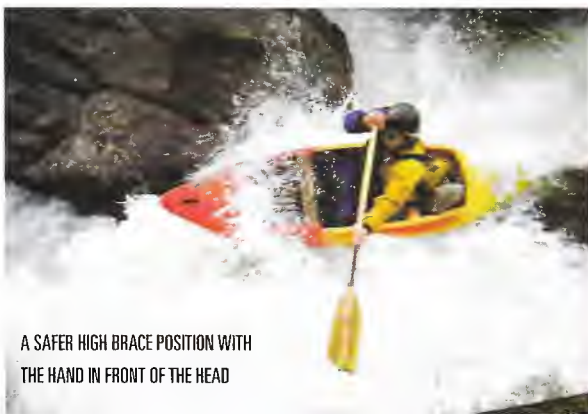
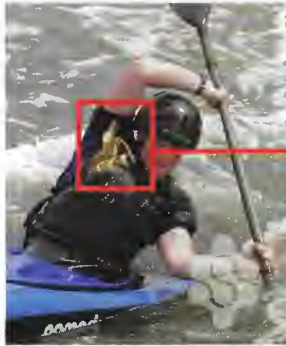
The most common reason, while paddling, that you may find yourself in the 'at risk position' is when you are doing a high brace. You are usually more concerned about keeping upright than you are about injuring your shoulder. The reality is that while a capsize or a swim may be embarrassing it is often a lot better than seriously injuring your shoulder.

Try to avoid using a high brace; use a low brace as much as possible. In the low brace position your hand is below your elbow and it is unlikely that you will injure your shoulder. When you do need to do a high brace keep your hand in front of your head. Don't get caught with your hand behind your head! →



A SAFER HIGH BRACE POSITION WITH THE HAND IN FRONT OF THE HEAD

THE AT RISK POSITION WITH THE HAND BEHIND THE HEAD (SHOULDERDOC.CO.UK)



A SAFER HIGH BRACE POSITION WITH THE HAND IN FRONT OF THE HEAD



**WHAT CAN BE DONE IF I INJURE MY SHOULDER?**

If you have a shoulder injury that doesn't get better after a few weeks make sure you see a health care professional who specialises in shoulder injuries such as a shoulder surgeon or a specialist physiotherapist. You may be suffering with pain, or it may be that you don't feel you can trust your shoulder anymore. Whatever your symptoms if your injury is stopping you from doing what you want to do you need to see someone who can accurately diagnose and treat your shoulder injury.

**IF YOU HAVE A SHOULDER INJURY THAT DOESN'T GET BETTER AFTER A FEW WEEKS MAKE SURE YOU SEE A HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL WHO SPECIALISES IN SHOULDER INJURIES SUCH AS A SHOULDER SURGEON OR A SPECIALIST PHYSIOTHERAPIST.**

Some images for this article have been reproduced with permission from [shoulderdoc.co.uk](http://shoulderdoc.co.uk). This is a great online resource to learn more about shoulders and shoulder injuries.

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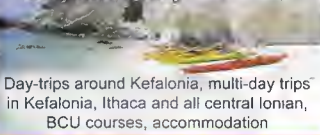
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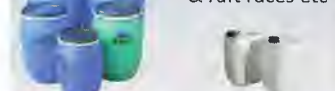
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