

### Wilde award

John Wilde has been voted life membership unanimously by the New South Wales Sea Kayak Club. He first made his mark in paddling as a slalom C1 paddler with Aberystwyth University Canoe Club before shifting to sea kayaks, especially in North America. In subsequent decades he has been mostly in Australia and was Australia's highest qualified kayak instructor for three decades. He was head of safety for the 2000 Olympic slalom in Penrith. Winters would see him heading for the Sun Kosi for an annual fix of white water river running.

under the A34 to link up with the Thames. If you were building a high embankment to contain a large reservoir, would you want a group of canal enthusiasts to dig a channel next to it afterwards or would you prefer to use the plant already on site to excavate and shape the waterway professionally while you were still there, not to mention using the material dug out?

## Zongzi

The Dragon Boat Festival is one of Taiwan's three major annual traditional holidays, the others being the Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn Festival.



The festival commemorates the life and death of Qu Yuan, who was a patriotic poet who lived during China's Warring States period. Persecuted by corrupt officials and forced into exile, Qu drowned himself in the Miluo River as a furious protest against his government. Following his death, locals rowed their boats up and down the waters to find him. When they could not locate his body they threw rice into the river to feed the fish so they would not eat him. This practice eventually evolved into dragon boat races and the Chinese tradition of eating zongzi.



Many areas of Taiwan from New Taipei City to Yilan County and Changhua County to Kaohsiung each hold their own events to celebrate the festival. In recent years the festivities have been expanded to include international races featuring competing teams from Taiwan and abroad.

Zongzi (also referred to as meat rice tamales) is a steamed glutinous rice dumpling wrapped in bamboo leaves along with ingredients such as diced pork, mushrooms, peanuts or egg yolk. The origins of zongzi can be traced back to Qu Yuan. For the Taiwanese, however, zongzi are not merely restricted to the festival but are eaten all year round as either a snack or a light meal.

## INCIDENT FILE

### PLBs for swift response

A group of seven kayak paddlers needing rescue from near Pwll Deri at the end of November were commended by the MCA for having Personal Locator Beacons and using them. They became trapped between cliffs and deteriorating sea conditions as the wind increased and sent out a PLB call, registered with their details. Mobile phone reception was poor but a 999 call to Milford Haven eventually allowed precise details to be given to an approaching lifeboat. All weather lifeboats were sent from Fishguard and St David's, a helicopter from St Athan and rescue teams from Fishguard, St David's and Dale and a general Mayday to vessels in the area. The group were all on a lifeboat an hour after sending the first call.

### Whale eats paddler

A Chilean paddler and his inflatable packraft were taken into the mouth of a humpback whale for several seconds off Patagonia. His father was present and encouraged him to stay calm as he recorded the incident on video.

### Kiwi statistics

New Zealand accidents for 2024 put the fatality rate at one death for 100,000 boaters of all sorts. Of these, 70% were within 1.9km of the shore. Indeed, 28% were within 400m of the shore. People tend not to allow for the fact that getting swamped or capsized is more likely to happen close to the shore. In tests, most people could not swim as far or for as long as they expected. Only 2% could float for more than five minutes in a pool. Only 6% could swim 100m in a pool in under five minutes, a figure that fell to 2% in open water.

### Air lock

When paddlers end up in the water, especially non swimmers, they are sometimes kept afloat only by the air trapped in their clothing. Thus, approach should be so that wash from an approaching boat should not be allowed to knock air out of their clothes. Approach speed should be slowed so that it doesn't cause the death of the person it is attempting to save.

### Mexican rescue

Two men on a sit on top double kayak were picked up by a cruise ship off the Mexican coast. They appeared fit and well on a video taken by one of the passengers, just a long way from where they should have been with no kit.

### Unexpected seal launch

George Parsonage of Glasgow Humane Society recalls some of the issues with weirs on the Clyde in Glasgow. Among those who had not done their homework were a party of canoeists who saw flat water each side of an overhead structure. As it happened, there was a 900mm height difference and they got away with an unexpected seal launch.

### Alligator kill

A 61 year old woman was killed by an alligator on Florida's Lake Kissimmee near Tiger Creek while canoeing with her husband. In 800mm deep water, the couple were capsized then they appeared to drift over a large alligator. Her husband was unable to fight it off. This was during the mating season in May, when alligators are more likely to be aggressive. There had been a previous attack in the vicinity on a kayak this spring, a woman escaping with a bite on this first attack.

Peter Frank was also chased by an alligator in Florida this spring. The 23 year old is paddling 9,200km of the eastern USA Great Loop but in the anticlockwise direction, including going up the Mississippi, which he has already done downstream. He is using a decked canoe, a Loon, as was used by Verlen Kruger (Mar 1995, p28). Another oddity is that he is paddling dressed as a pirate as they used clothing to suit the conditions rather than modern fashionable high street outdoor gear.

### Haverfordwest judgement

A former police officer who lost four of a commercial party of seven paddleboarders she was leading on the Western Cleddau in Haverfordwest in 2021 has been jailed for over a decade. Regardless of the details of the management of the trip, it is unacceptable to all concerned that the incident has taken nearly four years to come to court or the lack of criticism of the dangerous state of the river.

### Cygnets rescue by kayak

A cygnet was extracted from behind part of Waltham Town Lock on the Lee Navigation in April by a kayak paddler. Craft were prevented from using the lock until she had completed the operation or it would have drowned.