

May 2024

# **Canoeist**



***Canoe lifeguards disband after seventy years of service***  
***Have sea kayak journeys lost their challenge?***  
***Why odd shapes in Greenland paddles were deliberate***  
***From failed canal to Europe's best restoration***



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will be. Canoeing disappears from the public perception of national sporting bodies, as it did from most high street newsagents a couple of decades ago. We have a body run by non canoeists for non canoeists. Not everyone will be unhappy about that. Defra is another body which has changed its name at various times with a conspicuous lack of promotion or even assistance for canoeists. Sometimes a name change is in the hope that the public will forget a body's previous behaviour.

Hang on! Although the BCU have come up with names suspiciously close to ours for their activities from time to time, is this just an attempt to get close to Paddlers International's name and *Paddlers World*, which we ceased using in 2022, and are we in a position to criticize? Perhaps not.

## Mewling and puking

I have been uneasy about the PI name since before I was involved and have considered changing it. What had started out as the Long River Canoeist Club in 1975 became Paddlers International before the century was out, long before most people had heard of paddleboarding, but the name was retained for historical reasons rather than changing it to something new. The *Radio Times* has been mostly about television for decades and most members of the former GMB trade union would not have had a clue about how to make a boiler, to name just a couple of other historical anachronisms. Leading clubs Friends of Allonby and Amathus give no clue to the fact that they are based in Liverpool but use names which have their own characters. Even the British open canoe group goes under the name Song of the Paddle, the title of Canadian Bill Mason's acclaimed book.

I have also been uneasy about the use of 'international'. Peter Salisbury ran the club with a central feature being the international address list of members' contacts for those travelling abroad, a list that would have GDPR problems these days. *Canoeist* is aimed at readers in Great Britain although interest from overseas is welcomed. Our paying subscribers in our print days lived in thirty different countries but they were not our target market and did not justify the international name.

Perhaps it is time for a body run by canoeists whose interest is canoeing in Britain, no more, no less.

Stuart Fisher

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### Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the editor or publishers. References to waters do not necessarily imply that access or passage is legally permitted or that they are safe in all conditions. The editor and publishers can not be held responsible for any omissions of references to hazards from notes on these waters. They do not hold themselves responsible for inadequacies in items of equipment reviewed here. AI is not used in the preparation of articles.

### Governing body enquiries

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



The main unknown incident in the canoe lifeguard national championships was usually the most dramatic and this one at Upton Warren was more so than any. Canoe lifeguard rescuers, in the background, arrived to find a crashed waterski boat burning fiercely with injured patients aboard. Indeed, on one occasion the boat itself did catch fire. This issue covers the disbanding of the canoe lifeguards after seven decades of public service.

An evening reception in a bar in an old castle during the 2010 world marathon championships at Banyoles was a reminder of how things used to be here, the unpleasant air thick with cigarette smoke. People smoking at canoeing events are now a rarity, particularly competition. After all, if your intention is to win then you usually need to train to shave off fractions of a second so there is no point in coating your lungs and slowing yourself down.

Learning how many years smoking is likely to bring forward a person's death should be one factor to stop you from starting. Another would be to calculate how much you will spend in total in a lifetime of smoking, even a shortened lifetime, at current costs and taxation rates.

Yet if it is still your wish to do so and you are able to do so in a way that does not impose your habit on anyone else, including staff where applicable, then the choice should be yours.

Many people support the Tobacco & Vapes Bill because smoking is the biggest killer. Eliminate smoking and there will still be a biggest killer and, after that has been eradicated, then another to be closed down. Risk sports will rise up the list with everything else. There are those who will do things simply because there is risk or challenge. Remember 'he who does nothing wrong, does nothing'. The choice should be yours.

Stuart Fisher

## Freedom of choice

# Floods

I canoed past houses.  
 I canoed along our flooded street.  
 I stopped to say 'Hi'  
 To a family friend outside the pub  
 Where the water was pretty deep.

My neighbour's car was a rightoff  
 As it flooded were he normally parked  
 Most days  
 It was a lovely shade of green  
 But it never ran again  
 After the town flooded that day.

I canoed out into the main street  
 And on past the old market square  
 And then I turned right  
 Then canoed past a floating garden chair.

My son then took the canoe over  
 And did pretty much the same  
 But before we could get a double out  
 The local fire brigade came.

It didn't take them all that long  
 To pump the main street dry  
 In a time before we had sit  
 On canoes or paddle boards  
 Either of which would've been  
 Worthy of a try.

My house is up six steps  
 But it only ever comes up just over two  
 Which makes it doubly perfect  
 When it floods to get into a canoe...

Kevin Pyne

Has your email address changed or do you want to be added to the mailing notification list when copies of Canoeist are issued?

Email mail@canoeist.co.uk with your email address (with your former email address if changed) and ask us to add you to the list.

# Editorial

Sport - a game or competitive activity, esp an outdoor one involving physical exertion.

Entertainment - the act or an instance of entertaining; the process of being entertained.

(Oxford English Dictionary)

## Sport or entertainment

Millions of people are anticipating a summer of sport. By that they mean watching sport on TV. With remote control they do not even have to walk across the room to adjust the set. What they are really expecting is entertainment.

They will take part in no more activity than if watching a film or the news. Watching the fastest runner on Earth will bring less benefit than for kids kicking a ball about a patch of rough ground. It is of concern that far less people get the benefits of taking part in sport than spend their time watching activity by other people. It is of greater concern how few people know the difference, including people in high places. It is just the numbers that seem important.

Years ago we had TV interest in slalom and wild water racing in this country. Should these sports be changed to suit the convenience of TV? TV interests said their requirements should predominate because there would be many more viewers than participants. On the other hand, without the participants there would be nothing to watch. It would be like theatre with no actors.

We have seen sprint distances introduced for WWR, 200m races brought in for sprint racing while 10km races have been dropped and sequences of laps rather than going from A to B in marathon, all at world championship level, to make them easier to film or give results in less time. The bottom line is doubtless getting money out of TV companies by changing the sport in ways the competitors often find less attractive. How many competitors would want to come from the far side of Europe to race down Holme Pierrepont for a minute or so?

Sponsorship has allowed publicity for interests that do not always represent the views of competitors. Cigarette companies were regular sponsors for Llangollen slaloms, then alcoholic drinks, perhaps not so welcome today.

The confusion between sport and entertainment and their relative merits is widespread. In the Lords debate on sportwashing, Lord Bassam of Brighton (Lab) said about the Football Governance Bill 'One important objective of the moves towards football regulation was to give the fans a bigger say in the governance of football and put them very much in the heart of the game', a view echoed on the front pages of the press.

Summing up, Lord Parkinson of Whitely Bay (Con), the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, suggested 'major sporting events are not just for the fans and the people who love watching live sports' but did not mention the competitors. Just for the fans?

Although the term 'sportwashing' is relatively new for countries using sport to draw attention from human rights or other concerns, often nothing to do with the sport, the 1936 Olympics were a prominent example and there were examples before and plenty since. Boycotts have been used as a way of showing opposition. It is the people at the sharp end who are hit hardest when protest boycotts result, people who have trained for years and then have the rug pulled from under them because of the behaviour of politicians. I have had to explain to contributors in Serbia and South Africa why we have had to halt working with them. Questions have been asked why sport is singled out but not the arts or business. Why was the Bolshoi Ballet welcomed to perform in London while British competitors were required to boycott the Moscow Olympics? No doubt it was because more people were watching sport and only a minority would have had their dreams and efforts ruined. The viewer on his sofa with his can of lager seems the important person, not the person who has trained for years.

Stuart Fisher

Apparently the BCU have changed their name again, this time to Paddle UK. At the same time they switched to Paddle England and it was particularly sad to see the respected historical name of the Scottish Canoe Association supplanted by Paddle Scotland. Only the Welsh retain a name that includes canoeing. Some abbreviations are not too happy, either, and will remind many of the results of excesses better forgotten rather than as in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. PS also suggests an afterthought, something overlooked and now tacked on the end.

Presumably this is an indication that paddleboarders chasing subsidized licences are now the largest part of the membership or soon

# Undercurrents

## Union rejected

Kayak paddlers but not powerboaters were among the claimed 40,000 participants who took part in a Scottish independence Chain of Freedom demonstration. The event was moved to the Forth & Clyde Canal towpath after Scottish Canals refused to allow it on the Union Canal, a significant name.

## Whistleblowing portal

The EA have set up a portal for whistleblowers. It is for people working elsewhere to report environmental concerns to the EA. However, they say it can also be used to report wrongdoing by EA staff.

## Another Scottish tax

The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill intends to add a new tax to users of hotels, B&Bs and campsites, which providers will have to collect. British Marine have led a successful campaign to have marinas and moorings removed from the list of those affected, a potential nightmare.

## Points mean prizes

British Marine have set up a membership rewards scheme, valued at up to £1,500 per time. Bringing in new members can earn credits redeemable for membership renewal fees, a wide range of training courses or stand fees at their Southampton Boat Show.

## Canoe on hydrofoils

Canadian mechanical engineering student Dermot MacDougall has got an open canoe running on hydrofoils, one at the bow and one each side of his body. Powered by a pair of 6kW electric motors with bow steering controlled by his feet, the 5.6m craft seems to perform very smoothly.



Major Mick Stanley (May 22, p46) has been named as *Just Giving's* 2023 Creative Fundraiser of the Year. He raised £12,000 for Ukrainian charity *Children on the Edge*, using his boat *Tintanic II* and assisted by canoeists at times.

## Trips

The White House Farm Canal ran north to Southey Creek, part of the River Blackwater, opposite Northey Island, passing close to the 991 site of the Battle of Maldon. Built in 1832, it was used for half a century until downstream structures failed. These days it is the Mundon Wash, little more than a drainage ditch and usually impassable but winter flooding made it possible for former yachtsman Ant Law to take his coracle down it. He claims it was the first boat passage in 140 years. Do you know any better?

Spanish Red Bull paddler Aniol Serrasolses has extended the possibilities of running waterfalls with a 20m drop from a glacier in Svalbard. Unlike other falls, an exact repeat will not be possible because the venue is continually changing. Perhaps more frightening than the fall itself was the approach through white water in a tunnel through ice. Getting trapped here, perhaps unable to exit the kayak, or sustaining injury in the tunnel or during the drop would not be resolvable by calling out the emergency services.

California's Death Valley gets its name from its desert conditions, as they usually are. Lake Manly dried up a millennium ago and water in its feeder, the Amargosa River, usually evaporates before it gets there. Being 91m below sea level there would be no way for it to flow out

even if it did. However, rainfall this winter did manage to put 300mm of water into the lake, 10km long, 5km wide and worth canoeing just because it was there. The rain did cause a different problem in that it damaged all the approach roads and it was a couple of months before they were sufficiently repaired for canoeists to reach the lake.

## Mud rescues improving

Firefighters are equipped to carry out rescues from mud up to 30m from solid ground. A three day training session in Portsmouth for the Coastguard, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, police and animal rescue interests showed how they can now travel up to 400m across mud to carry out rescues.

Anyone with a kayak (not a playboat) can move with reasonable safety by sitting astride the rear deck, supporting on feet while sliding it forward before sitting on the deck again before feet sink too far into mud or quicksand. If all else fails it should be possible to sit in the cockpit and wait for the tide to return. Even giving the end of a kayak to someone in the mud to hold will be of great help, in addition to the psychological benefit of having somebody else present and perhaps able to call for help.

Where there are steep banks of mud it may be found



The Canadian Canoe Museum new building with the world's most important collection of open canoes opens this month in Peterborough, Ontario.



Aniol Serrasolses on Svalbard, the run in and then the fall.

that watercourses crossing them are firmer underfoot as ways to reach solid ground.

Even without mud a kayak can help. In Bracklesham Bay one day a swimmer asked me to take his tired

partner to the shore while she held onto the end of the kayak, a sensible way of preventing a serious situation from developing.



A less testing trip took Mark Carter to Heads of Ayr this spring.



Mud rescue course at Portsmouth.



ICF



The next Wharram Hui will take place over Aug 3rd-5th at Devoran Quay on the Carnon River. Participants can arrive by boat or on land, camping is available and there is no charge for a weekend of sailing, barbecues and partying.



Keswick Mountain Festival takes place again over May 17-19th with canoeing as one of a host of outdoor activities from the testing to the plain weird, talks and live music.

## ICF centenary

The International Canoe Federation is celebrating 100 years since its formation.

A commemorative book will be published later this year while a series of articles highlighting key moments for the sport over the past 100 years will also be produced for the ICF website.

On January 19th 1924, representatives from the national federations of Denmark, Germany, Austria and Sweden came together to form an international paddling association.

The two day meeting was held in Copenhagen, where the officials agreed to name the body Internationale Repräsentantschaft für Kanusport.

The ICF replaced the IRK as the name of the organization in 1946.

## Licence fee increases

The CRT have increased the cost of their boat licences by 6% this year when inflation is expected to be 4.5%. CRT get 11% of their income from boat licences although boaters probably account for only 3% of canal and towpath users. CRT's Government grant is already way behind inflation and has been threatened with a massive cut after 2027. The fact that licensing via the CRT website is now increasingly complex is unhelpful.

## Sport inadequacies

Sport England are moving £250,000,000 to deprived areas in an effort to improve sports participation, activity levels ranging from 81% to 43%. The latter is in poorer areas, the cost of living being a major factor in the level of sports participation, what people can afford to do. Canoe sales have fallen off a cliff this year, along with many other sports. What Sport England had not said is from where the funding is to be removed. A quarter of adults are said to be inactive with less than half an hour of activity per week and only 47% of children and young people reach an hour of activity per day. Lack of adequate exercise can reduce lifespan by nine years. The Lords Sport & Recreation Committee have called for a new minister for sport, health and wellbeing and for sport to be moved from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, just as there have been calls for river use to be moved from Defra.



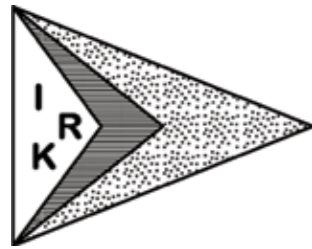
### Old Aberdeen photos

The Aberdeen Press & Journal features historic photographs from Past Times. A recent subject was canoeing in and around the city, 13 pictures from Chris Jones (Baillie) in 1969 to a group in 1990. See <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/past-times/4056047/canoeing-through-the-years>.

### Rescue issues

A Parliamentary debate on revised SAR helicopter service contract terms has resulted from the leaking of proposals. Of particular concern was the readiness expectation of the Sumburgh helicopter to reduce from 15 minutes to one hour, also the proposal to unify the fleet to a single model, meaning that finding of a fault at some future date could result in the grounding of all rescue helicopters simultaneously. It does seem that some basic errors could be reconsidered. One positive to come out of this attempt to provide a better service for less money is the additional helicopters for the Lakes and Nevis in season, primarily for mountain rescue.

Asked in a Parliamentary Written Question about rescue boat funding, Guy Opperman gave a figure for 104 boat charities. In fact, a large proportion of recipients on the list were mountain rescue, search and rescue and beach rescue teams. Only a small minority went to lifeboat operators, of which there are over 50.



Since then the ICF has grown enormously and has increased its membership to 171 national federations.

The celebration will reach its peak at the ICF Congress in Antalya this November, where there will be a centenary celebration evening.



## Alistair Carmichael Wilson

1939-2023

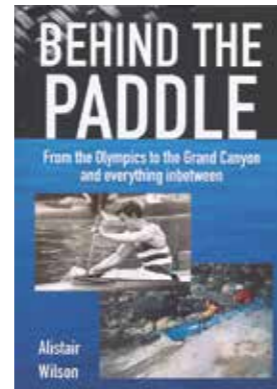
Born in Kolkata, Alistair lived much of his life around Ayr and particularly loved Lendalfoot on the Ayrshire coast.

He was primarily a sprinter, although this expanded into marathon racing and even some wild water racing. He did much of his training off the coast in a sprint kayak in weather conditions which were often far from conducive, in pre health and safety days. Alistair was anything but overstated yet he was uncompromising in everything he did. This took him to the Tokyo Olympics, where he raced K1 and K4 over 1km. Four years later he was in the K4 again for the Mexico Olympics but not the K1 although his selection time would have given him 4th place in the Olympic final.

Ayrshire was well off the beaten track as far as sprint was concerned and Alistair had to pull together a group of enthusiasts. With most of his important activity between Birmingham and London, some of the most gruelling side of his sport was the frequent drives south, sometimes less than a week apart because of his work, in the days when the M6 was still under construction.

Alistair's training methods were unconventional and extreme, such as running up mountains. While training was frequently on the sea, there were times when it was simply too dangerous but anglers were refusing to let him use the local rivers for Olympic training, even when conditions were too rough for them.

A civil engineer by profession, Alistair switched to making paddles and found the inevitable conflict between his business and his sport, accounting for some of the necessary journeys between Ayr and southern England. Working with his father, his ethos was that the product had to be perfect, even if that introduced



some unconventional thinking. Early Lendal veneer paddles were produced with the aid of a letterpress and a concrete mould. Alistair produced the world's first GRP shafts, later carbon fibre, the first split paddles and four part paddles and handled the issues of composite blades, cranks, aerofoil blades and more subtle curves of shaft. Each time the product had to be perfect. His sketches show his own style, precision and attention to detail. There was even some diversification into cycle parts.

Having given up competing in order to concentrate on the business, Alistair felt the need to return every few years. Just a few weeks of training were enough to put him back at the front each time. Training methods included altitude training with regard to the Mexico Olympics.

It is easy to forget that Alistair's paddling on the sea in a K1 gave him a lot of experience in handling rough water.

He was invited to take part in expeditions. Perhaps the most unlikely was paddling an open C2 down the Grand Canyon. He also undertook a sea tour on the Newfoundland coast with bears, whales and glaciers.

He had a can do attitude, made his own luck and understood the importance of his family. He is survived by his wife, Marianne, children, Andrea, Samantha and Stuart, and his grandchildren.

STF

## George Cherry

1933-2023

George Cherry was a sports lecturer at Hatfield Polytechnic, now the University of Hertfordshire, and had a particular interest in wild water racing, his students including Ross Pearton and Fiona Mitchell. He built a number of WWR kayaks, including the Tornado with Avoncraft, but also put together some kit cars, another interest. The Ouse Handicap Race in Bedford was one of his ideas. He worked with the British youth team and, later, took youngsters to events such as the Lerida Rally in Spain.

STF



# ACCESS & environment

### EA ignore Fens legal responsibility

A standoff between the EA and the Middle Level Commissioners has resulted in the blockage of navigation at Salters Lode Lock. Rainfall this winter has resulted in heavy silting in the tidal water at the lock. The MLC have removed 270t of silt from the lock but are refusing to open the lock as it is likely to be filled again with silt from the adjacent River Great Ouse, which the EA have not cleared and say they will not do so despite their legal obligation to dredge.

This is not the only example of the EA blocking boat passage in the Fens. Prevention of use of Welches Dam means that the Forty Foot Drain has been impassable for a number of years. Refusal to allow maintenance of the River Ant near North Walsham set back restoration by a decade and Barton Broad is navigable only because the Broads Authority ignored EA dictates on what they could do in preventing heavy weed growth.

### National park proposal

Defra are proposing a new national park. Such parks are usually areas of land although the Broads are centred around water. Nigel Fenwick has suggested that the new national park could be the CRT's canal network. He has started an online petition which needs 10,000 signatures in order to have the idea noted by the Government. The CRT are facing a large cut in their Government grant at a time when costs are rising steeply. However, several complications and possibilities would need to be addressed:

- \* The CRT have river navigations as well as canals.
- \* There are canals in all four parts of the UK.
- \* Some canals are under the control of other bodies, including Scottish Canals.
- \* Some canals are under the control of the EA, part of Defra, who are keen not to relinquish control of any of them although they say they do not have enough funding even for some of their present legal obligations.
- \* There are many derelict canals ranging from those under restoration to those where restoration would no longer be feasible.
- \* There are new canal proposals, such as the Bedford Milton Keynes Waterway.
- \* Where parts of rivers have been improved for navigation this could exclude sections of river unmodified.
- \* The majority of rivers are only passable by small craft but the EA/Defra have been unable or unwilling to name any legislation removing the general right of navigation on inland rivers or to improve them for river users in England and Wales.
- \* The right of navigation on all rivers in Scotland is undisputed.
- \* The right of navigation on tidal waters is not disputed by the EA but it is often not clear when an estuary becomes open sea.
- \* Competition for national park status is likely to include the Chilterns, Cotswolds and Dorset.
- \* There would be no new funding, the national parks also being subject to financial cuts by the Government.
- \* Most importantly, wildlife's supposed interests would need to be given priority over human interests in a national park.

### Harrison on access

Following the slashing of the CRT's funding by the Government, David Morris (Morecambe & Lonsdale,

Con) brought an Adjournment Debate on the Northern Reaches of the Lancaster Canal, which spread out into the wider issue of canal funding. Responding, Trudy Harrison, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, admitted that she was 'the Minister responsible for access' in Defra and gave some funding figures which would have sounded less impressive if inflation was considered.

She claimed 'I am also fully aware of how important it is to have access to water and green spaces.'

She made reference to 'our legal commitment that everyone, wherever they live in England, will be able to access a blue or green space within a 15 minute walk', all this while refusing to name any legal basis for blocking of access to be on water.

'People enjoy being by canals and waterways and using them for leisure and recreation' she said.

### Angling offences

Asked by Lord Douglas-Miller (Con) how many successful prosecutions of anglers there had been, the EA recorded 343 last year as the result of 1,969 offences. Over the last five year through Covid there were 9,469 offences.

### Question



Selaine Saxby

Conservative

North Devon

Commons

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an estimate of the number of kilometres of tree cover there are along the banks of (a) rivers and (b) tributaries in England.

### Answer



Rebecca Pow

Conservative

Taunton Deane

Commons

### Answered on

26 February 2024

Defra can provide both a rapid indicative estimate and a longer-term definitive estimate to the question.

It will take within the region of two to four weeks' time to produce an indicative estimate, with estimates solely based upon earth observation techniques.

It may take up to one year's time to achieve a definitive answer, as we await the completion of field work undertaken as part of the Natural Capital Ecosystem Assessment.

The main difference between the indicative estimate and a comprehensive estimate is the ability to include smaller tree size and tributary sizes:

- The indicative estimate would be derived from earth observation and would not include smaller trees less than 2.5m in height and would exclude smaller tributaries less than 0.5m in width.
- The comprehensive estimate would be supported by field survey work that would include estimates for smaller trees down to 30cm in height and tributaries less than 0.5m in width.

Parochial estimates would be that possibly up to 30% of trees are less than 2.5m in height and 5% of tributaries are less than 0.5m in width.

## Question



Lord Browne of Ladyton

Labour

Life peer



To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the merits of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, and the viability of introducing similar provisions for England.

## Answer



Lord Benyon

Conservative

Life peer



## Answered on

10 April 2024

With regard to access to the countryside, England has a comprehensive network of public rights of way and the public has the 'right to roam' over many areas of wild, open countryside. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 currently provides the public with a right of access to areas of mountain, moor, heath, down, registered common land and coastal margin in England. There are no plans to change this.

The Government recognises the importance of providing access to the outdoors for people's health and wellbeing and is committed to ensure that everyone lives within 15 minutes' walk of a green or blue space. As part of this we are completing work on the 2,700 mile King Charles III England Coast Path, and delivering the £16m Access for All programme across our protected landscapes, national trails, forests and the wider countryside to make access to green and blue spaces more inclusive.

## Oxford flood scheme opposed

The EA's £175,000,000 flood relief channel proposal for Oxford (Nov, p14), 5km long and 60m wide, removing 4,000 trees, lowering ground to create 20ha of new wetland and 16ha of floodplain, has been opposed by those who think it overengineered. Hinksey & Osney Environmental Group petitioned for dredging of existing watercourses before giving any permissions which would spoil 54ha of Greenbelt and require 500,000t of sand and gravel to be brought in by lorry. They called for the clearing of rivers and streams that have not been maintained for 40 years and unblocking the floodplain outlet near the old Abingdon road before deciding whether any further action is required. A five week public inquiry took place.

'We all recognize the benefits of being *near* water and appreciating nature - and, goodness me, we all need to get a little bit more active' (our italics in each case). So says the Minister for carrying the can for preventing it.

## Varied fish passes

More fish passes are being installed as part of Great Yorkshire Rivers to allow fish to reach rivers that they have not been able to reach for centuries, if at all. None of them are combined canoe chutes/fish passes as they would be on the Continent. Security fences are still being placed where they block use of rescue throwlines for canoeists or anyone else trapped in the water below weirs.

There are three on the Don. Niagara Weir in Sheffield now has a canoe portage route in place of the previous simple portage area. Fish passes are also being installed at Stocksbridge and Cheesebottom Weir, Thurgoland.

A fish pass is also being installed at Meadowgate in the Rother Valley Country Park. A rock ramp has been installed at Watson Mill in Sowerby Bridge and a weir has been removed from the Black Brook at Bowers Mill near Huddersfield.

The removal of four dams from Oregon's Klamath River is the world's largest such exercise at a time when removing dams is running at nearly 100 per year in the USA and increasing. This is reverting from reservoirs to the original free flowing rapids and giving long continuous runs. The problem this is throwing up is that water is uncontrolled once again. You go when it is there and that is frequently in the spring when the weather can be cold, a situation similar to the Alps, Himalaya or many other parts of the world. Later in the summer flows can be low. This contrasts with the former situation when canoeists could take runs on reliable white water in warm weather but these were shorter runs between dams. Hardest hit have been outfitters offering customers packages with enjoyable day trips or shorter.

## Loss of public footpaths

The Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 proposed deleting any public rights of way in England that had not been registered before 2026. That date has now been moved to the end of 2030 but is thought to include 66,000km of paths, often used by canoeists to reach rivers. There is a backlog of 10,000 footpaths waiting for registration, some for as long as 20 years, and no resources to be made available for registration and the inevitable buildup as the deadline looms. A debate in the Lords was almost totally opposed to the process with many probing questions, including why there needed to be any deadline at all. Defending the process was Lord Benyon, who has been one of those most opposed in recent years to river access for canoeists.

In answer to Julian Knight (Solihull, Ind) on another occasion Rebecca Pow stated that there had been 21 appeals in 2023/4 for modifications to the footpath planning map with 19 decisions announced.

## Bathing water quality

Bathing water quality at official locations has been recorded as Excellent, the highest grade, at 80 of 109 Welsh locations tested in 2023. This includes Tenby North and Aberdyfi, each up a grade. Two newly designated bathing locations were recorded as Poor.

In Scotland 84% of bathing waters were Good or Excellent, 98% reaching Sufficient.

Britain has a pitifully small number of official inland water bathing sites. The Government invite further applications. However, there were only 16 of these in 2022, of which two on Rutland Water, one at Waldringfield on the tidal River Deben and Frestone Bay in Plymouth Sound were approved. The others were rejected. Thirty applications were made from January 2023 to February 2024. For a site to be accepted it must have at least 100 bathers per day during the Bathing Season, May 15th-Sep 30th, to be proved by two surveys during the season, and there must be toilet facilities within 500m of the site. If you want a quiet swim these are not places to go.

The university rowing Boat Race event drew further attention to sewage discharges into rivers, increasing as populations increase. As well as rowers being sick, they were told to forgo the usual practice of throwing coxes in after the races.

## And I quote...

'My hon Friend made the point that green finance, flooding and climate change are split between portfolios. However, I want to reassure him that all Ministers in the Department work closely together. There is no silo mentality in Defra' claimed Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Robbie Moore. Our Nov 2021 issue, p13, shows three scrappy bits of paper that Defra said was the sum total of what they knew about the legal situation on river access. This was in answer to our Freedom of Information request to Defra, for which a reply was required legally, the basis for their policy adversely affecting millions of members of the public over a number of decades. The EA are part of Defra.

## Access islands

While 8% of England is designated as Open Country, open to the public, this includes 27km<sup>2</sup> of land which cannot be reached without crossing private land. The Country Landowner Association's president, Victoria Vynyard, said that walkers already had enough land they could use and that they should not cross anywhere private.

