

CANOE FOCUS



**Come and be part
of something
extraordinary at the
2023 Slalom World
Championships**

[Read more on page 22](#)

**Journeys into
SUP Racing with
SUP Junkie,
Sarah Thornely**

[Read more on page 16](#)

**Clear Access, Clear
Waters Charter
Launch at Houses of
Parliament**

[Read more on page 8](#)

Contents

Welcome

Welcome from John Coyne 3

News

Stories making a splash: British Canoeing's Safety Campaign with the RNLI 4

Access and Environment

The Big Paddle Cleanup 2023 6

Clear Access, Clear Waters Charter Launch at the Houses of Parliament 8



#ShePaddles

Scottish Women's Paddle Symposium 10

#ShePaddle Weekend Retreat 11



Coaching and Leadership

British Canoeing Awarding Body 15

Stories From The Water

Journeys into SUP Racing with SUP Junkie, Sarah Thornely 16



Paddler Spotlight

May Paddler Spotlight 18

June Paddler Spotlight 19



Performance

British success on the International Stage 20

Come and be part of something extraordinary at the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships 22



Welcome

Welcome to the Summer edition of Canoe Focus!

Welcome to the July edition of Canoe Focus. As I write this it is perfect paddling weather – a blue sky, calm water with just the slightest of breezes and a temperature in the early 20's. Perhaps these ideal paddling conditions explain why so many have been out on the water and so many are joining us in full membership. We could soon be at the magical 100,000 members – a critical mass that would enable us to further reinforce our role as the paddlers' voice. And making that voice heard is central to two of the key features in this edition.

We have been vocal, with our partners, in promoting the water quality in our rivers. The issue of the discharge of untreated sewage is now firmly in the national spotlight and the level of plastic pollution in particular is well known. It has been massively rewarding to see our community take positive action this summer through the big paddle clean up. I am sure you will be both stunned and impressed by the actions we report in this edition. We should never underestimate the power and significance of this event.

We are committed custodians of our inland and coastal blue spaces. Yet we have so few rights of access to inland waterways. Extending those rights aligned with the need for those waters to be in good condition was the theme as we relaunched our Clear Access Clear Waters campaign in the Houses of Parliament last month. We want our political parties to include commitments in their manifestos so that paddlers can have a real choice at the next election.

The enjoyment of blue spaces and the personal well-being that it promotes is at the heart of much of our work. We are also committed to inclusion: bringing the joys of paddling to the widest possible audience. The Birmingham Regatta is a brilliant example. It is clearly reaching new groups and showcasing, with the Canals and Rivers Trust, the asset communities have on their doorstep in our second city.

This is a very busy year for our competitive disciplines – and particularly the Olympic and Paralympic disciplines of Canoe Slalom and Canoe Sprint. The challenge is to secure early qualification for Olympic and Paralympic quota places. We report on competitive performance in this edition. We are fortunate that we have secured the key qualification event for Canoe Slalom for Lee Valley in September. Our paddlers will be on 'home water' for the crucial series with six places up for grabs. Check out the dates and put them in your diary – if we can add a vocal home crowd, I know that our paddlers will reward us handsomely. The pop-up campsite could be a good way to stay for the whole event.

Moving from a recreational interest into a competitive mode is a route many take. It is a fantastic way for youngsters (and not so young!) to stretch themselves. We would love to see more of our new members join us on the competitive journey. A growing proportion of our community are naming SUP as their craft of choice, and we look in this edition at some of the SUP racing developments.

Whatever your interest I am sure there will be much for you in this edition and across our community more widely.

Enjoy your summer paddling.


John Coyne

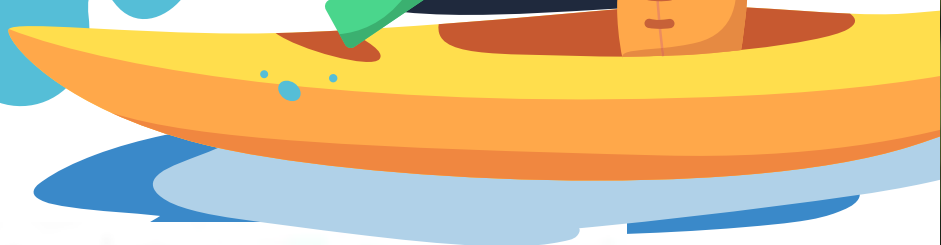
**Professor
John Coyne**
CBE



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**



#PADDLE SAFELY

British Canoeing and RNLI launch safety campaign for paddlers

At the end of June British Canoeing launched our #PaddleSafely campaign in partnership with the RNLI, sharing five key safety messages to help people stay safe while participating in paddlesports.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of how to stay safe on the water when planning to Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP), kayak or canoe on any type of water - whether at the coast or inland.

The five key messages are:

- > Wear a buoyancy aid / personal floatation device. No matter how strong you think you are at swimming.
- > Carry a means of communication on you. If you become separated from your craft, this is when you may need to call for assistance.
- > Check the weather. So that you can wear the right clothing and spot any weather that is dangerous to paddle in.
- > Tell others of your plans. So they know when you will be returning.
- > Paddle within your ability and if you need to, take courses to help level up your skills.

