

# CANOE FOCUS

**2023 Go  
Paddling Photo  
Competition  
RoundUp**

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**2023 Medal  
Moments**

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**New Year's  
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# Welcome

## Happy New year to everyone from all of us at British Canoeing.

This is the perfect time of year – January – named for the Roman God Janus – to be looking to the past and to the future. The god Janus is depicted with two heads and is associated with gateways, passages, motion and transition. One head confidently looking to the past and one head looking positively to the future. There is no more apt symbol for where we are as a paddling community. We are in full transition with positive change and momentum as we face big agendas in 2024. But we do so with the confidence that a successful past and a successful 2023 gives us.

One aspect of this transition is that this will be the last edition of Canoe Focus. From March we shall be launching a new corporate identity to more fully reflect the community that we now serve and at the same time reflecting that in how we communicate with you all – including through The Paddler and SUP magazine. So, watch this space.

This edition of Canoe Focus provides the perfect illustration of a great year and lots to look forward to. It has been a year of considerable competitive success. We celebrate the successes of our competitive athletes of all ages and categories, and across all our disciplines and subdisciplines. It has been an enormously rewarding year on such a wide front. A high point for me was to be there to see a successful World Championships where we dominated the medal table in an unprecedented manner. But I applaud and celebrate success across the board.

I have always been struck by how photogenic we are as a sport. Great imagery characterises much of what we do and our community paddles in some stunning natural environments. It is why we like to encourage people to gather and share their photographic memories and you will see the stunning winners from every month of 2024 – be inspired.

As we manage our transition and as we face change, as all organisations do, it is important to ask the question “What must stay the same”. When change is increasingly the natural order what it is that we wish to preserve and hang on to is crucial. For our community

I would suggest three components stand out – our commitment to good values in everything we do, our commitment to the natural environment and access to open and blue space, and our desire to leave our planet in a better state than we found it. These are big issues on which we promote modest but significant action. I refer to Green membership, to the work on invasive non-native species, to our river clean ups to our campaigns for greater access to blue space. You will see reference to these in this edition and it will be a big part of our future journey. A modest yet significant step is the access gained to paddle on Ladybower – a step that is significant and which I am sure our community will treat with respect. An important contribution is the Big Paddle Cleanup – so save the date.

We always have a focus on supporting our community and telling their stories and keeping our community safe. Much work has been done in 2023 and will continue in 2024 through safety alerts, coaching, equipment advice and guidance etc. We represent an activity that by its nature has hazards – we need to minimize the adverse impact of these whilst maximizing the enjoyment.

As we enter an important new phase I want to encourage you all to work together to build a stronger community, a more prominent advocate for nature, to paddle more and to be a force for change. Please gather around our new identity when it is launched in March and let us use that moment to ensure that the voice of the paddler is heard.

### Very best wishes

John Coyne


**John Coyne CBE**  
Chair, British Canoeing



# STORIES that are making a SPLASH

Check out the stories that are currently making a splash within the paddling community.

For regular updates on stories like these, straight to your inbox,

 become a British Canoeing member



## Paddling physiotherapist Julie Gray awarded MBE

Julie Gray, a paediatric physiotherapist and founder of Adventure Activities for All Abilities, has been awarded an MBE in the King's New Year's Honour's list. Julie was recognised for her work with children who have impairments, including cerebral palsy, spina bifida and autism.


### Find out more here

 [www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2024/paddling-physiotherapist-julie-gray-awarded-mbe](http://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2024/paddling-physiotherapist-julie-gray-awarded-mbe)

## Outdoors For All - 36 organisations support manifesto

Thirty six leading national governing bodies and environmental organisations have joined together to support an **Outdoors For All manifesto**. British Canoeing and our partners are seeking to extend responsible access to more green and blue landscapes.

### Find out more here

 [www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/outdoors-for-all-36-organisations-support-manifesto](http://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/outdoors-for-all-36-organisations-support-manifesto)

## Catch up with our Paddler Spotlights from 2023: Rising Stars of Coventry

Catch up with our Paddler Spotlights from the end of 2023. For our November Paddler Spotlight, we caught up with Ayaz Maqsood, Chairperson of the Rising Stars Group, and volunteers from Mercia Canoe Club. Together they are leading the way to get their local community paddling. Alongside offering paddlesport sessions, they're creating opportunities for the people of Coventry to earn their Paddlesport Instructor qualification and inspire others to take up the sport.

### Find out more here

 [www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/paddler-spotlight-rising-stars-of-coventry](http://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/paddler-spotlight-rising-stars-of-coventry)



# Ladybower Reservoir

*A new beautiful place to paddle*

For the first time in 100 years, paddlers can explore the 'iconic' Ladybower Reservoir, which lies in the heart of the Peak District. A great experience for your list of things to do in the New Year.