In canoeing we have seen places where a public footpath runs along the top of a riverbank above tidal water but a landowner has tried to stop canoeists from stepping from one to the other to launch because he owns the intermediate bank, such as at Bigsweir on the River Wye.



Extensive media coverage has been given to the storm in Dubai when 250mm of rain fell in a day. It is interesting to compare this with a storm I experienced in the desert outside Jeddah in Saudi Arabia (Feb 78, p14), when 55mm of rain fell in 23 minutes but had drained away in four hours.

## The answer is...?

Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton (Lab) about the merits of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, Lord Benyon replied that walkers had enough. Once again he was totally silent about river use, of which Scotland has some of the world's best legislation while the EA claim unnamed legislation which would be some of the world's most oppressive.

Asked about walking distances to recreational areas, Rebecca Pow was able to point to how many people could walk how far to areas of what size. In the same way she could give a detailed answer about the numbers and sizes of trees growing along river banks. Yet she claims not to know what law relates to the policy she presents for access for river users.

Tim Farron (Westmorland & Lonsdale, LD) asked how many staff have been in the EA's legal team over the last decade, Robbie Moore presenting yearly figures between 137 and 148. Yet the members of this army do not know what the law says about the use of inland rivers, we are asked to believe.

## Question



Kim Leadbeater

Labour

Batley and Spennithorne



To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many and what proportion of the population have access to (a) green space and (b) water within 15 minutes walk from home.

## Answer



Rebecca Pow

Conservative

Taunton Deane



## Answered on

23 April 2024

The data we currently use on the number and proportion of people with access to greenspace is taken from Natural England's Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework analysis. Natural England's G3 indicator report shows that as of October 2021, the proportions of the total population in England living within Accessible Greenspace Standards 'criteria' (straight line distances from the boundary of the greenspaces) are:

- 1 in 3 people live within 200 metres of a doorstep greenspace of at least 0.5 hectares
- 1 in 4 people live within 300 metres of a local natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares
- 1 in 2 people live within 1 km of a neighbourhood natural greenspace of at least 10 hectares.

We are currently working to establish a robust baseline of walkability to green and blue space, including working with NE and with the Rivers Trust to create data on blue space access points. In August we will publish an official statistic in development on walkability within England to the nearest green space. This will use network analysis to calculate travel time/distance rather than straight-line distances, and enhanced use of data on the rights-of-way network. For full details see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/access-to-green-space-in-england>.

## Still awaiting reply after 10 years

It is a decade since Douglas Caffyn placed online the results of his study into inland river access law in England and Wales, concluding that the general right of navigation still exists. Two universities awarded him higher law degrees for his work. He challenged anyone to find errors in his work, which nobody has been able to do. He invited Defra Minister Alun Michael (Lab) to do likewise. Michael agreed that the Defra legal team would look at it and report back to Caffyn, which they did not do, obviously not using the 20 working day criterion. Sadly, Douglas died a year ago but that does not stop Defra giving the public the answer.



## Scottish land registry law operational

The Register of Person Holding a Controlled Interest in Land is now operational in Scotland, where it is a criminal offence not to register, with risk of a £5,000 fine. The register is to provide transparency over who owns what although it is not to catch private home owners where there is no significant influence or control over them. This contrasts with the situation south of the border where the EA claim riparian owners must all be consulted before their land is passed, without any way of identifying who owns what.



Some of those who have served over the years and were present in Swindon for the final evening.

## Canoe lifeguards disband

After seven decades the Corps of Canoe Lifeguards, renamed the BCU Lifeguards in 1991, have disbanded. In recent years their beach patrols have been hampered by resources being transferred to RNLI beach units. Much work in looking after safety certification and awards has been undertaken voluntarily by their members but this has now been taken over by PUK with a full time paid official from outside.

A motion to disband was taken and passed at a final ACM at the Swindon Hilton in April as the work of the canoe lifeguards has now been sidelined. Many of the movers and shakers from recent decades were present for the start of a social evening. With £9,600 still in the kitty, the committee paid for mileage, accommodation, a dinner, the bar and engraved glasses for all at this farewell event.

The balance is to be handed to PUK although there was a call for it to be shared out between the four federations. Mark Carter, former lifeguards chairman, objected strongly to PS requiring him to pay £375 for the most basic level of qualification, five or six levels below his current qualifications, in order to run free canoe/swimmer courses for Kyle Canoe Club and to be required to update this every three years at his own expense. The Scottish lifeguard rep had told him there were no lifeguards in Scotland and they did not want any, begging the question why he was their rep. Three of these non-existent Scottish lifeguards were at Swindon.

It is worth recalling that one supporter used to donate a rescue kayak anonymously every year, these kayaks being more complex and expensive than general purpose kayaks. This was one of the reasons for which he was put forward for the Honours List. That application was blocked, also anonymously, although there were some who recalled that he had been employed by the BCU at one time, taking them to court and winning his case over an employment issue.

### End of an era for canoe rescue service

When I joined Weymouth Corps of Canoe Lifeguards in 1986 little did I know that there was a national organization behind them or that I'd be involved in the organization for nearly the next 40 years.

I also very much doubt Rear Admiral Hoare, when he founded the organization in 1953, or John Dudderidge, when he drove it forward during the 1960s, or those that brought the Corps into the BCU in 1991, would be expecting the organization to have trained so many canoeists in the intervening years.

Tens of thousands of canoeists have held what became the BCU Lifeguards awards, ranging from the Canoe Safety Test through to the Senior Lifeguard and a range of first aid awards.

As well as an active awards programme the committee have supported UK, International and world class events, supplying specialist teams, knowledge and leadership.

During the 80s and 90s clubs from as far apart as Weymouth, Bournemouth, GAFIRS and Worthing along the south coast up through Aldershot, Pewsey, Bristol and South Wales to Birmingham and across to Ipswich with Rampant Tuna in the far north along with teams in Hong Kong and Indonesia provided a venue for training and often



front line rescue capabilities which some of these clubs were still offering to the end.

No organization stands still and the British Canoe Union are no different; a change in name, a change in direction and a change in awarding protocols has meant the awards written and administered by this committee moved to HQ control (and have since been removed from their portfolio in the main).

Although this committee has now ceased to function, it is not HQ's or our intention to let BC Lifeguards disappear completely. A new Technical Group will be set up, consisting of industry specialists, and the hope is that experienced members of this committee will join the group, especially in its first year or two.

Andy Squirrell

### Canoeing's public service

The first name to appear in the history of the BCU Lifeguards is Captain (later Rear Admiral) DJ Hoare CB RN. Captain Hoare was a voluntary leader in the London Federation of Boys Clubs when he took a Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme party undertaking a gold award expedition on the River Teme in 1958. He recalled the East Coast floods of 1953 and realized that a skilled canoeist could give aid where motor boats and swimmers could not. An approach for sponsorship from the British Canoe Union brought about the creation of the Young Peoples' Training Association Ltd. Flood reconnaissance exercises were executed but as floods were an infrequent event the skills of the lifeguard were extended to cover inshore and beaches.

Recognition of the Corps of Canoe Lifeguards as a useful part of the lifesaving services was not instant, reckoned to be more of a hindrance, but gradually official acceptance was made. Throughout the 1960s the Corps of Canoe Lifeguards became more formalized: an award system was developed under a steering committee initially chaired by John Dudderidge and designs were drawn for a rescue kayak. In 1970 the Rescue kayak was in production and being used by the several units operating around the British coastline. The first Canoe Lifeguard Manual was produced and a good relationship was developed with the Royal Life Saving Society and with the Surf Life Saving Society.

In 1991 the Corps of Canoe Lifeguards was renamed the British Canoe Union Lifeguards and became a specialist committee of the BCU. The skills developed and practised by the BCU Lifeguards to deal with incidents and incorporated in its awards were adopted by the BCU as prerequisites for any member wishing to further abilities as a coach. The aims of the BCU Lifeguards has broadened from its inception as an emergency service for flood alerts to providing training for canoeists in rescue techniques, giving rescue cover wherever canoeists travel (off beaches, on rivers, lakes or canals) and develop rescue techniques for coastal and inland waters. Through the federal agreement that exists between Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England the local organizations, eg the WCA Lifeguards, administered the sport in their respective countries. The BCU Lifeguards administered the sport in England as well as representing Wales, Scotland and Northern Irish issues at national level.

The objectives of the BCU Lifeguards were to:  
Organize and operate canoe lifeguard services,  
Develop coastal and inland waters rescue techniques,  
Liaise with other national organizations and agencies on lifesaving and lifeguarding techniques,  
Act as a rescue and safety co-ordinating agency for the BCU.

In relation to the objectives, the BCU Lifeguards set a high standard of canoeing, first aid, safety and rescue. They promoted, trained and advised groups using canoes/kayaks within the United Kingdom or overseas in all aspects of safety and rescue pertaining to canoeing, could advise and assist local authorities in times of emergency and provide safety cover at events or competitions when requested.

By constitution BCU Lifeguards were responsible for the management and administration of canoe lifeguarding services aiming to foster and provide/support specialized water rescue services using canoes on both inland and coastal waters.

They worked closely with all the UK lifeguarding bodies and first aid organizations to keep all voluntary and professional awards to the same standards.



There were several events held through the year of relevance to canoe lifeguards.

The National Lifeguard Championships were held every year in September. The championships were based on the Canoe Safety Test and Canoe Rescue Test syllabi and were open to any canoe club, not necessarily an active lifeguard club. The Welsh Canoeing Association Lifeguards hosted the Whitewater Lifeguard Championships. This event utilized the skills necessary to negotiate white water and its associated hazards, stoppers, overhanging trees, waterfalls etc and to effect a rescue in these situations. In April the lifeguard convention was run for all those wishing to either learn some of the many aspects of canoe lifeguarding or be examined for the awards necessary to be an effective lifeguard.

There were a number of clubs around the country. Some lifeguarded a beach, eg Weymouth, some an area of water, eg GAFIRS, and some lifeguarded events such as the Devizes to Westminster canoe race or the Youth Afloat festival in Poole Harbour.

Andy Squirrell

## Championship highlights

The most conspicuous of the canoe lifeguards' activities have been the national championships, which have produced an amazing and imaginative set of scenarios that have become increasingly sophisticated over the years.

There would be a series of short incidents, such as swimming and using rescue canoes to recover and treat casualties. Some were regular, such as kit inspection, written paper and mini triathlon. Knotting frequently involved having to tie boats on trailers or could be more advanced, such as using a Z drag to move a vehicle. The throwline test regularly surprised the many who found they could not throw a line as far or as accurately as they believed. Tests were frequently against the

clock and threw up unexpected difficulties. Even many of the short incidents were not known in advance.

The championships required units to be able to react quickly to incidents from the blatantly obvious to things as simple but obscure as inhaler issues. Most of the year members just went about their patrolling with much less fuss and noise than some intrusive beach units that have displaced them despite not always having good local knowledge.

Some competitors have gone on to higher things, such as the Gosport & Fareham Inshore Rescue Service team captain who became responsible for the whole independent lifeboat station including inshore and offshore lifeboats.



The mouth injury and neck protrusion were fairly rudimentary for this patient in 1980 but the shivering was real enough after she had been in and out of the cold water of Thorpe Park over a period of hours.



Fallen climber Kate had a gory set of exposed intestines at Plas Menai in 1993.



Having got a patient to land, lifting onto the jetty of the Brayford Pool in Lincoln in 1994 turned out to be a weighty problem.

Casualties played an essential part in these events and needed to react in the same fashion for each team.



Make up had reached a very high standard by the time of this casualty at Bala Mill in 2003.



Perhaps the casualties who had the most fun were these revelling drunken pirates at South Cerney, given the award for the best patients, but still fairly intimidating for young rescuers trying to bring them to safety.





Making sure that everyone had been accounted for, frequently from upturned boats or even a ditched hang glider at South Cerney, did not always succeed. Weymouth refused to believe that a patient had just floated away from a car they were searching after it crashed into the Tryweryn in 2000 but here is the evidence. Earlier, it was shown how a team of three could cross a fast flowing river by linking shoulders and moving in turn in a rotating motion.



Swiftwater 2000 Girlies deal with a road accident at Herts Young Mariners in 2001. Notices had to be put up to assure the public this was not an accident. A usual part of such an incident was for a bystander to be sent away to call for an ambulance, before the days of mobile phones, sometimes even before casualties had been assessed. Here, the messenger was intercepted round the corner and an ambulance with blue flashing lights later arrived. Entry was not restricted to lifeguard units. Others were welcomed to see how prepared they were for such eventualities and it was good to see a Herts Young Mariners team including two BCU board members taking part more than once. I found that just watching was helpful in remaining calmer at subsequent real accidents.



One of the most varied championships was one of the last, at Upton Warren in 2004. The main unknown incident was usually the most dramatic and the one at Upton Warren was more so than any. Rescuers arrived to find a crashed waterski boat burning fiercely with patients aboard. Indeed, on one occasion the boat itself did catch fire.

The throwline event simply required a line to be dropped across a row of lifebuoys with one of three attempts, much easier than trying to reach somebody floating past, but many could not manage it.



Fast Action Response address an injured tree surgeon up a tree. The running chainsaw dangling below him was withdrawn as being too dangerous but he was still able to shower rescuers with infected blood. Nobody acted on the suggestion that simply cutting his line and accepting a few extra broken bones when he hit the ground would be the fastest way of getting him down with the least risk for all those present.



This altercation on a pontoon resulted in a toddler in a pushchair being lost into the deep lake, a distraught mother and flying fists preventing rescuers from getting near enough to begin a search.

# 21 in 21 Act 5



A Foxy is the combined traverse of a loch or lake (over 1km) and the summing of a mountain (over 2,000 ft) bearing the same name. (See May 2022, p21.)

## Creag an-Dubh Loch + Dubh Loch



I like it when a plan works but that's not often; this time we are held up for four hours on the M74 just south of Glasgow. Whilst this was inconvenient for us at least we were not part of the horrific accident that lay ahead of us.

It is around midnight when we reach the outskirts of Stirling and we divert off the motorway for a short drive to a secluded layby to park up and sleep. The next morning we are up early and, after a quick brew, we continue our journey past Perth and onto the A93 through Blairgowrie, Glenshee and on to Ballater before we head south into Glen Muick. The road ends at the Spittal of Glenmuick where there is a large carpark from where many walkers start their ascent of Lochnagar.

My objective today however is somewhat more obscure, a paddle on

the Dubh Loch and an ascent of Creag an-Dubh-loch, the rocky buttes that hem in the southern side of the loch.

It appears to be a relatively straightforward route to Creag an Dubh-loch, cycle around Loch Muick, hike up to Dubh Loch then skirt around the northern side of the loch before striking up to Creag an Dubh-loch summit.

Not knowing the area, I set out on my bike on the obvious track on the southern side of Loch Muick. It is a slight error as the track runs



Loch Muick with Creag an Dubh-loch beyond.



Creag an Dubh-loch above Dubh Loch.



The boardwalks at the end of Loch Muick.

up. There is a good path that brings you up to the Dubh Loch and the imposing face of Creag an Dubh-loch. At the far end of the loch, I dump my main rucksack. The path, however, has now dissolved into boggy tussocks and I make use of the rock slabs over which the stream cascades to gain height. At a suitable point I cross the stream and strike upwards towards the summit. The wind is now vicious as I walk over a broad ridge to the summit cairn. I take a few quick photos before I turn back, this time following the edge of the crag and passing by the cleft of a central gully; the path that drops down the gully looks inviting as a fast decent route but is likely to be somewhat loose underfoot and I err on the side of caution and retrace my steps back down to the loch.

By the time I am back down to Dubh Loch the wind has significantly increased in strength and I am in two minds as to whether to launch the packraft. Handling an inflatable in high wind is somewhat tricky and I dump my rucksack in the raft to hold it down as I inflate it. I tentatively launch out from the head of the loch but the wind thwarts my attempts to make any sensible headway and I am almost blown back to the shore. It's time to play safe and return to solid ground. I pack up the raft and walk back along the length of the loch to descend to Loch Muick. This time I cycle out on the northern side of the loch, a level and easy bike ride back to the carpark. The weather is still unsettled and windy as we pack up the car and set the satnav for the Isle of Skye.

out about halfway around the loch and I am forced to push my bike over a rough boulder strewn path to reach the far end. Here there are a number of boardwalks that take you over the feeder streams before I find a suitable place to set the bike down and lock it up. As I set off the weather appears to be holding for the hike but the wind is picking



A brief foray onto Dubh Loch.

### The Storr + Storr Lochs



The weather does not improve as we drive towards the Isle of Skye. The wind and rain have continued unabated for the entire journey. We have also spent another night in the car as it is too wet to put a tent up; this time we have found a layby just short of the Skye bridge. Come the morning the weather looks as if it may be clearing and we drive over the Skye bridge to Portree. Most of the mountain streams are going full throttle and it is clear it has been a stormy night on Skye as well. After a welcoming large 'Scottish breakfast' in the Red Brick Café we continue our drive to the Storr.

We leave Portree, taking the road that heads north. Usually there are good views of the Storr as you crest the rise at the southern end of the Storr Lochs but this time we are confronted with a cloud base that is level with the top of the Old Man; normally I can deal with clouds but

these ones are dark, threatening and uninviting. We park near the toilet block and it is with some reluctance that we leave the warmth of the car to take the path up towards the Old Man of Storr.

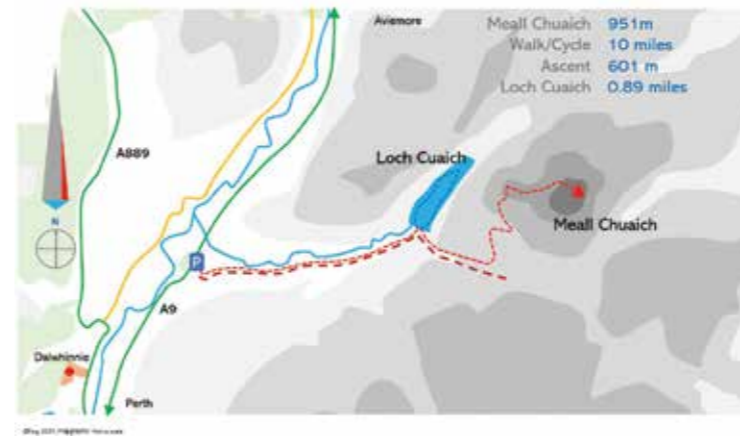
Our dog, Lyra, despite having a windproof coat, is looking decidedly unimpressed. My wife, Anne, wears a similar expression as we have to brace hard into strong gusts of wind to avoid being thrown off our feet. Looking back out over the Storr Lochs I can see the surface being whipped into a frenzy of white horses. Looking back up, the clouds have dropped lower and are decidedly black and impenetrable. It is very uninviting.

It is an easy decision; this Foxy is not going to happen today. We retreat back to the warmth of the car; Lyra snuggles down in the back avoiding eye contact lest I make another suggestion of a walk and we head off to more comfortable accommodation on the east coast.



Lyra is less than impressed with the Storr.

### Meall Chuaich + Loch Cuaich



It's this way...

Three days later the weather has cleared. As I have to drop my daughter off at Inverness airport, I take the opportunity to drive the extra one hour south to Meall Chuaich and Loch Cuaich near Dalwhinnie.

Meall Chuaich is one of the more accessible Munros with an easy walk in and a relatively gentle ascent. There is a layby just south of the gate that marks the track up to Loch Cuaich; from here it is an easy bike in for almost three miles to the base of the mountain. I leave my bike propped against a stalkers' hut and from there it is another hour and a half to the summit, a steep haul to start with before the gradient eases.

There is relatively little bog and for once my boots remain dry. When I reach the summit there is a cold wind blowing and I only spend a few minutes there before I jog back down to my bike. I peddle the short distance from the stalkers' hut up to the loch to unload my gear. It's a quick process to inflate my pack raft, seat and buoyancy aid and soon I am pushing out over the shallows until I reach deeper water. The sun has come out now and the wind has stopped. It is perfect conditions for an afternoon float in the mountains, a far cry from the DNF on the Storr a couple of days earlier.

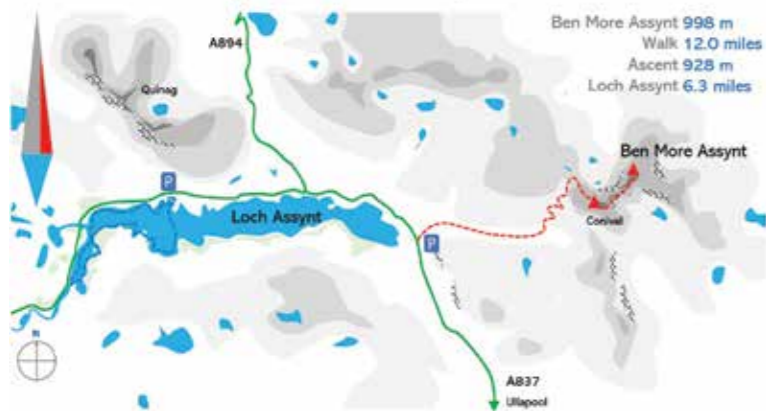


The easy cycle in to Loch Cuaich.



Perfect conditions for an afternoon on Loch Cuaich.

## Ben More Assynt + Loch Assynt



The weather forecast looked promising and usually the mountain weather forecast is quite accurate but the reality was to prove different. There was not the usual welcoming view of the imposing bulk of Suilven as we traversed the road from Lairg to the west coast, just low cloud. It then started to rain just as we entered the carpark next to the Inchnadamph Hotel. It is from here that you start the walk up to Conival and Ben More Assynt.

I had persuaded two of my nieces to join me and we quickly decided that full waterproofs would be required from the start. This is a walk to chunk up mentally into sections, the walk in following the river, the steep climb to the first bealach, the ascent to Conival and, finally, the ridge traverse that crosses from the summit of Conival to the summit of Ben More Assynt. In rough timings each of these sections took about an hour to complete.

The weather did not let up and the wind and rain pervaded some of our less than adequately water resistant clothing. Despite this my nieces kept smiling or maybe it was the onset of hyperthermia and chattering teeth. As we started across the final ridge we met a couple coming back up to Conival; they, too, had thought the weather forecast was going to be better and they warned us about high winds further along the ridge. It is tactile going over the ridge with limited paths and jumbled rocks. As we approach the summit of Ben More Assynt the wind roars over the ridge like an express train. It is perhaps the first time on a mountain walk that I have had to crouch low and hang onto a rock to avoid being blown off my feet. Luckily there is a small, sheltered area near the summit where we take refuge for a few minutes whilst we refuel and steel ourselves for our return trip. The final descent to the walk out section is generally over unpleasant ground, a mixture of bog, uneven rocks and slippery waterlogged moss and grass. It is a relief to



Near the summit of Ben More Assynt.

finally get down to a more level path. We are finally back at the car after 7½ hours of walking. We are cold and wet and we quickly change into dry clothing before our relatively short drive back to Lairg.

A couple of days later we head back to the west coast. This time we are treated to sunshine and fine views of the ridgeback of Suilven. It never fails to impress me. We take the Lochinvar road along the north side of Loch Assynt to a layby midpoint along the loch. We unload the kayaks and start our exploration of the west end of the loch, skirting



The Quinag ridge seen across the loch.



On Loch Assynt with Quinag behind.



The summit of Ben More Assynt lost in cloud.

the bays on the south side, lazing on a beach in the sunshine and then making our way back up the north side and back to the start, all the while with cloud free views of the surrounding peaks of Quinag and Conival. We finish with a swim in the loch and cook a late lunch on the shoreline still bathed in sunshine. It is hard to find the energy to leave

when the weather is like this but eventually we pack up and head home.

This trip we have managed 3 Foxys. Yet again I have travelled to places, hiked mountains and traversed lochs to which I would not normally have gone. The Foxys are an excuse for an adventure.

**Alan Fox**

# Fool!

Moods

'Fool!'

Standing by my car, I'm eye-to-eye with him. 'What did you just say?'

'Fool,' he repeats, no hesitation.

An encounter I didn't see coming, I'm gobsmacked, at a loss for words. All I can manage is 'Please explain yourself,' my words on the timid side, me thinking I'm better off not antagonizing this guy.

'Fool,' says he with some force, 'Look around and tell me what you see.'

I look around, say 'A couple benches, the harbour, boats, the bay, three seagulls...' but he cuts me off before I can finish.

'So pedestrian,' he sniggers. 'Things! All you can see are things!'

I look around again, see nothing but things. Scratching my head, confused, 'That's all there's to see. Things. Stuff.'

'Fool,' he says but now I cut him off.

'Please, stop calling me a fool,' I plead before he can utter another word.

'Fool' slips past my mild-mannered plea like wasps to bacon scraps left on your breakfast plate, 'You can't see past the end of your nose. You don't see with feeling. You need feeling! What about the blue sky, the bright sun, the warm air, the calm bay, no wind to mess with you, no wet spray in your face.'

I wait for his onslaught, his tirade, to continue but he says no more. Uneasy in his silence, I say 'Well, ummm... there's that. Yeah.'

'Said with such passion. Hah!' A pause, then 'Why aren't you out there paddling, the day glorious, conditions ideal? Tell me that!'

I have a very good excuse, deliver it like spooning applesauce over potato pancakes. 'My paddling buddies aren't here. Gandalf's transported himself to Florida and Don't Follow Don's done a Gulliver's Travels, grew so tall he smacked his head on the top of a doorframe. No one knows where Dragon's flown off to.'

'So?'

'So,' I say, 'I can't paddle alone. Paddling's all about being on the bay with your buddies.' For added emphasis I tack on 'Paddling alone just isn't right.'

I don't know what I said but my storm paddle goes ballistic. 'What the heck! I've been on more paddles with you than any of those other guys. You're not alone when you paddle with me. What am I? A stick in the mud?'

'A stick in the mud' I think but don't comment, the storm paddle a skinny 6'4" red cedar stick. He's still laying it on thick but arguing with him is futile. Best that I leave him strapped to the top of the car and drive home, which I do.

'Fool!' I hear more times than I can count from the car top but I don't stop.

**John Boesch**

# What's new Eureka!

## What a load of rubbish

How many times do you wear a shirt before you throw it away? Regretting the 350,000t of clothing sent to landfill in the UK each year, Howies point out that their kit is long life and expected to be worn at least 100 times. Much other fast fashion clothing is far less durable. How many uses does the average Christmas jersey get?

## Trailer safety

Do you tow a canoe trailer? In an Adjournment Debate Karin Smyth (Bristol S, Lab) highlighted trailer safety issues. These were not caravans or commercial trailers but light trailers where spot checks had shown half were not complaint with safety standards, including 40% needing immediate repairs. Of those drivers who had been trained and tested on trailer towing, 30% failed. In the 18 months since the towing accreditation scheme was made voluntary the number of applications has fallen by 98%.

## Permanent exhibition access

The Worldwide Classic Boat Show has become an annual fortnight's online event, highlights from this year included in this issue. However, annual membership at \$49 of organizers Off Center Harbor allows access to the exhibition year round, including next year's exhibition. Membership also brings an OCH hat and allows access to over 700 videos and 500 articles with the ability to ask questions about them. A fortnight's free trial membership is available or there is a free annual licence with limited benefits. Britain has over 1,000 members. See [classicboatshow.com](http://classicboatshow.com).



An American study of old toys that have increased in value suggests Germany's Playmobil have done particularly well. A set like this, originally \$5.99, could now fetch \$800 in a box in good condition.



Gougeon Brothers, who produce West System epoxy resins, also acquired Entropy Resins with some vibrant colours which are claimed to be up to 98% biobased and highly concentrated with translucent, opaque and metallic options. These are available from Epoxycraft.

## Stolquist shut down

Jim Stolquist started his whitewater clothing business in 1977 with some radical thinking. Even being shown an early Stolquist catalogue by him on a computer was an eye opener, probably a couple of orders of magnitude of data more than was going into rivals' catalogues. In 2004, still manufacturing in California, he tied up with Aqualung, a company making diving equipment in France since the Second World War but acquiring other watersports companies, resulting in fast growth for Stolquist with sights set on the recreational and kayak

angling markets prior to Covid. Aqualung was bought in 2017 by a financial company, being acquired again last year by bankers Barings, who have announced the closure of Stolquist to concentrate on Aqualung. Other manufacturers within canoeing are understood to be expressing interest in acquiring the Stolquist brand.