British Canoeing has been working with partners and retailers ahead of the summer, to increase safety messaging at point of sale, as inflatable crafts and paddling equipment become more widely available.

PLUS... This summer British Canoeing is offering a **FREE e-learning course**

'An Introduction to Paddlesport' to paddlers signed up to our Go Paddling newsletter and British Canoeing members. The course provides key information for beginners including key equipment, safety precautions and environmental factors.

Sign up to the Go Paddling newsletter

 gopaddling.info/newsletter

Become a British Canoeing member

 members.britishcanoeing.org.uk



GO
Paddling!

PaddlePoints

Discover new places to paddle



Scan Me!

gopaddling.info/paddlepoints

A **BIG** THANK YOU to everyone who took part in the **Big Paddle Cleanup 2023**



The campaign saw an incredible effort from our fantastic community of paddlers.

Not everyone has logged their finds, but so far, about **2,100 volunteers participated and 1,300 big sacks were filled.**

Inside those bags were about 5,000 plastic bottles, 1,400 glass bottles, 2,800 cans and 6,00 food wrappers.

We also held a flagship Big Paddle Cleanup event in Liverpool, on 3rd June.

The event, held at Collingwood Dock by the Friends of Allonby Canoe Club, was attended by Labour MP Kim Johnson who praised the volunteers for cleaning up the canal.

Staff from British Canoeing also held their own Big Paddle Cleanup at Nottingham and Beeston Canal.

Several big sacks were filled with plastic bottles, cans and wrappers.

There were some more unusual finds too, like an ornate candlestick holder, wellies, trainers, clay pipes and a small tyre.

Local media including BBC Radio Nottingham, East Midlands Today and Notts TV came along to report on what the team were doing.

Talking of things, other than plastic bottles and packaging, found in the water... these are some of the items volunteers found across the country:



ERDINGER Alkoholfrei, a British Canoeing partner, supported the event, providing food and refreshments for the volunteers.

Pete Gowans, ERDINGER Country Manager, said it was **“fantastic to see such a vibrant family club being so enthusiastic about picking the rubbish out of the water.”**

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plastic stools | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cash register |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Underwear | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wheelbarrow |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pallets | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traffic cones |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Footballs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rubber ducks |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shopping trolleys | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skateboards |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fanta can from the 1980s | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A Playstation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roadworks barriers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A dead parrot |

Perhaps the weirdest item found was a message in a bottle. Released about 30 years ago it was discovered by a canoe club, in Scotland, during the Big Paddle Cleanup.

A member of Pentland Canoe Club, in Thurso, Scotland, found the object while the group collected a tonne of waste from hard-to-reach beaches.

The message, found by David Shand, was inside a small plastic bottle picked up on the shore near Occumster.

The note on fragile, orange paper, which has faded to white, was written, as a child, by a woman named Lynn, from Rothes, who has since been traced after some brilliant detective work.

The bottle with Lynn's message travelled out to the Moray Firth before ending its 100km journey in Caithness.

"I'm 34 and I reckon I was 8 or 9 when I did it so that's probably about 25 years ago" - Lynn Rothes

The bottle travelled for miles and stayed completely intact after 25 years, which shows the robustness of the material and the danger it poses to the environment.



This year, we were also delighted that our athletes got involved too.

A special mention to Canoe sprint athlete Tom Lusty who led a team of 18 people in cleaning up the Grand Union Canal.

He was also interviewed by BBC Sport and explained how, in the past, he has fished out discarded bikes, plastic bags, shoes of all sizes and a puppy! Thankfully, the puppy was absolutely fine.

In summary, everyone connected with the Big Paddle Cleanup is delighted with how well it went.

Chantelle Grundy, British Canoeing's Access & Environment Lead, said:

"It's been fantastic to see the paddling community across the nation, coming together to take action to remove junk and plastic pollution. It will make a positive difference for nature and for people."

The Big Paddle Cleanup has highlighted the scale of the pollution issue our waters face. It has also shown how each of us can make a positive difference, which is amplified as we unite in a common cause. I would like to thank all of our community who have given up their time to protect our special blue places."

Support our next Big Paddle Cleanup by becoming a Go Green British Canoeing member.

When you Go Green with your membership, we allocate £2 of your membership fee towards projects just like the big paddle cleanup at no extra cost to you! It's a completely paperless membership option that supports the protection of the waterways we all love to paddle. Choose Go Green when you sign up for membership or when you next renew your membership.

 **GO GREEN MEMBERSHIP**



For more information
please visit:
**clearaccessclear
waters.org.uk/
bigpaddlecleanup**

Clear Access, Clear Waters campaign vision shared at event in Westminster



A team from British Canoeing relaunched our Access & Environment Charter at a special event in Westminster, in June.

The last charter, promoting the Clear Access, Clear Waters campaign, was published in 2018, and it set out our vision for fair, shared, sustainable access to waters in England and Wales.

Since then we have been through the Covid pandemic which reaffirmed our belief why access to blue space matters for our health and wellbeing.

Our event was hosted by Conservative MP Pauline Latham OBE and Labour MP Kim Leadbeater, who both spoke at the event in support of our priorities for action.

Jim McMahon, the Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, also made a speech in which he expressed support for British Canoeing's vision.

