



British Canoe Union  
Helping and Inspiring People to go Canoeing...

# Get Fit Get into Canoe & Kayaking!

Autumn 2006

## Change your life one paddle stroke at a time!

### Inside this issue:

Why canoe & kayaking?	2
Paddle Ability	2
Kayaking with 'hoodies'	3
Indoor Training	3
An inspirational story	4

It is common knowledge that regular exercise helps to reduce illness, ill health and stress, that it increases confidence, social skills and community spirit.

### How many people canoe or kayak?....

You may be surprised to know that over **1.5 million people paddle** and gain from many benefits the sport has to offer. Canoe & kayaking is **the** most popular watersport for the fifth year running and as the National Governing Body for the sport, the British Canoe Union want more people to experience improved health and wellbeing through paddling. Why not join them, get fitter, healthier, make new friends and have fun too!



## Need to exercise? Want to get fit?

### Need to exercise, but can't stand the thought of going to the gym?

Enjoy training outdoors, but running has taken its toll on your joints? Want to get fitter, but can't imagine yourself in Lycra?

Then canoeing could be the sport for you.

The beauty of canoe sport is that there is something for everyone – you can push yourself as hard as you want.

It can be competitive or recreational. It can be a team game or an individual test of speed and ability. It can be a sociable hobby or a way of escaping the crowds.

Whatever the objective, whether it is to; make new friends, get fit, lose a few pounds, push yourself to the limit or learn a new skill, canoeing is ideal.

Contrary to the belief that your legs do not appear to be doing much, if you have good technique, paddling is a good all-body workout.

You can burn up to 300 calories per hour paddling.\*

It is also a fantastic way to meet people, socialise and learn new skills all at the same time. So you can keep healthy and have fun!

So, let's get more people paddling!

\* depending on body weight & how vigorously you paddle



## So why canoe and kayaking?

### Health benefits

Muscle strength, co-ordination, cardiovascular, relaxation, and stress reduction.

### Something for everyone

Whether you want: a relaxing day with the family (recreational), a team event (canoe polo), a big open space (sea kayaking), a test of endurance (marathon racing), a test of skill (slalom) or wanting to perform the coolest and latest tricks and manoeuvres (freestyle), to take part in the London 2012 Olympics, canoeing has it all!

### Age is no barrier

Everyone from 6 years old to 90 years old can paddle

### Clubs, coaches & equipment around the country

With 450 clubs, 200 approved centres stocked with equipment and 9000 coaches, all the equipment and expertise are on hand. So you all have to do is come along and enjoy yourself!

### Disabled paddlers welcome

Many clubs welcome disabled paddlers and will cater to meet their needs

**Inner city or country** – whether you live in the middle of inner city London or in the countryside there is water near you.

### Fresh air and appreciation of nature

Canoe and kayaking is a great way to experience nature and wildlife.



## Paddle Ability

### Canoeists with special needs

Disabled? Able bodied? Special needs? Canoeing can be a hobby, passion, sport, even a job, for all. The sport is so varied that there is literally something for everyone. Paddling allows family and friends to experience exercise and challenge that is therapeutic for both mind and body.

More importantly, canoeing is pleasurable and fun! Together, able bodied and disabled can share all aspects of the sport.

The British Canoe Union promotes 'canoeing for all' and aims: -

- To ensure that all people have a general and equal opportunity to participate in canoeing.
- Not to disadvantage any individual by imposing any conditions or requirements that cannot be justified.
- To promote and develop canoeing for disabled people, the British Canoe Union uses the concept and term 'Paddle-Ability' to

encourage participation in canoe sport and canoe recreation.

- Paddle-Ability focuses on the individuals' ability in canoeing rather than disability.

Paddle-ability races, which recognise the needs of disabled competitors, form part of mainstream competitive events.



## Did you know? Canoeing can benefit breast cancer

Traditionally breast cancer survivors have been warned against repetitive arm movement for fear of exacerbating lymphoedema, a condition causing painful and debilitating swelling in the arms. Yet new research reveals it may actually be beneficial. According to Mysore Chandrashekar a breast cancer surgeon at the Royal Liverpool Hospital and the Linda McCartney Centre.

