

SUPM

Stand Up Paddle Mag UK

A NATTER WITH...

Guinness World Record holder Sam Rutt

CAZ DAWSON... Q&A

By Tez Plavenieks

PADDLE HER WAY

By Sarah Blues

SEATED SUP

By Will Behenna

SUP FREESTYLE

By Tez Plavenieks

BATTLING THE BROADS

By Alexandra Tyrer

NORWEGIAN FJORD SUP

By Dave Brown

GEAR SHED

Tons of stuff reviewed

Adrian Angell's coast to coast

#ShePaddles chats: Emma Love speaks to Lina Patel

GBSUP reports by Scott Warren

Don't stop moving – Rob Britton's Parkinson's story

Lake Sylvenstein SUP by Valentin Illichmann

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Ed's note

SUP safety

The last few years have seen unprecedented amounts of new paddlers take to the water. This is great for the paddle boarding industry and the wider watersports world. Anybody discovering SUP will be suitably pleased by how accessible it is. We all can appreciate how simple it is to get afloat, grab an affordable inflatable board and paddle and get stuck in. Unfortunately, here lies the problem.

With SUP's perceived ease, many of the aforementioned newbies have little to no prior water experience. Whether heading for the coast or inland waters, any seasoned rider will tell you there's more to paddling environments than meets the eye. Experienced eyes will spot hazards straight away. Not so much with newbies.

A number of SUP incidents have occurred since SUP's boom, ending in tragedy. In some of those cases, the end results could possibly have been prevented. In all circumstances, understanding your environment and how to keep safe is paramount.

In recent weeks SUP industry movers and shakers have been on the hard charge to identify ways of raising SUP safety awareness. Some brands already do good work within this area, but there's still more to be sorted out. The big problem is reaching end users who sometimes don't even know they're missing vital intel.

I don't have any answers, but I will try and help those I see who look in need of guidance whilst out and about. It's hard not to come across as patronising sometimes, but I'd rather be told to do one, having tried, than let them get on with it. And I'd encourage the same for all of us during floats. This may be a small part of the puzzle, but hopefully, some of those we educate will grow and prosper within SUP.

As far as the industry approach to SUP safety, there's now set to be a unified voice. Which is a great start. There's plenty more to be done, and I (as a lot of us) will be watching to see how things unfold.

Have fun in the water this summer. But do keep SUP safety in mind. The last thing any of us wants is more statistics.

On a lighter note, we hope you enjoy the latest issue of SUPM. As always, there are loads to sink your teeth into. Pull up a pew and have a read. The door's always open for anyone with questions, queries, feedback or submissions. From all the SUP team: have a good 'un!

Thanks as always to our many contributors and those who get involved with the mag. It might just be a loaned ear when a bit of venting is needed. Alternatively, it could be one of the many scribes and photographers we work with. There are many levels to making a magazine. Big up to all of you - we couldn't do it without your involvement. Massive thanks!

Tez Plavenieks – August 2022



Editor

Tez Plavenieks
tez@supmaguk.co.uk
www.supmaguk.co.uk
Insta: @tez_plavenieks



Advertising sales & subscriptions

Anne Egan
Tel: (01480) 465081
anne@supmaguk.co.uk

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Cover photo: Samantha Rutt and Mark Walton completing the North Channel crossing
Photo: Steve Rutt

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Publisher

2b Graphic Design Ltd
Peter Tranter
peter@supmaguk.co.uk
www.2bgraphicdesign.co.uk

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GBSUP REPORTING:



GBSUP DIRECTORS REPORT

Words: Scott Warren - GBSUP Events Director

Photos: Amanda Roberts - P3T Photography

2022 – the season so far

Successes of the season

Already we have wrapped up our Distance Series and have just one technical race to come in October and our National Champs in September.

The biggest success for me is the community's continued support the GBSUP series receives. The sponsors, our competitors, the tireless work of our volunteers, our ambassadors and our spectators make the GBSUP series a success. It's so much more than racing, and it's too easy to get wrapped up in the details or what can be done better. Taking a moment to stand back and view the collective community and what GBSUP offers everyone is quite something.

Partnerships

GBSUP relies heavily on our industry friends to make the series happen. It's not just sponsorship; it's the support for our raffle, hosting events, helping with our operational needs, and much more. Without our partners, we couldn't deliver the racing we do at a national level. BSUPA, Surfing England, Water Skills Academy and British Canoeing have all been working with us to deliver specific criteria for international selection and junior participation. We see these alignments as a considerable achievement and a high priority for the future growth of our sport.

New ownership

Many of our followers and competitors are familiar with the original UKSUP series from 2014. For 2022 however, GBSUP is a brand new formation of an entirely new structure and directing board. Whilst the national series has continued to roll on, it was very much hanging in the balance at the end of 2021. There was more than one occasion where we thought 2022 might not happen. Certainly, not a full distance and technical series, never mind our National Champs.

This new formation, however, gives us a degree of ownership, and our goals represent this. For me, it's a full circle to get here from 2012 and the original UK SUP Club's initiative (UKSUPC) to being involved in GBSUP with the same ambition to grow SUP racing. We look forward to finishing 2022 with the same successes we have seen and hitting the ground running in 2023.

Events roundup

Northern SUP Beadnell Belter

Kicking off our Tech Series up in the beautiful Northumbrian village of Beadnell, the Beadnell Belter did not disappoint. For years the northern SUP crews have been crying out for an event their way, and they didn't disappoint when they finally got the chance to host a National Series race. With racers coming from as far as Essex, Jersey, Wales and the south west, the event was well attended.

The conditions gave us sunshine and a strong breeze, and with a course laid out right on the beach, it made for exciting viewing for the spectators. Alongside our Tech Series race, we also ran sprints and our second Water Skills Academy Junior Clinic giving the groms the opportunity to learn from two of the countries leading paddlers, Emily Evans and Sarah Perkins.

Blue Chip Battle of the Thames

Hot, hot and well hot were the words to describe this year's BoTT. A staple on the UK SUP racing scene, it never disappoints, representing a challenging year after year. It wasn't all blazing sunshine, though, as, throughout the 16km distance, our paddlers also had showers, wind and the chop from 100 plus paddlers going up and down the course. The 2022 edition allowed two of our young chargers to put their stamp on the Distance Series, with the Euro Tour tempting some other paddles overseas.



Will Keetley and Hector Jessie didn't disappoint with a race-long battle for the lead despite both having a difficult start in the chop. Hector came out on top in the end, but both paddlers have a bright future if they carry on at this pace.

The GBSUP series isn't just about the front runners. Races like the BoTT always remind me of the effort everyone puts into their racing or challenging themselves against their personal goals. A huge shout-out must go to our Challenge Tour paddlers, who showcase this with their determination to finish and spirit whilst out on the course. The Challenge Tour is designed to bring newcomers into racing and represents an opportunity for others to take part in a shorter distance. Mike Ridsdill-Smith is our ever-present Challenge Tour marshall. We can't thank him enough for constantly paddling around and offering encouragement.

BaySUP Battle of the Bay

If the Beadnell Belter was well a belter and the BoTT was hot, then the Battle of the Bay sure was a battle. A forecast for some of the wildest conditions we have seen for years on the UK SUP racing circuit led to some very tricky conditions. With this year's race representing the Distance Series, just getting out was an achievement, never mind completing the course. It was easy to spot the ocean paddlers amongst our competitors as they got to showcase their skills through breaking waves and large seas.

The Ladies' 14' fleet was about Holly Pye and Ginnie Betts. They put their sea paddling skills to good use, coming in 3rd and 4th respectively in the morning distance race, and Ginnie repeated her 4th overall in the stand-alone technical race in the afternoon. The Battle of the Bay was perhaps better suited to our two prone paddlers. They once again showcased just how quick they are with some very competitive times that would have placed them 2nd and 4th overall in the 14' fleet.

