

Aviva community support

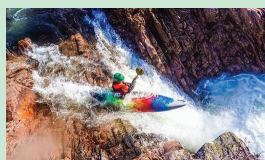
The Aviva Community Fund has made awards of up to £25,000 to 586 projects this year. Included are:



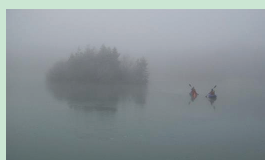
4th New Forest (Eling) Sea Scouts with up to £1,000 for new kayaks.



North East Edinburgh Youth Ambassadors Group with up to £5,000 to bring together diverse young people.



University of Stirling Kayak Club with up to £1,000 for two river boats.



Cambridgeshire Search & Rescue with up to £1,000 for eight lifejackets.



Sheffield Hallam University Canoe Club with up to £1,000 for river running and polo buoyancy aids.



1st Llangollen Scout Group with up to £1,000 for kayak equipment.

were the supplier of smoked salmon to the Queen. If you could not apply the kitemark it might be because your product fell short or it might be because it was ahead of BSI. An example was LED lights on bikes, which did not comply with the standard of the day. Several British manufacturers of canoeing kit were world leaders with innovative products. The European Standards Organization changed that. Products had to comply with their dictates and had to be tested at the manufacturer's expense, prohibitive for startup businesses. Minor changes were considered as new products, to be retested, preventing incremental improvements. Standards were more stringent than they might have been. Helmets had to be able to stand impact in Europe's fastest rapid, not likely to be encountered by most of us. Buoyancy aids are a nightmare. It was not unknown for a standards group to meet on a Monday morning in a remote part of the Alps with no public transport on a Sunday, meaning somebody representing the British trade needing to be away for multiple days at personal cost and inconvenience. Some dogmatic rules were not so much for any logical reason as to tie in with arbitrary dimensions which had been selected by particular manufacturers. While it makes sense to ensure that everyone is using the same colours for electrical connections that hardly applies for the diameter of kayak toggles. British innovation by young entrepreneurs died.

So, post Brexit, will we return to the days when newcomers with original thinking could flourish and small businesses could move the sport forward? It seems not. British and European standards bodies are separate from their respective politicians and they are likely to want to work together, also with ISO, a further layer of bureaucracy. All the testing is keeping a lot of people employed and there are those who will not want to see that go.

Trips

Mike Ranta has been undertaking his third canoe crossing of Canada since 2011, solo except for his dog. Travelling eastwards, an early inconvenience was a 1,000km portage over the Rockies. No crossing of Canada has been made in a single season before, the trip being completed in 200 days. As protection against the weather he wears a birchbark hat he made himself.

Pole Aleksander Doba has completed his third solo Atlantic kayak crossing just before his 71st birthday. His plan was to cross the south, central and north parts of the ocean, Dakar to Brazil and Lisbon to Florida having been completed previously. This time he left New Jersey and paddled to just a few hundred metres off the British coast before turning south for a further five days to the French coast. The overall trip took 110 days but he wanted to paddle from continent to continent, not outlying islands. He did not suffer the ignominy of being arrested by the French authorities who do not want kayaks to go more than a kilometre offshore as they think them unsafe. He has no further plans for long kayak crossings but he has not ruled out sailing.



WSP have been working on a modular hotel, dramatic in appearance with 19m high multi level pods. The Tetra Hotel attempts to tick all the right environmental boxes. However, publicity says 'the hotel will be located in a geographically stunning location', OK if you don't think the location would look better without an eye-catching hotel.

Traci Lynn Martin has become the first person to circumnavigate North America's three largest lakes, Superior, Huron and Michigan, in one season. A surfski racer, she set out to beat the longest solo sea kayak trip, Freya Hoffmeister's 13,892km round Australia. However, affected by rheumatoid arthritis, she reduced her target to the surfski record of 6,191km, held by Gerhard Moolman. The trip did not start well, with two calls to the emergency services because of ice and navigation inexperience. The Huron County Sheriff warned her he would confiscate her ski if it happened again. The 50 year old has used up some of her pension fund to pay for the journey so that leaves her with a future issue to be addressed.

Kayaking the Continent is a 4,000km journey from London to the Black Sea to raise funds for Pancreatic Cancer Action. Kate Culverwell has not undertaken long expeditions before but has been involved in shorter travelling, currently waiting to go to Oxford University. Anna Blackwell, 24, has undertaken long trips but not on water. The pair left London in mid April in a double kayak, travelling down the Thames, around the coast to Folkestone, across to Calais, the hardest part of the journey, and are now following the canals down the French/Belgian border. Later they will include most of the length of the Danube.

Glasgow rescue

One of the less well known rescue families, at the heart of the Glasgow Humane Society, are the Parsonages who, this year, celebrate a century of rescuing people from the Clyde. For the first 61 years, until his death, Bennie Parsonage was the leading figure in a period when no call for help ever went unanswered, day or night, none of the family ever failed in a rescue attempt and an estimated 3,000 people were saved. A tribute to Bennie on St Andrews Bridge notes that he rescued single handedly from drowning more than any other person in Britain. The family's work continues.

Watersports growth

British Marine's annual watersports survey shows 3,960,000 UK adults participating in boating last year, an increase of 3.4% over the year and the highest figure since the survey began in 2002. The largest increase was in canoeing, up by 345,000 or 0.6% of UK adults. Paddleboarding was up by 190,000 or 0.4% of UK adults. It is important to remember that these figures are for adults only and do not include the large number of youngsters who enjoy canoeing.

Another Oxford channel

The EA are proposing a new flood relief channel to bypass part of the Thames around Oxford. It will run to the west of the Thames from Botley to Kennington. This area already sees significant braiding with the Seacourt Stream and Hinksey Stream leaving from and returning to the Thames to the west of Oxford in an area between Cassington and Kennington.



Powered canogganing

Using canoes as toboggans in the snow is not unusual. A variant, spotted and filmed by a BBC cameraman in Bere Regis, involved an open canoe being towed along the road by a 4x4 vehicle.