Since November 2023, for a small fee, people can launch their kayaks, canoes and paddleboards at the site.

It has come thanks to a deal between Ladybower Paddlesports and Ladybower Fisheries.

Ben Seal, Head of Access and Environment at British Canoeing, said:

"Ladybower Reservoir is an absolutely iconic place in the Peak District. It is fantastic that paddlers are able to enjoy the water and facilities provided.

"While the opportunity to paddle on Ladybower is an exciting prospect for many paddlers, as an open body of water, it is really important to stay safe and be prepared!

**"Ladybower Reservoir is an absolutely iconic place in the Peak District. It is fantastic that paddlers are able to enjoy the water and facilities provided."**

– Ben Seal

"Conditions can change quickly. Anyone venturing out onto Ladybower or any other lake for an adventure should always follow our 'Paddle Safe' principles." For only £10 per craft, all you have to do is turn up to the fisheries office to book on the day.

Please heed advice from Ladybower Paddlesports and don't launch without booking.

 [Click here to visit their website and see updates including safety, weather, clothing!](#)

It has taken the team a long time to get permissions to and no one wants that taken away due to unauthorised use.

Ladybower Paddlesports is partnering with DC Outdoors to provide paddlesports instruction and coaching.

Want to explore more? Well check out the story below for more places to paddle...

**[99 miles of new waterways for members to explore!](#)**



# New Year's Resolutions for Paddlers

**Happy New Year from British Canoeing. It's the start of a brand new year, which means opportunities for more paddling.**

January is all about new beginnings. It's a great time of year to set out your goals and intentions for 2024, whether they are paddling related or not. But if you're anything like us, you've already started thinking about the many paddling adventures, challenges and skills you can learn and do.

Whether you've already decided your new year's resolutions, or are still trying to decide, check out some of our paddling related resolutions, and how you can make them happen in 2024.

## Level up your paddling skills in 2024

As we enter a new year, now is a great time to consider your paddling progression for 2024. Whether you're looking to develop your personal paddling skills, your safety skills or become an instructor, coach or leader, there's something for everyone.

In 2023 the British Canoeing Awarding Body released a number of new and improved courses and eLearning resources. These included multiple levels to our White Water Safety course, Inland Open Water Safety and Rescue, and the new Stand Up Paddleboard White Water leader course, plus many more.

Head over to the British Canoeing Awarding Body website to explore our Paddlesports Instructor, Coaching and Performance Coaching Awards, plus much, much more and start your 2024 paddling development journey today.






## Discover new places to paddle


It's time to start planning your paddling adventures for 2024. Is there a location you've always wanted to paddle or a paddling distance you've always wanted to achieve? Let us help you reach your paddling goals.

Our handy tool PaddlePoints can help you discover new places to paddle across the UK. It includes a detailed map of launch and landing locations, plus tips on where to park, or change from local paddlers who have visited before.

Check out PaddlePoints here:

 [gopaddling.info/paddlepoints/](https://gopaddling.info/paddlepoints/)

Our Go Paddling website also holds a wealth of paddling route articles to help guide and inspire your paddling adventures. You'll be able to find tips for different paddling routes, plus their distance and difficulty level. The perfect way to explore somewhere new this year.


Find the perfect paddling location for your 2024 adventure here:  <https://gopaddling.info/tag/paddling-routes/>

## Take on a paddling challenge

With a New Year come new possibilities for adventures and challenges. If you're thinking about taking on a paddling challenge in 2024 then you are in luck. We have a collection of challenge routes on waterways across the UK that have been carefully chosen to provide you with unique experiences.

Why not try the Three Lakes Challenge. Paddling three of the longest lakes in the UK. Now that would be a great achievement for 2024.

Check out all our challenges here:


 <https://gopaddling.info/gopaddlingchallenges/>

## Keep our waterways clean

Together as a paddling community we can help make a difference to the health of our blue spaces. A vital addition to your 2024 new year's resolutions would be taking part in a paddle cleanup of plastic pollution or invasive non native species on your local waterways.

Organising a paddle cleanup with your friends or paddling club is a great way to get outside and do some good for waterways near you. You can find a guide on the Clear Access, Clear Waters website to help you organise your own. Keep an eye out for more information on our 2024 Big Paddle Cleanup and how you can get involved.