## Social Change

### Social Change

As well as health benefits the additional benefits are phenomenal for example the sport of canoeing can help youngsters with little or no confidence, disaffected youth etc to find a way through the maze of growing up.

### “Hoodies” try canoeing...

Falcon Rowing and Canoe Club are set to teach youngsters who hang out on the river bank near its Donnington Bridge base, how to paddle a kayak.

“Kayaking for Hoodies” came about after several incidents in the area ...

and Falcon Club thought that experiencing the pleasure of canoeing as well as showing the youths the skill it requires helps them realise that watersports are great fun to participate in rather than hanging around doing nothing in particular...

### QUOTE

“I am 14 and used to hang about a lot with my mates in town but I would much rather be out on a river than out in town with my mates.”

### QUOTE

“I work with kids and although some of them can be a little “difficult” at times, giving them the opportunity to try stuff like kayaking is the best thing for them. It keeps them from being bored/ hanging around and drifting into trouble, raises self esteem when they learn skills, and gives them decent role models.”



FROM THIS, to.... THIS

## Indoor Training.....

### Indoor training ...

The paddling ergo, known affectionately as a paddling machine is the nearest thing to kayaking you can get on dry land.

Many canoe clubs all around the country have these paddling machines and they are used for indoor training but are also used to correct position and paddling techniques.

They can also be used for competitions. A computer hooked up to the machine can show a variety of things including distance travelled. These machines are used at shows for “come and try kayaking” sessions.

They are great for schools too. Our Paddle Sport Development Officers and Community Coaches take them in to schools and Youth Clubs etc to give children the chance to



## Where can I paddle?

Many of Britain's inland waterways are ideal for canoeing. The network owned by British Waterways offers a variety of canoeing waters—some passing through wooded cuttings like those on the Shropshire canal, while others are broad river navigations like the rivers Trent & Severn. BCU membership (for members living in England) includes a licence for BW waters!

## If I could do it, so could you! by Jean Boatman

### How does a woman in her seventies inspire girls to take up canoeing?

Just by showing she can still take part, even in 10K races, with participants of all ages.

It never occurred to me, a housewife with young children, to do water sports. How did I get into it? I was the leader of a Girl Guide unit and the girls heard that the scouts were canoeing and wanted to do the same. This was my challenge – I had to learn to canoe before the girls could take part. It all started from there!

I carried on canoeing through my fifties mostly in slalom boats and it wasn't till my sixties when I retired from work that I took up marathon racing.

My first stab at the Devizes to Westminster (DW) happened because of a joke remark in a club newsletter that Jean and Gill were seen to be practising for the DW.

When we read it we looked at each other and said, "We'll show them we really can do it". Gill was a novice at the time and I knew very little about racing but with the help of our families we quickly learnt and were delighted to reach the finish at Westminster and receive a medal each, even if it took us nearly 50 hours - as we had a sleep at Henley and again at Teddington. The tideway was glorious very early on a sunny morning with no moving traffic apart from a few canoeists.

At 67 years old I completed the race again, this time paddling straight through the night with my partner and we finished 50th out of 150 boats in less than 27 hours. We were also awarded the trophy for the oldest crew to finish that year! For me this is my greatest personal achievement but it hasn't stopped here.

My club encouraged me to enter the World Cup canoe marathon race at Stockton-on-Tees. At the age of 70 –

I eventually found myself in the 45+ race, as there were no other women in my age range. The other participants asked how long I thought I'd take so I returned the question. When they said three hours, I said I'd do the same. I raced the 22 km in 2 hours 25 minutes, winning a Bronze World Cup medal, which must be quite rare in this country. I was surprised when two local newspapers rang to take a photo!

Since then I've overcome breast cancer but managed a 4-mile race just 6 months after my operation. Now here I am at the age of 75, still racing but slightly slower than in my 60's.

So don't delay, take up canoeing today. Don't give up at the first setback and remember: you are never too old to take part.

### Jean Boatman



*"So don't delay, take up canoeing today. Don't give up at the first setback and remember: you are never too old to take part."*

**Jean Boatman**



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