Paddle Logger Falmouth Bay Open

Originally planned for Carbis Bay, an unforeseen circumstance meant our second tech race of the year had to take a last-minute detour to the stunning coastal town of Falmouth. With just 12 weeks to create an entirely new event from scratch at a new location and build brand new partnerships, this one was on the rocks! What came out of that frantic period was, as someone else put it, *"The best event of the series."* Quite how we managed that is still a small mystery, but one thing for certain is the people we



had on the ground helping us pull this together made this happen.

With a blank canvas, we also had the opportunity to test the waters, so to speak, on an event format we had been thinking about since the start of 2022. Whilst nothing new, it was the perfect opportunity to test our new event planning resources and run two full fleet races, two Challenge Tour events and the WSA Junior Clinic and racing. Run from the stunning Gylly Beach in Falmouth Bay with the local Surf Life Saving Club, with coordination from member and longtime GBSUP paddler Tom Hicks being instrumental in making the event happen. Paddle Logger kindly offered their support as our title sponsor. Director and local resident David Walker was on hand to offer his support, knowledge and help to cover all areas of the event.

After such a last-minute change, we can't thank everyone who got stuck in and took part enough for their commitment to our series.





Events to come The National Champs

Next up after a much-needed summer break is our National Champs in Nottingham on September 3rd and 4th. This year we are running not only the usual sprints in partnership with British Canoeing but also our first proper Distance Race National Champs. Our options are for a 10-16km race through Nottingham city centre. Details are still being finalised and will be released through our website and social channels shortly.

Viking Bay Classic

Once more, we are finishing our Tech Series on October 1st at Kent's Viking Bay, in the heart of Broadstairs town centre. Last year proved to be a huge success with the races, but its biggest achievement was the number of spectators able to watch the action. For the 2022 event, we plan to drop in the same format we ran at Falmouth. Partnering with Kent Surf School, who will

host us on the day, and Kent SUP racing, also running their SouthEast Regional Series finale as part of this year's event. Current plans are for the national series Tech Race in the morning, WSA Junior activities over lunch and a hybrid tech race in the afternoon for the SouthEast series. If you are looking for exciting racing and plenty of action, then the Viking Bay Classic is it!

Juniors

One of our goals with the new GBSUP formation is to inspire newcomers to the sport. Juniors are a key pillar in making that goal work, and our partnership with the Water Skills Academy has allowed us to start the process of building up our junior offering. The WSA has been instrumental through their Junior Rep Ben Julian, who created the blueprint for our clinics and races this year. At each hosting event, we have been fortunate enough to have WSA ambassadors and coaches lead the junior sessions.

Juniors will continue to grow for us. We have a full Junior structure in mind to offer proper competitive racing and help support our next generation of paddlers.

Fundraising for the RNLI

Our 2022 fundraiser in support of the RNLI has raised just over £3,000, with more yet to be added to the total from recent efforts. To put that value into context, £3,000 covers just the clothing needed for one crew member to go to sea on an inshore and all-weather lifeboat as we have at my local station in Ramsgate.

Our very own Lauren Newman-Warren has once again taken upon herself a triathlon challenge of a 2km sea swim, 10km sup and a 10km run. A fantastic achievement with donations of over £500 received so far.



Our next two events will also include our prize raffle, which has seen exceptional support from our friends across the industry this year. We thank them for their support as they have helped us raise over £2,500. The biggest prize donated to date comes from Dave Ewer at Reactive watersports, who donated a brand new Aztron Isup board into our Falmouth raffle – thank you, Dave.

Our fundraiser runs until December 2022, so please help support the RNLI and get us to our goal of £5,000. Donations can be made through our GoFundMe page:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/gbsups-2022-campaign-for-the-rnli>

GBSUP's new direction

One of the goals of the new GBSUP formation is to modernise our events and bring in a higher level of standardisation. We believe this will allow our sport to grow and ensure that competitors find new motivation and progression each year.

A key part of this is the ownership of organising the events in-house. This has

allowed us to implement a new event model, which has been successful so far. We are, after all, a small team of volunteers who run GBSUP, and our event hosts are more often than not fitting into the same boat.

The first test of this model was last year's Viking Bay Classic which was implemented quickly with the need to finish the 2021 Tech Series. After a successful test, the event paperwork is now templated so that a plug-and-play approach can be taken across our event planning.

It's not just our national series benefiting from this new direction, with the Northern SUP, South East and Wales events all involved in our Regional Series pilot model. We have plans to expand this model across the South West and other locations into 2023 through our Race From A Box initiative. If you are interested in running races locally, please contact us about our support.

A final word

Thank you to all our supporters and friends. The GBSUP operation is, after all, for the paddlers, and we can't thank you enough. We look forward to our next events and hopefully seeing you and more newcomers joining the fun.

Please check out our new website for 2022, where you will find our races, results, media and more, plus how you can get involved and help us meet our goals for the future.

<https://www.gbsup.co.uk>



2022 so far...

Whilst the consensus is one of success for 2022, we are the biggest critics of ourselves, and we have already learned plenty of lessons this year. 2022 has been a foundation year for us to get up to speed with running the national races, forming new partnerships and identifying areas that need our support.

Here are some of our achievements this year so far:

- Coordinated the 2022 Distance and Technical Series
- Organising the partnership with British Canoeing to continue with the National Champs at Nottingham in September (Sprint and Distance National Champs).
- Implemented a pilot scheme for GBSUP Regional Series and racing.
- Created our Race From A Box initiative to support new races and organisers.
- Established regular junior activity and racing and some of our national series events.
- Supporting clubs with growing junior racing through direct coaching support and organiser consulting.
- Parachuted in the Falmouth Bay Open event for July 2022 after the Carbis Bay event was cancelled.
- Created a new website to start bringing all relevant GBSUP information to one source.
- Coordinated the selection events and criteria for ISA worlds & ICF Champs.
- Established the GBSUP series as the recognised provider for SUP events and international team selection with British Canoeing.
- Coordinated four APP London wildcard entries through our Distance Series results.
- Created new event documentation, risk assessments, race director guides and more from scratch.

There is more we want to achieve throughout 2022, and our list continues to grow as we understand the series and market requirements further as leaders of the national series.



If you have any queries on the changes or want to get involved, please reach out to Adrian, Phil or Scott directly or email info@gbsup.co.uk.





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A natter with...

Samantha Rutt of Barefoot SUP

Interview: Peter Tranter

Pics: Samantha and Steve Rutt

Sam has just paddled her way to a new world record ratified by Guinness World Records for the fastest crossing of the North Channel between Northern Ireland and Scotland. What further reason did we need to have a natter with Sam on the world of SUP?

Hiya Sam, you're now embedded in UK SUP History, but how did you first become involved in SUP, and how many years have you been paddle boarding?

The first time I picked a paddle up was in Portugal back in 2015. We were supposed to be on a surfing holiday, but I had herniated a disc in my neck and had pretty bad nerve damage in my right arm, so surfing was out...desperate to get on the water; we booked a SUP lesson. We turned up it was on a small grubby estuary that ran off into the sea (we could see all the surfers having a ball!). Knowing what SUP conditions you should teach in now, there is no way our lesson should have gone ahead; it was so windy...our boards blew off down the beach, and we couldn't stand up. It was awful, so that was it until the following year when I tried it again on the Norfolk Coast and the ocean and fell in love with it

You're an inspiration to many paddleboarders? Who do you get your inspiration from both at the start and now?