He also expressed his disgust at the state of our rivers and called for water companies to take more responsibility.

“Let's hold the water company bosses to account,” he said. **“Let's deliver not just good access, but good quality of life for working people too.”**

Through our Clear Access, Clear Waters campaign we have done some great work in championing the case for change and to make a difference in protecting our blue spaces.

The new charter reaffirms those commitments set out five years ago, but we are tirelessly pushing for the policy changes we desire.

Change is more important than ever, these are the priorities that we presented at our event in parliament...

- > Expand our freedom to enjoy more of our inland waters
- > Go further, faster to recover our blue spaces from pollution
- > Educate, inspire and inform responsible, sustainable behaviour

Members of British Canoeing staff and our Board were joined by volunteer ambassadors, who were able to share their personal stories of why blue space matters so much to our community.

We are calling on the government to review its current stance, and to take a fresh approach, drawing on positive examples in Scotland and the rest of the world.

Pauline Latham OBE said in her speech:

“I have always advocated for parties to come together to agree on fair, shared open access on the basis of mutual respect.

“Having dealt first hand with access disagreements in my own constituency, I believe that there is a role for the government to play, to bring about fair, shared access for all.”

Kim Leadbeater, MP for Batley and Spen, who joined us on the water, for the Big Paddle Cleanup, said:

“Paddlesport is a special way of combining physical activity and connecting to the natural environment. Two things I feel passionate about.

“As I found out when I joined Ben [Seal] and the team on the canal just outside my constituency for the Big Paddle Cleanup. We had a fantastic time. It was a really special thing to do.

“The opportunity to get outdoors and be active in our green and blue spaces are really important, but not, sadly, available to everyone in society.



We're in the middle of a major health crisis... The reality is, whoever is in government, we cannot keep chucking money at the NHS..."

FREE NATURAL HEALTH SERVICE

"We have to take a much more preventative approach to the health and wellbeing of the nation," she said.

"Our outdoors is a free 'natural health service'... Our rivers, canals, footpaths, bridleways and cycle ways are an incredible resource that should be seen as a prime means to keep us all healthy and happy."

One of the priorities for British Canoeing and its sector colleagues is to see an ambitious, accountable cross department plan for access and outdoor recreation.

We need a holistic approach, integrating the work of every department and all activities carried out or overseen by the government, would bring together a wide range of interventions throughout the life cycle into one strategy.

Professor John Coyne CBE, Chair of British Canoeing, said during his speech:

"We are calling on the government to review its current stance, and to take a fresh approach, drawing on positive examples in Scotland and the rest of the world.

"We need to encourage Defra to move towards a policy of 'fair, equal, shared space.'

"Fairness for everyone wanting to enjoy outdoor recreation, on and off the water."

During the event at Westminster, we showed one of our new 'Why Blue Space Matters' films. You can find these on the [British Canoeing YouTube channel](#).

It features The One Show reporter Miranda Krestovnikoff, who loves to paddle on the River Avon, in Bath.

She said: **"The value of blue spaces to me is immeasurable. Imagine if we're denied access to that valuable resource?"**

"Imagine how poorer how lives would be if we had no connection with these wild, beautiful wet spaces?"

Suzie Wheway, an outdoor swimmer, also made a film.

Open water swimmers have the same issues, as paddlers, when it comes to access to our rivers. "I swim for fitness and physical health but a really big factor in that is mental health," she said.

"Not having free unencumbered, unquestioned access to water is a real problem.

"I have to adjust my swims at the minute so that I know I'm not going to be confronted and have that horrible circumstance where I'm shouted at, given abuse, questioned, for doing something that I love and that enhances me so much.

"I've come away from water thankfully a handful of times only in tears because I've been shouted out and told off and it is the most hideous experience."

We will have to wait and see what happens next. It is up to the lawmakers. However, everyone from the Clear Access, Clear Waters team will keep pushing for what we all want to happen with our inland waters.



#SHEPADDLES SCOTTISH WOMEN'S PADDLE SYMPOSIUM



Words by Emy McLeod, 21/22 #ShePaddles Ambassador

The Scottish Womens' Paddle Symposium took place at Scotland's National training Centre; Glenmore Lodge at the end of May.

It is probably the biggest female-only paddling event in the whole of the UK. Bringing together those with a love of paddlesports, the top coaches in Scotland and some very stunning rivers, lochs and coastal environments you have got one awesome weekend ahead of you!

Workshops in Canoe, Sea Kayak, White Water Kayak, SUP, Rolling and OC1, Adaptive Paddling & Greenland Rolling were on offer for people to book on to. The weekend was a sell out with over 108 participants in attendance; the symposium is not solely for people who live in Scotland - with people from Wales, England and even the Netherlands travelling to it!

With an all female coaching team of 26 coaches and 20 assistant coaches it was pretty amazing to have all that experience, knowledge and talent all at the same event. *Empowering, Inspiring and Welcoming* were three words used to describe the experience by some of the participants.

The current Scotland #shepaddles ambassadors were representing at the symposium; Claire Scott & Savanna Guade were on the water assisting the paddle board workshops. There are exciting things to come from the two of them as they team together to offer paddleboard & yoga weekends in Scotland!

