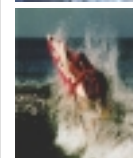
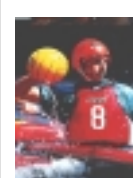
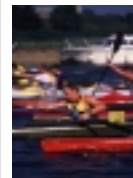
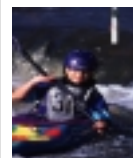
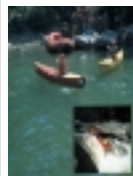
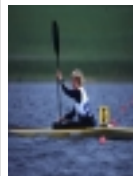




Getting Started

Part 1 of the BCU Website

Getting Started Series





Getting Started

1

...come canoeing

From a beginning almost as old as mankind, when the kayak or canoe was part of the process of survival, to the present day, when boundaries of exploration are being rolled back, canoeing is a sport rich in potential for young and old - the adventurous and the less adventurous.

Canoeing offers a wide range of activities, some based on competition and others, less formalised, based on journeying and adventuring.

HOW CAN I GET STARTED ?

Join with a local group or club - it's more fun, safer, and will help you to master the basic skills more quickly. The BCU publishes regional lists of affiliated clubs who welcome new faces, many running special sessions for newcomers.

Activity holidays often include canoeing and this can be a pleasant introduction, or perhaps you'd prefer to attend one of the many BCU regional events, and chat to some of the paddlers themselves.

See the regional and clubs section of the website for details of clubs near you.

Courses

One of the best ways to get to know what canoeing has to offer is on an activity holiday or specialist course. Under expert guidance you will learn the basic techniques, and the simple safety rules, which will equip you to enjoy a lifetime of water wanderings, or aquatic adventure.

A national calendar of courses and events is maintained by the BCU. This, together with other information is available from the BCU Year Book, free to members or £5.00p to non-members.

The BCU maintains a register of centres approved for the quality of the canoeing and instruction offered. It also holds a register of instructors, activity centres and clubs with an interest and expertise in catering for people who are disabled who wish to canoe.

Send a SAE to the BCU office for an up to date list. Contact the Centre of your choice for a catalogue showing the wide range on offer.

See the courses / Coaching and Approved centre pages of the BCU Website for more info and details of courses.

...where to canoe in Britain

The British Isles are made for canoeing - there is a wonderful variety of water to choose from. Inland, the canals, rivers and lakes offer simple touring on placid water, through to challenging white water descents. Not all inland water is open to canoeists, some is privately owned or is bounded by land which is private. The British Canoe Union has an Access Officer in each region who can advise you about local canoeing waters.

The coastline of Britain provides superb canoeing water, some of which is remote with spectacular scenery. Coastal canoeing in all but enclosed, sheltered sites demands knowledge and skill. Experienced canoeists are always keen to help beginners develop themselves, but you are strongly advised not to embark upon any coastal cruise without adequate personal ability, training and knowledge.

CANALS

- There are several thousand miles of canals
- These 'water highways' offer safe touring
- A licence is needed - included with BCU membership for all 2,000 miles of British Waterways Canals
- Get the BCU leaflets Enjoy Britains Waterways and Touring and Recreation with the BCU Licence

SEA

- Surf beaches, off shore islands, sea cliffs
- Seek expert guidance before going afloat
- Courses available around the country



British Canoe Union
 John Dudderidge House, Adbolton Lane,
 West Bridgford, Nottingham
 NG2 SAS
 Tel: 0115 982 1100
E-mail - info@bcu.org.uk -
Web Site - www.bcu.org.uk



Getting Started

2

RIVERS AND LAKES

- Upland rivers offer white water
- Lowland rivers offer interesting touring
- Many lowland rivers require a licence .BCU membership includes a licence for BW rivers, canals and EA waters.
- BCU Access Officers can give help on where to get on and off the water
- Guide books available.

...types of kayak or canoe

Canoes fall into four main types

SHORT PLAYBOATS

- Between 2-3 meters in length
- Flat hulled for planing and easy spins
- Hard edges for wave speed and carving.
- Slicey ends for easy vertical moves.
- Central Volume for stability and balance on end.

Good for whitewater playboating, park and play and playing the river.

FAST - TURNING KAYAK

- Designed for rough water
- Rather slow in a straight line
- A curved keel-line
- Between 3 and 4 metres in length

Good for: white water; slalom racing; surfing; shore sea trips; general use for all kinds of 'fun paddling.