My inspiration comes from people who overcome adversity to achieve amazing things. It's the fastest way to bring me to tears watching people do firsts like Ross Edgley and Brendon Price circumnavigating the UK (I cried watching both of them coming in at the end), Justine DuPont winning the XXL at the WSA, and Andrew Cotty coming back from a broken back to surf Nazare. I am also inspired by people overcoming adversity, especially my mother-in-law Ellen who battled breast cancer for 30 plus years but always put everyone first and always had a smile no matter what she was dealing with; that inspires me. Anyone who has been told they can't, then they smash that ceiling and show the world they can...puts a fire in my belly to do and be more and challenge myself to get out of my comfort zone!



Tell us a little about how the North Channel crossing idea emerged.

You kindly documented my attempt to paddle the English Channel and back again in 2020. That was just a failure of a challenge for so many reasons...permission... covid...it felt like one problem after another. That's when I decided I would have a go at paddling the east coast of the UK, and that felt like a failure as well as I just didn't enjoy the unpredictability of the weather, meaning I couldn't get out on the water. So after two weeks of bad weather and just under 100km covered, I headed home to Norfolk and did the Norfolk to Suffolk border on a SUP and running if I couldn't paddle...I didn't enjoy the multi-day challenges; something was missing that those two challenges didn't satisfy! It's a lesson in resilience, though, as I never gave up, never thought right well, that's it, I've failed. I'm hanging my paddle up. I discovered what I do and don't like, and I love crossing from point to point. So I was put in contact with a prone paddler called James Fletcher, who SUPJunkie had just covered a story on as he had crossed the North Channel, and it hadn't been on my radar... a few calls later, and it was booked.



Steve and Sam Rutt with Casper Steinfath



Were you surprised by how much you beat the previous SUP crossing record?

Very....it was bittersweet, though. Iain McCarthy, the current record holder, was fantastic support. We chatted a lot before with him offering great advice, and his hospitality when we arrived was off the chart. He organised our accommodation at the Salty Dog, which is a great hotel and even sponsored costs towards our hotel, so he is just one in a million so generous and has a fantastic club SUP Hub NI who were also so welcoming...I thought it would be tough to beat the 6 hours 30 minutes that Guinness had set, so coming in at 5 hours and 2 minutes was a shock. I asked my husband and boat crew if they had got it wrong, and they meant 6 hours and 2 minutes!

Was there any moment of the crossing that scared you, and if not – what would it take?

Ok, so those that know me know that I am not particularly fond of jellyfish, it is a slight phobia. I am happy in the water swimming with sharks as they tend to move out of your way and, on the whole, avoid humans more than they attack us. However, it breaks my

heart at the bad press they get, especially as we are in their home. Most sharks will avoid human interaction, and the only way they can really tell what you are is to take a nibble...but jellyfish just bob along, paying no attention to who they are stinging and don't move out of your way; it's been a fear of mine for as long as I can remember. My worst encounter was a field of Portuguese Man of War in a Euro Tour race in France!

Aside from smashing the record – what do you believe was your highest achievement during the crossing?

Actually, getting on the water in the lead-up, I suffered from uncomfortable bouts of intense anxiety. While anxiety is expected, especially for something like this, the intensity kick starts my fight or flight response, so a few days before, all I wanted to do was quit and go home and hide under a blanket so that the feeling of anxiety would dissipate. Still, I know from previous experience that I can work through it and that once I get to the other side, it will be worth the uncomfortable feelings.

Besides the obvious board and paddle – what will be the first piece of equipment you pack for any long SUP paddle?

My Garmin, haha; while I don't get hung up on stats, I am pretty geeky and love looking at them when I finish any training session. I also have the Garmin Fenix 7 now, which is an amazing bit of kit, especially for endurance SUP, as it has a built-in solar watch face, so it charges as you go.

Talk us through your new gear and what you're riding these days.

I am fortunate enough to be an ambassador for Starboard here in the UK, so the kit they provide me with is not only award-winning but also something I trust to get the job

“I thought it would be tough to beat the 6 hours 30 minutes that Guinness had set, so coming in at 5 hours and 2 minutes was a shock.”



Sam Rutt with Sarah Thornely





“So over the years, I have discovered that my body works best fasted, so I usually get up to train and then eat breakfast.”

done. I used my 23" inch wide Allstar but had thankfully been provided with a backup board by Andy Holland of Supslife, also a sponsor, that was 26" wide just in case conditions picked up, but the 23" was perfect. I team that with the Black Project Hydroflow X small blade as it is so kind to my body that I have zero shoulder aches, pains or muscle soreness after some long-distance training and the actual challenge.

Are you naturally competitive?

People often think I am competitive, and there is an element of competitiveness, but it's usually with myself. Whether it's a race or a challenge, I don't like getting off the water thinking I didn't give it my best shot or that something is left in the tank. It's more about beating my own times or pushing to get faster rather than thinking,

“Oh, I must beat that person,” it's internal competitiveness, and I already think I want to go back and do it in a quicker time!

Do you have a specific training regime, or is it simply about getting wet and putting the hours in?

I am a qualified personal trainer and will be a qualified strength and conditioning coach in the next few weeks. Understand the importance of periodising your training which allows for quality building with recovery factored in, along with understanding everything you'd need to work with an athlete at the highest level. So my training for this event has been specified for it, so there has been a lot of time putting the hours in, but it is always structured.

I am so fortunate to work with Larry Cain and love how he says it's a team effort; he comes with years of fantastic knowledge but



listens to my input and keeps me accountable. Having someone in your corner makes such a difference, and the ease of how this challenge felt goes to show that the training works. Now it's time to focus back on my speed so I can get back to racing.

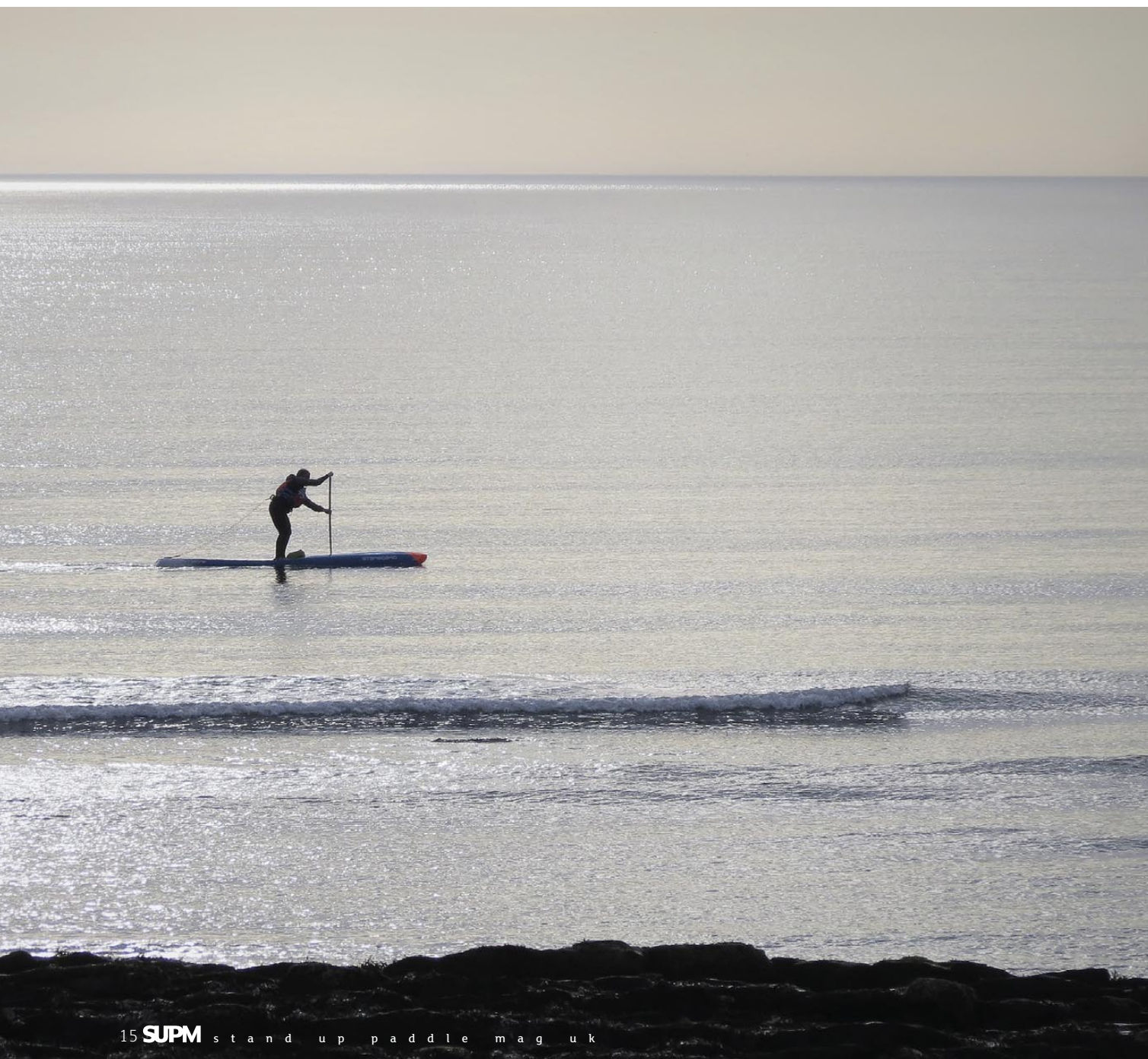
What would a typical food day be for you from breakfast to supper?

