

Undercurrents

Climber death has canoeing implications

A climber has been found guilty of gross negligent manslaughter after his less experienced girlfriend, whom he was leading near the summit of the Grossglockner, died of hypothermia following a number of poor decisions and failures. The important question was whether errors of personal judgement and risk taking amounted to criminal liability by a tour leader. Consideration was given to discussions on social media, incriminating for the defendant. It is worrying that social media discussions should affect a court case outcome. There are implications for other mountain sports, which must include canoeing, and the question arises over who is the group leader when a group of friends of similar skill levels meet up to paddle together. It is different when there is a paid professional leading, not the case here. In many circumstances

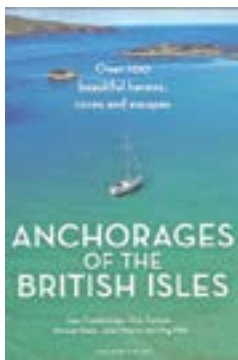
nobody would think of appointing a leader when friends go paddling together. Each participant is responsible for his own safety but may need to make changes for the safety of the group. One thing on which climbers all seem to be agreed is that they do not want non climbers imposing rules. Think: all canoeists must wear lifejackets at all times.

Restoration of CRT funding

The Government have reinstated £6,500,000 of the cuts to CRT's grant in the face of public outcry. This is in addition to the £52,600,000 of grant remaining but comes before the major breach on the Llangollen Canal at Whitchurch is taken into consideration.

BOOKS

Anchorage of the British Isles



Jane Cumberlidge, Dick Durham, Norman Kean, Jonty Pearce & Dag Pike
Adlard Coles
978 1 3994 2354 0
2026
230 x 150mm
250 pages, paperback
£20.00

A long running series in *Yachting Monthly* forms the basis for a selection of favourite anchorages for sailors throughout the British Isles, including the Channel Islands.

Five authors are involved. Norman Kean and Jonty Pearce are new to us but I have reviewed Dick Durham's biography of

cartoonist Peyton and appreciate his personal and historical anecdotes in this book. I reviewed Jane Cumberlidge's guides to the inland waterways of Great Britain and Ireland. The late Dag Pike's series of guides to hidden harbours of southwest Britain, Wales and the northwest have all been reviewed here, plus his book on weather forecasting and I even proofread his *Storms & Wild Water*.

Most locations have two page spreads, sometimes three pages. Photographs often include aerial views. Chartlets do not have scales, perhaps because you will have alternatives for navigation, but do show drying areas. Often they are chosen for their wildlife, which many of us on the water appreciate. Pubs and eating places are indicated where available but they may lack facilities completely, may not have road access and sometimes are inaccessible even on foot. Frequently they are peaceful, often noisy because of wildlife, the aircraft noise of Ronaldsway being an exception. The ticks of Barmore Island on Loch Fyne carry an isolated warning. Swimming beaches are suggested frequently.

Sailors are advised how to nudge in and drop their hooks without denting their boats but have the advantage of eating and sleeping aboard, paddlers needing to think for themselves. Sailors should get

their dinghies out to explore further when conditions prove difficult for bigger boats, obviously more appropriate for sea kayaks. A couple of kayaks are shown on the beach at Fermain Bay on Guernsey and they are mentioned, sometimes with hire, at Blackpool Sands, Hope Cove, Green Bay on Bryher, Solva and Poll Creadha. The 'dream harbour of the north-west' is Acairseid Mhór on Rona (May, p33).

The authors stand up to the excesses of naturalists. Anchoring in Studland Bay, an important weather shelter, is subject to a voluntary no-anchor zone because of seagrass but Durham says 'I went for a swim off Middle Beach and certainly within 50m (164ft) or so of the shore there was no seagrass, weed or any other flora growing on the seabed which I could clearly see was bald sand.'

Of the Shiant Isles Pearce suggests 'Time your visit to coincide with the breeding season (late April to mid-July) and you will never forget the extraordinary experience of a plethora of seabirds flying in all directions, zipping overhead as they return to their young with beaks full of fish.'