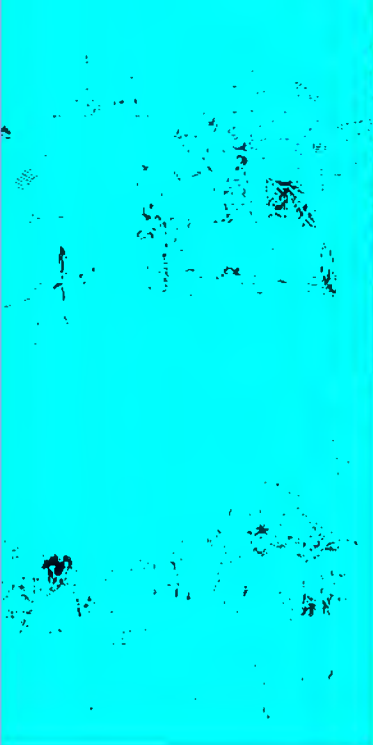
Another key action you can support is stopping the spread of invasive non-native species. All you need to do is Check, Clean, Dry your equipment every time you go paddling. By following these three simple steps you can help stop the spread of invasive non native species in the waterways you love to paddle, helping them to thrive.

You can find out more through our informative video series here:  [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPnshMnHWb0LZnauTD4XcfEOAxkmLF-m0](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPnshMnHWb0LZnauTD4XcfEOAxkmLF-m0)

## This New Year edition of Canoe Focus will hopefully inspire you to give some of these New Year's Resolutions a go.

You'll be able to find tips on how to use the PaddlePoints tool on the Go Paddling website so you can explore more. Plus what's new in 2024 for paddlesports coaching and how you can get involved with a paddle cleanup during the 2024 Big Paddle Cleanup.

We hope that 2024 brings you plenty of opportunities for adventure and growth. We are here to help you get the most out of paddling and enjoy another fantastic year on the water.



**The Big Paddle Clean up**  
Clear Access, Clear Waters



**Save the Date**

**The Big Paddle Cleanup 2024**

25th May - 9th June 2024

**It's back!**

We're excited to share that The Big Paddle Cleanup will be returning to waterways near you in 2024.

We can't do it without you - So keep an eye out for more information on how you can get involved and in the meantime why not become a Go Green member to get access to a free clean up kit?







# Become a GO GREEN MEMBER

## Become a Go Green Member and claim your FREE Big Paddle Cleanup Kit

Ready to get involved with the 2024 Big Paddle Cleanup? Well you're going to need a clean up kit. Perhaps some sacks for all the rubbish you find, and some gloves and pickers too?

Well Our Big Paddle Clean Up kits have everything you need to rid your waterways of plastic pollution AND they are available for FREE exclusively to our British Canoeing Go Green members!

All British Canoeing Members can opt to Go Green when they join or renew. By choosing this eco-friendly membership, you not only make a positive impact on the environment but also contribute to vital river cleanup projects.


When you opt to Go Green, we allocate £2 from your membership fee to support our Clear Access, Clear Waters campaign and fund Big Paddle Cleanup and biosecurity kits. To date, Go Green members have raised an impressive £50,000 towards these initiatives.

In 2023, we set aside 150 of cleanup kits exclusively for Go Green members, with the remaining reaching clubs and community groups. This year we are doing the same and we've got even more kits available for Go Green Members. Sign up to become a British Canoeing Go Green member before the 16th Feb and you'll receive an email to claim your FREE Big Paddle Cleanup Kit (on a first come first serve basis). These kits are made up of Waterhaul's eco pickers, made from recycled fishing nets, as well as gloves and sacks.



When you choose to Go Green, you will receive all membership information digitally, including a digital membership card and communications. Through our Members Hub, you can access the full range of member benefits, instantly and without the need for any paper.

With the Go Green Membership option, you will be able to use a PDF digital membership card. And if you delete it accidentally, you can download another from your dedicated member dashboard in the Hub.

Find out more about the benefits of Going Green HERE:  
 [members.britishcanoeing.org.uk/go-green-membership/](https://members.britishcanoeing.org.uk/go-green-membership/)

GO GREEN TODAY

 Click here to Go Green with your British Canoeing Membership.

Or get in touch directly with our membership team by email at [membership@britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:membership@britishcanoeing.org.uk) or by phone on 0300 0119 500.



# Exciting NEW British Canoeing Awarding Body courses for 2024

**A new addition to our SUP qualifications and awards course for 2024 is the Stand Up Paddleboard White Water Leader Course.**

The SUP White Water Leader Course is appropriate for people who want to lead others on journeys on grade 2(3) white water rivers.

During the assessment that is run over 1-2 days you will be assessed on your personal paddling skills, incident management, rescues skills, leadership and group management.

The SUP White Water Leader will be assessed leading a group of 3 to 6 paddlers.

*'Over the past two years we have seen a growth in this specific area of Stand Up Paddleboarding, with guided trips within a white water environment and we are delighted to be able to offer this course in 2024.'*

*'The content is aligned with our other awards within the leadership suite as well as covering specifics of briefings, equipment and safety and rescue. It was a privilege that I was able to work alongside the highly experienced and knowledgeable individuals on the SUP White Water Working Group, to create a high quality programme.'*

- Lee Pooley Director of Coaching & Qualifications



The Stand Up Paddleboard White Water Leader course will be available from the 4th March 2024.