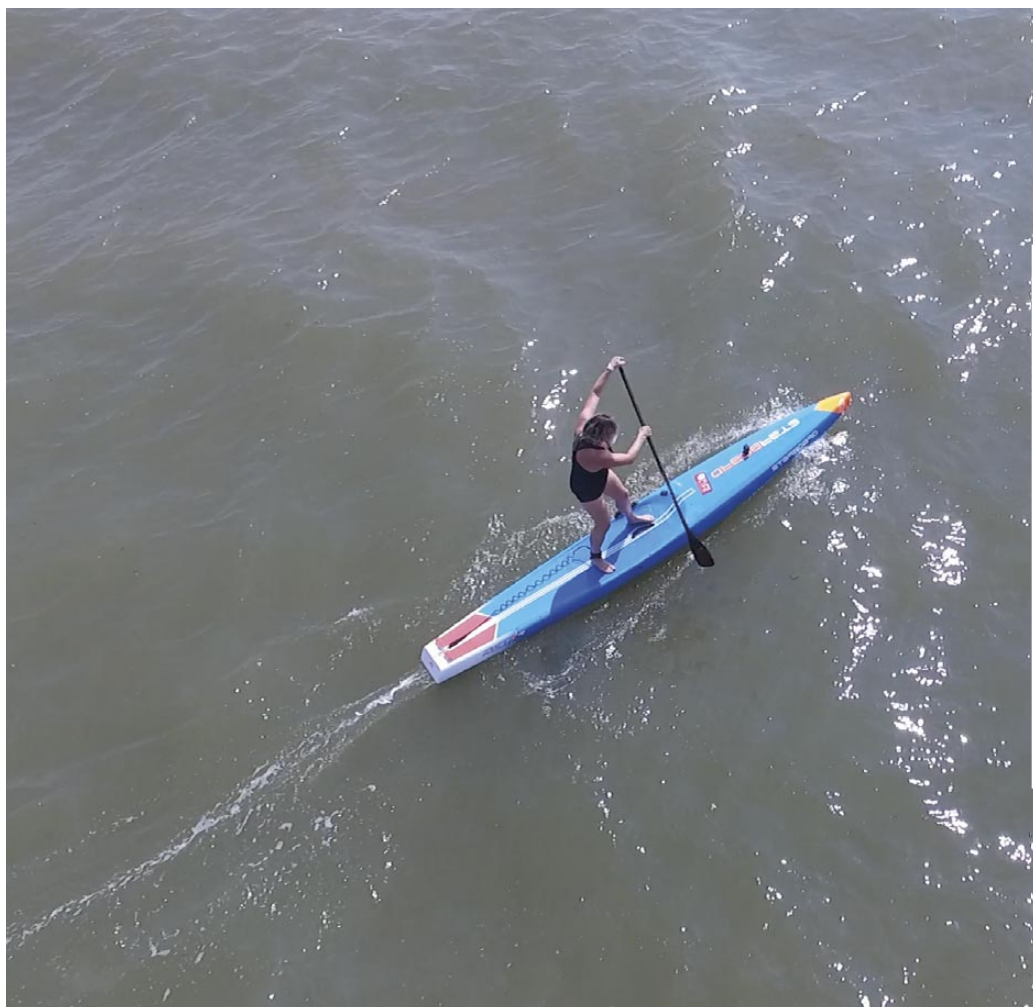
So over the years, I have discovered that my body works best fasted, so I usually get up to train and then eat breakfast, which today was a strawberry and cream protein smoothie with Beetroot Juice (blurgh!). Nuts as a snack or apple and peanut butter are delicious. Lunch was chicken tacos with salad, and dinner will be Harrisa Chicken with some pasta and veg. I love food; it's one thing in life I enjoy, so I try and balance it; at weekends, we have a great place that does oven-fired pizza!

What is the most significant accomplishment in your career to date?

When I decided to do challenges, I also talked openly about my diagnosis of Complex PTSD and how it has affected me and how I navigate mental health and doing challenges. The messages that I have received to say it helped them or they live with someone going through a tough time, or inspired anyone to do something they might not do, would be the one thing I would feel is significant in terms of feeling like I have accomplished something. In terms of an actual challenge, it was probably being the first woman to cross the wash with my poor husband in tow, unsupported as it made me feel like I could push myself out of my comfort zone. I loved how it made me feel getting to the other side; it just felt right. I had that same feeling about this challenge.

“When I decided to do challenges, I also talked openly about my diagnosis of Complex PTSD and how it has affected me and how I navigate mental health and doing challenges.”



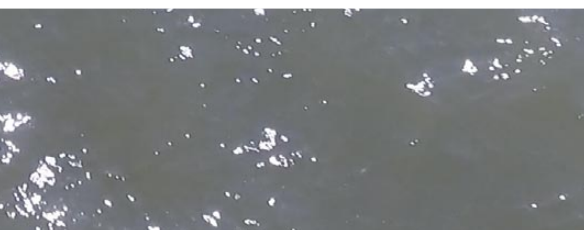


Sam Rutt with Jay 'JSUP' Manning

Do you have any thoughts on the future of the sport and concerns over safety within it?

I would desperately love to see more happening with the development of our sport so that there are clear pathways for talent spotting to support our current athletes. At the moment, we have some phenomenal racers who pay for everything and organise everything, and I have to say it's not easy when they need to focus on their training. Many have full-time jobs; they represent us as a country and work hard to do that with little support or funding. I'd love to see the sup community get behind them and help inspire younger generations to get into the sport.

GBSUP is doing an amazing job in bringing about these changes and looking into the areas that need work, but again, they are all volunteers working for free with families and full-time jobs but doing it all so we can race! When it comes to safety, absolutely, I am so worried and think we need to have a gold standard qualification so that we can limit accidents and educate. Many people come under fire on social media for a million reasons, but at the end of the day, many people don't know what they don't know. I feel it's our responsibility as a community



to stop criticising and start educating positively, from instructors to manufacturers and everyone in between.

I'm into SUP and going on vacation; where would you recommend?

Finistere in France, have you seen how clear the water is? I have a good friend who runs Barrachou Paddle, and the location is mind-blowing. You have bays, surf, downwind, French wine and the food; yep, as soon as the SUP season is over, that's where I am heading; it's so close!

If you had to choose one last thing you wanted to achieve within SUP before giving it up, what would that be and why?