He ends Skomer's South Haven 'there's no restriction on the joys of pottering round South Haven in the tender, enjoying the wildlife and fauna at close quarters.' The Pembrokeshire Marine Code has a 100m exclusion zone round the whole island except for landing at North Haven for the paying public. Around the time we published our guide to Skomer there was a ban for half the year for nesting birds and a ban for the other half because of breeding seals. You could go round in February but not land or could pay to walk on the island, more disturbing to wildlife.

There is a lot here that you won't find in tourist guides.

CRT advice improved

The dangerous *Canoeing, Kayaking & Paddleboarding for Beginners* (Nov 22, p38) has gone from the CRT website and been replaced with novice canoeing advice which is significantly better. The list of suggested destinations has the Gloucester & Sharpness and Montgomery Canals, the Fossdyke Navigation, the Lancaster Canal still there and the Llangollen Canal but, most importantly, the Prees Branch, not the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. The Kennet & Avon Canal with the Bruce Tunnel has also gone. There is useful advice on photographing wildlife from canoes and issues relating to invasive species although confusion over dimensions could result in meeting some rather large insects. The only issue still to be addressed is tunnels and portaging them although this is a guide for beginners.

River Leven restored

SEPA have been restoring the River Leven in Fife. The aim is to transform the area into an exceptional place to live, work and visit with new opportunities for active travel and for recreation connecting with nature with implications for positive health outcomes.

Bathing water standards

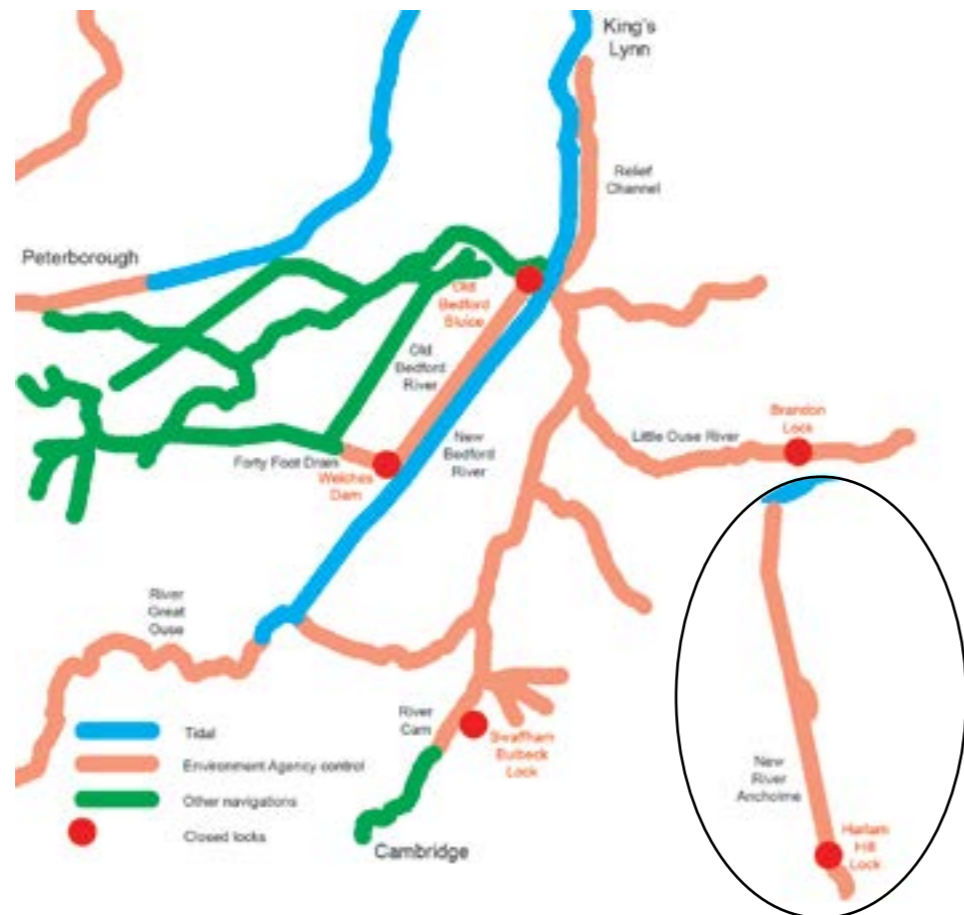
In 2025 449 designated inland waters and beaches were monitored for England. Of these, 87% were Excellent or Good and 6% were Sufficient, an improvement on the previous year. Those designated as Poor decreased to 7%. The number of Official Bathing Spots in England has now crept up by 13. The new ones are Amble Little Shore on the River Coquet, Newton and Noss creeks in Devon, Canvey Island Foreshore, Sandgate Granville Parade beach as enjoyed by kayak users and, in the past, Hattie Jacques and HG Wells, Salisbury, Bridport, the Thames at Pangbourne, Ham and Kingston, Lostwithiel, the Swale in Richmond, Falcon Meadow in Bungay, New Brighton east beach and the River Dee at Chester.