## Another new course for 2024 is the Swimmer Safety and Rescue Course

The BCAB Swimmer Safety and Rescue course is designed to provide paddlers with the key safety skills and knowledge to work as part of a water safety team where open water swimming is involved.

All modules are interactive, practical sessions, discussing and using equipment, exploring and practicing the knowledge and skills of a paddler providing safety cover.

The Swimmer Safety and Rescue course is a 7 1/2 hour programme that consists of 6 training modules and an assessment competency of which can be delivered in a day or modular over a maximum of an eight-week period that suits the participants

This course is available to those 16 years of age and over.

*'Due to the increase in popularity of open water swimming, aqua parks, and events that take place across the UK, it was so important for the Awarding Body to review its offer of training to those that provide swim safety cover from a paddlecraft.'*

*The course is mainly practical and focuses on providing safety to those taking part in organised open water swimming sessions/ events. The assessment ensures that anyone that gains certification has reached the appropriate standard to cover safety as part of a team.*

*Many thanks to the RLSS, Swim England and British Triathlon, as well as the British Canoeing Lifeguards, and specialists on the working group for their support in the development of this training course'*

- Lee Pooley Director of Coaching & Qualifications

The Swimmer Safety and Rescue course will replace the existing Lifeguards SESA course.

The **NEW** Swimmer Safety and Rescue course will be available to learners from the **9th February 2024.**



# Explore more with



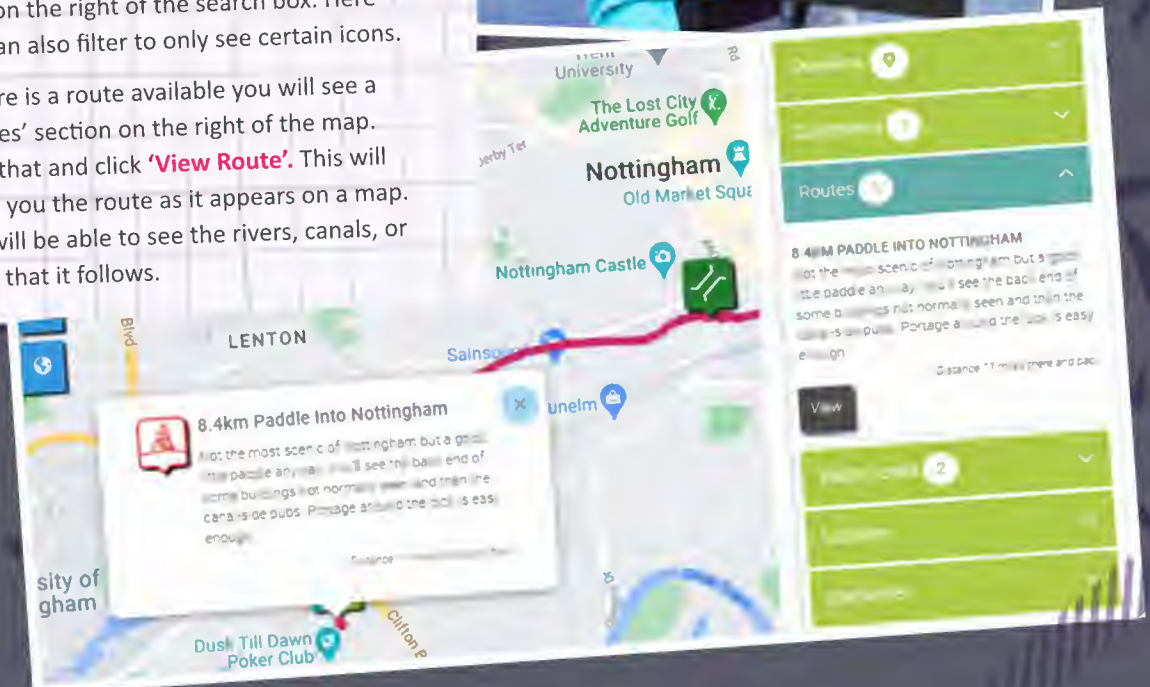
# PaddlePoints

PaddlePoints is a brilliant tool to help you find new places to paddle and share your favourite places with others. Heading away for a holiday and fancy a paddle, check PaddlePoints. Fancy seeing your city from the water, check PaddlePoints. Want to find out if there is a pub or picnic spot on your local paddle route, check PaddlePoints. It really is a tool that can revolutionise your paddle planning. So here is our step by step guide on how to use PaddlePoints.