I would love to help bring more young talent into the race scene, specifically, more young ladies. We have many inspirational women racing and competing in the UK, but seeing the new youngsters coming through and dominating the international scene would be amazing!

Tell us one interesting, none SUP related fact that we might not know about you.

I am colour blind and found out when I went for a role within M15 I passed all the tests (that surprised me!) but failed the medical.



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Quickfire questions...

Who would it be if you could paddle with anyone in the world, dead or alive?

My Nana she's not with us, but I would love to show her what I have achieved!

Pick two celebrities to be your parents...

Duke Kahanamoku and Emmeline Pankhurst.

Which famous person would you like to see playing you in a film?

Margot Robbie, not because I remotely look anything like her, but she is stunning and funny, so if that's how I will be remembered in history might as well make it unrealistic, haha.

Are you a bathroom/shower singer, and if so, what do you sing?

I am neither. I am that very enthusiastic car singer you see dancing in their car. I love most music, and a lot depends on my mood, but I often listen to beachy music, so surf and ocean-style songs.

Facebook, Instagram or Twitter?

Instagram (I like pictures).

An ideal night out for you is?

Sitting watching the sunset with dinner at the beach, I have a favourite private spot I love to go to.

What one luxury item would you take with you on a desert island?

Coffee.

What would I find in your fridge right now?

Just going to look...beetroot juice, feta cheese, and all the salad stuff; it's honestly looking pretty healthy, well until I look at the top shelf where I have stashed my Russell and Atwell fresh chocolates... seriously moreish!

What would you prepare for us if we came to your house for dinner?

You are most welcome to come for dinner anytime. I love fresh pasta and local produce, so it would probably be some sort of seafood pasta dish with homemade pasta... there would be a lot of cheese and cream!

What's the most boring question you are often asked?

When people find out I was a close protection officer before coaching SUP, I always get asked who was the biggest celebrity I looked after... it's such an overrated job.

If you could be a superhero for one day, what superpower would you choose and why?

This is such a cool question. My superpower would be being able to choose any superpower... I can never make my mind up between what is cooler... being able to fly, breath underwater, or teleport to anywhere... so if I could choose any, then that means I wouldn't have to decide!

Who are your SUP buddies?

Way too many to list... pretty much most of the race SUP community, anyone who loves the water and pushing themselves is my kind of person, and the whole of the Barefoot Race team and plan members who are all over the country.

Any final shout outs?

It has to be to my husband. He's pretty amazing to put up with half the ideas I come up with... to be there when he sees me battling with my anxiety but still knowing and supporting that it's something he knows I need to do; thank you!





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A photograph of two women standing on a pebbly beach at sunset. The woman on the left is wearing a bright pink jacket and has her mouth open in a joyful laugh. The woman on the right is wearing a light blue jacket and a colorful knit beanie with a large pom-pom, also laughing. The background shows the ocean and a warm, golden sky.

Making space to PADDLE Her Way

Words: Sarah Blues

Pics: Red Paddle Co.

I've been campaigning as Plus Size Paddler for inclusive kit since founding the #PaddleKitHerWay campaign in 2020, when I found the inclusive, welcoming SUP community wasn't reflected in kit availability. While this is still incredibly important, what became more apparent was the most significant barrier women were facing, was confidence.

For many of the women I was talking to, the lack of confidence stopped some from even trying the sport and others from seeking support or coaching based on the fear of being judged or failing. Sports can feel intimidating for women, something that can stem from childhood. Women in Sport UK found that 80% of girls feel they do not belong in sports, and 45% of girls don't feel that they have the right body shape to participate in sports.

“For 70% of women I surveyed, women-only spaces and coaches were essential to creating an environment where they could build their confidence.”



Role models

You may ask, how is this relevant when we're talking about women? However, for girls to feel welcome, they need to have role models, to see their mothers, aunts, and teachers enjoying themselves because if they see women of all shapes and sizes taking part in sports, they'll know that they're welcome too.

These conversations set me on a mission to find how I could support more women in feeling confident paddle boarding. For 70% of women I surveyed, women-only spaces and coaches were essential to creating an environment where they could build their confidence.

Paddle Her Way is an initiative that does just that and was created to help women overcome common barriers to paddle boarding, become more confident and learn to paddle safely.



The event designed by women for women tackles some key paddle skills that many women struggle with at the start of their journey, such as self-rescue, confidence standing and other key skills. In any new sport, being a beginner or just not progressing the way you'd like can be frustrating and intimidating, something that can be heightened in water sports, where hiding our bodies is harder. The sessions are all about making the women who join us leave feeling great so that they feel confident, safe and excited about paddle boarding.

Self-rescue

While every session is different and not all participants are beginners, the most common skill that has been requested is how to master self-rescue. This essential skill is often overlooked; however can be one of the most challenging for women, where the

different shapes of our bodies can make it more difficult. 67% of women I surveyed felt judged for not being able to self-rescue; for some, this fear of falling and judgement left them in tears, feeling like failures or too scared to try. Throughout the sessions, watching these women find a technique that works for them and the feeling of empowerment that comes with that has been incredible to be a part of.

Lois English, a participant in the first event, said, *"I feel amazing after the session; I've only paddle boarded a couple times before and wasn't able to stand or get back on. Within 20 minutes on the water, I could do both! I absolutely loved it!"*

The first Paddle Her Way with Plus Size Paddler was held in partnership with Ripple Rebels, which is based in Dorset, and I believe all people should have access to the physical and mental health benefits of SUP.





To find out more information:
@plussizepaddler on Facebook & Instagram

Their ethos is to create moments of opportunity for everyone to stand up proud, determined that lack of money, confidence or self-belief should not be barriers to the sport.

Abbie Orton, Director at Ripple Rebels, said, *"We loved teaming up with Plus Size Paddler to get more women enjoying the physical and mental health benefits of paddle boarding. Like Sarah, we feel it's important to create safe spaces for women to build their confidence. The Paddle Her Way is a great example of how we can do this with all the participants, coaches and volunteers finishing the day with huge smiles."*

Paddle Her Way

Paddle Her Way is an event I've wanted to run for a long time after having my own struggles and speaking to many women who struggled to feel confident in their bodies or self-conscious about trying SUP. I feel strongly that SUP is a sport for everybody and every body, and working on the events so far has already helped more women enjoy the sport confidently and safely.

I hope this is only the beginning; as someone who struggled to find women who looked like me when I started paddle boarding, I want to continue to create safe spaces for women of all sizes, both online and in person. The response to the events held in Dorset blew me away, so throughout the summer, I'll be taking Paddle Her Way on the road and working with some fabulous women coaches including the incredible SUP Lass in North Wales to reach even more women.

Ultimately, I want women to experience the incredible community I've been privileged to find through SUP. From the outside, the sport doesn't always appear as I've experienced it – full of wonderful, inspiring, supportive people. I want to help find space for women to Paddle their Way and the events be safe spaces that help women feel a little bit of that community and build their confidence so they feel ready to join a local club or explore more of what SUP has to offer.





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The International magazine for recreational paddlers
Issue 66 Summer 2022

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Norwegian SUP fjord TOURING

Words: Dave Brown – British Canoeing SUP Coach and Leader,
<https://supantics.co.uk>

Pics: Dave Brown and Paul Payne



As we approached the Norwegian coast, we looked down from the skies to see a myriad of islands, some with sandy coves. We hadn't even arrived yet, but it already looked magical and a paddler's paradise. We soon touched down at Bergen airport, picked our hire van up and were quickly on our way for the 2.5-hour road trip to our start point close to Gudvangen, located on the southern tip of Nærøyfjord.



We stopped close to the airport to pick up our all-important gas canisters for the week, and luck was at hand as we managed to get the last five 450g canisters! Gas is available at the petrol station in Gudvangen, but a bird in the hand and all that stuff!