While Bournemouth and Boscombe beaches are recorded as Excellent by the EA that does not necessarily apply for the water off them, which can be affected by wildlife, litter, misconnections and road runoff as well as treated effluent discharges and storm overflows. Wessex Water have installed buoys off piers at the two beaches to give more accurate information on water status, available on their Sea Check app.

SEPA have released their predictions for Scottish Bathing Waters for 2026, based on figures for the last four years. They rate 47 as Excellent, 26 as Good and 13 as Sufficient. Only Lower Largo, Kinghorn and Fisherrow Sands, all on the Firth of Forth, are rated as Poor.

Boundary Waters acid test

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota gets 250,000 visitors a year, one of the most popular wilderness areas in the USA. Ely has had iron mining for many years but a ban on copper and nickel sulphide mining upstream of the wilderness area has been upheld until now. This has now been reversed. When the chemicals are exposed to air and water the result is sulphuric acid, which is likely to be devastating for the wilderness area.



Further wildlife pond

Wern Pond, 1.5m deep, has been opened next to the Montgomery Canal. Restorers of this canal have already had to install more wildlife reserves here than on any other canal in Britain.

And I quote...

'It has been my privilege to canoe down some of the most wonderful rivers in the world. My great desire, before I shuffle off this mortal coil, is to canoe down all the great rivers of the world. I have done the Amazon, the Mississippi and the Congo but there are so many more to do. Rivers are an incredible joy in life; we really must understand them, promote them and restore them and we must ensure that we give them health because they give us life.'

Astonishingly, this seems to be the same Barry Gardiner (Lab, Brent W) who, as a Minister, went out of his way to undermine the access agreement on the Waveney, one of the very few to have been achieved, with a replacement shorter in length and more restrictive in time, new canoeing platforms relabelled as canoeing and angling platforms, and generally being seen as somebody opposed to boats. He was taking part in a parliamentary debate on Habitats, Protection & Restoration. Can somebody who is so opposed to canoeing in Britain have canoed a number of the world's great rivers and have a thirst for more?

Scottish water consultation

SEPA have been preparing their fourth River Basin Management Plan. This will be presented to the public for further consultation in December. Issues include water use, physical condition of rivers, barriers to fish, rural diffuse pollution and wastewater.

EA lock closing continues

The EA are pressing on with their policy of closing locks on navigations in the Fens. Latest to go is the Old Bedford Sluice. Most of the Old Bedford River, between Welches Dam and Denver Sluice, cannot now be reached from either end. This follows closure of Brandon Lock on the Little Ouse River and Harlam Hill Lock on the New River Ancholme while Swaffham Bulbeck Lock has been redesignated as a flood relief feature. All of these closures are for an indefinite period with no plans for reopening. The EA say they cannot afford to address the problems although they do not seem to be short of funds for breaching coastal flood defences and public footpaths or converting swathes of farmland to swamp for birds. They have also refused to allow voluntary bodies to undertake repair work.

While canoeists can portage obstructions, the condition of these

navigation channels steadily deteriorates to the point where even canoeists cannot use them. These come in addition to other navigation problems. There can be no doubt that this is a deliberate policy by the EA to prevent the use of boats, in the same way they are opposed to the use of canoes on 98% of rivers in England and Wales. The time is overdue for CRT to take control of navigation on all our rivers in the same way that Great British Railways are taking control of the various failing railway franchises.



Looking west from Welches Dam in 1993 and 2017.