Howies' Esrever unisex jacket is fully reversible, warm, windproof and water resistant, insulated with 200 gsm fill from recycled plastic bottles and with a YKK Natulon recycled zip. The water repellent finish is PFC free. This gives a chance to be seen when you want to and to keep a low profile when you don't as colours are dark blue and orange, sizes XS to XXL, price £119.

## Wenonah sell Current Designs

In 1999 open canoe manufacturers Wenonah bought Current Designs, broadening their scope to offer recreational and touring kayaks. Wenonah have now gone back to their roots and have sold on the kayak side. Their composite operation has gone to Sanborn Canoe Co, neighbours in Winona, Minnesota, who are much smaller and are increasing their emphasis on direct sale sales to customers to reduce the problems of storage space for wholesale operations. The rotomoulding side has been taken by Kayak Distribution of Montreal, a return to Canada.

As in Britain, the market is depressed, partly following the glut in sales during Covid when people wanted to be active but distancing, and partly because of newcomers to watersports coming in at a lower and cheaper level with paddleboards.



Sweet Protection have released a bunch of new colours for their helmets for 2024. Three examples are for the Wanderer II at £119.99, the Strutter at £179.99, going strong since 1997, and the Rocker at £212.99.



Welsh company Ruth Lee, who make training manikins, have chosen to support Canada's rescue teams following last year's fires. They have donated training manikins to six search and rescue teams and nine fire departments, who typically have little spare cash or such requirements.



Mana boat kits are now being produced by Chesapeake Light Craft in the USA and Pacific Boat Craft in Australia. The kits come with full building instructions and technical support is available from Wharram's office in Cornwall.

Wharram have a tasteful T shirt design based on one of Hanneke Boon's Spirit of Gaia sketches, at £22.



Pyranha's latest creek boat is the ReactR.

OverBoard have a 30l Classic Explorer Waterproof Backpack at £67.69. In black, yellow, red or blue, it is designed for rapid submersion. With PVC sides and base, it has an internal dry pocket, a weatherproof quick access pocket, two mesh side pockets to hold drinks bottles, roll top, attachment patch and reflective areas. While you would not want to end up in the water while wearing something you could not shed easily, it has adjustable backpack straps and D rings for use on land. They have a weatherproof 90l Adventure Duffel Bag that is IP64 rated, resistant to light rain and spray. In blue or black, it costs £99.99

An additional service available from OverBoard is adding custom logos, names or other text to blank areas of their waterproof bags.



Quick access pocket, Molle attachment system, waterproof on wet surfaces.



Roll top, reflective patches, internal pocket, adjustable straps.

## Questions of weight

If you are of generous proportions you probably want a buoyancy aid that reflects this. However, buoyancy aids seem to be measured by user weight. If you are heavy you are likely to be told you need one with greater flotation, more buoyancy. In fact, your volume may already give you extra buoyancy anyway. It is the extra size you want, just as children need smaller sizes.

If you buy a roofrack it may well tell you how much weight it will support. This should also tell you that the manufacturer does not know that roofracks often fail upwards. Returning south from the polo nationals on the M6 north of Keele services I saw two policemen on the hard shoulder carrying what looked like a polo kayak. This echoed a freestyle kayak I saw the police recovering on the M4 on an earlier occasion going to the Bitches. Just how many roofracks fail in this way?



Anyone who has experienced the alpine beauty of Central Greece won't be surprised to learn that the area holds another secret, virtually unknown to an international audience. Lake Kremaston lies below the Agrafa mountains, an hour and a half from the town of Karpensi and near the villages of Evritania. An undisputed hidden gem of the mainland, it was created during a 1960s hydroelectric project to dam four rivers (the Agrafioti, Acheloos, Tavropos and Trikeriotis) and is Greece's largest artificial lake, ideal for exploring by canoe or kayak.

More like a fjord than a lake, it is dotted with islets that appear or disappear, depending on the water level and is surrounded by the pine trees and other greenery so characteristic of Evritania. The water is an intense shade of blue. There are times you could mistake it for the sea, especially in the summer.

Largely set between two bridges (Kremaston or Episkopis and Tatarnas), it is an 81km<sup>2</sup> body of water.

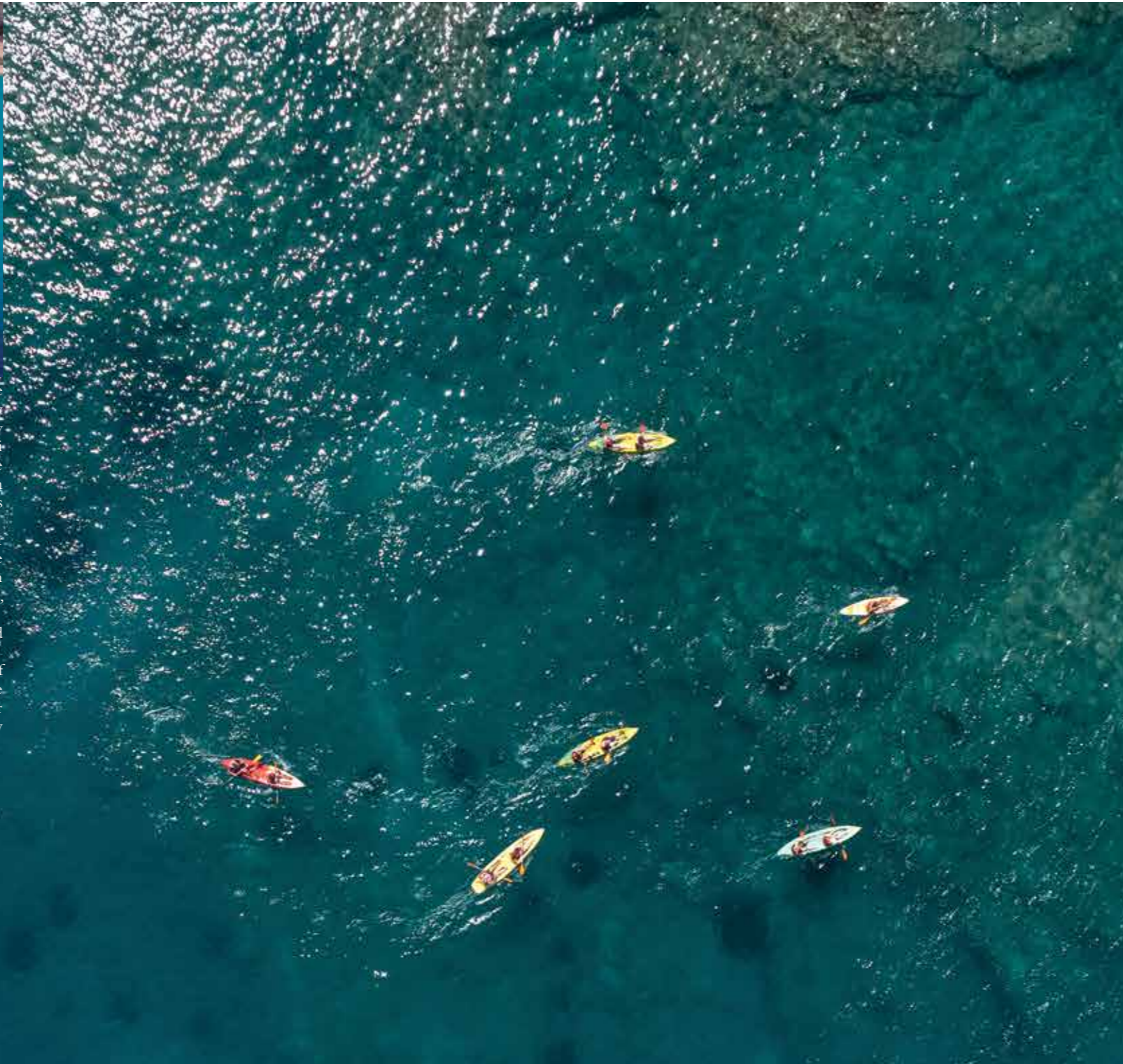
Up the Agrafiotis River you'll find the Manolis Bridge, an arch of stones that united the banks of the river for more than 300 years. Unlike other old bridges (and some buildings) that were covered with water during the damming project, the Manolis bridge is either partially submerged or fully revealed depending on the time of your visit.

## Holiday 2024

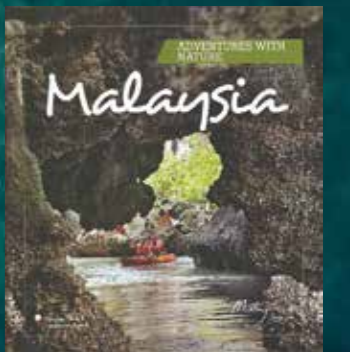


For sheer variety Water by Nature's New Zealand trip over Feb 17th - Mar 3rd took some beating. As well as sea kayaks in Abel Tasman and a night paddle in the Bay of Islands there was hiking, snorkelling, angling, swimming with wild dolphins, rafting, helicopter up the Landsborough River, jet boat on the Shotover, steamer to Walter Park, flying to Milford Sound, the Fox Glacier, life in a shearer's quarters, Maori culture, wineries and a cable car. Presumably there must also have been some time for catching up with sleep.

Some of Water by Nature's most interesting activities on their eight day Zambezi trips are not about paddling. Here are viewing Victoria Fall from Devil's Pool, camping by the river and viewing the river during the return trip upstream.



Explore France have produced a list of 15 must see châteaux. The Renaissance Chenonceau on the Cher is marked as the most aquatic castle in France, ideal for visiting by canoe at a gentle pace, especially at dawn or dusk, drifting below the arches of the gallery, watching carp and wild birds and noting the lock gates designed by Leonardo da Vinci.



Lily-Rose Sheppard, who guides groups on kayak canal tours from the Roundhouse in central Birmingham, was one of the ten finalists in VisitEngland's Tourism Superstars competition this year. The winner was Peter Chambers of Coventry Music Museum.

Mitsis Crete Bali Paradise.

# On show



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.

## Clubs and communities



The Canoe Cruisers Association of Greater Washington DC are particularly interested in the Potomac river basin.



Channel Island Traditional Small Boat Society have building projects and regular outings in south California.



The Classic Boat Club promote the use of traditional boats for rowing in Mülheim, where it is assumed that those who do so cannot afford anything more modern.



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



The Raft Men of Brazil are based in New York and seek to empower small artisan fishing communities in Brazil.



Sebago Canoe Club build and maintain traditional boats powered by humans or the wind.



Traditional Small Craft Association Oregon Coos Chapter are boating nuts, serving particularly the Willamette valley.



Cleveland Amateur Boat Building & Boating Society of Ohio have been bringing people together to build, sail, paddle and motor in boats, offering courses, workspace, tools, meetings, mentors, a library and monthly messabouts,



The Irish Currach Club of Milwaukee promote the heritage of Ireland's canoes, including racing.



Toledo Community Boathouses are floating.



Nantucket Community Sailing have kayaks among their 150 craft and run courses for 2 to 65+ year olds including 1,000 children per year.



The Wooden Canoe Heritage Association of Tamworth, New Hampshire, is an international organization of builders, paddlers and admirers of wooden and bark canoes.

## Schools



Cape Falcon Kayak of Portland, Oregon, offer plans and online instruction for skin on frame canoes and kayaks and Greenland paddles including material accessible free of charge.



The Center for Wooden Boats in Seattle and on Camano Island has programmes which include woodworking, boatbuilding and sailing for youths and adults.

## Festivals and events



Bayles Boat Shop organize the annual Sikaflex Quick & Dirty Boat Building Competition.



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



Burano's Regatta celebrates the method of transporting fish around the Venetian islands before motors were invented.



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



Seventy48 is a 48 hour race in anything human powered, Puget Sound with a difference.



Zanzibar Beach & Watersports Festival has every sport from kayak and dhow racing to goat racing and much more with plenty of music over three days.



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



Cedar Key Small Boat Meet, Florida, informal with no planned events but all kinds of craft at the Cedar Keys & the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge.



Seattle Dragon Boat Festival.



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



Steveston Dragon Boat Festival, British Columbia.



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.

**Kayaks and canoes**



Faerie is a 1.2m folding coracle tender of 2015.



Mary Oliver is a 3.7m Herbert of 2013.



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



A 4m Oughtred McGregor trimaran sailing canoe of 2004.



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.



Shooting Star of 2018 is a 4.9m Baidarka.



Wee Lassie, a 3m cedar strip canoe built last year to a design inspired by Rushton's 1890s models.



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



This 1900 Kingsbury canoe has a lateen sailing rig.



Laguna is a 4.9m Marshallese Walap Proa of 2014 in Micronesian canoe style.



Folk is similar, from 2019, with the bridge able to take a small tent.



Shirley is a 5.2m Greenley kayak built in 2022.



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



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.



The 4.9m Chickenfeed is a Robb White sport cargo canoe of 2013, powered by a small outboard.



Quasar, a 5.2m wood strip white water canoe, has thigh straps, spins on a dime and surfs well.



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



Esplugues Sea Spirit kayaks, the 4.9m Eos and 5.5m Selene are custom built to order in a wide range of materials from okume and bamboo to carbon fibre.



A 6.1m Mekong long tail canoe driven by a small petrol engine.



Patrick McCorkle built his Murrelet from a Pygmy Kayaks kit.



A 5.2m Steve Killing kayak of 2016.



Alan Dater built his New Squeeze from a Chesapeake Light Craft kit.



A 5.5m expedition kayak of 2007.



Nick Schade has plans for high performance Guillemot Kayaks models



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



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.



An Old Town Molitor exactly a century of 2021.



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



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



Two 5.5m Thomas Willow/Quickbeam kayaks of 2006.



The 5.8m Ostlind pedal boat, Ripple, is built of plywood with twin Hobie Mirage drives.



Evangeline is a 6.1m Sarby Class E sailing canoe of 1947.



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



These 9.4m Senegalese pirogues used daily for fishing.



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



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

**Trades**



Products of Bear Mountain Boats of Westport, Ontario, include sprint C4s and C15s and restoration of historical craft.



Douglas Brooks Boatbuilding's speciality is building and restoring small Western and Asian craft, especially Japanese.



Ezra Smith Design designs mostly larger sailing vessels.



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



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.



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



The Wooden Canoe Builders' Guild promote and celebrate wooden canoes and kayaks.

**Museums**



Finger Lakes Boating Museum in Hammondsport, New York, is dedicated to the preservation of boats built across western New York.



The non profit Gig Harbor BoatShop perpetuates and restores craft of the Eddon Boatyard and waterfront.



The Hawaiian Museum is in Honolulu.



The Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough, Ontario, has the world's largest collection of canoes and kayaks.



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



Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum acquires, preserves and disseminates materials and information on the heritage of canoes and canoeing in North America.

Two shows running concurrently at the National Exhibition Centre included canoeing. The Caravan Camping & Motorhome Show is well established and had a token showing promoted by British Marine. BoatLife is relatively new but somewhat larger than the previous year.

**Caravan Camping & Motorhome Show**



Riber were present in both shows.



Sandbanks Style are regular attenders at boat shows.



The pool sessions proved popular at the caravan show with plenty of youngsters getting afloat.

**BoatLife**



Riber offered a selection of kayaks types.



Inflatables from North Sands.



Aqua Marina showed the Tomahawk, a high pressure canoe with 70mm walls and hull using drop stitch technology. This makes it more directionally stable than is usual for an inflatable. Multiple D rings offer choice for seat positioning.



Crewsaver now have a range of roll top bags as well as their buoyancy aids.



Kolibri inflatables are made in the Ukraine.



Instruction from Rockley in the pool.





# Have sea kayak journeys lost their challenge?

John Ramwell had established his reputation as one of the gurus of the sea kayak world in the 1960s and 70s. In 1973 he instigated the formation of the BCU Sea Touring Committee, of which he was the first chairman. He also set up the Advanced Sea Kayaking Club which developed into the International Sea Kayak Association and, in 1975, he instigated the first UK Sea Kayaking Symposium. ISKA provided a forum for the exchange of ideas internationally which further enhanced John's reputation as he was invited to attend and assist in running courses in the USA, Canada and Australia. The administration of ISKA and production of the newsletters was solely John's responsibility.

He gained the Advanced Sea Kayaking Award, the forerunner of the current Advanced Sea Kayak Leader Award, in 1975 and he also holds the corresponding advanced awards in inland (white water) kayaking and canoeing (then known as the Canadian Canoe). At the time there were no books on sea kayaking so he self published his own in 1976, based on notes he put together at the time. This was called *Sea Touring*. Later that year Derek Hutchinson had his book *Sea Canoeing* published by a professional publisher.

It was in 1975 that John joined Derek Hutchinson and a crew of friends to attempt the first crossing of the North Sea between England



and Belgium. The trip was unsuccessful and published details of the trip have been disputed ever since between those on the trip. 'It was 100 miles of the most unpredictable sea in the world,' explained Hutchinson. 'No part of it is more than 100 fathoms deep so the slightest barometric alterations give huge seas and the winds are dreadful.' Without electronic navigating equipment, Hutchinson and his team got so lost they ended up eight miles off the coast of Dunkirk, France, rather than the small coastal town they had originally targeted in Belgium. After 34 hours of open sea paddling they faced hallucinations, vomiting, nausea, hypothermia and dehydration. After tying themselves together to keep from capsizing in an exhausted stupor they finally sent up a signal flare and were retrieved by a passing ferry.

Hutchinson wasn't deterred. The next year, with better planning and experience, he and a new team successfully made the crossing from Felixstowe to Ostend in 31 hours.

Subsequently John acted as an activity leader for the British Schools Exploring Society (now British Exploring) and Operation Raleigh. In this role he led many trips to far flung parts of the world to introduce youngsters to the delights of our sport and the potential for exploring foreign parts.

pioneers in that I determined an international community of sea kayakers required catering for so that we could share our stories and so collectively learn whilst remaining safe.

Ocean kayaking will always remain an inherently risky activity, hence the advent of the Advanced Sea Kayak Club which soon achieved a large and international membership requiring me to change the title to the International Sea Kayaking Association. So started the bimonthly production of *Ocean Kayaker*, a 20 page newsletter that I edited, produced and distributed worldwide for 40 years.

Simultaneously, I and a small group of friends, including now legendary figures such as Frank Goodman, Nigel Dennis et al, established the concept of sea kayaking symposia, the first one in Birmingham, a city in the middle of England which could only boast of being the heart of our canal system and nowhere near the ocean!

Some years ago, in the late 1990s, my wife, Jenny, and I bought a home on the island of Newfoundland which was on the shores of the Bay of Exploits, on the north coast. This provided me with access to some remarkable paddling opportunities. I mention this as, apart from being a Mecca for ocean paddling where I was able to join some local and equally remarkable paddlers, it was also the reason why, in 2017, I capitulated and walked away from an activity that had previously brought so much pleasure. This was the year we sold up in Newfoundland and returned full time to the United Kingdom.



John in Newfoundland with Dave Walters and John Badger, 2010.



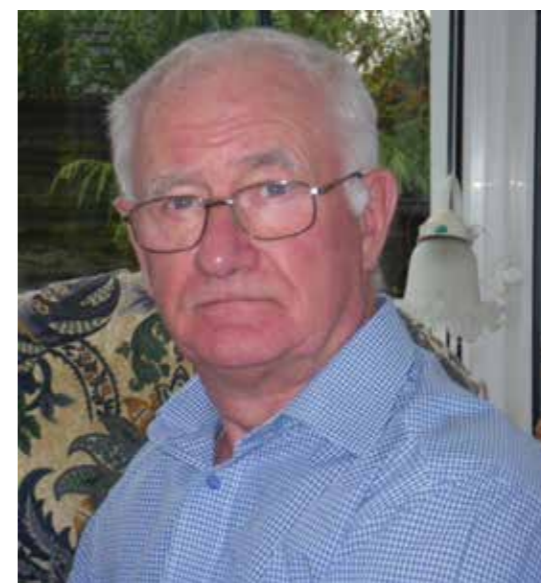
At the same time I freighted back to the UK a beautifully crafted wooden baidarka sea kayak made especially for me by my buddy, Terry Breault. I had no intention of stopping my paddling activities but, as the saying goes, 'Man proposes and God disposes' and, since leaving Newfoundland, I have never had the inclination to take to the ocean in a kayak. My baidarka kayak lay relegated to our garage in need of a good home. Do I miss paddling my own canoe where 'I'm skipper and crew?' Of course I do.

My boat is now headed back to a new home in Newfoundland

As one of the old boys of sea kayaking (I started in the 1960s) I can make ready comparisons between Now and Then and the conclusion that much has changed is clearly a no brainer to even the youngest and most inexperienced paddlers among us but you may find it surprising just how much technology and other advances in such equipment has changed our sport over the years; it has been quite radical, to say the least.

My first crossing of open water of any note was that of the English Channel that separates us from France. It is only 20 nautical miles but has fast tides and the busiest shipping lane in the world. Three of us paddled across before sea kayaks came available and we used slalom kayaks to which we fixed skegs to counter their overmanoeuvrability. We had not heard of bulkheads so a swamping would have been pretty fatal. We had flares but keeping them effective was a challenge as we once discovered on a subsequent paddle across the North Sea in the company of Derek Hutchinson but this is another story. Our boats were not well made and one came apart at the gunnels as we rafted in mid Channel. Here lies another tale. Eventually the coast of France came into view and the relief was palpable. Why should we be so relieved? Well, the French coast juts out towards England and missing our planned destination would have pushed us off course and our navigational planning might have let us down. Our course or heading was determined by working out the effect of tidal streams hour by hour using chart and tide tables back home on the kitchen table. Global positioning systems had not been heard of and neither had cellphones so you can understand how pleased we were to find ourselves more or less on course as we approached the French coast. Once we had left the English coast we were very much left to our own devices and could only rely on passing vessels or friends ashore to raise the alarm if we got into difficulties. Telling the local coastguard officers of our intentions to cross the English Channel by kayak would have been met with ridicule and clear instructions to 'not be so b... daft!'

It took many years before we got the coastguards on board with regard to our activities on the ocean with kayaks. This only happened after we initiated lengthy discussions with them after which they understood that we were as safe as all other small craft, if, indeed,



not safer. That this organization would not recognize sea kayakers, that they considered us unsafe and rather idiotic, has long been forgotten as today they are the first to acknowledge our approach to safety.

Before the advent of cellphones we relied on a third party ashore who would raise the alarm should we go beyond our estimated time of arrival and then the coastguards were the first port of call. Needless to say, this put quite a bit of pressure on the kayakers to get to a phone before any third party raised the alarm and the coastguard came looking for us.

Many innovations have been introduced over the last few decades that have made for greater predictability and, therefore, safer kayaking. Weather forecasts are a lot more reliable and a lot more accessible via iPads, iPhones etc. Equipment such as waterproof cameras, sound and reliable storage bags and beautifully designed and

professionally built sea kayaks are made from lightweight and extremely durable materials as well as paddles, camping gear and clothing. We used BDH bottles. Who remembers using these, large plastic screwtop bottles made by British Drug Houses for shipping drugs around? Failure to present at least a couple of these at BCU award assessments was bound to eliminate you. These bottles kept your stuff dry but there was a severe limit to what you could fit in one and then they had to be stored in the kayak, leaving little room for other stuff. Modern kayaks with bulkheads and hatch covers allow your clothing and gear to just be pushed through the hatch with little or no protection, being so much more reliable, not that I am advocating this as waterproof bags provide for 'belt and braces' when it comes to keeping gear dry in your kayak.

The use of small camp cookers and modern packaged food makes keeping well fed a doddle. Modern lightweight sleeping bags, clothing and tents allowed me to pack sufficient into my kayak last summer for a month's kayaking without having to restock en route.

The question I have concerns the level of challenge. Does having such as cellphones and GPS, albeit making our activities a lot safer, remove some of the adventure. I am aware of the old military saying 'any fool can be uncomfortable' but the escape from all the modern conveniences can be good for you as you struggle to survive in a gale lashed tent with only wet matches. I wonder whether some of the challenge long associated with outdoor activities has melted away as we embrace all the modern technology and that going back to basics is not such a bad idea. I know you certainly appreciate a chair and table after a few weeks in the field.

**John Ramwell**

*I recall an English paddler planning a solo trip down the west side of the Irish Sea without charts to give himself more of a challenge - Ed*



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## Memories to share?

Do any of your trips deserve a larger readership? We are pleased to hear from those who wish to share memories of their trips with others.

mail@canoeist.co.uk

# Bernoulli and his effect on kayaks

Bernoulli was a Swiss mathematician who lived in the 18th century. He described the conservation of energy with respect to moving fluids (gases and liquids) and said that the faster a fluid moved the lower the pressure it created on its surroundings. If the flow of a fluid on either side of an object is different, then there will be a pressure difference. Here's another way to understand the principle: if the speed of movement of a fluid increases, then the pressure it exerts on its surroundings will decrease. Why? Because of the laws of the conservation of energy – as one goes up, the other goes down.

All this theory might not be so easy to understand, so we need lots of examples, and they are not hard to find.

If you want to demonstrate the effect in a simple but amusing way, cut a straw in half, place one end in a cup of water and blow hard over the top of the cut straw with the other half of the straw. See what happens!

Or try balancing a table tennis ball on an upturned hair drier – switched on of course.

Bernoulli explains why your ears pop when you are in a train speeding through a tunnel. The air in the tunnel is suddenly displaced by the train travelling through the tunnel, and starts to move rapidly in the opposite direction. The sudden increase in the speed of air flowing outside in the tunnel, compared with the still air in the carriage, causes a drop in pressure which affects your eardrums.

Believe it or not, bagpipes work on the same principle. When you blow air through the reed, the pressure drops between the two halves of the reed and causes the reed to close. As soon as it closes, the flow of air stops, normal pressure resumes, and the reed opens again. This happens very rapidly and gives the distinctive buzzing sound you get with any reed instrument, not just bagpipes.

The slice or hook of any spinning ball is also caused by the Bernoulli effect. Because the ball is spinning it causes the air on either side to move at a different speeds, so affecting the side pressure exerted on the ball, moving it left (hook) or right (slice).

The Bernoulli effect is what causes flags to flutter, and roofs to blow off in gales. Old-fashioned carburettors in cars work using the same principle; it's called the Venturi effect.

Does Bernoulli have any effect on kayaks? Yes, very much so. You only need the water or air to be flowing over two surfaces at different speeds to get the effect. So, Bernoulli affects the hulls of kayaks and the blades of a paddle, particularly wing paddles.

When any boat travels quickly over shallow water, the water under the hull is displaced at speed and the pressure drops under the hull, so the boat sinks deeper in the water. This is exactly the same as the example of the train in the tunnel given above. There is also a positive feedback effect here – the deeper the boat sinks, the more powerful the effect – and this can result in the boat hitting the bottom.\* Mariners call it 'squat', and we racing paddlers experience the effect in shallow water, when our (fast) boats feel sluggish and are slowed by the drop in pressure under the hull, pulling the boat down. This also affects the wash given by the kayak, and makes wash-hanging more difficult. So, if you want to drop someone off your wash, shallow water is the place to do it.



You probably knew that already. Incidentally, this squat effect is also used by F1 racing cars.

The same effect causes canal boats to hit the sides of a canal if driven too fast too close to the vertical side of the canal. For example, it is particularly difficult to take a canal boat through the narrow channel in an aqueduct, without hitting the sides. And this explains why boats refuelling at sea are never brought too close together.

And there's more: if you have a kayak without a rudder or a skeg to keep it running in a straight line, Bernoulli will try to turn your kayak off course all the time. This is the problem beginners experience, particularly in short boats with a rockered keel. Why does it occur? Very simple: once the kayak starts to turn, the flow of water on either side of the stern becomes different. If the boat turns to port, the stern will move to starboard and the flow of water on the starboard side will be faster than on the port side, as it is squeezed aside. So the pressure will drop on the starboard side, and cause the stern to move even more to starboard, which is exactly what the paddler doesn't want.