Our plan (Claire, Yvonne, Paul, Al and I) was to spend a week paddle board touring under our own steam between the villages of Gudvangen, Undredal, Flåm and Fresvik. We aimed to use a few commercial campsites, but we hoped to use mainly wild campsites using Norway's 'right to roam' – *Allemannsrett*, where we would only take pictures and leave nothing but ripples on the water.





The fjords linking the villages that we planned to visit are the narrow Nærøfjord with its UNESCO world heritage status, Aurlandsfjord and the longest fjord in Norway – Sognefjord.

We arrived at our campsite for the first night on Saturday evening at Baka, a few kilometres north of Gudvangen, called Dyrdal Gard and run by the accommodating Katrine. We pitched our tents next to the fjord, soaked up the views, had a late dinner of dehydrated camp food, and then said our good nights. We had also arranged with Katrine that we could leave our van at the campsite for the duration of our trip.

Day 1: Baka – Gudvangen – Odnes, 12km

We awoke to fine drizzle in the morning, had breakfast, packed our gear on the boards and headed off to Gudvangen to stock up with essentials from the great mini-supermarket and petrol station. We arrived a bit damp and wind-beaten, so we welcomed scoffing the large hotdogs and coffee on offer. Once refuelled and supplies on board, we headed north in search of a suitable place to camp for the night. Luckily the wind and rain had started to subside as we headed towards Holmaneset, so we decided to stop for a brew.

As we approached Holmaneset, we were joined by one of the kayak tours and trips

from Gudvangen and Flåm. During the week, we probably saw half a dozen commercial kayak tours and a handful of kayakers doing as we were.

After our cuppa, we pressed on to Odnes, with its impressive waterfall, for our wild camp for the night. On arrival, the sun was out, and it felt much warmer than in the morning - Just what we needed for our damp tents!

Day 2: Odnes – Dyrdal – Stokko, 15km

The sun continued the following day as we headed north towards Dyrdal with the plan of wild camping at Stokko, a couple of km north of Undredal. This would see us leave the Nærøfjord and join the Aurlandsfjord. Close to Dyrdal, we bumped into Denise, Ella, Jo and Vicky, who were SUP'ing our way – they also had an ample supply of marshmallows for toasting, so we followed in anticipation! We weren't disappointed, and after dinner and a walk into Undredal, there was plenty of marshmallow toasting around the fire!

Day 3: Stokko – Undredal – Breisnes, 15km

We awoke to a glorious morning with plenty of sun, pleasant temperatures, and light winds. We said cheerio to Denise, Ella, Jo, Vicky, Claire, and Paul as they headed down to Flåm for some zip wire

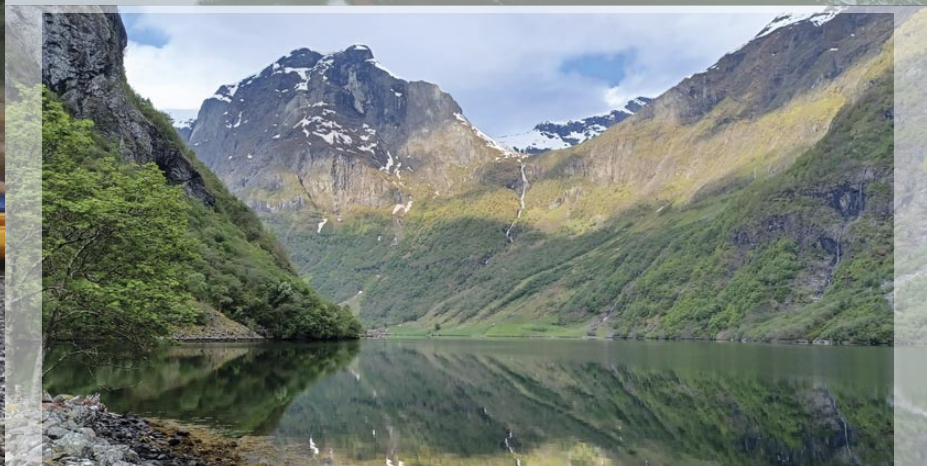
and mountain bike action over the next few days. While Yvonne, Al and I, visited Undredal for the legendary cinnamon buns and goats' cheese before heading north towards Frevisk and Sognefjord.

Once we had passed the entrance to Nærøfjord, we noticed that the boat traffic had reduced; not to say it was busy before, but it now felt very wild and remote. We stopped for snacks after crossing the fjord and saw our first two Golden Eagles flying close to the shore – amazing!

We were about 4km away from our wild camp for the night located at Breisnes – Titus from SUP Norway had tipped us off to this site with magnificent views but a trickier landing(?) On arrival, it was low tide, and we were greeted with elevated roundish boulders, surrounded by an apron of seaweed - so we now understood what Titus meant by trickier. A bit of careful footwork and great teamwork soon had us ashore and our boards safely out of harm's ways for the night. The views from the elevated camp were indeed fine, and after finding two deer antlers, we named the site 'Deer Antler Camp'. We were lucky enough to see a couple of porpoises feeding nearby during the evening.

Getting your head around the sheer scale of the mountains takes a bit of doing, with some reaching up to 1,700m above the fjord and dwarfing ocean liners as they sail by.





Day 4: Breisnes – Fresvik, 11km

The morning was fine and bright but with quite a stiff headwind for our crossing as we continued north towards Fresvik. We hugged the shore for a few km, and after a few snacks, we picked out what looked like a vineyard. To our surprise, after a few hundred metres, the wind vanished and was replaced by a mill pond as we paddled towards the vineyard. On our return trip, we chatted with a guy on the shore at the vineyard. After asking what variety of

grapes were growing, he told us that the grapes were raspberries – in fact, 44 massive poly-tunnels full of them, complete with five beehives for pollination!

Soon after the crossing, we started looking for a landing spot for lunch. Quite often, there weren't suitable landing spots for several kms, so you had to prepare to have lunch on your board. Luckily, we found a spot that allowed us to get our boards clear of any wash from passing boats.

After Al's freshly prepared goats' cheese and salami sandwiches, we continued paddling towards Fresvik. After a few kms, my laminated map reading skills got a bit foggy as I overestimated our remaining distance, but Yvonne, with her online blue dot, got us back on track. As we rounded the final headland and turned south into a large bay, Fresvik came into view – so time to relax and indulge in a spot of sunbathing.

“To our surprise, after a few hundred metres, the wind vanished and was replaced by a mill pond as we paddled towards the vineyard.”



Once we landed at Fresvik, we called at the quayside Co-op store to pay for camping, and we found the storekeeper's English was as good as our Norwegian! After a quick phone call to a friend, all was sorted, and we all left with ice cream as a treat! The camping area was relatively small, enough for four small tents, but there was a great service cabin with a kitchen, shower, and washing/drying facilities – it felt great to have our first shower for over four days!

The village is quite agricultural, and a surrounding glacier holds some of the oldest, largest, and best-preserved traps for reindeer dating back 500 to 2,000 years.

The evening forecast was for heavy rain, which started at 21.00 and didn't stop until the following morning, so we were glad of the service cabin to sort out our damp kit.

Day 5: Fresvik – Norheimsdalssagi – Breisnes, 15km

After sorting our kit, we set off on our return journey to Deer Antler camp via the raspberry farm. Close to our camp, we discovered a bothy hut accessed via a small suspension bridge over a roaring waterfall, which would have made an exhilarating night's stay, but we chose the tranquillity of Deer Antler camp.

We also did our bit to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee that evening with our own beacon – and a couple of sneaky cans from the Co-op at Fresvik!

Day 6: Breisnes – Dyrdal – Holmaneset, 18km

Today was our last full day paddling as we headed back onto the narrow Nærøfjord with its amazing scenery. We had the pleasure of meeting Titus and his SUP Norway group close to the entrance of Nærøfjord, and we thanked him for his advice on our tour. Our final wild camp was at Holmaneset, and we had arranged to meet Claire and Paul for some last night celebrations, i.e. sneaky cans again!