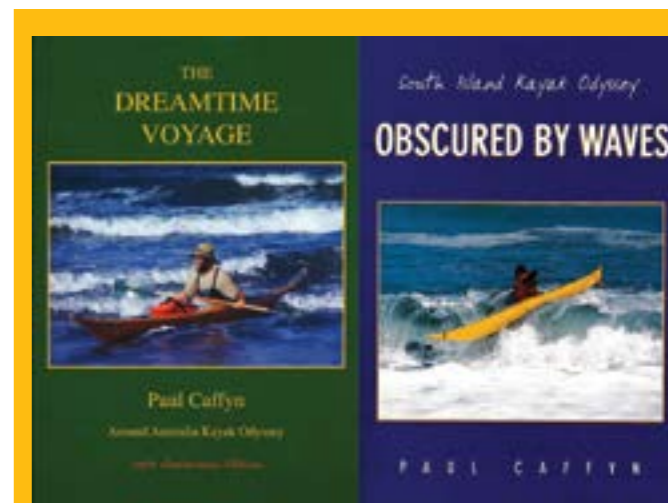
INCIDENT FILE

Epic swim rescue

A family in southwest Australia, a mother, sons 13 and 12 and daughter of eight, were paddling 1km offshore with a kayak and a couple of inflatable paddleboards when they went out a bit further than intended and were carried further away as wave size increased. It was decided that the older boy would go in the kayak for help while the mother kept the rest of the family together.

The kayak had been damaged and was shipping water, eventually capsizing. He abandoned it and swam for shore, eventually shedding his buoyancy aid as it was hindering him. After four hours in the water he finally reached the beach, found his mother's bag and used her phone to call for help.

By this time it was getting dark. Each of the family must have been wondering who, if any of them, would survive. No rescue boat was coming so the older son may have been lost. Wave size was increasing and the offshore party ended up in the water, holding onto the paddleboards. They were 14km offshore when help finally came. All were rescued with only minor injuries, an outcome better than any of them might have dared to hope, as a result of the epic swim by the 13 year old.



**Paul Caffyn
Klassic Kayaking
Books**

Now available in England, both the Australian and South Island books.

Sadly, the exorbitant cost of overseas postage has killed off mailing these A4 size books from NZ.

However, an old work colleague, Mick, loads up his hand luggage after he visits NZ annually. He has already sold out of the recent 2nd edition of the Stewart Island book but the two classics are available in England from: paulskayakbooksuk@gmail.com

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Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or publishers.

Governing body enquiries

Canoeist is the not for profit magazine of Paddlers International. Enquiries to governing bodies and associations should be addressed as appropriate.

On show

Boats



The Worldwide Classic Boat Show has been one of the best virtual exhibitions to have resulted from Covid lockdowns. Based in Maine, it has a North American emphasis but with exhibitors from around the world. Here is a small selection of exhibits.



Faerie is a 1.2m folding coracle tender of 2015, fitting into a sailing boat cockpit.



Wayne Timmo's Haereere is a Bob's Special built in 2018 in cedar strip but incorporating decoration using North American cedar and such New Zealand timbers as miro, rimu and rewarewa which were harvested over a century ago.



Mary Oliver is a 3.7m Herbert of 2013.



A 3.7m skin on frame ultra lightweight Hawaiian outrigger concept.



A 4.6m stitch and glue Fox of 2006.



This 3.6m Friedel Otter is built of three colours of cedar and skinned inside and out with glassfibre.



Sylph is a 4.6m sailing canoe of 2004.



A 4m Oughtred McGregor trimaran sailing canoe of 2004.



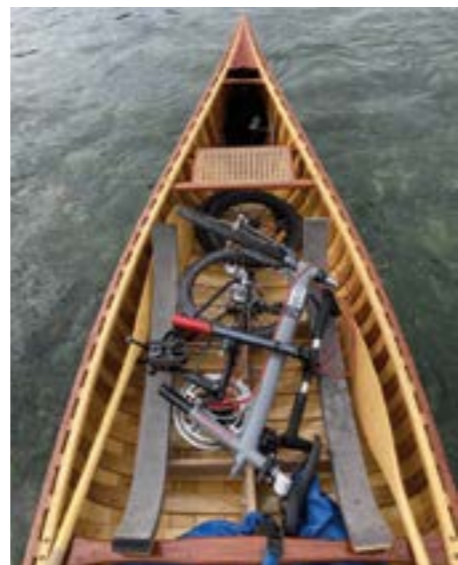
Shooting Star of 2018 is a 4.9m Baidarka.