"Mags Duncan and I are very proud of the event we started in 2010 now being in its rightful home of Glenmore Lodge, Scotland's National Outdoor Training Centre. It is fantastic that the event has stuck to its roots of "For Women by Women" and now have so many great women coaches to be able to hold such a large event. Everyone one of them were so stoked to be working at the National Centre."

- Quote by Tracy Sherrington. Organisation Committee & Surf Coach.

"Each year I look forward to coaching at SWPS, it brings a wide variety of women from the paddling community that are all keen to learn new things and share a fun day on the water. It has also been great to work alongside aspiring coaches and see them progress."

- Quote by WW SUP Coach Jess Philips



Photo Credit: Emy McLeod

#SHEPADDLES WEEKEND RETREAT



Words by Rebecca Edwards, 22/23 #ShePaddles Ambassador

We are so grateful here at Mersea boating Lake to have been able to hold the very first Women's only #ShePaddles Weekend retreat in partnership with British Canoeing. It was an amazing weekend!

From start to finish the women came together to help support and enjoy a range of activities.

The ladies met and worked together to put up their tents in the crazy afternoon heatwave before exploring the area and jumping in the lake for a nice cool down! The evening followed with a bbq and relax around the fire with smores and getting to know each other.

Saturday was a full day of activities from start to finish! The day started with a sunrise swim, before a briefing for the water sports activities, the ladies took to the water and tried out stand up paddleboarding, kayaking and took on the water assault course! Some ladies even took on the mega SUP!

After a nice lunch break the ladies had aerobics and pilates sessions which some did in the water as we were blessed with the most stunning sunny day! It was then time to get creative and the women tried their hand at a paint class where the ladies painted a paddler on the lake. The evening's entertainment was dinner followed by a live singer, Lianna Kaye, and a spot of bingo!

Sunday the ladies came together to take on a fun and inclusive triathlon! 50 women took to the water on their chosen craft to complete the course, before heading out for a scenic route around the countryside. The ladies could run, walk or jog the route and everyone completed it at their own pace but together as a group. We ended the triathlon with all of the women heading in for a couple of laps of the lake followed by a really chilled float around. There was an overwhelming sense of achievement and also a little sadness that the weekend was coming to an end.

The weekend was so amazing as women from all walks of life came together and enjoyed a range of activities accompanied by time together on and off the water, learning new skills, making new friends and memories to last a lifetime!

Seeing how much fun and enjoyment the ladies had was worth all the hard work to make this event happen! Bring on ShePaddles Weekender 2024!!



#SHEPADDLES
SPREAD THE LOVE!

Photo Credit: Josie, Folkandfilm_weddings

Top all-round products to add to your wishlist!

When it comes to sports clothing, it's often hard to know where to start when buying kit for a new activity or change in season. With so many products on the market, how do we know what's right for us? Luckily these days we have a variety of online tools that can help with this, as well as peer recommendations. But now more than ever we want to get quality products that are value for money and will stand the test of time. In this article we breakdown the top Gill products on the market that will see you through the change in seasons and years to come.



1. Verso Lite Jacket - £130

Brand new for this season, the Verso Lite Jacket is available in 2 colourways (Black and Bluejay) and is ideal for a range of activities on and off the water. Wear on its own or with a lightweight top in the warmer months and layer up in the Winter.

Made using Gill's exclusive XPLORE® 2-layer waterproof and breathable fabric and with fully taped seams to ensure a waterproof seal. Lightweight and able to pack down into its own pocket, making it the perfect jacket to carry round with you in dependable weather or if you're thinking of getting out on the water. (Available in sizes XS-XXL)

2. Pilot Trousers - £89

A waterproof trouser is a staple item for most outdoor enthusiasts. The Gill Pilot Trousers are a great solution for staying dry either on or off the water. Featuring fully taped seams for a waterproof seal and side pockets with external drainage to reduce any water ingress. (Available in Sizes XS-3XL)

3. Aquatech Shoes - Adult £55 / Junior £45

The low-profile Aquatech Shoes offer a lightweight solution to foot protection on and around the water. Easy to slip on, with an adjustable strap over the top of the foot for ankle support, they are constructed with 3mm double lined Neoprene and waterproof seams to keep you comfortable all day. The wrap-around, non-marking natural rubber sole offers improved grip while the reinforced heel, toe and bridge support allow the flexibility needed to remain agile. Ideal for all conditions, the Aquatech Shoes are suitable for wear on the beach, boat or board. (Adults are available in sizes 39-49 / Junior are available in sizes 33-37/38)



4. Aqua Parka - £145

The only robe on the market to have stretch fabric properties making it ideal for changing into or out of wet clothes. High loft thermal lining not only wicks water and moisture away from the skin, but will keep you warm even when worn on top of wet clothing. The full length arms with adjustable cuffs and generous fit combined with the two way YKK zipper offers full coverage, allowing you to change anywhere with ease! (Available in sizes XS-XL)

5. Verso Drysuit / Women's Verso Drysuit - £650

A Drysuit is an investment piece, no matter how much wear you get out of it! However for those who will get their wear out of one, they want to make sure it's both comfortable and durable so they get their money's worth. The Gill Verso Drysuit is made using Gill's exclusive XPLORE+® 3-layer waterproof and breathable fabric as well as plant-based XPEL® treatment providing exceptional levels of waterproofness and stain resistance. XPEL® treated garments offer consistent levels of performance for up to 30 washes, with the treatment continuing to be effective for up to 50 washes.