Day 7: travel home

We had just a short paddle across the fjord to pick our van up from Baka before stopping off on route to the airport at the mini supermarket in Gudvangen for a quick shower and one last giant hotdog.

We all had such a fantastic time; the scenery was breathtaking, we met some great folk along the way, and the wild camping lets you immerse yourself in this magical place, which gives you a feeling of being remote and off the beaten track.

Thank you

Lastly, a big thumbs up to Paul for inspiring us all to go on the trip and thank you to all my camping buddies for putting up with my tent snoring!



Fact File

Travel

- Nearest airports to Gudvangen are Bergen (2.5hr) & Oslo (5.5hr).
- Bus service from Bergen to Gudvangen is available.

Conditions

We went in late May/early June with temperatures ranging from 6-19 C and sea temperature ranging from 12-14 C. We had light to medium winds, but there isn't much shelter if the wind picks up.

Health

- UK citizens need adequate medical insurance.
- There is no issue with biting insects, but there are ticks, so take a tick removal tool and check yourself – wearing tights helped.

Weather forecast

Yr - Fresvik - coastal forecast. Great forecast tool with weather, tides, tidal currents, and water temperatures. www.yr.no/en/coast/forecast/1-2607766/Norway/Vestland/Vik/Fresvik

Water

Plenty of waterfall water to collect – we had no issue drinking without filtering.

Maps

Norgeskart. Great free detailed maps. www.norgeskart.no

Camping (*short distance from fjord)

- Commercial sites at Gudvangen*, Baka, Undredal, Aurlandsvangen*, Flåm* and Fresvik.
- Wild camps with a drop-box toilet at Holmaneset, Odnas, Skalmenes, Salthelleneset and Stokko.
- Cabin with drop box toilet at Norheimsdalssaggi (NOK100pppn).
- Wild camp no toilet (take a trowel) at Breisnes

Mini supermarkets

- Gudvangen, Undredal, Aurlandsvangen, Flåm and Fresvik – check online for opening times.
- Camping gas (screw connector) – Gudvangen petrol station and Biltema café Sandsil, Sandslimarka 50, 5254 Sandsli
- Cards are accepted in most places.

Equipment

- Boards – Touring 12' to 13'2"
- Tents – single hoop tunnel type
- Mobiles for communication – O2 & 3 network worked OK
- Marine VHF handset

Food

Mainly, dehydrated meals from the UK topped up with bread, cheese, salami from local shops, and candy kittens!

Wildlife

Seals, Porpoise, Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Cuckoo, Hooded Crow, Chiffchaff, Common Sandpiper, Ring Ouzel, Pied Wagtail, Common Gull, Starfish



DON'T STOP MOVING



SUP and Parkinson's with Rob Britton

Words and pics: Rob Britton

Foreword: Tez Plavenieks

I've known Rob and his family for quite a while. My wife worked opposite him during their time at Sunsail HQ, and I've been at many social events with Rob. I've also windsurfed and paddled with him as well. To say I was shocked when he received his Parkinson's diagnosis is an understatement. I'm not that much older. Knowing Rob wanted to help raise awareness and show Parkinson's isn't something that only affects the older generation, I contacted him to see if he'd be keen to do this article. He was. So, here's Rob's story. Thanks for telling it, Rob.

How long have you been into watersports, and where does SUP feature?

I've been involved in water sports since a very young age. Living in Gloucestershire, we were close to the River Avon and Severn. These two rivers offered the chance to use canoes or sailing dinghies during weekends and holidays. Allowed this freedom at a young age was embraced and respect for the water became second nature. At 16, I decided that the leisure industry would be an excellent avenue to pursue. The foundation of being around the water while growing up supported me on my journey as a water sports instructor. That qualification was the golden ticket to opening opportunities to work overseas doing something I loved! The foundation of being around the water, while growing up, supported me on my journey as a water sports instructor and opened opportunities to work overseas from 1996 – 2002.

2002 my seasons overseas finished, and we had set up a home on UK's south coast, Gosport. Work drifted away from the watersports industry, a family was started, and the age-old balance of family, work and hobbies commenced. Sessions became sporadic and a small family car, not supporting a stack of windsurfing gear, steered me down the kiting route. Kiting lasted a year, and I found myself at the front of a Shearwater Sailing Catamaran.

2020, the COVID lockdown stopped any travel plans and presented challenges for carrying out activities. As we had the water on our doorstep, SUPing was the answer and this readily available activity saw ownership of one SUP turn to three.





When did you start paddling, and why?

I'm very much a late adopter of paddling. I was working at a trade fair in Birmingham circa 2004. On our stand, we had a stand-up paddleboard. I recall thinking it looked interesting but was sceptical also storage of another board was not on the cards. I recall thinking it looked interesting but couldn't justify another toy, and where would I store it with all the other toys in the shed?

Fast forward to 2020, and SUPing appeared to be everywhere. The performance of inflatables seemed to be at a standard that couldn't be sniggered at, which removed the excuse of being unable to store and transport. The concept appeared to be one not to turn your nose up to.

I was in my local watersport shop, returning to windsurfing. A lot of kit was being procured, and I was nervous about what the reaction would be on my return home. Then out of the corner of my eye was an inflatable touring board from STX.

The shape caught my interest and the affordable price. The first family SUP was

procured! On arrival home, the reaction to the introduction of the board was positive. The decision had been the right one.

At the time, we were in the initial throes of COVID, and activities close to home were welcomed. Use of the board became more and inevitably, the family discussions of who would use the board and how long crept in. A few weeks later, I was back at my local watersports shop procuring the second family SUP. This time I went for an inflatable wind SUP from STX. The shape this time was like a surfboard. The opportunity to use a windsurf sail with the board intrigued me and justified the purchase. The board would be able to accommodate different interests.

Summer of 2020 and COVID was well established, and the opportunities to go far and wide were minimal. The two SUPs were being used regularly, and now other families were interested. Helping friends out with sourcing an inflatable SUP, I came across a Facebook marketplace advert for two STX touring SUPs. One went to the interested family, and the other joined our two SUPs. The SUP fleet was complete!



How does SUP fit your and your family's routine?

Having inflatable boards aids transportation. Trips to the beach will see the addition of a board, or two, being thrown in along with the BBQ and chairs. The same goes for holidays. A Scottish trip to the Highlands saw us taking the boards with us and, with local knowledge, used to explore local lochs. Trips to Saunton Sands will see at least one SUP loaded. Strangely enough, the touring STX is favoured for catching waves on the beach.

This year's family holiday, shared with family friends, SUPs will be on the cards to be packed. We are looking forward to exploring the coastline of Pembrokeshire and playing about in the surf alongside our surfboards. The boards add that extra element to a holiday at no extra cost for an activity when away.

Where do you usually paddle?

In our location, we are lucky. We are based on the north shoreline at Gosport. From the back garden to the water, it's a 10-minute walk. Apart from no shore break, Portsmouth Harbour has so much to offer and explore.

Tide-dependent, you can paddle up to Fareham and back to get the miles in. Paddle across to Portchester Castle, or if you feel very adventurous, paddle past the ferries and into the tidal lake at Alverstoke. This route is challenging due to the water traffic but achievable.

We've also launched from Portchester Castle and enjoyed an evening of wind SUPing on the boards. The performance of the boards always surprises and on light wind days when windsurfing is not viable. Those that challenge the boards on upwind performance are proven wrong. Very versatile!

Got any particular SUP locations to tick off, home or away?

Pembrokeshire has been one location that has intrigued me – with a trip planned this year happy to report back.

The Scottish trip scratched the surface of what can be explored. The west coast has loads to offer (not including the midgets).