Joy is a Monfort Arrow 14 with a clear vinyl skin, to puzzle spectators.



A 5.5m expedition kayak of 2007.



Bean wood and canvas canoe, first home build by Chip Asbury and son, in Seattle during lockdown, powered by Zeeks pizza and Fremont Sky Kraken hazy pale ale.



This touring canoe of about 1915 has unusually long decks for a cosy space for two.



This 1900 Kingsbury canoe has a lateen sailing rig.



Shirley is a 5.2m Greenley kayak built in 2022.



A 5.2m Steve Killing kayak of 2016.



This AA grade canoe was purchased in 1912 by 1st Viscount Runciman of Doxford, Northumberland, whose 1938 diplomatic mission to Czechoslovakia on behalf of Neville Chamberlain's government was key to the enactment of the British policy of appeasement of Hitler preceding the Second World War. The canoe is a model MC of which only a handful were made. It is very probably the sole remaining MC.



Muskeego, a 5.2m Ojibway birch bark canoe of 1999.



Patrick McCorkle built his Murrelet from a Pygmy Kayaks kit.



Corona is a 5.5m double, inevitably built in 2021.



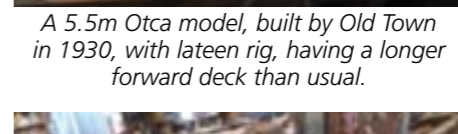
Ootek is a 5.2m Rob Macks/Laughing Loon sea kayak.



An Old Town Molitor of 2021.



This 5.5m 2024 touring canoe is traditional in style with glassfibre skin and optional ribs.



A 5.5m Otca model, built by Old Town in 1930, with lateen rig, having a longer forward deck than usual.



Espluges Sea Spirit kayaks are standard designs or can be custom built in a wide range of materials from okume and bamboo to carbon fibre, with extensive design changes as required.



Thought to be a 1901 model by the company that would become Old Town, the bow and stern lashings are similar to those of a birchbark canoe.



Nick Schade has plans for high performance Guillemot Kayaks models



A 5.5m Thomas Willow/Quickbeam kayak.



Gator Won is a cedar strip 5.5m freighter with a powerful Mercury outboard.



Wharram Pahi 63 Largyalo built by a German couple in France, heading for French Polynesia.



These 6.1m Mekong long tail canoes are driven by small petrol engines.



Tawli Pasana, a 7.6m Papua New Guinea sailing canoe used for inter island transport.



Leif Knutsen's Min Pike is a Pacific North West First Nation Native motif canoe but CAD cut from 6 and 9mm plywood.



The 11m Gondola Rosanna was built in 1958, later moving from Venice via Stratford on Avon to Germany.



This 11m Venetian gondola replica was built in 2024 but in 1880s styling although without the roofed centre.



Hokule'a is an 18.9m Hawaiian double hulled voyaging canoe of 1975.

Museums



The Center for Wooden Boats in Seattle and on Camano Island offers hands on experience of over 100 wooden boats plus boatbuilding classes.

Clubs and communities



The Arbeitskreis für Historischen Schiffbau in Ostfriesland was established to restore a tjalk but now primarily assists unemployed youth in Emden.



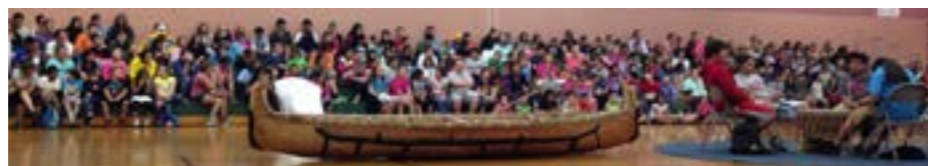
The Polynesian Voyaging Society seek to perpetuate the art and science of traditional Polynesian voyaging.



The Traditional Small Boat Squadron of Australia are in Canberra, building, restoring and using them on the water.



The Traditional Small Craft Association Oregon Coos Chapter are nuts about all kinds of boats in the Willamette Valley.



Wiigwaasi-Jiimaan is a project by the University of Wisconsin and the Lac du Flambeau Lake Superior Chippewa Indians to build an Ojibwa birchbark canoe.