STRAIGHT - RUNNING KAYAK

- Large, roomy cockpit area
- Holds a straight course easily
- Long non-curved keel-line
- Between 4 and 5.5 metres in length

Good for: Flat water touring; beginners; sheltered lake and coastal trips; marathon racing.

OPEN CANOE

- Single bladed paddles are used
- Reasonably manoeuvrable
- 'Open meaning no decks
- Between 4.5 and 5.2 metres length

Good for: Family canoeing; canal and river touring; beginners with special needs; (disabled, blind, very young); carrying more than one person; carrying camping equipment.

All canoes and kayaks should contain built-in flotation material. This must be sufficient to float the fully swamped boat at the surface in a horizontal position. The flotation usually takes the form of solid, plastic foam - it must be held securely in place or it will be lost or displaced by the boat's natural flexing.

Kayaks must be fitted with an adjustable footrest system and a grab handle or toggle at both ends of the boat. A boat manufactured by the Association of Canoe Trades will be reliably equipped.

It is not BCU policy to recommend particular manufacturers or models, but you are advised, once a choice is made, to only buy a boat which carries the label stating that it has been made in accordance with the recommendations of the British Standards Institution Code of Practice for Canoe Manufacture and Recommendations for Safety Features in Canoes.

...play safe

Canoeing is a risk activity. Accidents will happen and when they occur on white water, the outcome can easily be fatal if the appropriate remedial action is not quickly taken.

The answer lies in the combination of training, based on the accepted code of technique and safety; and experience gathered over a number of years, where techniques are acquired and practiced under the shadow of a leader.

Accidents on white water can be placed in three broad categories:

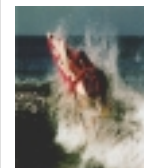
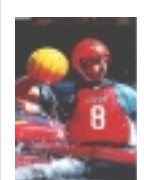
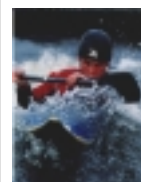
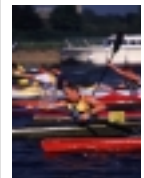
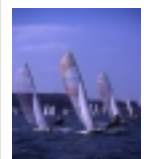
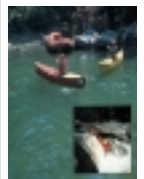
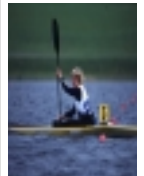
Lack of Knowledge – in correct usage of equipment, to lacking knowledge from which a balanced judgement can be made.

Over-estimation of Ability – inevitable with young, inexperienced canoeists.

Carelessness – may affect both novice and expert.

Ensure you have sound knowledge of the skills, techniques and equipment you are using by undertaking adequate training. With the types of canoeing activity ranging widely it would be impossible to cover all the aspects of safety here but a few golden rules would be useful.

Be able to swim at least 50m. You do not need to be able to swim vast distances but the ability to remain confident in and under the water, without panicking, is vital.





3

Getting Started

Use a buoyancy aid. This should be worn whenever you get into your boat!

Stay with the boat. In the unfortunate event that you do capsize stay with the upturned canoe. A canoe is easier to spot than a swimmer's head and its in-built buoyancy will help you to remain afloat.

Never paddle alone. If anything does go wrong it is vital to have someone else along, it's also friendlier! The British Canoe Union suggest that 'less than three there should never be!'

Make sure you are properly equipped for the water and weather conditions you will expect to encounter. See equipment and clothing advice.

Attend a qualified first aid course and get qualified

Of course there are other things to be taken into consideration but common sense and reading the relevant sections of the 'Canoe and Kayak Handbook' published by the British Canoe Union will give you much more help with maintaining personal safety whilst canoeing.

Water Quality

The issue of water quality really falls into two major concerns, blue-green algae blooms and Weil's disease. In the case of blue-green algae, if it is known to be present in a stretch of water then avoid it until it is declared clear. This is necessary normally only for a short time whilst the algae blooms, but follow the advice of the local authorities.

Weil's Disease or leptospirosis icterohaemorrhagica to give it its full title is an infection carried in rat's urine which can contaminate water and wet river banks. The bacteria which causes it does not survive long in dry conditions. It can be present in any water, including fast flowing streams and rivers but the risk of infection is greatest in slow moving and stagnant water. Absorbing bacteria through the skin and mucous membranes of the mouth and eyes contracts it. The bacteria can also enter your bloodstream through cuts on your skin, particularly the feet, and if you capsize or roll your canoe.