## Find a PaddlePoint

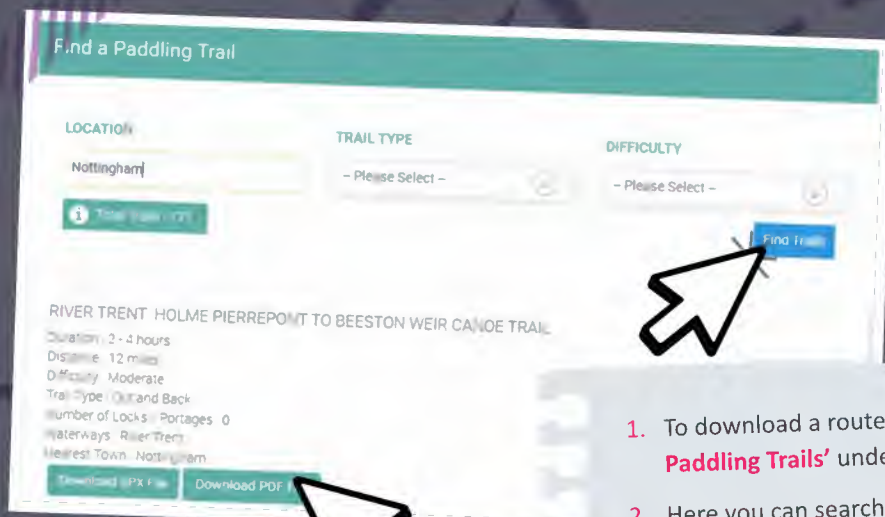
There are many types of PaddlePoints across the country, signposting all sorts of useful information. From paddling routes, weirs, pubs, picnic areas, to delivery partners and clubs. Use the PaddlePoints map to find your local ones.

1. From the GoPaddling homepage, select **'Find Paddling'** then **'Explore PaddlePoints'**.
2. Use the interactive map to locate the area you are looking to paddle in.
3. Click on the icon that denotes what you are looking for. The legend for these can be found by clicking on the three horizontal lines on the right of the search box. Here you can also filter to only see certain icons.
4. If there is a route available you will see a 'Routes' section on the right of the map. Click that and click **'View Route'**. This will show you the route as it appears on a map. You will be able to see the rivers, canals, or lakes that it follows.



## Download a route

There are many types of PaddlePoints across the country, signposting all sorts of useful information. From paddling routes, weirs, pubs, picnic areas, to delivery partners and clubs. Use the PaddlePoints map to find your local ones.

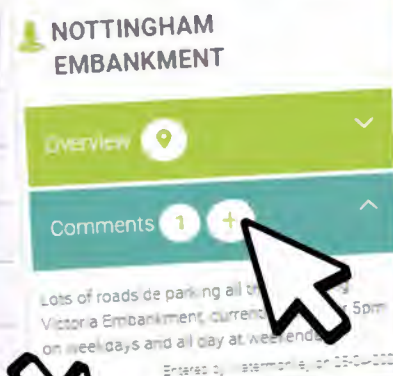


1. To download a route map and information, click '**Download Paddling Trails**' under the '**Find Paddling**' menu title.
2. Here you can search for the area you are wanting a trail map of, as well as the type of route and difficulty.
3. When you search, routes of the area will come up with basic information on them. When you find the one you like the look of you can click '**Download PDF File**' to get all the information and directions you may need.
4. You can also download the routes as a GPX file to upload straight onto your navigation kit.

## Comment on a PaddlePoint

If you have been out on a paddle and noticed a change to a PaddlePoint, or spotted something interesting along the way, you can let other paddlers know about this by leaving a comment on the PaddlePoint.

1. If you want to leave a comment on a paddle route simply **click the icon** for the trail to bring up the side menu.
2. Next to the '**Comment**' title, you will see a '+' button. Click this and comment away.
3. You can even add a photo to your comment for all to see.
4. Click **save** when you are finished.

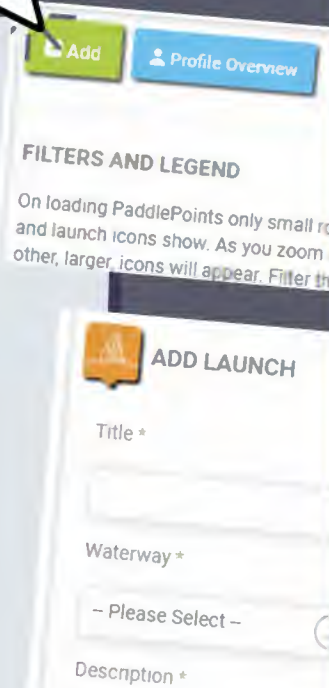


## Add a PaddlePoint

If you have been paddling in your area and found a route or key point on the river, and you want to share this with other paddlers you can add it to the PaddlePoints map. This helps to grow the sport and gives others the chance to explore new areas.