Incidentally, if you are operating a RIB safety boat or similar, and put the engine in reverse, you will find the boat almost impossible to control, because of Bernoulli. The effect is nullified by a keel, or skeg or rudder, so it's not a problem in a yacht, for example, and that's why many kayakers opt for a skeg or rudder.

You know if you tilt a kayak, particularly a short, rounded boat, it will turn to one side, e.g. tilt to the left and it turns right. That's because you are altering the flow of water over the left and right sides of the hull and changing the water pressure on it.

Bernoulli also explains why many kayaks always seem to turn up-wind, annoyingly. The flow of air over the bow of the kayak changes as it moves up one side and down the other. On the windward side the flow speeds up, and on the leeward side it slows down and forms eddies. This reduces the pressure on the windward side, so the bow moves to windward. Why doesn't that affect the stern too? I'm fairly certain that's because stern decks tend to be flat, and also because of the angle of attack of the wind, but I'd need to test it with different boats and different decks. There's a wee project for someone.

Those few of you who have skis will be aware that there's a self-bailing system which works because of the Bernoulli effect. The water in the cockpit is still, and the water under the hull is moving. So there's a pressure difference which causes the water to drain from the cockpit, so long as you are moving forward of course.

Finally, the Bernoulli principle helps explain the lifting effect on an aeroplane's wing, where the speed of airflow over the top of the wing, is greater than that below the wing, i.e. the air pressure on the top surface of the wing is lower than the bottom surface, so the wing experiences lift. But remember, it's not just Bernoulli that causes the lift, that's only part of the story. Most of the lift is caused by the displacement of air downwards. And it works fine when a plane is upside-down too, because of the angle of attack and the downward displacement of the air. The aerofoil shape helps when it's the right way up, but even upside-down there is still a degree of lift, because of the angle of attack. This is exactly the same with wing paddles. The wonderful feature of wing paddles is that there is a differential flow of water over both surfaces of the blade – fast over the forward convex surface and slow over the concave surface, and this causes a reduction of pressure on the front surface, which gives the wing paddle a small percentage edge over a normal one. A truly inspirational design. Propellers experience the same effect, but like the wing of an aircraft, and the wing paddle, the principle 'push' is simply from the displacement of water backwards. The sails on a yacht are such that the flow of air over the convex side is faster than the concave side, and this helps drive the yacht forward.

So next time you are paddling your kayak, remember that Bernoulli is influencing it in all kinds of wonderful ways, except that some of them are detrimental, rather than helpful. Sorry about that, but now you know why.

If anyone argues with you, the answer is simple: all you need is a differential flow of a fluid over a surface and Bernoulli will spring into action. That's a fact.

**Andy Morton**

\*There was an example of this at the IC nationals on Loch Lomond last year. A tour boat for spectators hit the gravel bottom between two islands. The power was shut off immediately and the boat rose in the water. Proceeding at a lower speed meant there was no further grounding.

To Meath of the pastures,  
From wet hills of the sea,  
Through Leitrim and Longford,  
Go my cattle and me.

**Padraig Colum**

# Shannon-Erne Waterway River Shannon End

A failed canal becomes Europe's best restoration



The Shannon-Erne Waterway near Leitrim. It continues wide and clear.

Designed by William Thomas Mulvany and John McMahon, the Ballinamore & Ballyconnell Canal was built from 1856 to 1860. There was only 8km of canal, the rest being 12km of lough and 42km of canalized river, reminiscent of the earlier Caledonian Canal. However, it was not to be successful. The loughs were problems for horse and donkey haulage, the river and canal sections are extensively tree lined, preventing sailing, and there are few towpath sections. Use for drainage also caused problems. It was intended to be a link in an inland water route from Dublin to Belfast via the River Shannon, Lough Neagh and the Lagan Navigation, rather longer than the sea route, but, soon after it opened, the narrower Ulster Canal closed for major repairs. There were only eight paying boats in the first nine years and a five year period with no paying craft. It closed in 1869, by which time railway competition was about to become serious.

A century later the problems were very different. The line was northeast from the Shannon and actually forms part of the border between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland before finishing in Northern Ireland. With the Troubles, tourism was one common area of interest for the Irish and British governments, which each contributed to restoration of the canal linking two popular cruising areas, one each side of the border.

The route was reopened in 1994 as the finest restoration in Europe, now using the Shannon-Erne Waterway name. Rebuilt locks are operated by smart card and bridges rebuilt or replaced. Service blocks are built at intervals with toilets, showers and laundry facilities, accessed by card bought locally. Canoeing and rowing are popular and there are more powered craft than usual, mostly cruisers, especially at the Shannon end. Markers for shallows for cruisers may be seen from up to a couple of

kilometres away across loughs on a clear day, showing the exit points for larger loughs. Small blue signs point out directions to named places for canoeists and where there are slipways. Locks are signed conspicuously from nearby roads and they have a landing stage and steps at each end with mooring cleats, usually the end nearest the lock to keep portages as short as practical. The name Shannon-Erne Blueway is now being used to draw in walkers and cyclists although these are often far from the canal, bringing the east end back into the Irish Republic at Belturbet.

The canal leaves the Shannon at Leitrim, moving northeast across Co Leitrim and away from Co Roscommon, both in Connaught. Activity around the marinas in Leitrim disguises the fact that this is Ireland's least populated county, becoming heavily depopulated in the famines of 1845-51 at the time of starting construction of the canal.

The R280 crosses Leitrim Bridge but the town is soon left behind. Killarcan Lock, beyond powerlines across the canal, is the only one with a lockkeeper and, with no shortage of water, he invites canoeists to be locked through. The locks rising to the



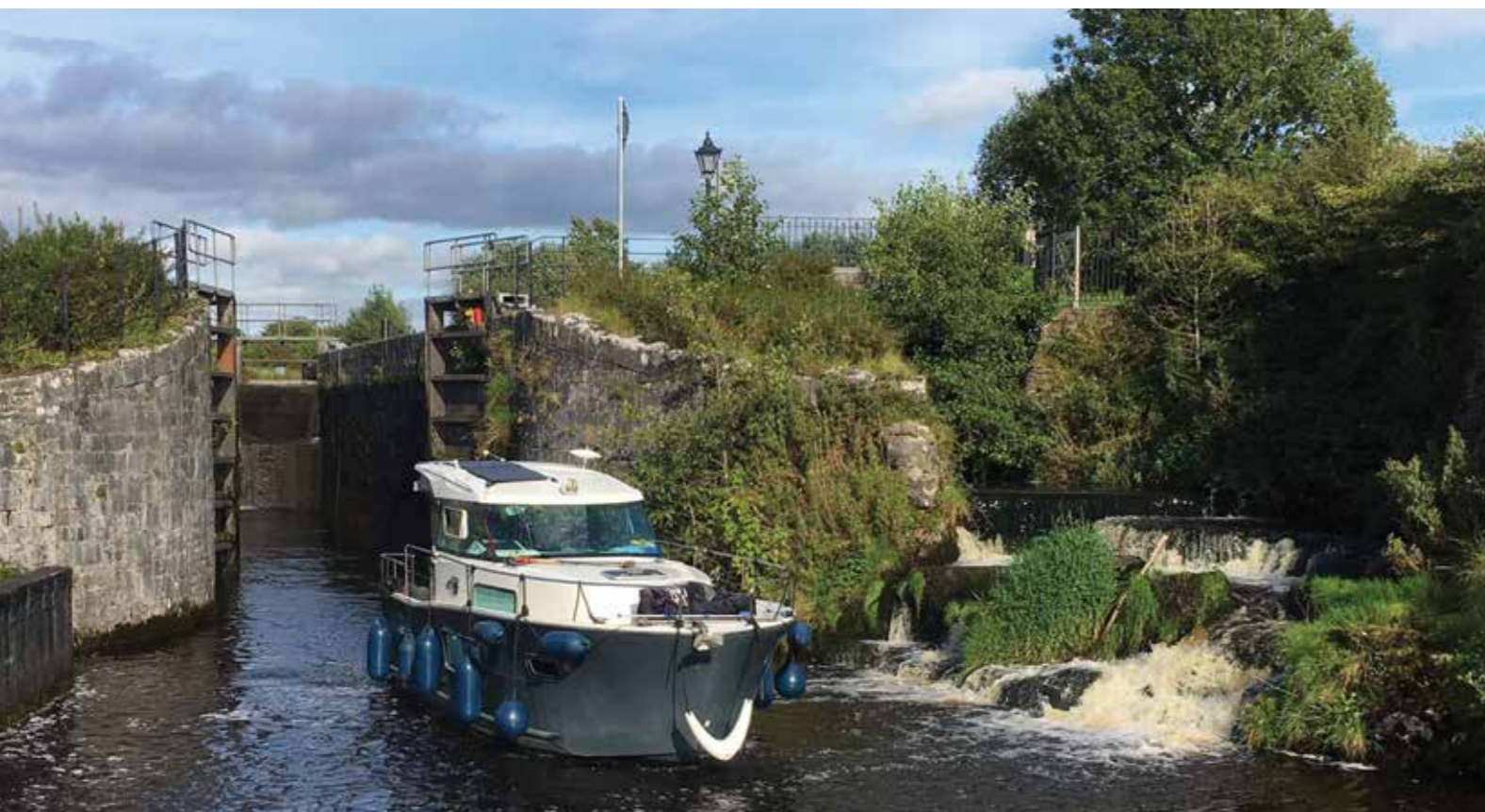
Access and passage are not necessarily permitted and safe under all conditions.



*The towpath is present occasionally.*



*Kilclare Upper Lock begins Ireland's highest canal summit level.*



*Plenty of water passing Tirmactiernan Lock.*

summit are all original and are slow to empty and fill. First sign of a lock is usually traffic lights, even though most locks are not manned.

Alders are prominent among the trees lining much of the canal but others include willows and hawthorns and there are plenty of dogroses and ivy. Otters and brown trout are in the water and many pondskaters on the surface. There are foxes and badgers about, kingfishers are common and the canal also has migratory ducks, mute and whooper swans, herons and swallows. The waterway has also provided an invasion route for zebra mussels. Cattle wallow in rough pasture by the canal, the quality of pasture gradually improving heading eastwards.

Killarcan Bridge and Tirmactiernan Lock come before Crossycarwill Bridge, across the road from which is a barrow near Ballinwing, overlooked by a conspicuous white cross on Sheemore hilltop, which also has megalithic tombs. The rural country means that many more antiquities survive and there are many enclosure sites such as ringforts.

Drumduff Lock and Newbrook Lock each have their respective bridges, the latter carrying the R209 which comes back over Lisconor Bridge by Lisconor Lock.

The three Kilclare locks, following McNamara's Bar & Shop, bring the canal up to the Summit Reach. At 67m, it is the highest section of canal in Ireland and is exposed to the prevailing southwesterly winds. Across the road from Kilclare Upper Lock is a lifeboat, presumably not for canal use.

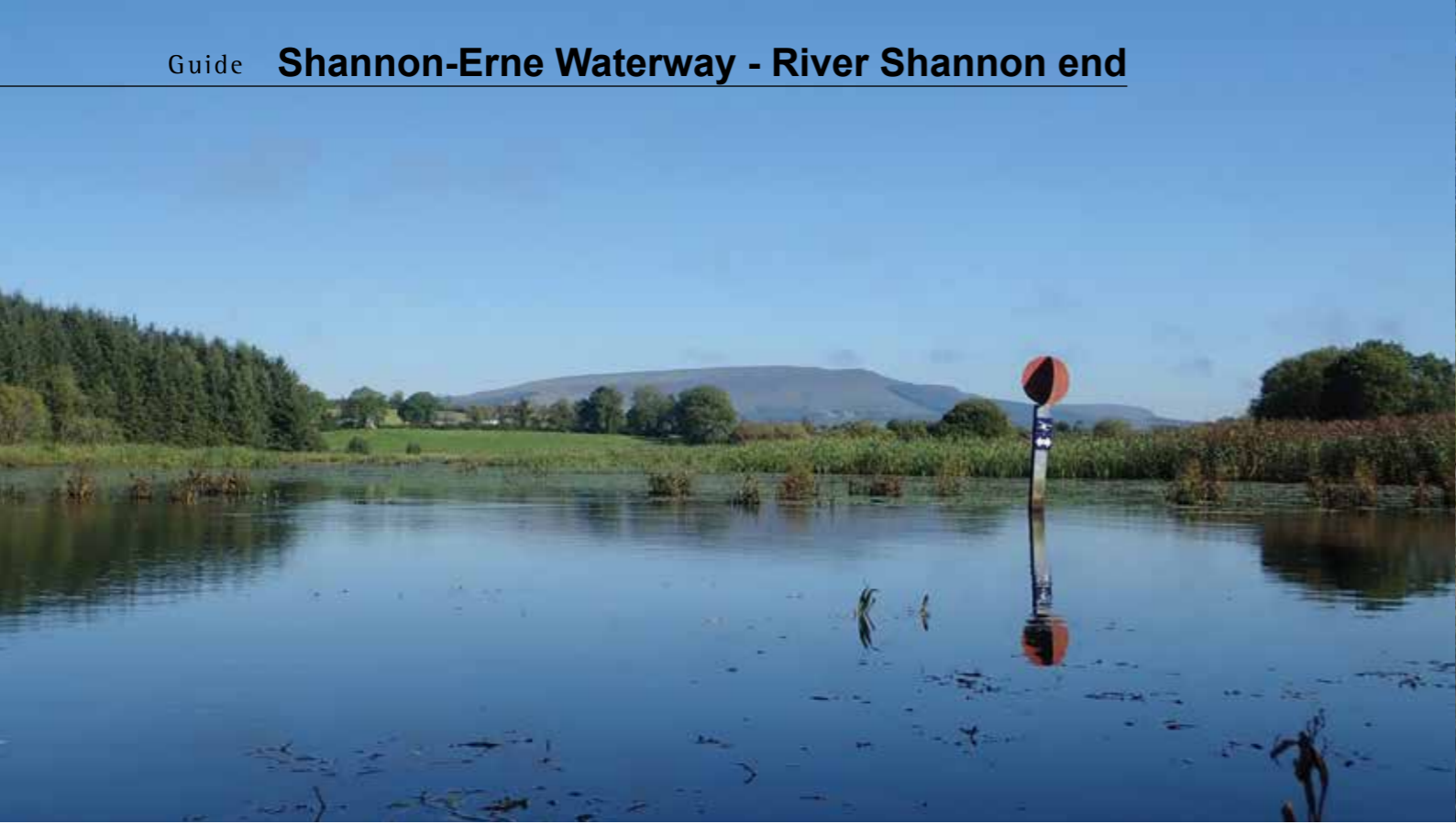
Lough Conway, surrounded by reeds, reedmace and lilies, is adjacent to the canal as the canal turns away

under the R209. Beyond the lough is 585m Slieve Anierin at the end of the Iron Mountains, formerly used for mining iron but now spread with conspicuous wind turbines.

Scrabbagh Bridge leads up to a cairn and a barrow before the canal widens out through Drumaleague Lough. There is a megalithic tomb on Sheebeg, a hill where it is claimed Irish folk hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill might be buried, or perhaps Sheemore. Fionn burnt his thumb while cooking for his master the Salmon of Knowledge, which knew everything in the world (except who was fishing, perhaps) and had taken seven years to catch. Thereafter, biting his thumb would allow him access to all this knowledge. He also altered the topography as he and Fingal, on the Scottish side, threw lumps of scenery the size of the Giant's Causeway, Lough Neagh and the Isle of Man at each other.

The R209 makes its final crossing of the canal on Letterfine Road but does not go away too far at this stage. Scur Road Bridge crosses the Letterfine Cutting, a channel through rock, bare on the north side but with hart's tongue ferns, blackberries and sycamores on the south side, beyond which are hidden more megalithic tombs.

Lough Scur is the largest and most interesting lough on the summit level. There are a couple of crannog sites, a tower on Prison Island and Castle John fortified house. Beyond Whiskey Island a conspicuous modern house stands near where the Aghacashlaun River joins from the Iron Mountains. A catholic mixture of cormorants, gulls, mallards, moorhens and hawker dragonflies might be seen.



*Lough Conway with Slieve Anierin beyond. The post carries guidance for canoeists.*



*Letterfine Cutting and its greenery.*



*Lough Scur, the first of the open loughs to be crossed.*



*Castlefore Lock, the deepest on the canal, ends the summit level.*



*Trees line the canal on a secluded section.*

The lough tapers down to the quay at Keshcarrigan where Gertie's has a museum and is one of two pubs in the village which are reputed to be the best music pubs in the country. Its St Patrick's Day parades have also been claimed to have been the best anywhere, themes having included backwards, indoors, invisible, standing still and Brexit.

Rossy Footbridge crosses as the R209 finally makes a full departure and the canalized river widens into Lough Marrave.

Castlefore Lock's 4m fall is the largest on the canal,

bringing to an end a summit level that would be the envy of many canals, long with a healthy water supply, no restrictions on using it and a large storage capacity. Purple loosestrife and rosebay willowherb add colour between Drumany and Derrinkip bridges.

The route turns left onto Muckros Lough and runs along the foot of a hillside covered in trees before a short river reach connects to St John's Lough. Another short river reach to the next lough passes where Derrymacoffin Bridge collapsed in 1948.

Leaving the lough, the canal passes under the R208



*Marker posts show the line across St John's Lough.*



*Gentle rolling loughside scenery.*

Ballyduff Road Bridge and is followed for a while by a section of the Kingfisher Cycle Trail. Ballyduff Lock, like the other eastern locks, has been rebuilt in reinforced concrete, faced above water level with stone from the original locks. Convolulous also brightens the banks in season.

The route now uses the canalized Yellow River and rounds three sides of Ballinamore Golf Course, opposite which are another megalithic tomb and a standing stone.

The town arrives abruptly with modern accommodation blocks. Ballinamore, mouth of the big ford, styles itself as the Capital of the Waterway and has a lock and quay but little of it is seen from the water. Gone is the narrow gauge Cavan & Leitrim Light Railway from Dromod to Belturbet, intended to be part of a 234mm gauge network from Newry to Clifden. There is a Glenview Folk Museum and

Leitrim Genealogy Centre with Ballinamore Family Festival week as one of the town's attractions.

After the R202 crosses over Ballinamore Navigation Road Bridge there is an unmarked T junction. Counterintuitively, the navigation turns back to the right and runs along beside extensive moorings towards a substantial modern boat shed before making a large semicircle to the south via Ardrum Lock.

The railway used to cross at Aghoo West. Aghoo Lock lies beyond Aghoo Bridge, crossed by the R204. Derrygoan Road Bridge is in the centre of a triangle of Ardmeenagh Lough, Drumcouran Lough and Lough Awaddy.

Carrickmakeegan Bridge is the last access point before a series of larger loughs. Just beyond the bridge there are inconspicuous steps leading up to an area with picnic tables and parking, a convenient place to take a break.



*Carrickmakeegan Bridge before arrival at larger loughs.*

## FACT FILE

### Distance

From the River Shannon to Carrickmakeegan is 31km.

### OSI 1:50,000 Sheets

26 Cavan, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Roscommon, Sligo

[27A Cavan, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Monaghan]

33 Leitrim, Longford, Roscommon, Sligo

34 Cavan, Leitrim, Longford, Meath, Westmeath

# BOOKS

## Reviews of books and publications

### The Secret Treasures of Saint Lucia



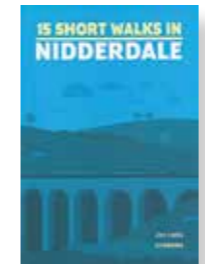
Sara Grant  
Scholastic  
978 1407 19275 8  
2019  
200 x 130mm  
92 pages, paperback

Twelve year old Jack flies in from London to St Lucia with his parents for a holiday. The book opens with him, within a few hours, out in a kayak on his own, out of sight of his parents and out of control. He ends up in the Maria Islands, forbidden territory, where he meets Nyla, a girl of similar age, a volunteer with the National

Trust, carrying out her weekly inspection, also by kayak.

That is as far as the kayaks go, however. This children's novel, involving a magic map and more unexplainable things, ranges over the island's attractions in a search for pirate buried treasure.

### 15 Short Walks in Nidderdale



Jon Fallis  
978 1 78631 154 2

Cicerone  
2023  
170 x 120mm  
95 pages, paperback  
£9.95

This series of 15 short family walks is frequently alongside rivers. Inevitably, the River Nidd features often, between Ulshaw and Kilgram Bridge, from Pateley Bridge to Glasshouses, where there is some information on the mill at the slalom site being converted to residential use, from Dacre Banks to Darley, looking down on the river at Ripley and the Nidd Gorge north of Harrogate.

The Burn is viewed between Gollinglith Foot and Leighton and at Masham, where the River Ure takes over and is followed again above Hack Fall. Armathwaite Gill is seen from both sides at How Stean Gorge and the River Skell is followed around Studley Park. Finally, Swinsty Reservoir is encircled and Lindley Wood Reservoir with the section of the Washburn leading to it from Dobpark Bridge. Although there is little detail on these rivers they appear in some photographs and pictures show the settings.

The book has not caught up with the change of terminology from Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to National Landscape and shows a Nidderdale AONB boundary sign which is going to need some reingraving.

Maps are sections of OS 1:25,000 sheets with much detail and showing starts for walkers, important as location by postcodes and What3Words terms will mean nothing to anyone not using appropriate apps. Refreshments, toilets and parking at starts are indicated, some of which will be near enough for paddlers to use.

### 15 Short Walks in Dumfries & Galloway

Ronald Turnbull  
978 1 78631 172 6  
Cicerone  
2023  
170 x 120mm  
95 pages, paperback  
£9.95

These 15 walks in Dumfries & Galloway are mostly suitable for



families, not unduly strenuous and often near water. The odd one out is an ascent of Criffel, which is tougher but has a new footpath of quality up it and from the top has extensive views over the Nith and Solway which both drain over large areas.

Portpatrick has a coastal walk to Port More. Another coastal walk is from Garlieston to Craggleton Point. There is a circuit of Loch Trool. Newton Stewart just meets the River Cree as the walk at Gatehouse of Fleet meets the Water of

Fleet. The walk at Kirkcudbright is mostly riparian, however, following the River Dee and going right round St Mary's Island, actually a peninsula. The Dee is also met at Threave Castle near Castle Douglas while another walk further still upstream follows the Water of Ken at St John's Town of Dalry. The Balcarly Point walk follows the sea cliffs from Balcarly Bay and another walk follows the coast from Sandyhills to Rockcliffe. From Langholm a route follows the River Esk up to Postholm.

Two walks follow the banks of rivers closely. That on the River Nith goes from the centre of Dumfries to the A75. The one on the River Annan uses both banks between Annan and Brydekirk. Attention is drawn to a caul or cauld, a southwest Scotland dialect word for a weir which is the term used on the map. More often than not the term cauld is applied to old stone weirs, often partly collapsed, leaving just a short rapid, as is the case of all those on the Annan except the one passed on this walk, which is large, modern and dangerous. This is less of an issue for walkers but paddlers on this popular touring river arrive at it unmarked. Our guide in the next issue will show a photograph and explain how it is so dangerous.

### 15 Short Walks Pembrokeshire Tenby & the South



Dennis & Jan Kelsall  
978 1 78631 175 7  
Cicerone  
2024  
170 x 120mm  
87 pages, paperback  
£9.95

Another book in the 15 short walks series, this one is almost completely walks at the coast between Amroth and Martin's Haven.

IC sailors have used Saundersfoot for their nationals more than once and should add Dale this July. Waveski and kayak surfers are familiar with Manorbier and Bullslaughter Bay. Sea kayak users may be found at Tenby, Lydstep, Stackpole, St Govan's Head, the Green Bridge of Wales, West Angle, Marloes and many places between with seven visible in the photo of Martin's Haven.

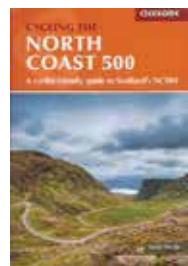
More coast is shown at St Ishmael's in Milford Haven and Carew Castle can be reached from further up the estuary. Bosherton Lily Ponds are more waters that can be seen.

There is reference to caves and coves inaccessible to those on foot and information on how to find out when Castlemartin tank firing range is operational.

'The abyss, known as The Cauldron, is open to the sea through a huge arch on its southern wall, and on the opposite side through narrow clefts to an inaccessible beach. Birds swoop through its portals to ride in the winds that are funnelled out through the top.' This sounds like birds playing, as they do by riding the tidal flow between Portsea and Hayling Island at the entrance to Langstone Harbour.

This coast offers more than most for sea kayak users, the reason for its popularity. We have reviewed other guides by Dennis and Jan Kelsall, the Ribble, the Yorkshire Dales and, particularly, *Walking the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path* (Nov 2016, p37), on which the current book is probably based.

## Cycling the North Coast 500



Mike Wells  
978 1 78631 219 8  
Cicerone  
2019, second edition 2024  
170 x 120mm  
194 pages, paperback  
£17.95

The North Coast 500 is a promotional name that has been given to a route that circles the north of Scotland from Inverness. Its success in attracting users from campervan owners to motorcyclists means that it is less safe for cyclists than in former days and so this book offers route options on quieter roads, including avoiding the A9 down the east coast.

The book settles on the figure of 528, mostly miles but kilometres on the cover, actually 850km, although this varies with route options chosen, including down the centre of the Flow Country.

Roads are somewhat limited in the north of Scotland so anyone travelling to and from the water is likely to use much of this route. As well as the coast, the route passes lochs such as Maree, Ewe, Assynt, Broom and Little Loch Broom and follows river valleys including Strath Carron and Strath Naver.

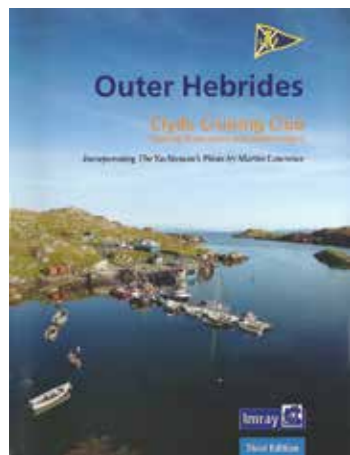
You can count the towns on the fingers of one hand. Villages, usually small, are well spaced out and facilities are sparse so it is useful to have them located.

Maps in the book are mostly at 1:150,000 and features of interest are marked and described, including hostels, bunkhouses, campsites and other accommodation, distilleries, places to eat, stations and adjacent Munros.

Geology and history, especially the Clearances, are given significant coverage and it is noted that although only 2% of the population speak Gaelic it is being given prominence in official places, including road signs.

Author Mike Wells is an established writer of these guides, the Elbe, the Rhine, the Moselle, the Rhone, the Loire and, indeed, the north of Scotland having been reviewed previously in our pages.

## Outer Hebrides



Geoff Crowley  
978 178679 168 9  
Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson  
2012, 3rd edition 2024  
300 x 220mm  
170 pages, paperback  
£37.50

The Clyde Cruising Club's sailing directions are pilots primarily intended to prevent sailors from hitting rocks and finding them safe places to anchor. They have been merged with Martin Lawrence's yachtsmen's pilots, this one (May 18, p64) with the one to the Western Isles. Particularly valuable are his aerial

photographs which have sometimes become a little dated as fish farms get moved around and marinas get added but the geography does not change. Indeed, some views are 19th century sketches and an Admiralty survey of south Harris is from around 1860 is the basis of coverage of that area.

The non navigational content has been moved to *Cruising Scotland* (May 16, p35), there being cross links to this and to relevant Admiralty and Imray charts and OS maps. There are, of course, plenty of chartlets throughout the book and I am very pleased to see that each now has a scale rather than latitude and longitude rulers. Appendices give the locations of applicable Admiralty and Antares charts.

Over 80% of the coverage is of the eastern side of the Outer Hebrides. The west side gets far less attention as there are fewer anchorages but the Flannans and St Kilda round off the book.