Schools



Cape Falcon Kayak of Portland, Oregon, offer skin on frame kayaks and canoes, especially with Arctic associations, and with building video instruction online.



The essence of the Small Boat School in Copenhagen is having fun while building boats with online instruction. The boat is simply a by product but one which offers further fun.



The Sultana Education Foundation in Chestertown, Maryland, explores and preserves the natural and human history of Chesapeake Bay.



Urban Boatbuilders take youths aged 12-21 to build and launch their own craft over 70 hours.

Festivals, shows and regattas



Boston Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival was the first dragon boat regatta in the US.



Concord Pacific Dragon Boat Festival has racing, music shows, cultural events, interactive performances, local artisans, shopping, food and family activities.



Florida Gulf Coast Small Boat Meet at Cedar Key is part of the recovery process after the 2024 hurricane season.



Lake Union Wooden Boat Festival is an annual celebration of wooden boats in Seattle, where much is going on, everything is fun and most of it is free.



Maine Canoe Symposium is a non profit event to appreciate North American canoeing heritage and develop skills.



Pirogue regatta, based on those used by the fishermen of Mauritius.

Marine trades and yards



Régates 1900 in Cenon-sur-Vienne in early 20th century costume includes canoe and other races, live music and Vete Venitienne, an illuminated parade.



Steveston Dragon Boat Festival, British Columbia.



Toronto International Dragon Boat Race Festival is one of Toronto's signature cultural events with, typically, over 5,000 paddlers on the water.



Vogalonga Venezia is a 30km race, not too serious, from the Piazza San Marco through the Lagoon, typically with 6,000 people in anything unpowered that floats but a protest event against powered craft damaging the city.



Bayles Boat Shop of Port Jefferson are planning to expand into other youth and community building programmes.



The students of Eden Canoes build canoes and also build teams in their aboriginal community and go on to explore the waterways from Merimbula to Kiah.



Laughing Loon have strip canoes and kayaks, plans, instruction books and instructional films.



NorthWest Canoe of Clearwater, Minnesota, offer a canoe building and repair shop.

Supplies, charters and resources



Northwoods Canoe Co of Atkinson, Maine, build and restore wood and canvas canoes and offer kits and building classes.



Newfound Woodworks of Bristol, New Hampshire, provide kits, plans, books, materials and tools for building cedar strip canoes and kayaks.



Atlantic Coastal Kayaker are in Ipswich, Massachusetts.



Vendia Woods make pine plywood for boatbuilding and run summer canoe building courses in Finland.



Old Town Canoes & Kayaks are based in Maine.



Nomad Boatbuilding design, build and restore wooden boats from Victoria, British Columbia, emphasizing education.



Venture Sail Holidays of Redruth run sailing holidays that are not just sailing.



TenderCraft Boat Shop of White Salmon, Washington, custom build and refurbish woodstrip canoes and kayaks and have varnishes, finishes, rare fittings and advice.



Shaw & Tenney of Orono, Maine, have been making quality paddles since 1858.



West System epoxy has been used for building and repairing boats since 1969.



White Salmon build custom woodstrip canoes and kayaks.



Among the show's lecturers was Hanneke Boon on her life with Wharram canoes.

Back then

50 years ago



- * The British Canoe Manufacturers Association settled their differences with the BCU and there was a return to having a single national canoe exhibition at Crystal Palace.
- * A North of England wild water race series could be block booked at £5 for all ten races instead of 80p each.
- * Andy Morton was Scottish Canoeist of the Year.
- * A Soviet slalom site was constructed on the Southern Bug to hold major Russian events.
- * Denzil Davies of the Treasury told *White Water* why glassfibre for canoes was rated at 25% VAT although the rate was 12.5% for glassfibre for other purposes.
- * Only 3% of slalom kayaks made ever saw a slalom course, mostly being for general purpose use.
- * Six south Pacific islanders paddled a 4.9m canoe from the Yap Islands to Okinawa in 49 days.
- * Ace produced the unbreakable Lexan Polycarbonate helmet.
- * There was a delay of a couple of minutes during the Ouse long distance race after a pile up of competitors in a reed bed on an S bend.
- * The first Tees Race was deranked because of excess of ice and shortage of water, most seeded competitors withdrawing.