Thankfully Weil's disease is rare, but it can be a very serious illness requiring treatment in hospital and it can lead to kidney or liver failure. The disease is a notifiable illness. If you become ill within a three to 19 day period after canoeing then you should see your doctor immediately. The most common symptoms are: temperature, flu-like illness, joint and muscle pain, often particularly noticeable in the calf muscles. Tell your doctor that you have been canoeing and where. Quick treatment with antibiotics is essential and make sure you receive a blood test. An 'ELISA' test at the local laboratory can normally give a result within a few hours.

Ways to avoid contracting Weil's disease are very simple:

Avoid capsize drill or 'rolling' in stagnant or slow moving water, particularly where rat infestation is obvious

Wash or shower after canoeing. Cover minor cuts and scratches with waterproof plasters before getting in your boat.

Wear trainers or wet suit boots to avoid cutting your feet.

If you have flu like symptoms after canoeing go to your GP and tell him you are a canoeist.

...earning a welcome

- **Be friendly and polite to local residents**
- Drive slowly with care and consideration
- **Park sensibly without causing any obstruction**
- **Be as quiet as possible**
- **Unload kit tidily and take all litter home**
- **Get changed out of public view**
- **Get permission before going onto private property**
- **Avoid wildlife disturbance and environmental damage**
- **Be considerate to other water users**
- **Avoid being an intrusion on local life**
- **Support local businesses if you can**
- **Say "Thank You" for any help you receive**
- **Leave no trace of your visit**
- **Follow the Country Code (see below)**

Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
Leave livestock, crops & machinery alone

- **Guard against all risk of fire Take your litter home**



British Canoe Union

John Dudderidge House, Adbolton Lane,
West Bridgford, Nottingham
NG2 SAS

Tel: 0115 982 1100

E-mail - info@bcu.org.uk -

Web Site - www.bcu.org.uk



Getting Started

- **Fasten all Gates Help to keep all water clean**
- **Keep your dogs under close control**
- **Protect wildlife, plants and trees**
- **Keep to public paths across farmland Take special care on country roads**
- **Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges & walls Make no unnecessary noise**

these are some good ways for canoeists to earn a welcome in the countryside.

...other useful information

Canoe Clubs

There are many canoe clubs throughout Britain, some of these specialise in particular aspects of canoeing, while the majority have members whose interests range widely.

The BCU Member's Yearbook contains an extensive list of clubs (with addresses) in each of the regions of Britain. You can also find a list of clubs on the BCU web site

BCU Approved Centres:

A list is available from the BCU Head Office. SAE please.
Or on the BCU Web Site: www.bcu.org.uk.

National Canoeing Venues For BCU courses:

Plas y Brenin, Capel Curig, Betws y Coed, North Wales.
LL24 GET Tel: (01690720214) Email: info@pyb.co.uk
www.pyb.co.uk

Plas Menai, Caernarfon, Gwynedd. LL55 1 UE Tel: (01248 670964) www.plasmenai.co.uk

Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore, Inverness-shire, Scotland. PH22 2QU Tel: (0479 86256) www.glenmorelodge.org.uk

Canoeing Magazines

Canoe Focus is the official magazine of the British Canoe Union - produced every two months. It contains advertising, articles, competition results, book reviews and private sales. The magazine is free to members or £2.00 to non-members.

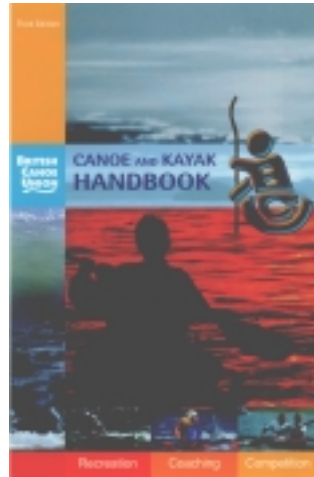
Canoeist www.canoeist.co.uk
Paddles www.freepubs.co.uk
Playboating www.playboating.com
Canoe and Kayak www.canoeekayak.co.uk

are all independent monthly magazine.