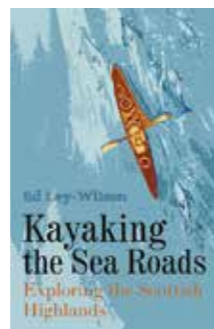
Tides, tidal streams and the information on mobile phone coverage is important. There are suggestions for getting water from a burn near

Wizard Pool and a spring near Vaccasay Basin while an index is given to where provisions may be obtained, rather limited in this part of the country.

The Gunwale or Rengas Channel is noted as only suitable for sea kayaks, as are the Narrows in Loch Seaforth.

An appendix of Gaelic geographical terms and pronunciations round off this pilot, which is wire bound so that it will remain open at the page you want.

## Kayaking the Sea Roads



Ed Ley-Wilson  
978 1 84995 563 8  
Whittles  
2023  
220 x 140mm  
230 pages, paperback  
£16.99

This is probably the most important book of its kind for over 70 years.

On the surface it is the record of a 58 year old paddler who appreciates that time is running out to undertake a two month solo paddle, his chosen route from Gourrock up the Scottish west coast to Kinlochbervie, including

part of the coast of Skye and much of the Outer Hebrides. There are no records, no blogs, not the fastest, often not even the first time the author has paddled there. He uses ferries and a car portage or two, paddling nearly 1,000km in 56 days despite picking the wettest and windiest June and July for years in 2022.

Each day is written up, even when weatherbound, and he has his own traffic light system for a clear summary of the wind, amber for force 4 to 6, green below and red above. Maps are clear for the route and pictures, usually in blocks of three, are spread through the book to accompany the relevant text.

Although an average sea kayak paddler, some of his previous history suggests something more, Royal Marines, adventure centre instructor, running nearly 2,000km of the Great Wall of China, running over 3,000km across the Himalaya, salmon farmer, Assynt crofter, businessman, community leader and someone with a deep concern about improving the lot of communities in the Highlands and Islands with some suggestions about how to go about it.

The book with which I compare it is *Quest by Canoe* of 1950, which covered a trip from the Clyde to Mull, looking not just at the paddling but also the issues of life on Scotland's deprived western seaboard. Author Alistair Dunnett went on to edit various national papers, including *The Scotsman*, where his experience of the lives in these rural communities stood him in good stead.

Ed discusses many current day issues, shooting, angling, invasive plants, the climate, Brexit, ecologists who decide to promote one or two species of wildlife over others, tourism, holiday homes and second houses. Incomers are accepted provided they integrate fully but not those who buy houses and leave them empty for much of the year. He explains how the Norwegians have dealt with the situation which is ruining Cornish villages as rich outsiders buy houses for their occasional use. He disparages social media that promotes 'my top ten secret Highland places'. (Our guides always describe everything rather than cherry picking.)

Even when weatherbound there are things to discuss, from why midges and ticks can be good to dating tips in the days before the internet. His mobile phone usage is kept to a minimum. Wildlife encounters are described frequently. He likes to get out of all his gear, especially when wet, and go 'wild swimming - or, as we call it in the Highlands, swimming'. He contrasts the attitude of his distant landlord when he was a crofter at the mouth of Loch a' Chàirn Bhàin with that of the positive approach of Ardtornish estate at Lochaline.

I make no apology for quoting one long summary paragraph in full:

'I am clear, I hope, about the sort of Highlands I long to see. I hope for empowered local communities; people living *on* the land not just *off* the land; I want to see shops and pubs and ceilidhs and community woodlands and things for young people to do; I want to see a smaller percentage of holiday homes, and certainly few, if any, second homes; I want to see affordable housing, green energy, efficient use of our natural capital, communities vested in their area; I want to see incomers and I want to see those incomers keep quiet and listen before they believe they know how things work - and read some books (Jim Hunter would be a good start); I want to see us value 'local'; to think global and act

local; I want to see great communications and road networks, effective, well-maintained ferries and a planning system that is sensitive to the sense of community. And I want a brave government - braver than they are at present - who will pass laws to protect and promote Highland interest. Protect us from the seemingly unstoppable spread of the worst tourism has to offer; promote high-skilled businesses that provide jobs year round; protect our environment with a regulatory body that is efficient and enabling; and promote the devolving of power to a more local level, suitably supported with finance, whenever possible.'

You may not agree with all of this but, if not, you need to be clear why. As it happens, while a student I shared digs with Jim Hunter for a term.

Other names come from the past. The Scottish Association for Marine Science, who helped Ed, are the successors to the body that introduced me to the west coast of Scotland. Rebecca Ridgway, author of *Something Amazing* (Oct 93, p38) is the daughter of transatlantic rower John Ridgway, visited here, and, rotting on a beach, is the boat shaped like a sperm whale by Tom McClean, who claimed Rockall for the UK in 1985.

There is much more here than the title implies

## Nature & Beaches



Cala Millor Mallorca  
A5  
24 pages, paperback

A brief guide to Mallorca's Cala Millor beaches, this guide has some limited introductions to beaches with small pictures. Lists of birds, the significance of seagrass and the nature of beaches are included

Collection of plants or mineral specimens is not allowed and there are some protected areas. Wild camping and campfires are also forbidden but hotels and their contacts are listed.

Some beaches can rent out such items as hammocks, umbrellas and safe boxes and one even has a free book loan service.

## By the Sea



PromoTurismoFVG  
220 x 160mm  
75 pages, paperback

Friuli Venezia Giulia has 130km of coast at the northern end of the Adriatic, including extensive lagoons. This long and detailed guide splits the region into three, Lignano Sabbiadoro area, Grado area and Gulf of Trieste, and goes through them each topic by topic which might be of interest to the visitor. Kayak and canoe hire are available in many places as indicated, often with guides or instructors if required, both in lagoons and on the sea.

Nature reserves include one that can only be approached by sea while a number of beaches have guards and require payment on entry. Areas popular with kite surfers imply significant wind at times. There is even a Lido di Fido, an area of beach set up for the enjoyment of dogs.

A large fold out map of attractions is included.

## Sardinia Canoeing & Kayaking

Telemaco Murgia  
Regione Autonoma della Sardegna  
2023  
200 x 130mm  
52 pages, paperback

This is an abridged guide to parts of the coast of Sardinia. Five of eleven guides that make up the full 95 page book are included here with advice on how to download the rest.

Guides to trips here range between 44 and 92km in length, broken up into two to four sections. Each section has a sketch map showing start, landing spots and finish and QR codes lead to Google maps. Data



includes prevailing wind directions. Text gives the route and mentions spots of interest along the way. Highlights, beaches and restrictions are given slightly more detailed mention with limited photographs.

The introduction gives advice on safety, including a list of 20 items to be taken on even the shortest trips with four more on longer trips. Businesses running tours or hiring kayaks are listed and some local food specialities are presented. To help you find the best trip for your needs they are all listed under specialities, such as best for wildlife, geology, ancient monuments or scenery.

It is a booklet that does not go into a lot of detail but presents important information clearly and quickly.

## Tuscany Delicious Sea



Elisabetta Palaia  
Toscana Promozione Turistica  
2021  
A5  
73 pages, paperback

Tuscany has over 500km of coastline and includes the Tuscan archipelago of Elba, Gorgona, Giglio, Capraia, Montecristo and Giannutri plus lagoons and inland waterways. It has constraints in the form of restricted areas and also the Libeccio wind at times but includes among its attractions coves that are hard to access from land. Canoe hire is offered for watching birdlife.

The main emphasis of the book, however, is fish and other seafood, the species, in which seasons they are caught and how they are cooked and served. There are increasing numbers of restaurants that don't have set menus using imported frozen fish but prepare whatever has been caught locally that day, completely fresh with more flavour.

## Circular Walks on the Cromford Canal



Ken Brockway  
Friends of the Cromford Canal  
2024  
A5  
35pages  
£6

This guidebook consists of a dozen circular walks between Cotmanhay on the Erewash Canal and Cromford on the Cromford Canal, each using the towpath. Well illustrated, it has full descriptions, including where to obtain refreshments, and maps based on OS 1:50,000 mapping. The centre two pages are a location map.

## Dragon Boat Racing in the Modern Era



Mike Mackeddie-Haslam  
2024  
326 pages, PDF

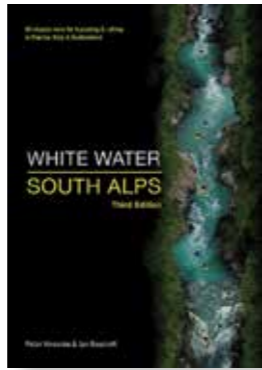
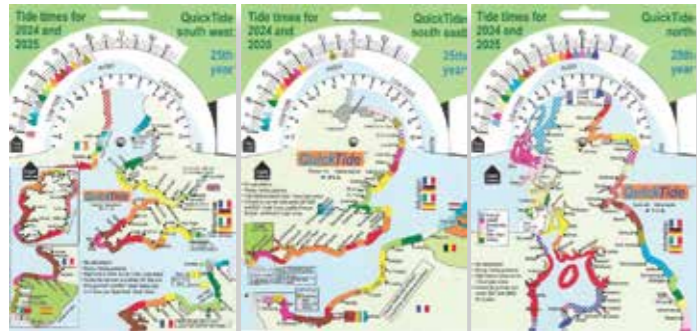
This is an abridgement of *Racing the Dragon* (Nov 23, p33). About a quarter of the original book has been removed, mostly relating to canoeing and Mike's military career. The remaining work has been brought right up to date to give a very full history of modern dragon boat racing.

It is available only in PDF format but is free. To obtain a copy email [mikehaslam@aol.com](mailto:mikehaslam@aol.com) with your contact details.

QuickTide South West  
 QuickTide South East  
 QuickTide North

Ronald Turnbull  
 QT International  
 2024  
 £11.00 each

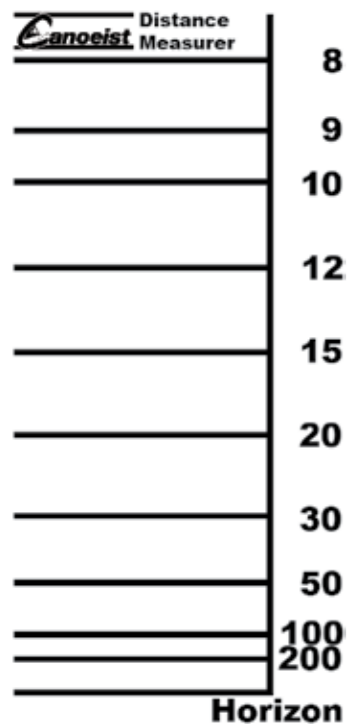
QuickTide tables are available again for the 25th year, covering two years as usual. Three tables cover the British Isles and the European coast from the Dutch delta to the Mediterranean at Cabo de Gata. As usual, no calculations are involved. You simply have to turn a dial to line up relevant information. Colouring of reference codes on the back draws attention to days with the largest tidal ranges.



White Water South Alps

The third edition of *White Water South Alps* (Dec 2011, p57) is now also available in PDF format for the Kindle, price £9.99. This will be useful for those limited on space or weight while travelling or not wishing to get involved with postal delivery times or costs when ordering from abroad.

**Paul Caffyn Classic 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



**The Canoeist Distance Measurer**

The Canoeist Distance Measurer is a simple device which, once set up, will always be with you without any further effort, no extra kit to remember or carry.

Print out the page, cut out the measurer and stick it on your paddle shaft with clear waterproof tape or similar. Find a spot where it will not be worn by your hands. The numbers need to read correctly when the paddle is held vertically. Too far up the shaft and you might have difficulty with being unable in shallow water to get the bottom blade down far enough to read the scale but too near the bottom end and you might have to contend with any wind.

To use it, hold the paddle vertically at arm's length with the bottom of the scale lined up with the horizon. Sight something of known height and read off an appropriate number from the scale against the top of the object. This object sighted could be a lighthouse or other tall building, a hill, cliffs or the navigation clearance under a large bridge. The distance measurer can also be used horizontally

between two places a known distance apart as long as they are each about the same distance from you.

The height multiplied by the figure from the scale gives the distance away. For example, a lighthouse with light 30m above water level giving a reading of 50 would show you were  $30 \times 50 = 1,500\text{m}$  away.

The scale reads correctly for a paddler with paddle shaft held 660mm away from the eye. Measure your comfortable distance when you set it up initially. It will read 8% high if your arms are 50mm shorter or 8% low if they are 50mm longer than 660mm from your eye to the position at which the paddle is held.

By the time you have allowed for arm length, interpolating between numbers on the scale and the fact that the waves will probably be moving you up and down, you will not get precise readings but you will get approximate distances, get an idea of how far you are away from where you want to be and be able to work out whether you are making headway against an ebbing current.

**Overlooked functional design in cranked Greenland paddles**



First try in 1986.

The east side of the Isle of Bute, Clyde estuary, Scotland, 1985. Wind westerly F8 gusting F9. Sea state almost flat calm.

I was in a short sea kayak made by Alan Byde in 1983. It had and still has an adjustable skeg forward of the stern that is very effective at setting the angle to the wind. Directional control was no problem and took no effort beyond setting the skeg. The paddle had become the limiting factor, a flat bladed feathered offering from UK company Ottersports. It had served well until then but not now. A decade earlier, in 1974, plans for a narrow blade paddle had come my way and I still had those. Was it time to try that style? The narrow blade paddle was finished early in 1986 in time for a day's trip around the islands off Luing on the west of Scotland, including the Grey Dog gap (little Corryvreckan).

The narrow blade did not inspire confidence and took a deal of getting used to but I didn't fall in. The next weekend, Easter, my friend and I paddled from Luing to Skye, stopping to camp at Craignure on Mull and Kinloch Bay on Rùm. We landed in Glen Brittle on Skye just as the weather deteriorated. Apart from the first day out with the paddle the previous week, I had not been on the water for almost six months and fully expected to feel paddling muscles stiff the next or following days. However, nothing like that occurred. I just felt generally

exercised and that was the first revelation of the advantages of a narrow blade. Why was this effect experienced? This led to some research on muscle fatigue and cycling energetics which was the nearest equivalent to paddling that I could find (1). All that eventually resulted in the article *Sea blades: fashion or function?* (2).

**Advanced Greenland stroke**

From 1986 until late 1999 I made and sold some forty or fifty paddles based on the 1974 plans and used one made from pitch pine for more than a decade when instructing on outdoor adventure courses based on the Isle of Scarba. Articles about Greenland style paddles were appearing with more frequency in the US magazine *Sea Kayaker* around that time when, finally, in a 2000 edition the 'advanced Greenland stroke' was described (3). This is where the narrow blade is sliced at the start of the stroke. This sounds counterintuitive for stability but, in fact, is very effective. The trick to making this work is to have the mental image of an intention to pull the kayak down into the water. With this mental image, bracing in the correct direction is automatic and the result is to feel very 'planted' and solid in the water while stroking.

Later, in 2000, there was an opportunity to examine four old Inuit paddles in a museum, the Museon Omniversum, Den Haag, Netherlands. From a prior request, their paddle collection was provided for examination. Three of the paddles, 57536, 48058 and 59876, exhibited particular intention in their design. The knowledge and experience of making and using narrow blades for a decade or so beforehand helped to make sense of the strange intentional shapes I could soon see in these three paddles.

The characteristics observed in the Den Haag examples are what I call and describe here as: 'forward set', 'upsweep', 'central massing' and 'loom rotation'. These are illustrated in the accompanying photographs of a Windslicer demonstration paddle. In all other commercial paddles of which I am aware (apart from Windslicer) Greenland style paddles are manufactured straight and perfectly bilaterally symmetrical.



The Museon Omniversum in Den Haag.



Skye in 1986.

**Forward set**

To begin with, the blades are not parallel to each other but form a shallow angle a little less than 180 degrees when viewed end on (or from above as the paddle is held) so that each blade rises up if the middle of the loom of the paddle, that would normally face the paddler, is rested against a flat surface. Carving the blade thickness taper on one side of the wood only, probably creates this deviation from 180 degrees in the Museon paddles. In practice it can be created by deliberately carving away from an established straight edge or reference line on the wood. When in use, the paddle is held so that the blades angle forward of the paddler so that the term 'forward set' seems the best name.

Many previous researchers have surveyed and commented on old Inuit paddles, notably John Brand and Gail Ferris. Brand, in his *Little Kayak Book* series, has surveyed a number of native paddles associated with the kayakers he surveyed. However, in *Little Kayak Book III* he mentions the Greenlanders' fashion for making 'bent' paddles and states that there may well have been similar aspects in the earlier paddles he had surveyed.

In a survey of the Quintin Riley kayak Brand also describes the paddle on drawing bKr-12(a) and states:





a) The handgrip.



b) Inboard.



c) The thole.



d) The blade.



e) Blade trail.



f) Upsweep.

'It is interesting to see that Charlie Ranshaw understood that the paddle was curved forward for a reason because he traced a line along the back of the curve. I [Brand] reduced and traced the curve for PE.13 (c) but it was another twenty years before Henrik Kaput found out that 'bent' paddles were usual in most kayak areas and deduced that they were more efficient than straight blades and looms. So some of my earlier drawings may show bent paddles that I ignorantly straightened, not realizing that 'warping' was not only intentional but technically advanced. The arrow on top of the loom was probably a reminder carved by Quintin Riley' (4).

Brand implies that the Quintin Riley paddle was given to the Royal Geographical Society to display with the Gino Watkins kayak there. Windslicer paddles use lettering on the blades to distinguish the correct paddle orientation. The lettering should be the correct way for reading, when holding the paddle. In practice the correct orientation is quickly learnt by feel and the lettering cue soon becomes superfluous.

Ferris mentions bent paddle designs (5) and states that the intention is to create the equivalent of spooning for greater efficiency. However, the basis of this conclusion, in terms of experience or native explanation, is not mentioned.

### Upsweep

Blade upsweep can be seen in published photographs of a collection of Greenland paddles used in a kayak festival at Sisimiut, Greenland (6). Ten paddles are shown with an upsweep discernible in the second, third and fourth paddle from the right. The author of the article, John Heath, makes no mention of deviations from straightness in the paddles, nor in subsequent carving instructions (7).

Straight and symmetrical is easy to achieve which is may be one reason why commercial versions of complex shapes are not available.

### Central massing

A further design aspect can be thought of as 'central massing'. The looms of these paddles are noticeably thicker at the centre. The makers could have removed this extra thickness if desired but a centralizing or concentrating of the weight of the paddle in the middle contributes to a better feel or dynamic balance when the paddle is swung. This thickness maximum also acts as a tactile guide, indicating the middle of the paddle when the paddler is using a sliding stroke. The maximum results at the marking out stage when the middle of the paddle is determined on the initial reference straight edge and, from that point, reference lines are extended to the intended blade tips.

### Loom axis rotation

The final refinement to the design in the Museon examples again helps to determine the correct angle of entry of the blade at the start of a stroke. Among these three paddles it was observed that the long axis of the oval loom is set at a slight deviation from 90° to the blades. It was not possible to precisely measure the angle when the Museon paddles were examined. Trials with two copies made with this feature confirm that it provides a comfortable and efficiently functional hand hold orientation on the paddle.

### Rowing example

An example from rowing oars of similar complexity to the Den Haag paddles can be found in oars for a Norwegian four oared faering (rowing boat) on display in 2006 in the maritime museum in Roskilde, Denmark. This craft was made in 1970 in Hardanger Fjord, Norway, and the builder fashioned unique oars for it. Each oar is designed and numbered for that particular position in the craft. This is necessary because their design is highly directional. They start with the hand grip angled forward to compensate for the change in angle of the rower's arm to the oar during the stroke (8). Next to the hand grip, the shaft is a maximum in cross section to put as much weight inboard as possible to compensate for the weight of the outboard portion of the oar (9). When examining this exhibit I was not able to test the degree of balance achieved. Where the oar crosses the gunwale it is a quadrant in cross section to fit the thole, the equivalent of the rowlock (10). This quadrant cross section locks the angle that the oar blade strikes the water. It can be seen in the photographs that the oar blade is fashioned to strike the water slicing (11). The blades are deliberately not designed to be either at right angles to the water surface or planing (where the top edge would be angled aft). In addition, the blade slightly trails the thole portion so that the blade naturally follows when pressure on the oar is applied. This means there is no twisting of the oar and a tight grip to control it is unnecessary (12). This is the same design intention as the 'forward set' in Windslicer paddles or the 'bent' paddles that Brand describes. In

addition it can be seen that the blade is upswept with respect to the inboard part of the oar (13). So, in the example of these oars we can see the same directional properties in the design as are present in the Inuit kayak paddles.

Many paddlers will be familiar with the 'cranked' shafts of slalom paddles. An article in *Sea Kayaker* for June 1995 (8) describes the 'Torque' and 'Double Torque' designs of Lendal paddles intended for sea touring use. In these examples the bent part of the shaft moves the blade to a trailing edge. However, the trail is quite pronounced. This works in practice because the hand position is fixed. The slalom paddler does not normally change hand position but a required fixed grip may not be so advantageous for sea paddling. In contrast, the hand grip position on Greenland style narrow blades can change often. The hands can grip either the loom or the blade, as circumstances dictate. The grip position can and is changed frequently or with each stroke when sliding.

In sea paddling the most important aspect is to remain in control and, for that, the paddle must be predictable in an emergency. That means any 'cranking' has to be just enough to achieve the effect and no more. With Windslicer paddles the offset for both upsweep and forward set is of the order of 1cm in 1.1m. The result of the trailing edges of forward set and upsweep is that the blade self orientates in the water and does not need to be precisely controlled by the paddler's grip. This means a loose grip is adequate most of the time. This relaxed grip is obviously an advantage in a cold climate, enabling a better blood supply to the fingers. In addition, with the Windslicer design the leading edge of each blade (ie facing the paddler) has a small radius (sharp edge) to induce vortex formation on the edge of the blade and thereby delay vortex development on the reverse of the blade (other side from the paddler). The reverse edges of the Windslicer blades are more rounded. This difference in the driving and following edges of the Windslicer blades also provides an immediate tactile feedback on the orientation of the paddle.

The Museon paddles, characterized by these four attributes of forward set, upsweep, central massing and loom rotation are all quite short but not as short as a 'storm' paddle can be where the length is equal to height of the paddler and my conclusion was that their mode of use, when travelling normally, was with a short sliding stroke of 10 to 20cm. When used with a static hand grip the stroke rate with the Museon paddles would be quite high but that would favour sprinting and thus be appropriate in a hunting situation when chasing a wounded seal for example. Thus, such a design can be thought of as dual purpose. In contrast, a 'storm' paddle has a loom of two hand widths only and is intended to be used continuously in full sliding stroke mode. Such a paddle has an advantage where prevailing winds tend to be offshore.

Today, in strong winds, my paddle is no longer the limiting factor.

### Peter Lamont

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Windslicer forward set.



Upsweep in the Windslicer.



Windslicer loom rotation.



Windslicer showing the central massing.



Anezka Paloudova.



Curtis McGrath.



German K4.



Van der Westhuyzen/Green.

## Four British women's para wins

### Szeged Regatta

The Netherlands earned its first women's canoe sprint Olympic quota for more than 30 years while Poland and two crews representing neutral canoeists also picked up tickets to Paris on the opening day of the European Olympic qualifiers in Hungary. The last time there was a Dutch woman competing at an Olympics was in 1988 but on Wednesday Selma Konijn and Ruth Vorrsselman ended the 32 year drought by storming to victory in the women's K2 500 in Szeged.

Konijn and Vorrsselman triumphed after an epic struggle against the neutral crew of Svetlana Chernigovskaya and Anastasiia Dolgova.

'It's been such a long time so it seems a little bit unreal to be going there,' Vorrsselman said.

'We knew if we did a really good race it would be possible so we had to believe in it but it was also a bit scary.'

'I did believe in it but it was also scary to say because it is so unreal,' Konijn said.

Poland fell agonizingly short of earning a men's K4 quota at last year's world championships but on the Wednesday two of the members of that crew guaranteed the country will have at least two competing in kayak in Paris.

Jakub Stepun and Przemyslaw Korsak took victory in the men's K2 500, finishing ahead of the neutral pair of Uladzislav Kravets and Dzimiry Natynchyk.

'The main word in this competition is believe,' Stepun said.

'We thought we could do it here and our coach believed in us and now we are going to Paris, to the Olympic Games.'

Two crews representing the neutral canoeists also earned Olympic quotas. Alexey Korovashkov and Ivan Shtyl, both 2012 Olympians, won the men's C2 500 while Anhelina Bardanouskaya and Volha Klimava won the women's C2 500.

Danish paddler Rene Holten Poulsen is set to compete at a fourth Olympic Games while several will get the chance to compete at their first after a dramatic day of qualifying on the Thursday.

Poulsen, who made his debut at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, taking K2 silver, also competed in London and Rio but failed to qualify for Tokyo. In Szeged on the Thursday afternoon he turned back the clock and silenced the doubters by winning one of two European Olympic quotas available in the men's K1 1,000.

'Today was really hard mentally to try and enjoy it because you know it might be your last race so you can't enjoy it,' Poulsen said.

'It's been a very long journey for me, a lot of mental battles, a lot of battles within the federation. Going off on my own, it's been a long fight.'



Konijn/Vorrsselman.



'It's really cool to be at the end of it and to start to enjoy it again.'

Czech paddler Anezka Paloudova and Italian Nicolae Craciun are set to compete in their first Games after earning quotas in the women's K1 500 and the men's C1 1,000 respectively. Paloudova said it was hard to bounce back from the disappointment of not winning a quota at last year's world championships in Duisburg.

'I can't believe what has happened; it will take some time for me to believe that I am an Olympian,' Paloudova said.

'Duisburg was pretty tough for me. I didn't do a good race there and I was really upset after my race.'

'I really focused then on my mental preparation and tried to do everything correctly. On one hand it was pretty hard but on the other hand there wasn't so much pressure on me because in the Czech Republic there are much better paddlers in the boys, in kayak and canoe, and for the girls we are getting better but we are still not on the same level as the boy athletes.'

Craciun has made his name as a C2 paddler, having won both a C2 500 and C2 1,000 world title, but his decision to try his hand at the C1 paid dividends on Thursday.

'I never expected this result for me because I've never raced in C1 1,000 metres in my career,' Craciun said.

'I did all my life in C2 but this year I had a new goal. I started the season with a preparation in C1 but I really didn't believe in my form so I didn't expect when I saw the starting list that I could get better than fourth or fifth.'

'I don't have the words to explain this emotion because the Olympics was a dream of my family.'

Ukraine's Mariya Povkh is set to compete at a third consecutive Olympics after winning the women's K1 500 qualifier, while Hungary's Kincso Takacs has the opportunity for a second Games after snatching a quota in the women's C1 200.

Neutral competitors also picked up quotas, although under ICF qualification rules they will not be able to accept all the positions. No one country can earn two boat and single boat quotas at a continental qualifier.

On the Thursday Yuliya Trushkina won the women's C1 200, Aleh Yurenia is set for a third Olympics after winning the men's K1 1,000 and Zakhar Petrov could be competing at his first Games after winning the men's C1 1,000.

The Thursday also saw the first day of competition in the paracanoe world championships, which was also doubling as the final Paralympic qualifiers.



Rene Poulsen.

Australia's Curtis McGrath and Great Britain's Emma Wiggs both won their 12th world titles and Charlotte Henshaw held on to narrowly claim her ninth on a gripping first day of finals racing on the Friday.

McGrath overcame a slow start to win the men's KL2, Wiggs had to hold off a spirited challenge from Canada's Brianna Hennessy in the women's VL2 and fellow Brit Henshaw just held out teammate Hope Gordon in the women's VL3.

Wiggs has had a stranglehold on the women's VL2 since before it made its Paralympic debut in 2016. Despite occasional injury struggles, the former UK sitting volleyball captain said she's feeling ready for a third Paralympic campaign.

'This is very much a benchmark for us so it's nice to be able to just pip it,' Wiggs said.

'The rest of the field is getting very close but it's great to have a race that feels very tight.'

'If we can get through selection and be on that start line in Paris it's going to be pretty special. Another Games would be an incredible opportunity and I'm excited to, hopefully, be there and, hopefully, have some tight racing.'

Hennessy finished second and Australia's Susan Seipel third.