Find out more and help the paddling community, join in a PaddlePoints Webinar or reach out to us via [gopaddling@britishcanoeing.org.uk](mailto:gopaddling@britishcanoeing.org.uk) or contact Craig the Paddle Trails and Paddle Points content lead at British Canoeing. [craig.duff@britishcanoeng.org.uk](mailto:craig.duff@britishcanoeng.org.uk)

1. On the PaddlePoints interactive map, click the three **horizontal lines** on the right hand side of the search bar. This will bring up the button labelled '**+Add**'. Click on that.
2. Select what type of point you want to add. You can add anything from a route to a pub to a car park.
3. This point will then appear on the map. Position it where needed.
4. Once you have positioned the point, add all the appropriate details prompted on the right side of the map.
5. Once completed **click save!**



# 2023 Go Paddling Photo Competition RoundUp


Over the past year the paddling community have been sharing their best paddling pics using the #GoPaddling hashtag and taking part in the Go Paddling photo competition.

Each month in 2023 we chose our favourite photos to share with our social media followers. Check out the photos from all our monthly winners in 2023. Whether they inspire you to start taking your own paddling pics or encourage you to paddle somewhere new, we hope that these photos will motivate you to Go Paddling in 2024.



## January

Keith

 @2sanstef

Our wonderful January photo of the month was taken by @2sanstef on the River Crouch, on a paddle from South Woodham Yacht Club to Battlesbridge. Look at those lovely blue skies!

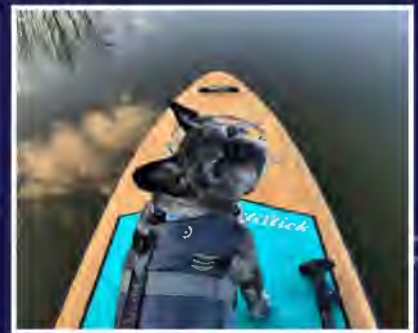


## February

Kayak Punk

 @kayakpunk

It was so great to see people out on the water in February despite the cold and frosty days! This lovely shot captures the beauty of a sunny winter's day on the River Ericht in Blairgowrie, Scotland.



## March

Rachel Ives


 @the\_only\_way\_is\_sup\_rachy

Our wonderful March Photo of the Month was taken by @the\_only\_way\_is\_sup\_rachy on the River Ancholme in Lincolnshire with her SUP pup, Herbie.



## April

Bradley Mosey


 @bradm053y

Sunny days canoeing on the River Ure at Boroughbridge. As you paddle from Ripon to Linton, the river gradually widens and flattens, making it perfect for a leisurely trip.



## May

Paul Smart


 @paulpsphotos

Our wonderful May photo of the month was taken by @paulpsphotos on an evening paddle on the River Soar at Mountsorrel.



## June

Rosie

 @rose\_on\_the\_water

Our beautiful June photo of the month was taken by Rosie @rose\_on\_the\_water on her evening paddle with @oxfordsupclub



## July

**Brandon Hardy**

 @hardy.fam.adventures

Our brilliant July photo of the month was taken by the @hardy.fam.adventures on the River Thames, kick-starting their summer holidays with a paddleboarding trip!



## August

**Nikki B**

 @re.sup.ply

Our August photo of the month was captured by @re.sup.ply on the River Thames by the Wokingham Water Centre in Reading. 🌿



## September

**Woody**


 @hikerwoody

@hikerwoody has been exploring the wonderful Llangollen Canal in their inflatable kayak. It's one of our favourite spots to explore in autumn! Add it to your list.



## October

**Amy**


 @sup\_lakedistrict

Our stunning October photo of the month was taken by @sup\_lakedistrict at Ullswater in the Lake District



## November

**Clare Rutter**


 @clare\_rutter.ba.hons

Paddling through a kaleidoscope of autumn colours on the Calder & Hebble Navigation in Yorkshire.



## December

**Gill**


 @sup\_loving\_gill

Our stunning December photo of the month was taken by @sup\_loving\_gill on the Basingstoke Canal. Just look at that beautiful blue sky and sunset!

### The Go Paddling photo competition will continue into 2024...

... so there is still time to take part and be in with a chance of winning some fab prizes.

Why not check out our top five tips for taking great paddling photos online here:

 [gopaddling.info/top-5-tips-for-taking-paddling-pics/](https://gopaddling.info/top-5-tips-for-taking-paddling-pics/)

The Winter Go Paddling photo competition is in full swing. Perhaps you have paddled in a winter wonderland or enjoyed a serene paddle down the canal, we want to see it! To take part, all you need to do is tag @GoPaddling in your Instagram posts and use the hashtag #GoPaddling.

We will choose our favourite photo each month and share it with our followers.

This winter you'll be in with a chance of winning a **Gill Verso Lite Jacket and Trousers** worth over £200



# EAST LONDON'S NEW COMMUNITY PADDLING CLUB

**In our final Paddler Spotlight of 2023, we hear from Katy Hogarth from Moo Canoes, who has been at the heart of a project in East London to establish a new community paddling club.**

In our final Paddler Spotlight of 2023, we hear from Katy Hogarth from Moo Canoes, who has been at the heart of a project in East London to establish a new community paddling club.