Newly released is the Women's specific design of the Verso Drysuit featuring a unique entry system combined with a drop seat function for added convenience. (Available in sizes XS-XXL and Women's Verso Drysuit in sizes 8-18)

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



Visit the Gill site to see the
full collection of products
- www.gb.gillmarine.com

Don't forget British Canoeing
members receive **15% off Gill**

Everyday Adventurer

The New Voyager Jacket



VOYAGER

A lightweight waterproof jacket offering dependable wet weather protection in changeable conditions. Minimalist design suitable for everyday use. Made using our exclusive XPLORE® 2-layer waterproof and breathable fabric.

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Gill

LEVEL UP YOUR PADDLING WITH THE BRITISH CANOEING AWARDING BODY

British Canoeing Awarding Body is the only regulated and recognised awarding organisation for paddlesport in the UK.

Our work and compliance with Ofqual, Qualification Wales and the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment ensures the highest standards of quality assurance and standardisation, providing assurances to both the participants and deployers.

Our qualifications are also mapped to the professional standards of the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) aligned to coaching national standards.

To ensure we are confident in both the qualifications' content and quality assurance, BCAB have comprehensive systems in place to scrutinise and support our work:

British Canoeing Awarding Body Governance

Quality assurance and standardisation is such an important part of the Awarding Body role, providing deployers, participants of paddlesport activity, and those attending our regulated qualifications assurances of the standards in delivery and assessment from highly experienced providers.

Due to the wonderful diversity of paddlesport activity and disciplines there are many qualifications and awards to choose from, whether you want to coach formal sessions, lead trips and journeys, obtain recognition of your personal skill or take part in a safety training course, British Canoeing Awarding Body has something for everyone.

Qualifications and Awards

The main for of the British Canoeing Awarding Body is to support the learning and development of those engaged with paddlesport activity. Our new website has its own individualised Learning Management System, an eShop, a sophisticated search function within our digital library with over 2000 resources, and an added internet BOT to provide instant customer service support.

Digital library

For members of British Canoeing, Canoe Wales, Scottish Canoe Association and Canoe Association of Northern Ireland, you get FREE access to eLearning worth £130.

Have you seen and used the BCAB Self Analysis Tools?

The award winning Self-Analysis Tools can be used to help you identify any development areas, signposting you to courses and other learning resources for you to consider. The tools are discipline specific and aimed at Coaches, as well and Leaders and Raft Guides.

Helpful links:



Coach Self-Analysis Tool



Leader and Raft Guide Self-Analysis Tool



VISIT THE BRITISH CANOEING AWARDING BODY WEBSITE HERE

JOURNEYS INTO SUP RACING

WITH SUP JUNKIE, SARAH THORNELY



Words by Sarah Thornely (SUP Junkie)

Following on from my piece “Have you heard about SUP racing”, I thought I would highlight three women who have caught the racing bug to showcase the transition from leisure paddler to SUP racer.

Sarah Perkins

Sarah was a sporty kid before “a wonky shoulder and wonky knee” put paid to climbing and running. She found SUP by accident at a demo and all she remembers is someone shouting at her from the beach that she had the paddle round the wrong way – we’ve all been there, right?

She loves paddleboarding as it’s very accessible with low-tech gear and also low impact on the body. We are also an island nation with many, many waterways so no shortage of places to paddle.

Sarah fell in love with SUP surfing first and is now obsessed with the surf report and gets out as much as she can. Fearful of competition, her first was in windsurfing where she “whinged and moaned because I was terrified of taking part in a competition! I took the plunge and had great fun. There was a good crowd, fab after-party and, importantly, it made me realise that competition is not just for pros or elite athletes.”

As soon as she got into SUP the idea of entering a race seemed like the logical thing to do to bring on her skills and fitness. She started in 2017 by entering Naish One Design comps, where everyone races on exactly the same board type. There she met “the nicest group of people, who are all still firm friends.”

Now, she attends as many national races as she can, and last year entered an international competition where at the age of 50, won a bronze and silver medal. Not bad for a girl who was scared to compete!

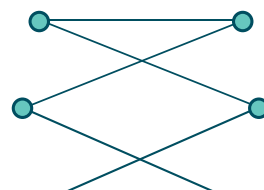
Karen Greener

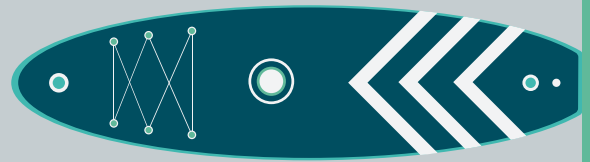
Karen from Durham started when her partner Bruce took her on a date to a local river, handed her a wetsuit and a Nisco board and said let’s see how you do it! A couple of days later she joined her local Club, the Northern SUP Race Team, on a casual afternoon paddle with the promise of a bacon butty. She became hooked.

Karen had been an active woman with running and strength training being her passions until a knee injury stopped her competing in half marathons and running events. She believes paddleboarding is like running on water only better.