McGrath has similarly been a dominant force in paracanoe for nearly a decade but had to work his way through the field to win the men's KL2 on the Friday.

'The competition out there today was pretty tough for me; it gave me a good little scare in the middle but I knew my strength was at the end of the race and I can't panic,' McGrath said.

'A lot of us have trained right into this event so when we go to Paris it will be all about tapering and sharpening that spear and making sure we've crossed all the Ts and dotted the Is.'

'Everyone's getting stronger; it's pretty amazing how much faster every competition is.'

A determined David Phillipson from Great Britain finished second and, in doing so, picked up another Paris quota for Team GB while Brazil's Fernando Rufino De Paulo was third.

The women's VL3 will make its Paralympic debut in Paris. Henshaw has been unbeatable in the race in the lead up to the Games but came close to a rare defeat on the Friday with a tense tussle with Gordon.

Henshaw said she expects Gordon to be even tougher to beat in Paris.

'When I first joined the sport I was doing va'a to get the numbers up, to showcase what the event could be, so to get it into the Games was a really exciting step forward,' Henshaw said.

'We've showcased it again today. We've not only put it into the programme but it's a very exciting race; it's close racing. The girls are stepping up all over the world, really embracing that we've got this new event.'

'It's what we want from paracanoe; we want exciting races and I'm just proud to play a small part in that.'

Uzbekistan's Shakhzoda Mamadalieva finished third.

The non Paralympic women's VL1 was won by Italy's Viktoriya Pistis Shablova, ahead of India's Pooja Ojha and Chile's Jocelyn Munoz.

The first races on the sprint World Cup programme also got underway on the Friday with the first medals set to be awarded on Saturday.

Germany sent out a pre Games warning they will be the crews to beat after both their men's and women's K4 crews stormed to World Cup gold on the Saturday.

The Chinese pairing of Shixiao Xu and Mengya Sun continued their dominance of the women's C2 500, New Zealand's Lisa Carrington and Alicia Hoskin won the women's K2 500, Australia's Tom Green and Jean Van der Westhuyzen the men's K2 500 and the neutral canoeists Alexey Korovashkov and Ivan Shtyl took out the men's C2 500 just days after earning an Olympic quota.

The German women's quartet came together just one week before the World Cup but showed no teething issues with a slashing win against last year's gold, silver and bronze medallists.

Paulina Paszek, Jule Hake, Pauline Jagsch and Sarah Bruessler staked a big claim to be the German K4 team in Paris after beating Poland and China with reigning world champions New Zealand finishing fourth.

'We just came together one week ago; we had some struggles in the training but in the competition it worked really well, fortunately,' Hake said.

'We will see now what happens with the selections and, hopefully, we can be in Paris.'

The German men's team are looking to defend their Olympic crown in Paris and showed they are on track with a powerful win over a much improved Australia and Spain.

The win confirmed Max Rendschmidt, Max Lemke, Jacob Schopf



Emma Wiggs.

and Tom Leibscher-Lucz will once again represent Germany at an Olympic level.

'The first race of the year is always pretty tough and the last two years were not easy for us,' Schopf said.

'I think the German crew are not the best starters but we are getting better and better so it was good to see we could paddle fast at the beginning of the year.'

Shixiao Xu and Mengya Sun have not been beaten in a women's C2 500 race since before the Tokyo Olympics and once again showed they will be the pair to beat in Paris with what almost seemed to be an effortless win in Szeged.

'Everyone is improving; our opponents are also improving so this is a good gold medal to win,' Xu said.

'We try and avoid the pressure and just focus on ourselves. If you compare us with before Tokyo I think we are faster.'

Canada's Sloan MacKenzie and Katie Vincent finished second with Spain's Antia Jacome and Maria Corbera taking third.

Lisa Carrington and Alicia Hoskin are hoping to defend New Zealand's K2 Olympic crown in Paris and made all the right moves on Saturday with a win against world champions Denmark and Sweden.

Australia's Green and Van der Westhuyzen won K2 1,000 in Tokyo and have struggled to turn that into winning form over the new Olympic distance of 500 metres but in Szeged they showed they are ready for Olympic glory again by beating world champions Portugal and Spain in the World Cup final.

'We've lined up for this so many times and most of the time we've finished on the podium but we haven't got that first step yet,' Green said.

'I guess patience has paid off.'

'It's been hard the past two years trying to work put what type of race plan is going to work for us and how we want to race the race. We've had some close races; we've had some races we were pretty disappointed in so I think to have a good race leading up to the Games is great,' Van der Westhuyzen said.

Great Britain, Brazil and Spain all picked up two more world titles while there were also wins for Ukraine and Chile on a busy final day of competition on the Saturday.

Charlotte Henshaw continued her merry romp through the garden of world titles with a 10th crown while Fernando Rufino de Paulo, Ukraine's Vladyslav Yepifanov and GB's Laura Sugar all successfully defended their 2023 championship wins.

Yepifanov showed his win in the highly competitive VL3 last year was no fluke, once again holding off a crack field to take the title.

'This confirms for me that I deserve this title. I have worked really hard for it,' Yepifanov said.

'If I can win in Paris it will mean a lot for Ukraine.'

Charlotte Henshaw chalked up her 10th 24 hours after winning her ninth world title, this time in the women's KL2. The late withdrawal of Emma Wiggs relieved some of the pressure for Henshaw but she once again showed she is the competitor to beat in Paris.

'I couldn't have imagined getting to that number or anywhere close to it when I took up this sport in 2017. I'm just incredibly grateful that I'm still able to be here amongst the best in the world,' Henshaw said.

'It's always tricky when there's a last minute name change but we prepare for all sorts of eventualities. I was racing out there with both of us in mind and doing it for the team.'

Laura Sugar is also on track to defend her Paralympic crown in the women's KL3, holding out Hope Gordon.

'You don't know what to expect when you come into the first race

of the season and there's been a bit of up and down training so it was great to get out there and race,' Sugar said.

'For me, even in my previous sports of athletics, I was always good at tapering and good at peaking. I thrive with racing so I've just got to try and build each day.'

Brazil looks set for another successful Paralympics with Fernando Rufino de Paulo taking gold in the men's VL2 and teammate Luis Cardoa da Silva returning to the top of the podium in the men's KL1.

'I feel so happy to be back on the podium again; the last time I got a gold medal was 2019 and now I'm back with a gold,' da Silva said.

'I've been training a lot. I'm so happy to give my country back a medal.'

Chile's Katherine Wollerman has been knocking on the door for a win in the women's KL1 for several years and on Saturday finally broke through for an emotional win over Ukraine's multiple world champion Maryna Mazhula and German Paralympic champion Edina Mueller.

'I know Maryna and Edina will always be good so I have to keep working hard,' Wollerman said.

'I want to devote this win to my mother.'

Spain's Juan Valle had a valuable pre Games win in the men's KL3 while in the non Paralympic VL1 it was fellow Spaniard David Gonzalez who got the win.

New Zealand's Aimee Fisher inflicted a rare defeat on her teammate Lisa Carrington while Canada's Katie Vincent, Hungary's Balint Kopasz and Brazil's Isaquias Queiroz firmed as Paris Olympic favourites on the final day of the ICF Sprint World Cup in Szeged.

New Zealand's Aimee Fisher inflicted a rare defeat on her teammate Lisa Carrington while Canada's Katie Vincent, Hungary's Balint Kopasz and Brazil's Isaquias Queiroz firmed as Paris Olympic favourites on the final day.

Fisher, who walked from the New Zealand team in the leadup to the Tokyo Olympics because of an internal dispute, announced her return to the big stage with an incredible finishing burst to relegate Olympic and world champion Carrington to a silver medal.

Both paddlers went under the previous world best time.

'When I was lining up, I just wanted to be courageous and I wanted to paddle beautifully and light up my own lane and I think I did that. I didn't panic. I stayed calm. I could hear everyone cheering us on. I could hear my name being called. I felt like I could hear everyone back home and it was like there was this love pulling me to the finish line.'

'There were definitely some tears afterwards. It was a really special moment. It's been tough. I feel like I have walked through fire at times but it's transformed me as a person and as an athlete. It's been a good ride.'

Belgium's Hermien Peters took the bronze.

Balint Kopasz is still to be confirmed as one of Hungary's paddlers for the men's K1 1,000 in Paris but on Sunday the reigning Olympic champion put on a display for the selectors and the large Hungarian crowd.

Kopasz took over the lead before the halfway mark and never looked back. In a repeat of the Olympic podium, teammate Adam Varga was second and Portugal's Fernando Pimenta third.

'I'm happy because there were several big champions out there and I could compete with them,' Kopasz said.

'I'm in very good form; that's what's important for me and I've trained a lot in the past few weeks. I feel I am strong mentally and physically which is important for 1,000 metres but I would like to have better form in my next race. On June 6th it's a very important race for me; it will be the Olympic selection and if I can win that race then I will go to the Olympics Games.'

Brazil's Isaquias Queiroz made a big statement on the Saturday by winning the non Olympic C1 500 and then followed up with a powerful win in Sunday's C1 1,000. The defending Olympic champion said he was back to full fitness after a challenging 2023.

'Last year I saved my energy and relaxed but now I'm ready,' Queiroz said. 'I'm really happy where I'm at. I just need to keep focussed on the Olympic Games.'

Frenchman Adrien Bart took the silver and neutral competitor Zakhar Petrov the bronze.

The race for women's C1 200 has intensified following a fast finishing win for Katie Vincent.

Vincent took a C2 500 bronze at the sport's debut in Tokyo but is ready to take on the C1 challenge in Paris.

'That was definitely one of the best races that I've put together, something we've been working on for probably a couple of years now,' Vincent said.

'Going into the C1 we had little expectations, just to go in there and

see what we can do, so to come out with these performances is really positive.

'One of the biggest things I learned going into Tokyo was resilience and staying with things and facing things head on. Since Tokyo our team has faced adversities and personally I've had ups and downs so I'm just taking those with a grain of salt.'

Teammate Sophia Jensen took the silver with Cuba's defending world champion, Yarisleidis Cirilo Duboys, the bronze.

**ICF**

- 200m: K1WL3:** 1 L Sugar, GB, 45.97. 2 H Gordon, GB, 46.94. 3 N Barbosa, France, 47.15.
- K1WL2:** 1 C Henshaw, GB, 48.79. 2 K Varga, Magyarország, 50.89. 3 A Adler, Deutschland, 52.64.
- K1WL1:** 1 K Wollerman, Chile, 52.83. 2 M Mazhula, Ukraina, 53.13.
- 3 E Mueller, Deutschland, 53.62. 6 J Chippington, GB, 56.48.
- K1W:** 1 M Yin, Zhongguo, 39.19. 2 D Putta, Polska, 40.01. 3 E Lewis, GB, 40.38.
- K1ML3:** 1 J Valle, España, 40.17. 2 D Littlehales, Australia, 40.27. 3 M Rodrigues, Brasil, 40.40.
- 5 R Oliver, GB, 40.98. 6 J Young, GB, 41.07.
- K1ML2:** 1 C McGrath, Australia, 42.89. 2 D Phillipson, GB, 43.60.
- 3 F Rufino de Paulo, Brasil, 43.64.
- V1WL3:** 1 C Henshaw, GB, 56.80. 2 H Gordon, GB, 56.91. 3 S Mamadaliyeva, Uzbekistan, 58.22.
- V1WL2:** 1 E Wiggs, GB, 58.69. 2 B Hennessey, Canada, 1:00.35. 3 S Seipel, Australia, 1:02.15.
- 4 J Chippington, GB, 1:02.83.
- C1WE:** 1 Y Trushkina, AIN, 45.97. 2 K Takacs, Magyarország, 46.26. 3 O Romsenko, AIN, 46.81.
- 8 K Reid, GB, 47.45.
- C1W:** 1 K Vincent, Canada, 45.54. 2 S Jensen, Canada, 46.16. 3 Y Cirilo Duboys, Cuba, 46.21.
- 14 K Reid, GB.
- V1ML3:** 1 V Yepifanov, Ukraina, 47.80. 2 P Cowan, NZ, 48.51. 3 C McGrath, Australia, 48.99.
- 5 S Wood, GB, 49.73. 10 J Eyers, GB.
- V1ML2:** 1 F Rufino de Paulo, Brasil, 50.59. 2 I Tofalini, Brasil, 51.20. 3 S Haxton, USA, 52.25.
- 10 E Clifton, GB.
- 500m: K1WE:** 1 M Povkh, Ukraina, 1:50.78. 2 A Paloudova, Czechia, 1:50.84.
- 3 A Osterman, Slovenija, 1:51.20. 6 D Kerr, GB, 1:52.46.
- K1W:** 1 A Fisher, NZ, 1:46.19. 2 L Carrington, NZ, 1:46.52. 3 H Peters, België, 1:48.98.
- K2WE:** 1 Konijn/Vorselman, Nederland, 1:39.49. 2 Cherngovskaya/Dolgova, AIN, 1:40.44.
- 3 Pavoloo/Kuklinovska, Ukraina, 1:41.92. 7 Kerr/Russell, GB, 1:42.73.
- K2W:** 1 Carrington/Hoskin, NZ, 1:38.61. 2 Jorgensen/Matthiesen, Danmark, 1:39.92.
- 3 Stensils/Lagerstam, Sverige, 1:40.24. 12 Kerr/Russell, GB.
- K2ME:** 1 Stepun/Korsak, Polska, 1:27.57. 2 Kravets/Natynchuk, AIN, 1:27.79.
- 3 Holpert/Dragosavljevic, Srbija, 1:28.44.
- K2M:** 1 Van der Westhuyzen/Green, Australia, 1:26.59. 2 Ribeiro/Baptista, Portugal, 1:27.09.
- 3 Del Rio/Cooper, España, 1:27.11.
- 1km: K1ME:** 1 A Yurenia, AIN, 3:30.30. 2 R Poulsen, Danmark, 3:30.97.
- 3 B Zdelar, Srbija, 3:31.53.



Jacob Holmes, one of a number to break out on the Serpent's Tail.

# Christies gather trophies



Regan Toop, prior to breaking out.



Jamie Christie takes the scenic route on the Tail.



Crowhurst/Sandercock fending off the bottom of the Tail.



Freddie Brown, 2nd in the sprint.

**Welsh Open**

The Dee was at its best for the Welsh Open, regardless of the miserable weather. The level was well up but not covering the rocks of the Serpent's Tail. As a result there were a number of competitors who broke out on the Tail and various collisions with the overhanging rock at its crux, including Crowhurst/Sandercock, who swam here on sprint first runs so that there were no C2 results initially.

On the first runs the women were more consistent than the men. Other than Lucy Guest, who swam, the other five had a spread of just 5 seconds, Kerry Christie in the lead.

Huw Singleton was in the open lead, just 0.13 sec ahead of Freddie Brown, but there were several breakouts, Jacob Holmes, Regan Toop, Selwyn Richards and Jamie Christie in K1 and Andrew Crowhurst, the only C1.

The second runs saw Kerry Christie swim although her first run was



Emma Christie, 3rd in the classic women.



Huw Singleton won both sprint and classic categories.



Laura Milne, 2nd in her sprint.



Vladyslav Yepifanov.



Katherine Wollerman.



Aimee Fisher.



Isaquias Queiroz.

**Paracanoe video**

The ICF and Hit the Roof have been preparing four videos, available on the ICF website, to introduce paracanoeing. The first is an introduction and the others will explain how to get started, how to get comfortable and how the classifications work.



Alex Sheppy, placed 3rd in the sprint.



Sprint and classic winner Kerry Christie.



Lucy Guest was 2nd in the classic race.



Nick Boreham below the railway bridge.



Mollie Sandercock in the sprint event.



Christie sisters, the only women's C2.



Nicky Cresser, the other men's classic C1.

good enough for the win, Laura Milne getting in behind her and Molly Sandercock just a second off the pace.

Singleton and Brown could not improve on their second runs although Alex Sheppy did, pulling himself up to third place, the first three spread over 0.21 sec. Crowhurst produced a better C1 result and the Christie sisters took a C2 run this time, not having done so the first time.

Kerry Christie won the women's event again in the classic event for



Christie/Cresser, the sole men's classic C2.



Andrew Crowhurst was C1 winner in both categories.

the national title, this time followed by Guest with Emma third, 11 seconds behind her sister.

Singleton took the men's title, 14 seconds up on Alex Sheppy, but third place was close, just 0.13 sec separating Holmes and Nick Boreham.

The Christie sisters were the only women's C2 but veterans Jamie Christie and Nicky Cresser were the other C2 of the day. Crowhurst took the C1 title from Cresser by 43 seconds.

The classic race stopped short of Llangollen town falls because work was undertaken last year to remove exposed reinforcing steel and there cannot be certainty of the success of this until water levels are lower. However, the full course should be back in use this year and beam timing has now been tried. In November the sprint event here will serve as the European final with interest being shown from as far away as Serbia. Despite the lower status of the classic race on Sunday, teams will want to stay for this additional event.

**Sp: K1W:** 1 K Christie, Break Out, 1:07.68. 2 L Milne, Pinkston Panthers, 1:08.31.

3 M Sandercock, Break Out, 1:08.70.

**K1M:** 1 H Singleton, Nottingham, 59.56. 2 F Brown, Wilts Y, 59.69. 3 A Sheppy, Devizes, 59.76.

**C1M:** 1 A Crowhurst, Halifax, 1:11.33.

**C2W:** 1 Christie/Christie, Break Out, 1:12.96.

**C1:** **K1W:** 1 K Christie, Break Out, 11:05:74. 2 L Guest, Nottingham, 11:11:37.

3 E Christie, Break Out, 11:16:27.

**K1M:** 1 H Singleton, Nottingham, 10:06:12. 2 A Sheppy, Devizes, 10:19:90.

3 J Holmes, Bredalbane, 10:31:38.

**C1M:** 1 A Crowhurst, Halifax, 11:47:96. 2 N Cresser, Nottingham, 12:30:51.

**C2W:** 1 Christie/Christie, Break Out, 12:06:96.

**C2M:** 1 Christie/Cresser, Soar Valley/Nottingham, 11:31:70.



Dragon A check Avon 1.



Aberfan Youth play Friends of Allonby D.

## Results not entirely predictable

### National Championships

After the previous year's successes the national championships were back in Liverpool again. David McBay, the only member of the Polo Committee present, masterminded an excellent tournament at Friends of Allonby's venue, facing Everton's almost completed football stadium, with full support from the club and welcoming staff everywhere from the control cabin to the toastie team. Results were put on a Dutch polo website almost in real time. There was ample parking and nobody trying to take money for it, no blue green algae and no goose muck on the pontoons.

The only thing they could not control was the weather, catching a late winter storm full on although the dock provided some protection from the warm southerly blast. The event managed to dodge most of the rain, being dry and quite sunny, especially on the Saturday, so timekeepers' shelters were taken down to stop them from being blown down.

It was easy to lose count of the number of Friends of Allonby teams, including nearly all of the juniors, and there was a good spread of other teams although none from north of Cumbria. Ulster sent a team less strong than last year's winners but they still produced some significant scores. The highest scoring match of the weekend was their 14-5 win over Cumbria but the most decisive win was their 13-0 defeat of Southend Sloths and the same score for St Albans against Liverpool A.

Dragon A took a 12-2 win over Avon 1, seemingly a succession of easy shots into goal. Friends of Allonby A's win over Manchester Wildcats A was one of the better ones and much more even than the 7-1 result would suggest.

East End Princesses held Kingston Ladies to a 3-3 draw, a final goal being discounted as the hooter was already sounding when it went home.

One of Sunday's best games was between Dragon A and Ulster, end to end with successive goals each time although the Welsh 6-3 win shows a less balanced result. Uncharacteristically, Clive Hammond arrived in front of an open goal and bounced the ball away off the top of the frame. Perhaps it was the wind.

Manchester Wildcats A failed in one attempt when they deflected the ball off the back of the frame and St Albans managed to hit one of their own players on the back of the head with a long pass. The 1-1 score fed into extra time, St Albans being the scorers.

An interesting women's game was between East End Princesses and Friends of Allonby Y, the Friends' only goal in this 7-1 defeat coming from a penalty shot. The start of each half saw only one side ready to go for the ball. The Princesses took one goal after a fumbled ball by FoA and there was a nice paddle flick at one point but a two handed shot backwards over the head met too many obstacles.

The youth final was between the hosts' E and D teams, who had each got there after 7-0 wins over their C team and Aberfan respectively. When they had met in an earlier round the E team, whose members looked the larger of the two, had won 8-2. They quickly took control of the game, scoring in the first minute. After bouncing a shot back off the frame they put an oblique shot home in the third minute with two more later, one into an open goal after a break and another gentle shot. A couple of shots in the final minute of the half bounced back off the frame and another sailed over for a 4-0 lead at half time.



FoA Y block East End Princesses.



Manchester Wildcats A oppose FoA A.



Rhondra Rhinos taunt Blackwater-ish.



Kingston Ladies face East End Princesses.



The youth final between Friends of Allonby D and E teams.

Two more goals followed in the second half, the second from a loose ball, and in the closing seconds a moderate length lob also went home for a 7-0 win.

Having drawn in their earlier meeting, what would happen when the East End Princesses met the Kingston team in the final? The London team took control and their first goal came in the second minute. Both teams were defending well but a second goal came for the East Enders midway through the half from nearly under the net. A shot from the Hull team was blocked. The Princesses had a shot bounce back off the frame, had another blocked and, in the final seconds of the half, managed to get the ball stuck on top of the goal.

The London team scored from a break three minutes into the second half but a similar attempt a couple of minutes later was intercepted by Kingston, who then shot wide. The Princesses scored again before they blocked another couple of attempts by Kingston, who also had a shot fall short. East End had a couple of shots fall short, too, one of them very long, but they could afford them with their 4-0 win.

Contenders for the open final were Friends of Allonby A, who had knocked out Dragon with a 4-1 win, and Kingston A, who had beaten St Albans 4-1. A first minute shot by FoA went very high but another a couple of minutes later was on target. Kingston quickly levelled the score. FoA scored again from a penalty, Kingston soon levelling the score again. Friends of Allonby had the edge from here but two shots were blocked and one in the closing seconds reflected off the frame, the score 2-2 at this stage.

The hosts opened the second half with a goal. Three minutes in, Kingston managed to burst through the defence on a third attempt to score. Tempers were becoming a bit frayed, cards were issued and each side reduced to four players as transgressors were sent off. FoA scored while two Kingston shots were blocked. More cards were issued. Half a minute from time Kingston produced an equalizer. A shot from FoA in the closing seconds sailed over.



Looks like a foul to me.



Kingston Ladies meet East End Princesses again in the women's final.



Friends of Allonby A play Kingston A in the open final.



Dragon A looking for Ulster's ball.



St Albans harass Manchester Wildcats A.



FoA Y with East End Princesses.

The scores at full time stood at 4-4 so the match moved to 5 minute halves for a golden goal, which Kingston produced in the second minute.

**W:** Friends of Allonby X 5, Friends of Allonby Y 1. Friends of Allonby Y 1, Kingston 5. E End Princesses 4, Friends of Allonby X 3. E End Princesses 12, Friends of Allonby Y 1. Friends of Allonby X 4, Kingston 5. E End Princesses 3, Kingston 3. E End Princesses 7, Friends of Allonby Y 1. Kingston 4, Friends of Allonby X 2. Friends of Allonby Y 1, Friends of Allonby X 6.

**F:** E End Princesses 4, Kingston 0.

**O/A:** 1 E End Princesses. 2 Kingston. 3 Friends of Allonby X.

**Y:** Aberfan 4, Friends of Allonby C 1. Friends of Allonby D 2, Friends of Allonby E 8.

Friends of Allonby C 0, Friends of Allonby E 10. Aberfan 2, Friends of Allonby D 1.

Aberfan 1, Friends of Allonby E 10. Friends of Allonby C 2, Friends of Allonby D 10. Friends of Allonby E 7, Friends of Allonby C 0. Aberfan 0, Friends of Allonby D 7. Friends of Allonby C 7, Aberfan 0.

**F:** Friends of Allonby E 7, Friends of Allonby D 0.

**O/A:** 1 Friends of Allonby E. 2 Friends of Allonby D. 3 Friends of Allonby C

**O:** Friends of Allonby A 7, Friends of Allonby F 1. Friends of Allonby B 7, Manchester Wildcats B 1.

Kingston A 6, Rhondda Rhinos 0. Liverpool A 5, Cumbria 4. Manchester Wildcats A 7,

Liverpool B 1. Dragon A 12, Viking B 0. Viking A 2, Blackwater-ish 3. Ulster 3, Avon 2 1.

Avon 1 5, Tandridge 4. St Albans 7, Southampton Sloths 1. Aberfan A 3, Friends of Allonby F 6.

Friends of Allonby A 13, Liverpool B 3. E End A 4, Rhondda Rhinos 2. Kingston A 13, Blackwater-ish

2. Friends of Allonby B 12, Viking B 1. Ulster 14, Cumbria 5. Manchester Wildcats B 6, Tandridge 3.

Liverpool A 2, Southampton Sloths 4. Manchester Wildcats A 4, Friends of Allonby F 1. St Albans 7,

Avon 2 0. Viking A 8, Rhondda Rhinos 0. Dragon A 12, Avon 1 2. Kingston A 8, E End A 2. Friends

of Allonby A 11, Aberfan A 1. Ulster 13, Southampton Sloths 0. Viking B 3, Tandridge 7. Blackwater-

ish 4, Rhondda Rhinos 3. Friends of Allonby F 6, Liverpool B 3. Kingston A 6, Viking A 2. Avon 1 7,

Manchester Wildcats B 4. Avon 2 3, Cumbria 4. Friends of Allonby A 7, Manchester Wildcats A 1.

Dragon A 7, Friends of Allonby B 2. E End A 2, Blackwater-ish 1. St Albans 13, Liverpool A 0. Avon

1 5, Viking B 1. Aberfan A 2, Liverpool B 7. Dragon A 10, Manchester Wildcats B 0. Southampton

Sloths 3, Cumbria 7. Ulster 3, St Albans 4. Viking A 1, E End A 3. Aberfan A 2, Manchester Wildcats

A 10. Avon 2 1, Liverpool A 0. Friends of Allonby B 8, Tandridge 0. Friends of Allonby B 5, Avon 1 1.

Manchester Wildcats B 9, Viking B 3. Avon 2 6, Southampton Sloths 4. Dragon A 10, Tandridge 0.

Ulster 7, Liverpool A 0. St Albans 7, Cumbria 1. Friends of Allonby A 10, E End A 0. Kingston A 11,

Friends of Allonby B 4. Friends of Allonby F 3, Viking A 6. Aberfan A 5, Viking B 1. Dragon A 6, Ulster

3. Blackwater-ish 7, Manchester Wildcats B 3. Rhondda Rhinos 3, Southampton Sloths 2. St Albans

2, Manchester Wildcats A 1. Avon 1 4, Cumbria 7. Avon 2 3, Liverpool B 6. Aberfan A 2, Liverpool

A 1. E End A 3, Ulster 7. Manchester Wildcats B 1, Avon 2 6. Rhondda Rhinos 4, Tandridge 2. Friends

of Allonby B 2, Manchester Wildcats A 4. Blackwater-ish 5, Liverpool B 2. Friends of Allonby F 7, Avon

1 1. Kingston A 4, St Albans 1. Viking A 7, Cumbria 5. Viking B 2, Southampton Sloths 9. Friends

of Allonby A 4, Dragon 1. Avon 1 3, Manchester Wildcats B 7. E End A 2, Friends of Allonby B 3. Friends

of Allonby F 3, Avon 2 4. Ulster 3, Manchester Wildcats A 2. Cumbria 3, Liverpool B 4. Liverpool A 4,

Tandridge 0. Dragon A 3, St Albans 2. Viking A 1, Blackwater-ish 4. Aberfan A 1, Rhondda Rhinos 2.

**F:** Friends of Allonby A 4, Kingston A 5.

**O/A:** 1 Kingston A. 2 Friends of Allonby A. 3 Dragon A.



Devizes Wharf on Friday morning.



Junior winners Prins-Mills/Teeuwen leave before the crowds.