In June 2022, a local housing association, Poplar HARCA and British Canoeing Delivery Partner, Moo Canoes, came together to develop a programme of paddlesports activities for a proposed new pontoon in East London.

Fast forward to today, the newly established club around the Teviot Estate in Poplar proudly features a purpose-built pontoon that extends onto four miles of uninterrupted waterways. This includes London's oldest canal and the rivers around the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The new club's home even boasts access to the River Thames. Katy shares the journey to getting here.

Words by **Katy Hogarth** Pictures by **Sylvie Belbouab**

An active community club needed to be established at the heart of this programme, but there was no history of a club here, and no latent paddling skills in the community. The Teviot Club project set out to up-skill local residents, showcase existing local opportunities to participate in watersports, and form a new kind of club created by exactly those who often face barriers to our sport.

## The access problem

The expanse of blue space on their doorstep has never hosted a club before. High tides on the neighbouring River Lea flooded into these canals until 2000, so the canal walls that held them back rose over a metre above the current water level. The original towpath was lost in the 80s and only made accessible to pedestrians again in 2003. Local access to the water for residents was never possible until now.

Aside from the physical barriers to the water, club members have collectively faced cultural, structural, institutional, and individual barriers to sport. Working to tackle as many of these as possible, the Teviot Club project initially set out to up-skill local women so they would have the confidence and agency to forge a path for this new community club.

Across the board, local sporting opportunities weren't always well promoted, and there were few opportunities for all levels of fitness, age, and ability. When it came to paddlesports specifically, the nearest paddlesport club was a 50-minute walk away and had a £50 induction fee, creating a significant financial barrier even before considering the costs of membership, sessions, and gear.

This community has a high proportion of non-swimmers. Understanding that lack of swimming ability doesn't need to exclude people from watersports has been fundamental, and is still a problematic barrier across much of the industry, with several local venues unable to host sessions for this reason.





## Tackling barriers

Working to address as many of these challenges as possible, a programme was initially developed for nine women to try a variety of paddlesports over six sessions on Tuesdays, 11am-1pm. Posters were put up in local community centres, and shared at other sporting hubs. Within a week, there had been over 30 applicants for these places, so the programme was expanded to accommodate 18 local women.

This first cohort embarked on their paddlesports journey in Autumn 2022, trying bell boating, rowing, canoeing, kayaking, paddleboarding and outrigger canoes. Showcasing the range of watersports already on offer across East London was an important part of the project, so the new club could complement and support local provision, rather than clash with activities already taking place.

Two further cohorts of women have since been able to splash through the programme, thanks to funding from London Sport, British Canoeing, Active Thames and the Hill Trust. Rather than launching straight onto the canals or open water, the first few sessions for each cohort were conducted in indoor pools, with the support of the Black Swimming Association, looking at water confidence and safe floating in buoyancy aids.



## Paddle Safer Training

This September, as well as introducing the third group of women to the water, the project focused on continuing to upskill members of the first two cohorts, running development sessions and looking at options for safety and rescue training.

Working within the limitations of school hours, suitable equipment, water temperature (and quality), and the need for all-female options for cultural reasons, running a full PSRT was proving challenging.

Working closely with British Canoeing, we were able to tailor-make a Paddle Safer course which all three cohorts of women would be able to attend together, giving them a basic level of skills and confidence.

Using the clear, clean waters of the lake at Lee Valley White Water Centre just days after the Slalom World Championships, the club members donned wetsuits and took to the water. Being able to see the bottom, stand in shallower sections, and not worry about getting caught in weeds made a huge difference to their confidence.

This was the first time the three groups of women had met each other too, and bringing the whole club together on the water like this created an amazing atmosphere of camaraderie and fun.

Modules were delivered as practically as possible by a diverse all-female team. The participants were able to try closed-cockpit kayaks and practice capsizes and falling from SUPs for the first time.

In total 50 women were involved in the day, including 11 paddlesports coaches and a female photographer who has been documenting the project.

**“I feel empowered to achieve more and keen to help other women who are struggling with their mental health to experience the joy that this has brought me and many of the other participants.” – *Tanjina*, Cohort 1**

## Results so far

Many of the women have achieved their Discover award, and collectively they have developed the confidence and agency to stand for committee positions and forge a new Affiliated Club.

54 women have been able to join the project as participants. 20 female coaches and instructors have worked together to deliver 41 training sessions alongside 5 male colleagues. Several family paddle days have taken place during school holidays and on weekends, with the women working as volunteers on taster sessions to engage their own relatives and the wider community.

Whilst the club isn't exclusively for a particular demographic or gender, forming it around a committee of women of colour will ensure they always have a voice and are able to build the club as they choose.