“The more I paddled, the more I felt I rediscovered my old running self – paddling reignited my love of fitness and exercise.”

So, a few weeks after discovering SUP, Karen entered the Naish One Design race in Emsworth and her fear of racing was very real. I remember meeting Karen on that day and encouraging her to just “have a go” – nerves and tears later turned into beaming smiles and she came away hungry for more. That’s all to do with the incredibly supportive community. Coming up for her 55th birthday, Karen feels fitter and stronger than ever and SUP has helped her through grief and keeps her head clear and heart happy. She has also won many medals and has been a National Champion with the GBSUP National Series.





Sarah Marshall

Sarah is also from Wales. Cycling and mountain biking were her passions in her early 40's and then cyclo-cross racing. She's also dabbled in XC MTB races. These sports "toughened me up and taught me a lot."

Having spotted SUP through a friend's holiday photos on social media and whilst taking a break after an injury, Sarah wanted a gentle exercise to keep her moving. She wanted to strengthen her back and core and also loved water. So, a friend gave her a whistle-stop tour of the basics and safety aspects and Sarah then turned up at her local SUP social event in Cardiff. Paddling with like-minded people in and around Cardiff and Barry gave her the confidence to attend a weekend adventure trip, where she was motivated to develop her skills and knowledge further.

Cardiff hosts one of the **GBSUP National Series** races so Sarah decided to enter the One Design class in 2019. She enjoyed the preparation, whilst improving her fitness and picking up race tips along the way. She said "It was quite daunting getting to a start line for the first time but the race was brilliant and I found the community really welcoming." Since then, she has been regularly training at the Cardiff International White Water Centre, who have invested in race boards. Sarah has been able to road test them all and found that invaluable in then deciding on her own, recently purchased, race board. There has also been a huge amount of help from local athletes too who are always generous with their time and knowledge.

Sarah has since dabbled in flat water, ocean tech, SUP-bike-run triathlon and white water SUP at Hurley Weir. She's a self-confessed "dabbler, who likes to mix things up, not a focussed athlete but I can turn up to a competitive event with my own personal goals. That sense of achievement and progress can be addictive, and there's usually good coffee, cake and company."

Last thoughts from Sarah Perkins...


"Don't worry about where you might place in a race, but instead think of it as an adventure paddle with great safety cover. I entered one of my first races with my sister with us paddling SUP surf boards. We came dead last but laughed our way round the course. The GBSUP race scene offers lots of events and is very inclusive, with age categories from juniors to 60+. Take the plunge, enter a race, your 80-year-old self with thank you."

These ladies started on inflatable boards and had a great deal of fun competing in one of the many events around the UK. They have since transitioned to race specific boards. The fun is there, whatever board you race. It's all about the SUP community who are welcoming, especially to first-time racers.


We very much look forward to seeing you on the water and at a SUP racing event!




JOHN WILLIS TAKES ON A 108 MILE PADDLE CHALLENGE

For our May Paddler Spotlight, we were delighted to catch up with John Willis, the founder of  Power2Inspire, as he prepares for his 108 mile paddle challenge on the River Thames this summer.

Power2Inspire was established after a triathlon relay in September 2013. John Willis, who was born without fully formed arms and legs, teamed up with his non-disabled friends to participate in a triathlon relay at Eton Dorney rowing lake. John took on the swimming leg, and together with his friends, they surpassed their goal of not finishing last, securing the 18th position out of 27 teams. More importantly, they discovered the joy of participating in a mixed ability team. Inspired by an advert featuring non-disabled players joining a wheelchair user in a basketball game, John established the core mission of Power2Inspire - 'Inclusion through sport'.

Determined to ensure that his own childhood experience of exclusion from sports would not be repeated, John created  PowerHouseGames. These inclusive sports days bring together students from state, independent, and SEN (Special Educational Needs) schools, along with sports stars and university students, to form mixed teams that engage in a variety of inclusive and adapted sports. Over the years, PowerHouseGames has grown from strength to strength, and what started with a single event in 2018 has expanded to more than 20 events planned for this year.

To celebrate its 10 year anniversary, Power2Inspire has launched its largest fundraiser to date, the  **108 Challenge**. From July 23rd to July 30th, John will embark on a 108 mile paddle along the River Thames, starting from Cricklade and ending at Eton Dorney. We're proud to offer our support for John's brilliant challenge.



The route has been broken down into 21 smaller sections, giving fellow paddlers the opportunity to join John in the kayak for each two-hour section.

Taking on this challenge does not come without difficulties for John. He shared that one of the main obstacles for him when kayaking is holding the paddle. Therefore, this required some clever thinking and adaptation - a ring attached to the paddle for his right arm where he is able to use his elbow. John has graduated from a prosthetic arm attachment connected to the paddle to a metal ring at right-angles to the paddle. This latter version means he does not need to wear any prosthesis, and as he rotates the ring it creates the necessary resistance for him to pull without any risk of it sliding off.

Thanks to John and Power2Inspire for sharing their brilliant challenge, we wish them all the best with their paddle this summer.

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!