## Freeman helps Sharpe to another win

### Devizes-Westminster Race

This was always going to be a difficult year, not least because of the wet winter weather. Both Thameside Races were lost because of levels in the Thames and some coaches of school crews wanted to finish at Reading because their paddlers had not been on the river in race conditions, perhaps not taken on the river in any conditions, even outside races. The senior singles were to finish at Thames Young Mariners below Teddington Lock, the head of the Tideway, and the senior doubles to go to Westminster, where DW crew were to be placed on the bridges of some Clippers to see the issues from the ferries' point of view.

Three separate finish locations and their facilities made for an expensive race while entries were limited by many people not being able to afford to take part or disappointed at not going to Westminster. It costs £80,000 to run the race, not covered by the entries. An appeal

for £30,000 of donations was exceeded although £5,000 from PUK carried conditions, the longterm success of the race being put down to its independence from that body.

As it happened, the water level on the Tideway resulted in a last minute change to all seniors finishing above Teddington Lock. This avoided any conflict with the University Boat Race, which still took place on the Tideway, but now took vehicles into the expanded ULEZ, where drivers reduce pollution by paying an extra tax. The whole race was run to GMT despite the hour change during the course of the race.

Problems were not just on the Thames. The EA were supposed to have cleared the Kennet of trees but didn't. In one place a large tree in the middle of the river could be bypassed on either side in daylight but it was an obstacle in the dark and to powered craft. Chief official Guy Dresser had been out with a saw to deal with some of the worst offending trees.



Third placed mixed juniors Jackson/Wright at Honeystreet.



Under 17 winners Barrett/Brown at Honeystreet.



Second placed junior ladies Jardine/Matthew at Honeystreet.



Second placed juniors Davies/Davies at Honeystreet.



Poon/Lam at Honeystreet.



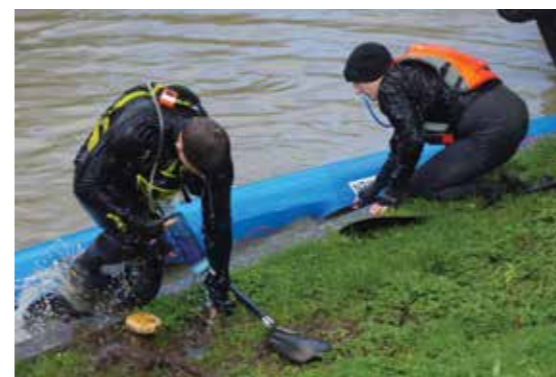
OkolilSom at Honeystreet.



Rawlings-Watts/Foot-Tapping.



Jaggs/Pilkington portage Crofton Bottom Lock. The previous day the water level had been higher.



Prins-Mills/Teeuwen swimming at Crofton.



Likewise de Dreu/Hoff.



Mixed juniors Davies/Sumpton cross the bywash.

New safety rules this year related to lights, spraydecks for C2s and yellow dayglo hats for nonstop crews. A planned relay race had no takers so that idea is unlikely to surface again. The tracking system is useful once you have got the hang of it. For example, it showed a crew some way from the river at Palmer Park in Earley, among those who retired.

Water levels promised fast times in the boat but difficult conditions on the slippery mud out of it. Most injuries over the years have related to head collisions with bridges and nearly all the swing bridges on the canal had to be portaged this year as the water level was too high to get

under them. Guy Dresser said he had never seen the canal so high in his 30 years of involvement with the race.

Crofton Bottom Lock was more difficult than any preceding it. On Maundy Thursday the towpath had been underwater and there was a line of powered craft moored below it, waiting to ascend. The lock was still brim full on Good Friday with water flowing over the gates at each end. Some of the problems were illustrated as de Dreu/Hoff, one of only half a dozen Endeavour crews, launched. They were joined by Prins-Mills/Teeuwen, last year's junior winners and one of only two



Third placed junior ladies Freer/Griffin at Honeystreet.



Winning junior ladies Kiggell/Diggle at Crofton.



Second under 17s Ockenden/Godfrey at Crofton Bottom Lock.



The sole C1, Damon White at Oak Hill Down.



A Ingpen at Oak Hill Down.



Third veteran/junior crew Reid/Reid at Crofton Bottom Lock.



Austin/Walsh at Wolfhall.



Winning veteran/junior crew Balla/Pavlyshyn at Oak Hill Down.



Third placed ladies Hills/Fletcher at Honeystreet.



Second placed single Richard Winstanley at Oak Hill Down.



Winning ladies Burbeck/Drummond and 2nd overall Burt/Bird.



Singles winner Dan Palmer portages on the road to avoid the towpath mud at Oakhill Down.

non school crews, who capsized on relaunching and had to empty out. While they were doing this the Dutch crew got away but were capsized by the strong bywash flow coming back in diagonally below the lock and flowing towards and under one of the moored boats, towards which they were swept with the potential of a nasty incident. All were able to recover themselves. The water level dropped about 100mm in the lock by the Saturday, following a day of sunny intervals and showers, some of them heavy, pushed along by a moderate southwesterly wind.

Despite their swim, Prins-Mills/Teeuwen had a 16 minute lead at Newbury over Davies/Davies of Wey, the other non schools crew, who were just 6 seconds up on Summerfield/Cheng of Kimbolton school. Head/Phippard of Kelly College were 9th, the leading mixed crew, with Kiggell/Diggle from Marlborough College the first girls' crew. In the under 17 school class Attwell/Reedman of Dauntseys were just 9 seconds up on Barrett/Brown of Kimbolton.

The three veteran/junior crews saw Balla/Pavlyshyn of Barking & Dagenham over an hour clear of the Camilleris of Wey.

Dan Palmer of Truro had a 13 minute singles lead over veteran Richard Winstanley and Joe Fitzpatrick, both of Bishop's Stortford, just 14 seconds apart. Damon White of Reading was 12th and last of the singles, the only C1, 2 hours 42 minutes off the pace. At Oak Hill Palmer had come off the muddy towpath and run down the road, helpfully free of moving vehicles.

Saturday was more sunny with lighter winds but these did back to become southeasterly, more of a headwind. All of the Dauntseys crews pulled out and paddled the first part of the course again instead of going on to Reading. Prins-Mills/Teeuwen barely increased their lead over the Wey pair but Summerfield/Cheng dropped back to be passed by Watt/Umbers of Lord Wandsworth College. Heal/Phippard retired, handing the mixed win to Green/Corfield of Lord Wandsworth College, an hour clear of Davies/Sumpton of Kimbolton. Kiggell/Diggle retained their girls' lead by 5 minutes from Jardine/Matthews of Kimbolton. Absence of Dauntseys paddlers left the win here to Barratt/Brown by 7 minutes from Ockenden/Godfrey.

Balla/Pavlyshyn opened up their lead over the Wey crew to exactly 2 hours.

Palmer increased his lead to 21 minutes at Reading, 2nd place going to Fitzpatrick, 6 minutes up on his veteran team mate.

The change of senior double finish came at 2am GMT on Easter Sunday, by which time all crews were on the water and start times would then not have had to consider the tidal gate. As it was, some had chosen to use the 4.30 - 5am start option on Saturday.

All crews were supposed to start from Devizes by 1700. Three went

even later. At 1714 Tom Sharpe, who had taken the 44 year old record the previous year, set out with Anoushka Freeman to challenge the mixed doubles record. All went well and they were onto the Thames in 7 hours 32 minutes. Tom Simmons and Andrew Birkett followed at 1739, their time 7 hours 47 minutes to the Thames. Last away, at 1801, anticipating a very fast time to the Tideway, were Billy Butler and Jon O'Grady but they took 7 hours 50 minutes to the Thames. Simmons/Birkett gave up the fight at Marsh Lock, half an hour after the course had been shortened.

Sharpe/Freeman were through 55 minutes before Butler/O'Grady at Reading, 54 minutes at Marsh, 55 minutes at Marlow, 58 minutes at Bray, 1 hour 4 minutes at Old Windsor, 1 hour 11 minutes at Shepperton and 1 hour 12 minutes at the finish, the gap gradually widening for an over time of 13:43:46 to win by 25 minutes, not the first time a mixed crew has won but a rare occurrence.

Third place went to Rees-Clark/Dobson of Devizes. Treadgold/Hayes, the leading veteran crew, were in 4th place with Herwanger/Hagen and Witteveen/Zegers in the next two slots. Burbeck/Drummond, the winning ladies, were 8th overall. C2 winners were Peter and Abigail Jones. Among those not making it were mixed crew Brehin/Grimsey and open canoe pair Hughes/Bowen pulling out at Reading and ladies Vernau/Fox and veterans Bush/Ball at Marsh.

It was not the ideal DW but the organizers did well to pull off even this good a race this year.



Overseas winners Witteveen/Zegers refuel at Pewsey.



Veteran winners Hayes/Treadgold at Pewsey.



Overall winners Sharpe/Freeman at Honeystreet as the light fades.



Runners up Butler/O'Grady, the last crew to leave Devizes.



Hickman/Talbot-King at Oakhill Down.



Traffic handlers compare EU approved headgear at Kintbury.

- 1 - Marsport Shield:** 1 D Palmer, Truro, 13:52:16. 2 R Winstanley, Bishop's Stortford, 14:41:18. 3 S Riley, RM, 15:04:26.
- 1MV - Maureen Duck Memorial Cup:** 1 R Winstanley, Bishop's Stortford, 14:41:18. 2 P Baker, RM, 16:29:28. 3 M Louw, Richmond, 16:48:04.
- 1050 - Half Century Cup:** 1 M Louw, Richmond, 16:48:04. 2 C Hodgson, Duddon, 19:58:22. 3 A Ingpen, Pangbourne, 20:31:05.
- C1 - Mobile Adventure Canoe Trophy:** 1 D White, Reading, 21:03:16.
- 2LJ - Junior Ladies Trophy:** 1 Kiggell/Diggie, Marlborough Coll, 10:02:16. 2 Jardine/Matthew, Kimbolton Sch, 10:06:53. 3 Freer/Griffin, Lord Wansworth Coll, 10:07:33
- 2L - Woodpecker Cider Ladies Rose Bowl:** 1 Burbeck/Drummond, Bishop's Stortford/Reading, 16:54:27. 2 Tetsmann/Baum, Sauna, 17:58:33. 3 Hills/Fletcher, Richmond, 19:18:40. 4 Mullins/Fischer, Paddlesport, 20:17:08. 5 Williams/Syms, Wey, 21:05:10. 6 Cooper/Farley, Cardiff Bay, 22:20:15. 7 Vater/Vater-Lambert, 22:59:45.
- 2MixJ - Oliver Brown Trophy:** 1 Green/Corfield, Lord Wadsworth Coll, 9:44:29. 2 Davies/Sumpton, Kimbolton Sch, 10:44:09. 3 Jackson/Wright, Kimbolton Sch, 11:28:29.
- 2Mix - CPO WR Templeton RN Memorial Trophy:** 1 Sharpe/Freeman, Richmond, 13:43:46. 2 Burt/Bird, Newbury, 16:31:08. 3 Clarke/Fooks, Devizes, 18:03:48.
- 2U17Sch - BSCA Junior Trophy:** 1 Barrett/Brown, Kimbolton, 9:24:58. 2 Ockenden/Godfrey, Bryanston, 9:31:49. 3 Prodger/Steer, Churcher's Coll, 9:44:25.
- 2J - Wiltshire Gazette Shield:** 1 Prins-Mills/Teeuwen, Reading, 8:13:29. 2 Davies/Davies, Wey, 8:32:43. 3 Watt/Umbers, Lord Wandsworth Coll, 8:55:16.
- 2CivJ - Berksonian Trophy:** 1 Prins-Mills/Teeuwen, Reading, 8:13:29. 2 Davies/Davies, Wey, 8:32:43. 3 Watt/Umbers, Lord Wandsworth Coll, 8:55:16.
- 2 - Devizes-Westminster Challenge Cup:** 1 Sharpe/Freeman, Richmond, 13:43:46. 2 Butler/O'Grady, Falcon/Runcorn, 14:09:05. 3 Rees-Clark/Dobson, Devizes, 14:49:52. 4 Treadgold/Hayes, Newbury, 15:32:25. 7 Burt/Bird, Newbury, 16:31:08. 8 Burbeck/Drummond, Bishop's Stortford/Reading, 16:54:27. 9 Whitehead/Richman, Newbury, 17:21:40. 10 Hamblin/Horrocks, Devizes, 17:37:34. 11 Alderdice/Webb, Wey, 17:40:23. 12 Symonds/Edwards, 17:53:05. 13 Houghting/Anderson, Wey/Southampton, 17:55:44. 15 Clarke/Fooks, Devizes, 18:03:48. 16 Dums/Latvenas, Richmond, 18:09:39. 17 Tilbury/Long, Pangbourne, 18:33:28. 18 Johnson/Margot, Cambridge, 18:38:26. 19 Craddock/Burgess, 18:40:49. 20 Jones/Jones, Devizes, 19:10:41.
- 2Civ - Devizes-Westminster Civilian Trophy:** 1 Sharpe/Freeman, Richmond, 13:43:46. 2 Butler/O'Grady, Falcon/Runcorn, 14:09:05. 3 Rees-Clark/Dobson, Devizes, 14:49:52. 4 Treadgold/Hayes, Newbury, 15:32:25. 7 Burt/Bird, Newbury, 16:31:08. 8 Burbeck/Drummond, Bishop's Stortford/Reading, 16:54:27. 9 Whitehead/Richman, Newbury, 17:21:40. 10 Hamblin/Horrocks, Devizes, 17:37:34. 11 Alderdice/Webb, Wey, 17:40:23. 12 Symonds/Edwards, 17:53:05. 13 Houghting/Anderson, Wey/Southampton, 17:55:44. 15 Clarke/Fooks, Devizes, 18:03:48. 16 Dums/Latvenas, Richmond, 18:09:39. 17 Tilbury/Long, Pangbourne, 18:33:28. 18 Johnson/Margot, Cambridge, 18:38:26. 19 Craddock/Burgess, 18:40:49. 20 Jones/Jones, Devizes, 19:10:41.
- 2VJ - Fred Bartlett Trophy:** 1 Balla/Pavlyshyn, Barking & Dagenham, 13:47:00. 2 Camilleri/Camilleri, Wey, 16:29:22. 3 Reid/Reid, 20:15:43.
- 2Ser - Devizes-Westminster Services Trophy:** 1 Niven/Gear-Jones, RM, 23:24:46. 2 Richardson/Titman, RM, 23:43:24. 3 Adams/Jesson, RM, 25:21:10.
- 2Res - Devizes-Westminster Reserve Trophy:** 1 Gargan/Foord, Parachute Regt, 19:34:34.
- 2RN - Roger Crane Memorial Trophy:** 1 Niven/Gear-Jones, RM, 23:24:46. 2 Richardson/Titman, RM, 23:43:24. 3 Adams/Jesson, RM, 25:21:10.
- 2A - Devizes-Westminster Army Trophy:** 1 Gargan/Foord, Parachute Regt, 19:34:34.
- 2Scts - Devizes-Westminster Scout Trophy:** 1 Turner/Matthews, 24:43:11
- 2OES - European Overseas Trophy:** 1 Witteveen/Zegers, Levitas, 16:17:09.



2 Herwanger/Hagen, Richmond/Laksevåg, 16:21:33. 3 Tetsmann/Baum, Sauna, 17:58:33.  
**205 - Overseas Trophy:** 1 Witteveen/Zegers, Levitas, 16:17:09.  
 2 Herwanger/Hagen, Richmond/Laksevåg, 16:21:33. 3 Tetsmann/Baum, Sauna, 17:58:33.  
**2V - Lee Trophy:** 1 Treadgold/Hayes, Newbury, 15:32:25.  
 2 Herwanger/Hagen, Richmond/Laksevåg, 16:21:33. 3 Burt/Bird, Newbury, 16:31:08.  
 4 Burbeck/Drummond, Bishop's Stortford/Reading, 16:54:27. 5 Whitehead/Richman, Newbury, 17:21:40. 6 Alderdice/Webb, Wey, 17:40:23. 7 Symonds/Edwards, 17:53:05.  
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 10 Dums/Latvenas, Richmond, 18:09:39. 11 Johnson/Margot, Cambridge, 18:38:26.  
 12 Gargan/Foord, Parachute Regt, 19:34:34. 13 Rundle/Barat-Farkas, Elmbridge, 19:34:54.  
 14 Thackray/Payne, Devizes, 19:40:54. 15 Jarratt/Carter, Lincoln, 19:48:30. 16 Hudson/Mansfield, Southampton, 20:07:00. 17 Shaw/Smith, Wey, 20:10:59. 18 Taylor/Sampson, Longridge, 20:12:01. 19 Mullins/Fischer, Paddlesport, 20:17:08. 20 Parritt/Trudgeon, Fowey R, 20:38:23.  
**2.100 - Century Trophy:** 1 Whitehead/Richman, Newbury, 17:21:40.  
 2 Clarke/Fooks, Devizes, 18:03:48. 3 Thackray/Payne, Devizes, 19:40:54.  
**2F- Folding Boat Trophy:** 1 Niven/Gear-Jones, RM, 23:24:46.  
 2 Richardson/Titman, RM, 23:43:24. 3 Adams/Jesson, RM, 25:21:10.  
**C2L - Senior Ladies C2 Trophy:** 1 Mullins/Fischer, Paddlesport, 20:17:08.  
**C2 - Devizes-Westminster Canadian Trophy:** 1 Jones/Jones, Devizes, 19:10:41.  
 2 Thackray/Payne, Devizes, 19:40:54. 3 Mullins/Fischer, Paddlesport, 20:17:08.  
**2LJT - Junior Ladies Team Trophy:** 1 Churchers Coll, 20:23:23.  
**2JT - Junior Team Trophy:** 1 Lord Wandsworth Coll, 27:25:15. 2 Kimbolton Sch, 28:28:49. 3 Churchers Coll, 30:14:40.  
**2JSchT - Schools Team Trophy:** 1 Lord Wandsworth Coll, 27:25:15. 2 Kimbolton Sch, 28:28:49. 3 Churchers Coll, 30:14:40.  
**2CCFJT- HMS Alacrity McKaig Cup:** 1 Kimbolton Sch, 29:50:25. 2 Churchers Coll, 33:34:31.  
**2T - Devizes-Westminster Team Trophy:** 1 Newbury, 49:25:13. 2 Richmond, 51:12:05. 3 Devizes, 56:55:23.  
**2CivT - Gillingham Trophy:** 1 Newbury, 49:25:13. 2 Richmond, 51:12:05. 3 Devizes, 56:55:23.  
**2SerT - Royal Engineers Trophy:** 1 RM, 72:29:20.

### The cost of running DW

It costs £80,000 per year to run the Devizes to Westminster Race, £30,000 of that at Westminster alone, a significant proportion already spent even if the race is shortened or cancelled. Costs are increasing steeply and people's personal finances mean that less canoeists are able to support the race than in previous years, a pattern seen elsewhere across the country. How can the issues be addressed for the future of this outstanding race? Last year the organizers carried out a thorough survey, the results of which have now been made public and make interesting reading for anyone competing, volunteering during the race or, indeed, running any other major canoeing competition. They can be downloaded from our website with this issue.



### Olympic concerns

This year's Olympic Games in Paris should be the first where people can get to all the venues by public transport but the rail extensions to cater for them will be incomplete and the free transport is now likely to be double the normal rate. Accommodation could be four times the normal rates but over half of Paris' residents are planning to leave for the duration of the Games, partly because they can make a lucrative income from renting out their homes and partly because Paris will be so unbearable, difficult travel, difficult parking, high costs everywhere, traders moved from their locations by the Seine and the opening event shortened so that the free spectator areas for residents will be much reduced. Security areas will be complex. The Games will go ahead but the concerns of residents will be noted by other cities considering hosting the event in the future and add to the financial concerns, further reducing the number of locations prepared to bid.

### Future venues

Banyoles will host the 2028 world marathon championships, the venue used in 2010, other bids having been placed by Pitesti-Bascov and Ponte de Lima.

Montemor-o-Velho will have the J/U23 sprint championships that year, Slovakia, Poland and Romania having also bid.

The six locations for the 2026 slalom World Cup will be Vaires-sur-

Marne, Augsburg, La Seu d'Urgell, Prague, Tacen and Kraków, the latter also hosting the 2028 J/U23 world championships.

Sprint World Cups for 2026 will be in Brandenburg, Bratislava and Szeged. Montemor also has the masters' world sprint championships next year.

World ocean racing championships for the next four years from 2025 are set for Durban, Vila Joiosa, Tahiti and Cherbourg and there will be a World Cup in Reunion over Nov 15-17th this year.

The world WWR championships next year will be in Ceske Budejovice with the J/U23 event in Solkan.

Vejen has the 2028 polo world.

With the exception of the coastal events these are nearly all in Europe.

The 17th world dragon boat racing championships are due to be held at Brandenburg an der Havel over Jul 16-20th next year while the 18th will be in Hong Kong in 2027. Between them, the 15th club crew championships will be held in Hualien County in Taiwan over Sep 5-10th 2026.

### Exact sex balance

The ICF have announced that they will have exactly the same number of male and female competitors at both the Olympics and the Paralympics. They will also have exactly the same number of male and female officials. Has there ever been a female president? While the better balance is to be welcomed, the exact parity does suggest that the numbers count is being given higher precedence than the ability levels of those involved.

### Drone judging

The wooden judging tower on the reef at Teahupo'o in Tahiti, to be used for this year's Olympic surfing, has been declared not legally compliant by the French Polynesian Government, who want to replace it with a new aluminium tower. The International Surfing Association do not agree with the proposal and say that use of live images shot from land, water and drones could do the job perfectly adequately. How many other sports could be judged using drones? They could replace referees following boats at sprint and dragon boat regattas and watch turn buoys in marathons and IC regattas. It is not unusual at our surfing contests to see judges squinting into the setting sun over the distant break at low water, trying to identify the vest colour of somebody already up and riding.

### Newgale diversion

Newgale is one of the most popular surf breaks in Pembrokeshire. The A487 runs next to the beach but storms are depositing increasing amounts of shingle on the road, to which there is no alternative other than minor lanes. This is also blocking the Brandy Brook with increasing flooding upstream of the village. Consideration is being given to diverting the road to the northeast of the village from Wood to Penycwm and replacing it with a coastal protection scheme. Carparks at each end of the village would be raised to reduce the risk of flooding but the pub would not be so easy to reach.

### Scottish Slalom Committee disbanded

PS have disbanded the Scottish Slalom Committee in their ongoing dispute (Nov, p5). They are accused of failing to cooperate with the central body, of not undertaking adequate risk assessment, of going ahead without PS input or authority and of allowing some of the veterans of previous years to take part in the Scottish championships while no longer paid up members. Their ACM was not advertised to the full membership although it has traditionally taken place at the national championships with all those having a serious interest being present anyway.

An independent report on the construction work undertaken at Grandtully has taken place although this has not been made public. There are no gatelines at Grandtully and the telephone and judging equipment have been taken away although there is doubt as to whether PS have the knowledge to operate or maintain it. It is doubtful whether there will be any events at Grandtully this year, there having been no slalom at Easter. Other slaloms are going ahead in Scotland but those running them have refused to sign an agreement with PS as they have not been shown details, particularly details of the lease at Grandtully. Slalom matters are being handled centrally by PS while the Slalom Committee are in special measures. The PS AGM is not until November. Further building is going ahead by PS on the Grandtully campsite.

Owen Inglis-Humphrey, whose daughter is a young slalomist, is

heading up a community entitled Slalom in Scotland, communicating via a WhatsApp group. The clubs are working together but asking what they get from PS, with whom communication seems to have broken down completely. Owen says that relations with Grandtully Estate are very positive. Otherwise, some heads need banging together.

At their February board meeting it was announced that board members were not to have telephone conversations or online meetings with anyone in slalom on a one to one basis and that anything written would be signed SCA rather than a personal name. A meeting for officials from slalom clubs but with Slalom Committee members excluded was held at 9.30am on a weekday and there was a full turnout of slalom club representatives.

### Women's kit

A BBC questionnaire suggested that two thirds of British sportswomen from the 143 elite competitors who responded faced problems with sports equipment. Too often it was simply scaled down for women from men's kit, frequently making no allowance for women's hips. One respondent was Nikita Setchell. A 9kg slalom kayak is OK for a woman to handle but double that weight for a slalom cross kayak is a different matter. Men's equipment is usually designed first and women may get a variant as an afterthought.

Perhaps assumptions on sizes should go further than this. Some years ago I was measured for an item of canoe clothing for review. The company decided I was an odd shape. They measured some other canoeists and discovered that we were all an odd shape, shoulders too big relative to hips when compared with the rest of the population.

## Back then

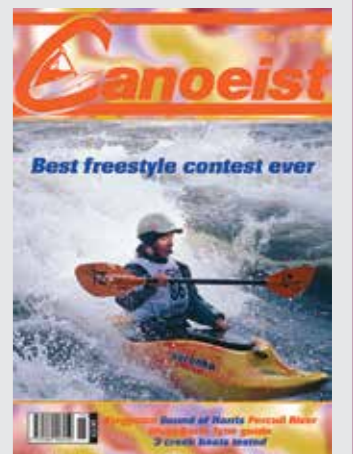


## 50 years ago

- \* Editor Vic Brown noted Fingal (the symbol of the Corps of Canoe Lifeguards) had been Down Under but playing his tricks on foreigners for a change, the slalom and wild water racing team coming back with good results from the Commonwealth championships in New Zealand.
- \* Extreme weather for spring slaloms saw Bala with snow, Appletreewick with high water and Grandtully with brilliant sunshine.
- \* Easter Grandtully was run by Edinburgh and Aberdeen clubs on a shorter course than usual, finishing above the bridge and proving popular, but the summer event would not take place as the Slalom Committee insisted it must be run by a single club.
- \* Yellow Master Class bibs were revealed for slalom with a large 'M' on front and back.
- \* My feature on the hydrology of the Welsh Dee and Tryweryn was reprinted from *Canoeing Magazine*.
- \* Two canoeists on a Welsh river were stung after treading on a bee's nest, swam, were ordered off the river by an angling bailiff and had to hitch a long way to their car, dressed in wet neoprene shorts.
- \* A Europa Cup was instituted with six events each for slalomists and wild water racers to fill in between world championships which were in alternate years.
- \* I took issue with a team selection policy that had included me rather than Norman Jackson, who was obviously faster.
- \* The WWR calendar had 17 events in four months, meaning support was too thinly spread, but the Dee Race in November had 320 entries while an entry of 200 would be reasonable for an organizer.
- \* WWR boats were delivered to customers at the Serpent's Tail but lost or wrecked within minutes. Slalomists needed to present Certificates of Competence.

## 20 years ago

- \* Ruth Holdway, who had Hodgkin's Disease, was one of the organizers of an attempt at the world's longest game of polo to raise funds for cancer charities.
- \* Several enthusiasts ran a first rate freestyle event at Hurley, intending to expand it to a Thames Valley Paddlesports Festival the following year.
- \* Construction was to begin on Whittingham Watersports Centre, Norwich.
- \* Terry Storry had died in a climbing accident, Drew Delaney was sorely missed and junior freestyle team member Eleanor Rutter was drowned in New Zealand during a gap year tour.
- \* Defra's funding to British Waterways had not included any inflationary increase for three years so 140 BW staff were to be made redundant.
- \* At a lecture at HR Wallingford on the Hampshire Water Strategy Hampshire's principal environmental officer could not name any stretch of inland river in the county that small boats were permitted to use and was not considering any improvement.
- \* Shepperton B weir on the Thames had been redesigned as a 'drowning machine' but Marsh and Sunbury weirs were to be made less dangerous.
- \* A plan to block the safe central chute at Stanley was called off after an SCA campaign of letter writing.
- \* Old Town, operational since 1898, produced their millionth canoe.
- \* A new trade show near Rosenheim, inspired by the former Crystal Palace exhibitions, was to be set up following dissatisfaction with ISPO.