Swimming skills aren't prevalent within the members. Re-scripting their relationship with the water, and tackling generational skill-gaps has already shown positive results for the wider community, with several of the women having built the confidence to take their own families to the beach, kayaking in Qatar, white water rafting in Scotland, and even paddleboarding in China!

There are still many barriers the club has to tackle - they have no equipment yet, and nowhere to store it. Two members have taken their PSRT, but as yet the club doesn't have any of its own instructors or leaders. Water quality and lack of wetsuits or drysuits continues to pose a barrier to rescue training and progression.

What they lack in real estate and qualifications then make up for in determination, and this project has formed new friendships and made impactful changes to their lives. Hopefully the club will thrive and offer watersports opportunities to this community for generations to come.




**"I love that I can experience activities on water at my age and meet such fantastic women from all kinds of societies. It really feels like the club brings the people of the world together."**

– *Bushra*, Cohort 1



**We'd love to hear all about your paddling journey, experiences and the great work happening in the paddling community. You could be our next Paddler Spotlight feature!**

Find out more about the initiative here:

 [www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/share-your-stories-for-the-paddler-spotlight](http://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2023/share-your-stories-for-the-paddler-spotlight)

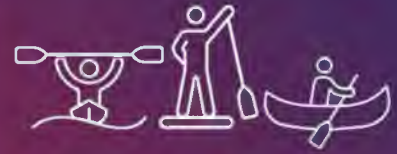
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2023

# Medal Moments

## Grand Total 101



### Canoe Slalom - 35



### Paracanoe - 26



### Sprint - 5



### Canoe Marathon - 12



### Wildwater - 8



### Rafting - 4



### Freestyle - 6



### Canoe Polo - 1



### SUP - 3



### Ocean Racing - 1





**GO**  
/Paddling!

**Gill**

# Stay Dry.

Out in your kayak, on your paddleboard, or doing any water activity where you could use a little extra protection? Dry suits are an excellent choice.

Like the new Verso Drysuit from Gill, surface dry suits are often made with breathable fabrics as wearers who spend much of their time on the surface often get overheated and/or dehydrated.

Along with being breathable, dry suits are waterproof and watertight and insulate against heat transfer to the surrounding environment. Aiding in keeping water out, the neck and wrists often incorporate soft rubber (like latex) or neoprene seals and purge valves to evacuate any water that may creep in.

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Easy to use, with a dependable, heavyweight rear-entry zip design, step into the suit and zip yourself in. Every feature has been thought out with the user in mind. Inner Neoprene Dryseals at the neck and wrist prevent cold water flush and adjustable cuffs improve fit, whilst adding additional weather protection. The packable rollaway hood design allows you to stow the hood safely away when not in use and the soft fleece inner chin guard has laser-cut ventilation holes to increase comfort. There is also a pocket on the sleeve that's accessible while wearing a PFD.

The Verso Drysuit comes in Graphite and Bluejay colourways, while the Women's Verso Drysuit is available in Marine Blue.



Your member discount gives you 15% off all of Gill's full priced product, shop now at: [gb.gillmarine.com](https://gb.gillmarine.com)

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Hydrophobe Top  
Adult £60, Junior £45

The Hydrophobe Top is ideal for all water-based activities. Ideal for wearing in colder weather under a wetsuit or drysuit, as well as other waterproof outer layers. The fleece lining is comfortable against the skin and traps warm air, whilst the thermal protection fabric protects the skin from UPF 50+ sun rays.



Aqua Parka  
£150

Change wherever, whenever with welded seams that stretch and move with you as you change, and a long length and generous fit which gives full coverage. Keep warm and dry inside with a high loft fleece lining to keep you warm even when wet.



Voyager Dry Bag  
50L £45, 25L £25, 10L £20, 5L £18

The Voyager Dry Bag is made from puncture resistant, waterproof PVC tarpaulin fabric and is constructed using stitch-free, high frequency welded seams, making it completely waterproof. Roll down the wide opening (we recommend rolling down three times) and fasten the side release clips to create a watertight seal. The semi translucent window allows you to see inside the bag without having to open it up in wet conditions. The multiple D-ring attachment points make it easy to secure down in transit on and off the water. Also available in Bluejay and Sulphur colourways.

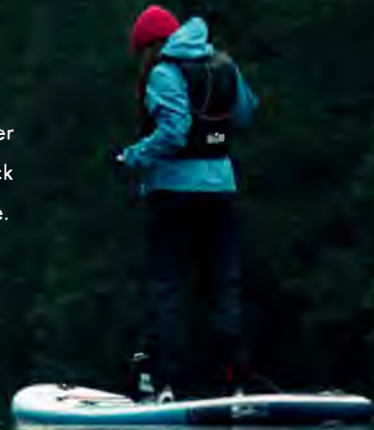


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