Videos

A wide range of canoeing videos, including expeditions, coaching and competition are available. Many retailers stock copies **or alternatively you can check out the Coaching Supplies section of the BCU Website,**

BOOKS

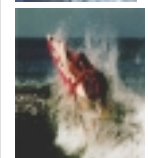
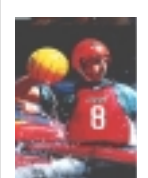
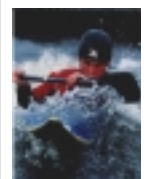
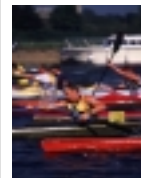
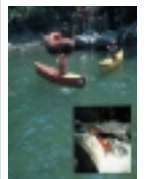
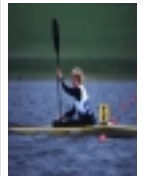


The Canoe & Kayak Handbook is the most comprehensive book on the sport of canoeing and is the official manual of the British Canoe Union. It contains information on technique, skills for kayak and canoe, the behaviour of water, history, boat design, safety, teaching, canoeing for the disabled and a great deal more.

Available from BCU, price £17.95 + £2 P & P (also available from BCU Coaching Supplies on the BCU web site).

The Canoe & Kayak Handbook contains a complete bibliography of canoeing literature.

4



British Canoe Union
John Dudderidge House, Adbolton Lane,
West Bridgford, Nottingham
NG2 SAS
Tel: 0115 982 1100
E-mail - info@bcu.org.uk -
Web Site - www.bcu.org.uk



Getting Started

5

White Water Canoeing takes place at the following national venues:

National Watersports Centre, Holme Pierrepont, Adbolton Lane, Nottingham. (0115 9821212) White water slalom course (man-made) open daily; sprint racing on regatta course. National and International events.

National White Water Centre, Canolfan Tryweryn. A white water course on the dam-controlled River Tryweryn. Used during period of water release. For up to date information phone the 24 hour answering service: (01678 521083). All bookings and enquiries Tel: (01678 521083) E-mail: welsh.canoeing-virgin.net Web Site: www.welsh-canoeing.org.uk

Nene Whitewater Centre Ltd, Bedford Road, Northampton NN4 7AA Tel: 01604 634040 Fax: 01604 634343 E-mail: info@nenuwhitewatercentre.co.uk Web Site: www.nenuwhitewatercentre.co.uk

Tees-side White Water Course, Tel: (01642 678000) email: kanu@4seasons.co.uk

RETAILERS

Avoncraft Hertfordshire 01707 330000
www.avoncraft.co.uk

Capel Canoesport Kent 01892 832128
www.crewsaver.co.uk

Nucleus W'sports Clacton 01255 812146
www.nucleuswatersports.org.uk

Paddlesport Warwickshire 01926 640573
www.paddlesport.co.uk

Pyranha Cheshire 01928 716666
www.pyranha.com

Ras Dex Nottingham 01159 813323
www.rasdex.co.uk

Tyrone Boats N.Ireland 01232 426389
www.tyrone.u-net.com

Whitewater Consultancy South Wales 01267 223666
www.wwc.co.uk

Wild Things Cornwall 01209 211977
www.wildthings-canoes.co.uk

MANUFACTURER/IMPORTER

Avoncraft Hertfordshire 01707 330000
www.avoncraft.co.uk

Crewsaver Gosport 01705 528621
www.crewsaver.co.uk

Paddlesport Warwickshire 01926 640573
www.paddlesport.co.uk

Palm-Equipment Bristol 01275 842740
www.palm-equipment.co.uk

Perception Kayaks East Sussex 01825 765891
www.perception.co.uk

Pyranha Cheshire 01928 716666
www.pyranha.com

Ras Dex Nottingham 0115 9813323
www.rasdex.co.uk

Simpsons Lawrence Glasgow 0141 3009100
www.simpson-lawrence.co.uk

Tyrone Boats N.Ireland 01232 426389
www.tyrone.u-net.com

Whitewater Consultancy South Wales 01267 223666
www.wwc.co.uk

Wild Things Cornwall 01209 211977
www.wildthings-canoes.co.uk

Wild-Water Bolton 01204 528225
www.wild-water.co.uk



British Canoe Union

John Dudderidge House, Adbolton Lane,
West Bridgford, Nottingham
NG2 SAS

Tel: 0115 982 1100

E-mail - info@bcu.org.uk -
Web Site - www.bcu.org.uk