Share your stories and photos with us via our form here:
**britishcanoeing.
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JUNE PADDLER SPOTLIGHT

Words by **Aisha Garwood**

#SHEPADDLES AMBASSADOR SUPPORTS ANNUAL WOMEN'S REGATTA IN BIRMINGHAM

For our June Paddler Spotlight, we had the pleasure of catching up with 22/23 #ShePaddles Ambassador, Aisha Garwood, about the annual Women's Regatta in Birmingham. In May, 17 teams took to the city's canal in an action packed bell boating regatta.

I was delighted to support this year's Women's Regatta held at Star City in Birmingham. The event, now in its second year, took place along the stretch of canal at Nechells and saw dozens of women and girls try their hand at bell boat racing. Many Birmingham residents were unaware that the Grand Union Canal ran behind Star City, but with 17 teams competing and around 200 attendees, the success of the event certainly brought attention to this hidden gem.

The teams participating in the regatta were divided into different categories, including mixed youth teams ranging from ages 7 to 15, as well as women's adult teams. Most teams represented community organisations such as Oscar Birmingham, who support those with Sickle Cell Anaemia & Thalassaemia; and Legacy West Midlands whose work celebrates and supports the diverse collective cultural heritage within the city.

Team MadSat, a rafting team who joined us from Herefordshire, won first place on the day. It was great to have a team from out of town and we hope more teams will join us from around the city and further afield in the future as this is set to be an annual event.

"It was a fantastic event, held in true community spirit." - Nick, Team MadSat

The event was made possible through a collaboration between the Canal & River Trust and Star City. Aliur Rahman and Andy Train established the event in 2022 with the aim of encouraging women's participation on the water, providing them with an opportunity to race and promoting community cohesion alongside the many benefits being on the water brings.

"This event just highlights how great it is when communities come together with a shared passion. I have not felt so happy or exhilarated in some time!" - Karen Rees, Team MadSat

"The Women's regatta was a fun filled day celebrating the strength of women from across Birmingham. The day embraced women of all shapes and sizes and broke down the stereo-typical views of 'women can't' or 'women shouldn't'. I had such an amazing day and everyone was a winner! It takes a lot of stamina and commitment to participate, so a huge shout out to the ladies for testing their endurance and to the organisers who made this day possible for everyone!" - Ayesha, Team Peaky Blinders

The event would not have been possible without the support of local sponsors as well as the many volunteers who ensured the smooth and safe running of the races on the day. In addition to the Women's Regatta, work is well underway across the city encouraging more people onto the water through **community paddling hubs** along the canal in Nechells, Winson Green, Perry Barr, Aston and Ladywood and South Birmingham Paddle Club being established in Selly Oak.

All sites will be offering come and try sessions this summer for either kayaking, bell boating or both. For more details on these events, you can get in touch with me on Instagram at @aisha_paddle_community or take a look at upcoming events **here**.



BRITISH SUCCESS ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

European Games


Five medals for TeamGB as canoe slalom makes its European Games debut

Ryan Westley (Lower Wharfe) became the men's C1 European Games Champion as Britain won a total of five medals at the slalom European Games with the discipline making its debut in the competition.

Battling back from injury, Ryan put down an incredible run to win his first individual medal in four years.

Mallory Franklin (Windsor & District) and Joe Clarke (Stafford & Stone) won bronze in the women's C1 and men's K1 respectively in Krakow, whilst Mallory joined forces with Kimberley Woods (Rugby) and Sophie Ogilvie (CR Cats) to win the women's C1 team silver.

Ryan Westley, Adam Burgess (Stafford & Stone) and James Kettle (Lee Valley) rounded off a successful meet by winning men's C1 team bronze.


 Read all the round ups from **the European Games here**

Lifetime best secured for canoe sprint at European Games in Krakow

Izzy Evans stormed to a lifetime best individual result in the final of the C1 200m at the European Games in Krakow.

Team GB's women's K4 crew finished in eighth place in the final of the 500m as Deborah Kerr (Anker Valley), Emma Russell (Chelmsford), Emily Lewis (Worcester) and Rebii Simon (Elmbridge) secured their fifth consecutive A Final.

Jonathan Jones (Fladbury) and Ben Phillips (Richmond) made their Team GB debut in the C2 500m with Beth Gill (Chelmsford) and Katie Reid (Forth) also in action in the C2 500m both making the semi-finals.

 Full round ups of the racing can be found **here**




Woods and Clarke win gold as British slalom team claim five World Cup medals in early season campaign

The British slalom team have been in fine form to kick off the international season at the first three World Cups of the series!

The squad has won a fantastic five medals across the three races, including two gold in the brand new Olympic discipline for Paris 2024, Kayak Cross!

Rio Olympic Champion Joe Clarke got the medals underway in Augsburg, winning silver and bronze in the men's K1 and kayak cross respectively. Mallory Franklin came away with a K1 bronze on her first race of the year in Prague, before Kimberley Woods won an incredible gold in the kayak cross.

Joe Clarke made it three medals in Tacen winning gold in the kayak cross.

 Read about all the early **season racing here!**



Nine medals at Canoe Sprint and Paracanoe World Cup

Britain were back in the medals as the canoe sprint and paracanoe international season kicked off at the Szeged and Poznan World Cups.