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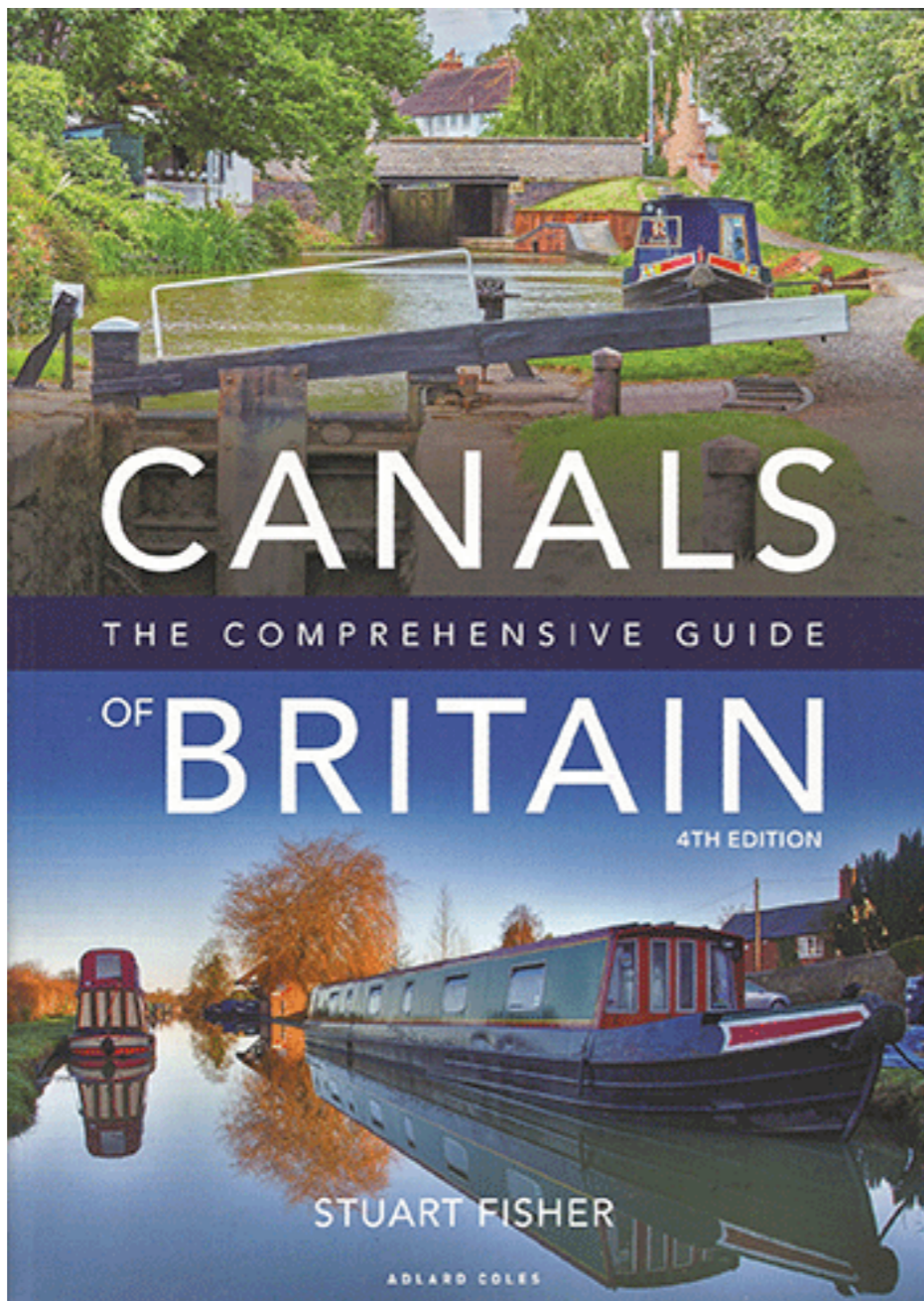
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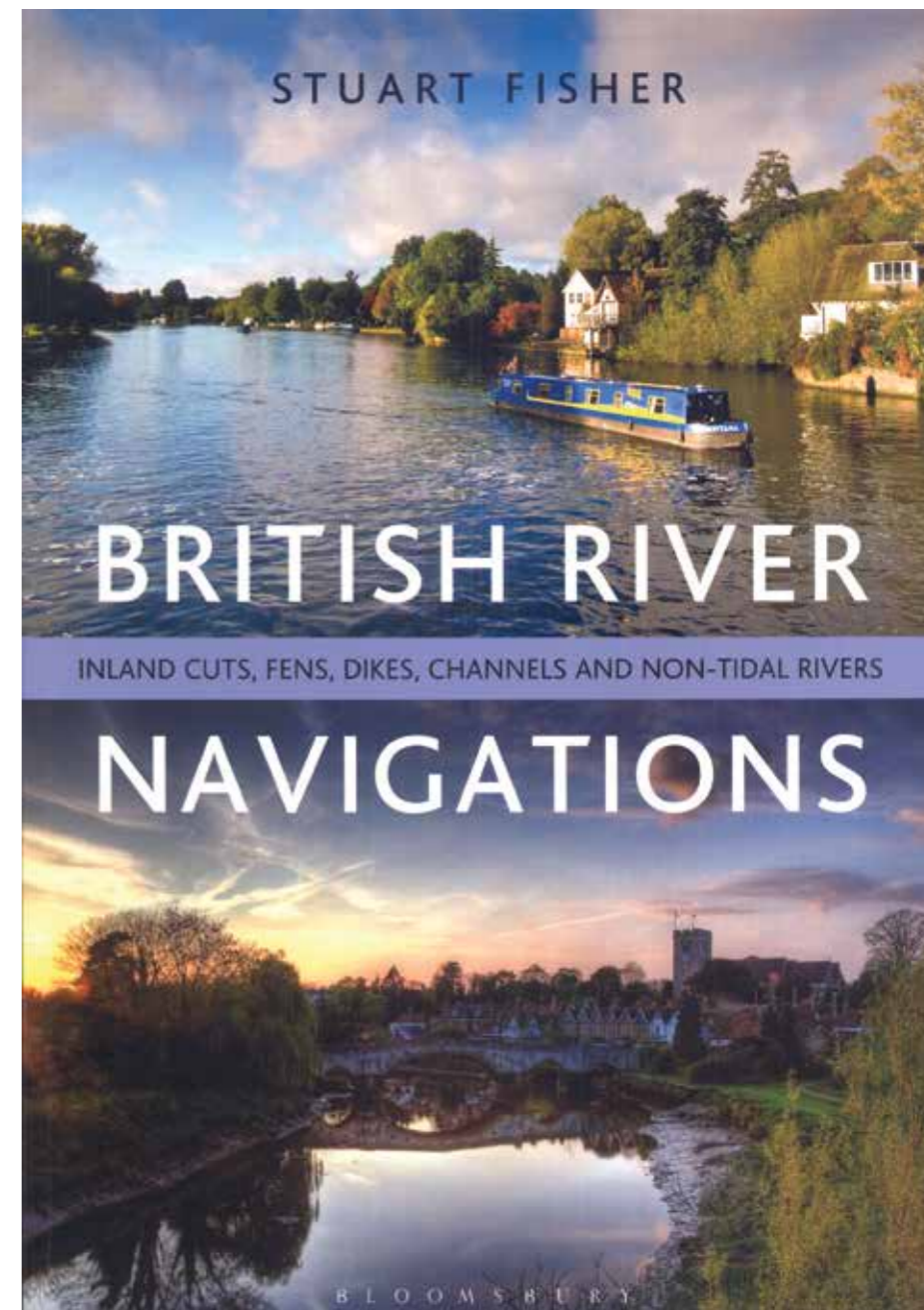
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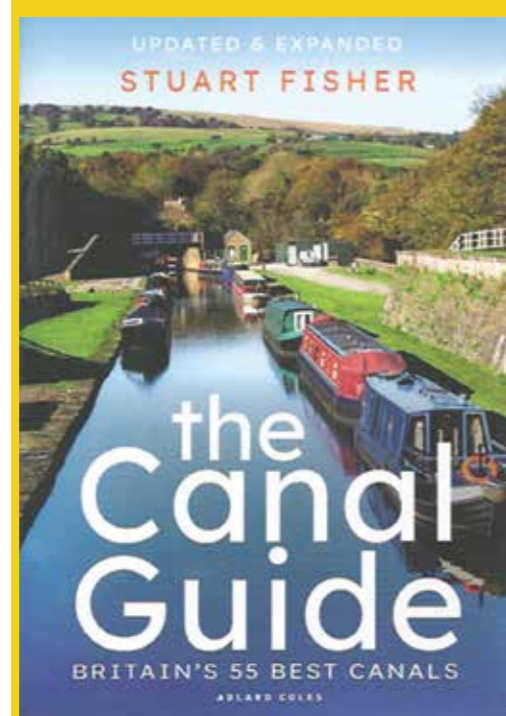
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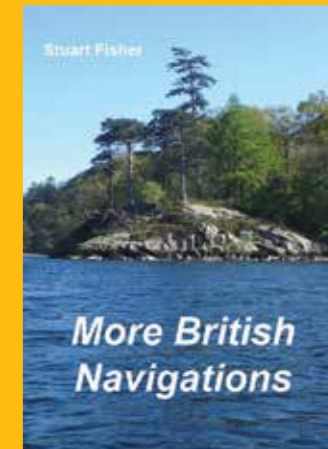
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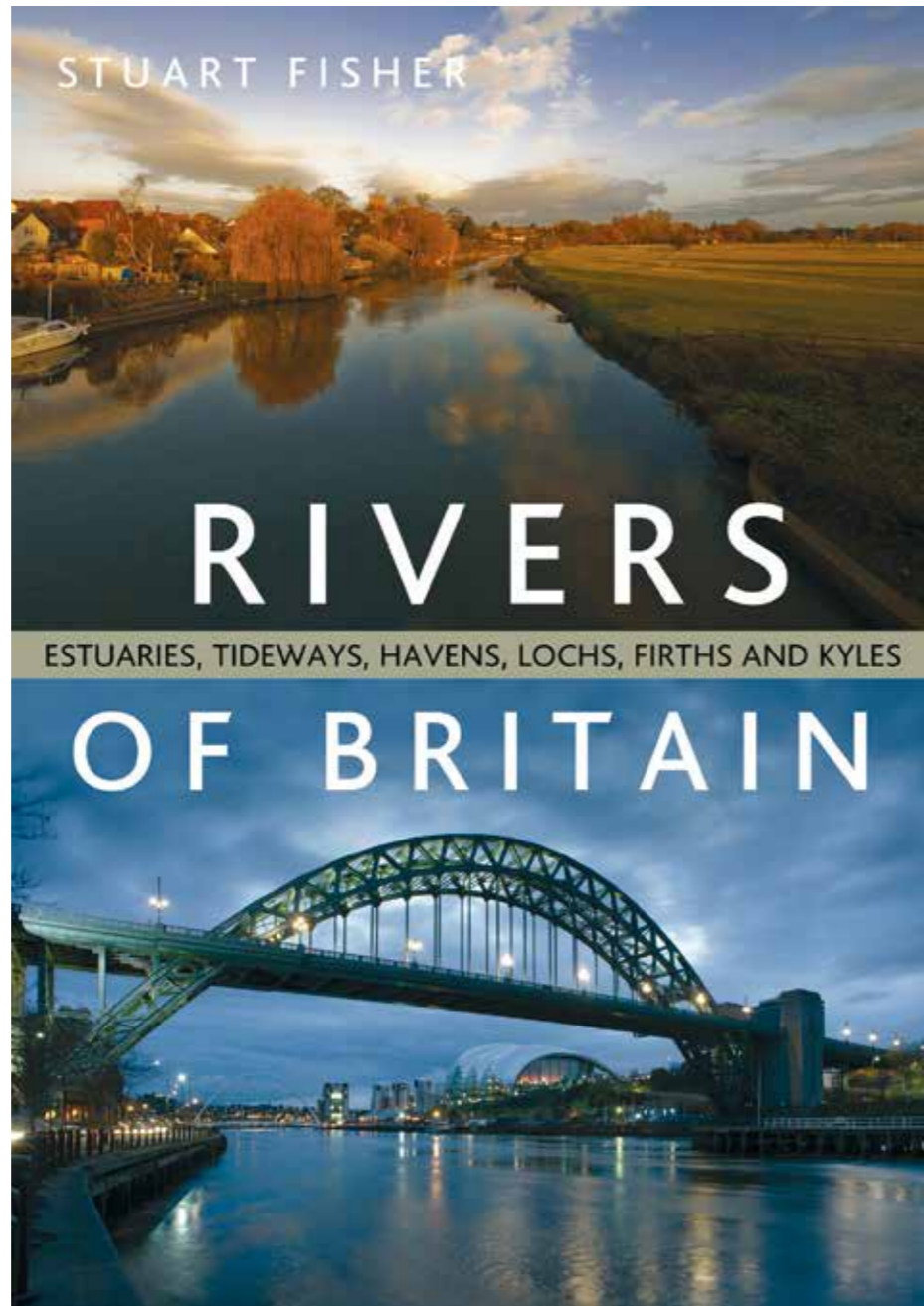
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From remote countryside to modern cities, through industrial hubs to fishing villages that have remained largely untouched for centuries, *Coastal Britain* visits all the places of interest along the entire coastline, exploring history and heritage, striking architecture and engineering, wonderful flora and fauna, on the way delving into art, relevant literature and culture. With maps and evocative photography, local brews to artefacts, nautical conditions and features that help convey the character of each area, *Coastal Britain* presents the array of facets that make each stretch of shoreline special.

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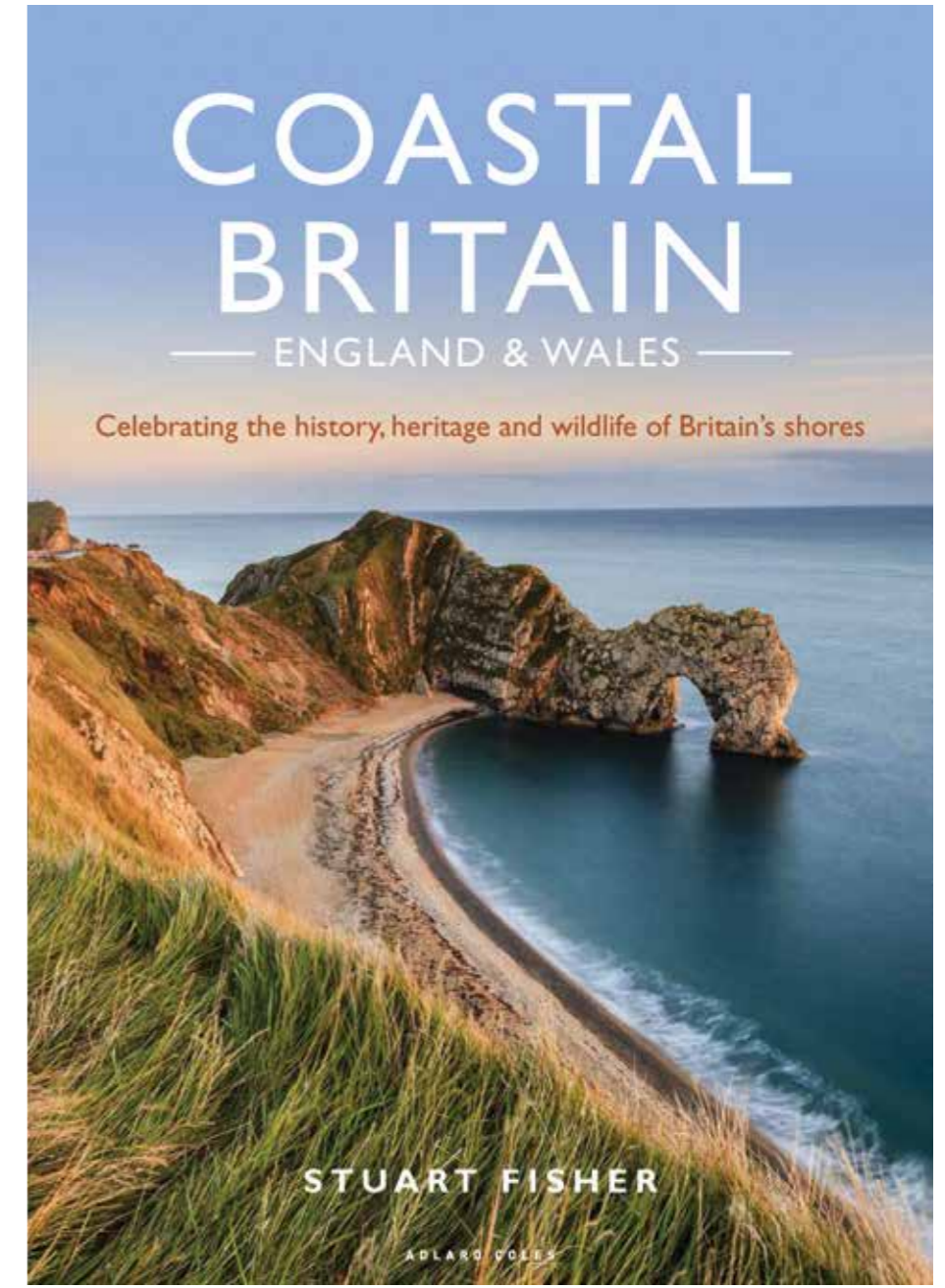
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'New books on rivers keep surfacing but here is an ambitious volume that stands firmly on its own... it transcends the conventional temptation to be pigeonholed.' - Peter Faulkner, *BBC Countryfile*

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Scotland has perhaps the most diverse and attractive coast in Europe although not always the easiest. The Corrieveckan is one of the largest whirlpools in the world, the Pentland Firth has some of the fastest currents in Europe, the Mull of Kintyre and Cape Wrath are a long way from civilization and some of the biggest surf in Britain is found along the north coast. Navigation aspects are covered fully.

Yet it is a coastline which is unbelievably beautiful, much of it wild with secluded places. From deserted sweeps of sand to rugged cliffs, from exposed headlands to sheltered sea lochs, from eagles to whales it is an endlessly fascinating coast.

*Coastal Scotland* visits all the coastline, including the larger inshore islands, the history, heritage and culture, architecture and engineering, flora and fauna, art and literature, the full spectrum of facets that make each stretch of coastline so special.

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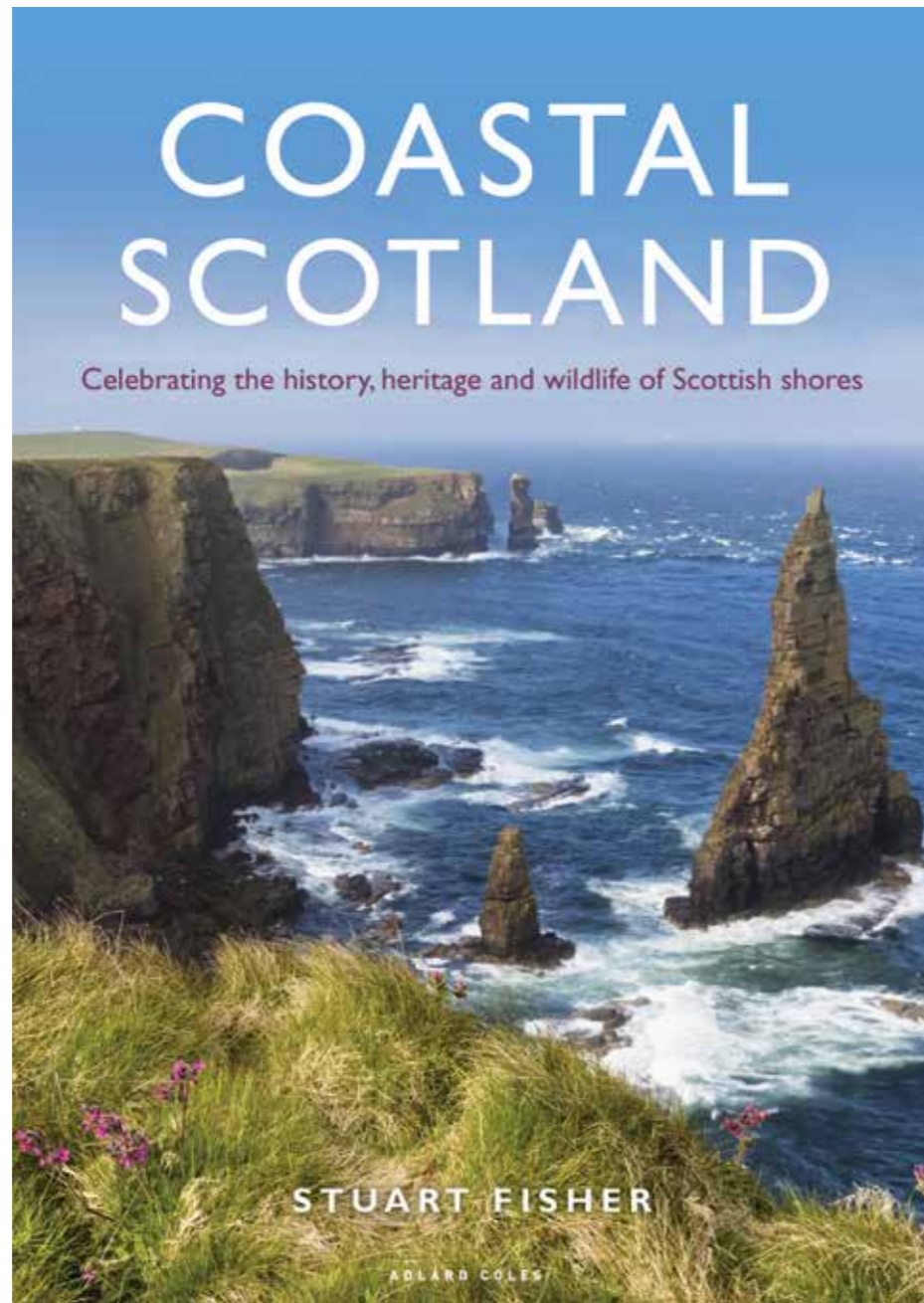
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This book features 50 lochs, both inland and sea. Some have been featured in *Canoeist* as guides or parts of guides but most are taken from a completely new study. They are generally the larger ones but not so large that they become open coastline. They are accessible by public road without the need for long carries to get on and off the water.

They do not include lochs which require commando techniques to access. Neither do they include the less interesting ones used for water storage which leave wide bands of dead grey rock along the shoreline for much of the year when drawn down.

Only three of these 50 lochs are Foxys.

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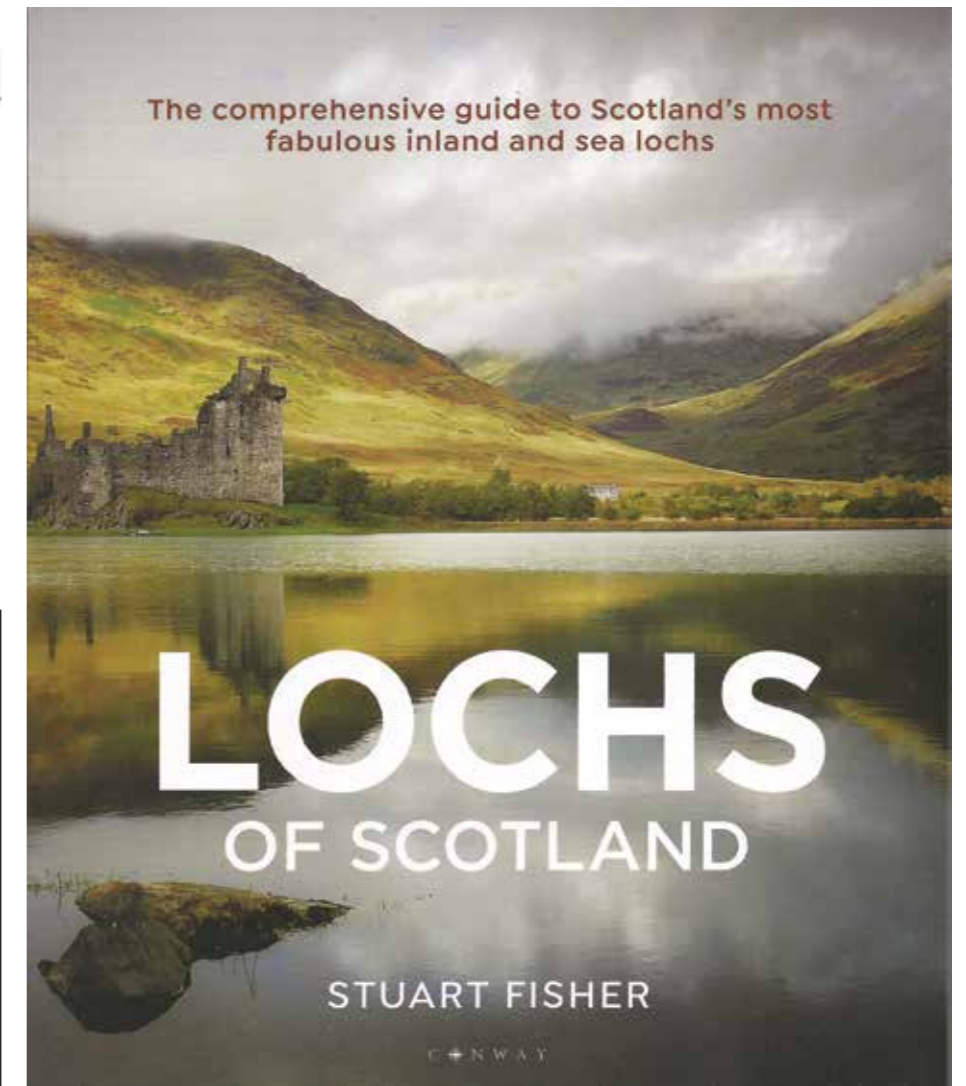
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'From spectacular coast to mountain nooks, this inspiring book showcases 50 of the most interesting lochs that frame the landscape of Scotland... it's packed with maps and information on local facilities, and is the perfect guide for anyone wanting to know more about these iconic locations.' - *Countryside*

'Author and canoeist Stuart Fisher has compiled a comprehensive guide to 50 of Scotland's lochs in his new book' - *The Scotsman Magazine*

'well catered for in this new guide to Scottish lochs... Packed with detailed maps, local facilities and photos, the guide is peppered with insights - from the history of clan warfare to more modern military activity.' - *Nautilus Telegraph*



'Dramatic photographs and maps complement a fascinating survey of Scotland's diverse coastline. Fisher has provided a treasure trove of interesting facts and knowledge' - *The Scots Magazine*

'With detailed maps and evocative photography, *Coastal Scotland* will have readers itching to explore this rich and fascinating stretch of coast' - *Countryside*

A brilliant addition to Stuart Fisher's series of observations from his sea kayak, possibly even better than last year's England and Wales volume. Refreshingly, Fisher is not interested in analysing his inner journey, only in recording what he learns... A wealth of unexpected fact on every page. Highly recommended.' - *Yachts & Yachting*

'The numerous colour photos make one want to head off to the coast and explore immediately... I'd recommend this book for its interest and enjoyable mix of facts and stories. I enjoyed revisiting places I know well and those I am yet to visit.' - Cically Oliver, *Towpath Talk*

'there's more than enough detail here to satisfy anyone who longs for Scotland's shores... His kayak noses into places which may not have been seen before and, almost certainly, they will not have been photographed either' - Roger Butler, *Scottish Islands Explorer*

'Each page is lavishly illustrated... With up to six photos per page, how Stuart kept track of photo locations and managed to cluster them in geographic order impresses me no end' - Paul Caffyn - *Journal of the Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club*

'My wife came home yesterday with a wonderful book re the Scottish coastline... A fantastic piece of work' - Colin Brown

Coast Book of the Month

**Title**

Coastal Scotland  
Coastal Britain: England & Wales  
Rivers of Britain  
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More British Navigations  
Canals of Britain  
The Canal Guide  
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# Which book?

This visual index gives a quick guide to which waters are included in each book. Some, such as some of the lochs, appear in more than one book.



Canals of Britain

British River Navigations

More British Navigations

Rivers of Britain

Coastal Britain -  
England & Wales

Coastal Scotland

Lochs of Scotland