The world-leading paracanoe team came away with nine medals from the first World Cup in Szeged, topping the medal table once again.

Stu Wood returned to international racing after being diagnosed with Stage 3b Hodgkin lymphoma back in 2021 to win gold in the men's VL3.

There were also gold medals for Charlotte Henshaw MBE (KL2 & VL3), Emma Wiggs MBE (VL2) and Jonny Young (KL3).

Emma Wiggs claimed her second medal of the weekend with silver in the KL2, Hope Gordon took silver women's VL3, Laura Sugar MBE won silver in the KL3, whilst Jeanette Chippington OBE rounded off the medals for Britain with bronze in the women's KL1.

In the canoe sprint, the women's K4 crew claimed their fourth consecutive A Final, whilst Dan Johnson and Tom Lusty too secured top nine finishes in the men's K1 1000m and 500m respectively to get the season off to a strong start.


 Check out all the round-ups from the **two events here**



Canoe Marathon success at the European Championships and World Cup

A 13-strong team of Canoe Marathon athletes were in Slavonski Brod, Croatia for the 2023 ECA Canoe Marathon European Championship. The Brits brought home five fabulous medals. Grete Roeser's (Wey) marathon talent shone through as she earnt gold in the junior women's short course race and a silver in the long course. She then teamed up with Sienna Payne (Chelmsford) for the junior K2 long course to claim another silver. Payne also secured bronze in the short course and Harry Freeland (Reading) made it five with a silver in the junior men's short course.


Earlier in the season Chelmsford paddler Melissa Johnson claimed a bronze medal in the K1 women's short course race at the 2023 ICF Canoe Marathon World Cup in Ruse, Bulgaria.

 Read more **here**

Gold Rush at Junior and U23 Wildwater Racing World Championships

Kerry Christie became a three time world champion at the World Championships in the Czech Republic. The 20-year-old took the U23 Women's K1 classic gold medal and then went on to claim a second gold with the help of her sister Emma in the U23 Women's C2. She rounded the gold rush off with a gold in the U23 Women's K1 classic team race alongside Lucy Guest and Molly Sandercock. The Christie sisters also secured a silver medal in the U23 Women's C2 sprint.

Kerry achieved an incredible fifth medal in winning bronze alongside Lucy Guest and Laura Milne in the U23 women's K1 sprint team final. Guest also claimed a bronze in the U23 Women's K1 classic.

 Check out the full round ups fromt the championships **here**.

COME AND BE PART OF SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY!



The 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships is coming to the UK at the iconic Lee Valley White Water Centre from 19-24 September 2023

Built for the London 2012 Olympic Games, Lee Valley White Water Centre is renowned across the globe as one of the best white water courses in the world and this year it will play host to around 300 of the world's best athletes from across 50 countries as they battle it out across a week of high octane competition.


Join us and experience the thrill of the action as GB's top stars including Olympic medallists Mallory Franklin and Joe Clarke MBE, take on the best in the world on home turf, to compete for the coveted world title - and British quota places for the Paris 2024 Olympics too.

With live entertainment, great food, opportunities to try paddling and lots, lots more, the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships promises to be an action packed event with something for everyone to enjoy.

Prices start from as little as £1 a day, with two-day weekend and full event passes also available.

 [Click here to see the full competition schedule running from 19-24 September](#)

Lee Valley last hosted an international competition in 2019 when the ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup came to London. Britain won a grand total of seven medals over the three day event - GB's best ever result at a World Cup.

For more information about the 2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships,  [visit the event website here.](#)

All this plus much much more!

Spectator Activities

There isn't just exciting action on the water at the event, there's a host of spectator activities to keep the whole family entertained. This will include:

Fan Zone

You will enter the site through the fan zone where you'll find a big screen to catch all the action and fabulous food and drink stalls, there will also be range of interactive activities and brands on offer to check out in between the racing.

Family Fun Zone

With a Best of British theme, on Saturday and Sunday, the family fun zone will host a range of activities to entertain the whole family including: bouncy castle and inflatable slide, fairground stalls, arts and crafts, as well as garden games.

Have a go activity

Inspired by the world's best? Saturday and Sunday, spectators will have the chance to try paddling for yourself on the flatwater lake. A range of boats and stand up paddle boards will be available for people to try.

Exciting music and performances

There will be music and entertainment throughout the event with live performances taking place on the stage in the middle of the course, including a live DJ set, with Friday and Saturday seeing live bands playing the Best of British playlist through the day.



19-24 SEPTEMBER 2023

LEE VALLEY WHITE WATER CENTRE

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£1 for children
£6 for adults



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Stay at the heart of the action at our ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships, Lee Valley Pop-up Campsite



19 – 24 September 2023

With six days of competition at the world-renowned white water course, this is a unique opportunity to watch 300 of the world's best athletes from across 50 countries battle it out across a week of high-octane competition.

Our pop-up campsite is situated onsite at Lee Valley White Water Centre and is the perfect base to take in all the action and visit the local area. Places are limited so book now!

Find out more camc.com/canoeingpopup

Why not hire a Motorhome or campervan for your visit?
It's a cost-effective holiday option that gives you the freedom to explore more.

Find out more experiencefreedom.co.uk/motorhome-hire



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