One SUPing location I won't be exploring is that of running a rapid. During a trip to Scotland, we went white water rafting, and we saw a group making their way to the river on leaving the riverbank. Imagine paddlers kitted out in American football attire with inflatable boards under arms.



Talk us through your diagnosis. When did you realise something wasn't right and what were the steps that followed?

Summer of 2019, I was walking with my wife. A nice day out, and all was good in the world. *"What is wrong with your left leg?"* Angela, clearly frustrated, asked, *"You're dragging it."* As far as I was concerned, there was nothing wrong. End of that conversation.

A couple of weeks later, we are on Saunton Beach, ready to go surfing with family and some of our extended Sunsail family. Everyone was rushing to get in the water, but I was struggling to put my wetsuit on – a moment that had been lovingly filmed for prosperity.

At the end of the session, I realised I was the last one in the water. I started the long walk back to the dunes, board under the arm. *"What is wrong with you? You look like an old man walking up the beach,"* was the greeting I was met with on my return. Considering I'm the youngest in my group by a few years, this was a kick in the ****. I couldn't deny it. Something was not quite right with my left side.

After the holiday, I booked a doctor's appointment. Expecting to be told I had fallen arches from wearing flip-flops and a frozen shoulder, I was surprised that the appointment lasted five minutes. The doctor had taken one look at me and returned the verdict that I needed an urgent visit to a Neurology department.

My neurology appointment turned into more than one visit. For three weeks, I was questioned, scanned many ways, tested, prodded, and given some test medication. All very over the top for a frozen shoulder and fallen arches.

On 21st November 2019, I had my results appointment. The appointment started with more tests – which showed a lack of performance from my left side. My consultant then proceeded with, *"My diagnosis of your condition based on all the test results is Parkinson's – you have a condition called Young Onset Parkinson's Disease."* What? How? Why? Me? Cue complete shock, utter disbelief, and denial!

My consultant explained that the challenge is that identifying characteristics are not always present for each sufferer. Which, in turn, doesn't help a newly diagnosed sufferer understand what is going on. The Q&A, during the month of testing, alongside the scans,



confirmed the diagnosis. *"Have family or friends noticed a change in how you carry out tasks?"*

In follow-up appointments, I learned that Parkinson's Disease is a brain disorder that causes unintended or uncontrollable movements, such as shaking, stiffness, and difficulty with balance and coordination. Other symptoms may or may not appear, but you get the picture. Parkinson's symptoms usually begin gradually and worsen over time.

My diagnosis was in 2019, but I would have been in decline before then. This feedback has helped me put an answer to several situations where I couldn't explain a struggle to carry out simple daily tasks.

How has this impacted your life in general?

People mainly identify Parkinson's Disease as affecting older people with involuntary shaking of body parts (tremor), slow movement, and stiff and inflexible

muscles. Not all sufferers follow these traits. I'm 44 years old, and Parkinson's mainly affects my left side with slow movements, rigidity, and stiffness. My right fingers have a slight tremor when meds are wearing off. My right leg and toes are prone to Dystonia – my leg literally twists inward to the point where my toes curl in on themselves. This can last from 15 to 30 minutes. During this duration, I'm practising techniques to combat this, swallowing meds and returning the limbs to normality which is exhausting.

These symptoms, and preconceived mindsets, have made me very aware of my surroundings and the situations I find myself in. I have learnt that certain stress and anxiety levels can act as trigger points for symptoms to manifest. Packing and paying for shopping during a busy period at a shop will make anyone anxious, and stress levels rise, but the added symptom of Parkinson's Disease is not required. Slowness and rigidity are not helpful. Scan and Go options are a big thumbs up!



Parkinson's traits can also be misinterpreted. To onlookers, these can be perceived as intoxication – 'one to many'. I've had numerous occasions when I have had mates under each arm carrying me out of a venue with onlookers looking on.

What support are you getting regarding Parkinson's?

The support has been overwhelming on all fronts – family, friends, NHS, and work.

Daily my wife and family kick my butt and support me in activities to keep me on the right track and being me. I get the impression that it's for a personal gain of silence and reduced hassles with me out and about.

The NHS has me seeing a consultant regularly throughout the year. I have a nurse who specialises in Parkinson's, on

standby, via email/phone. I'm about to have a physiotherapist specialising in neuro conditions assigned to me – I'm expecting my butt to be kicked into action with this recruitment.

On the work front, through health plans, I've had two rounds of counselling offered, each lasting roughly eight sessions. The counselling has really assisted me on the journey with tools and techniques to manage scenarios.

What's been the hardest thing about the whole situation?

I've gone from a healthy 40-year-old that would knock out 100 miles on a road bike for kicks, dance until there was no one left on the dance floor, and competitively crew on a catamaran, among many other activities, to a completely opposite person. Slow, stiff, and shuffling.



Any advice you'd give to others in a similar situation?

Don't stop moving, don't stop talking, work on a positive attitude, listen to the advice given and keep in the moment, however exhausting. Take any opportunity for help – I'm bad at this, but when I overexerted on the water or mountain biking, having mates to help is a relief, so appreciated!

How does SUP and watersports help?

Exercise is one of the key factors when combatting the symptoms of Parkinson's. This keeps your fitness levels up, enabling you to cope with everyday life, and it helps positivity levels. Add a SUP to the mix, and you have an outdoor gym offering a complete body workout at a location of choice.

One of the many unwanted aspects of Parkinson's is falling due to rigidity, stiffness, and shuffling. Strengthening your core muscles now helps keep balance levels in check for the future – at least that's what I'm telling myself! SUPing offers a low-impact exercise routine, challenging all parts of the body. All achieved as you paddle along, enjoying the great outdoors. Personally, my go-to board for exercise and fresh air is my windsurf board. In the future, I can see an increase in SUPing activities over windsurfing due to physical ability. I'm not one for a gym, so this change of activity option will be a welcomed option.

Plans for the rest of 2022?

Family holidays, time on the water and at the beach. Oh, and at some point, kick

training off for the September London to Brighton road bike ride in aid of Parkinson's UK.

Final thoughts on living with Parkinson's?

There currently is no cure for Parkinson's Disease which means the decline, albeit slow, carries on with symptoms worsening over time. Meds give you 'A' quality of life. Without awareness of this disease, there would be no, much needed and appreciated support in its various forms, making the journey almost impossible. My condition will deteriorate, playing sports and tasks frustrating, but taking the medication, using the support available and being around what I enjoy is my aim to keep on ongoing. "I've got Parkinson's, it hasn't got me"!

Shouts and thanks?

Firstly, and most importantly, my wife, Angela, and my family (near and far). Thank you for your support and patience!

Also, a huge thank you for the support, kicks and words of encouragement to the Sunsail family (too many names to mention, but you know who you are – both far and near). The Shearwater Catamaran family, the group that wouldn't let Parky stop me mountain biking through a purchase of a one-handed braking system. Biking Boyos, Buellers Bikers, BBQ Dads, all that I have sailed with at Stokes Bay these last years (Wayne, I will use my foil...), Andy Biggs in the procurement department, work colleagues, NHS, and Tez for this spot to help raise awareness regarding Parkinson's Disease. A huge thank you to all – everything you do is very much appreciated!



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Q&A

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SUP Lass Adventures

SUP LASS
PADDLE ADVENTURES

Interview: SUPM **Pics:** Caz Dawson, Paul O'Garra & Hari Corp
Caroline Dawson (Caz to those that know) is a multi-skilled SUP instructor and culinary wizard. Ever keen to pass on her knowledge of both cooking and paddling, Caz set up SUP Lass Adventures a few years back. SUPM caught up with the SUP Lass to find out more.

Tell us where your watersports journey began?

Always been a water baby – a competent swimmer who got a full house of swimming and survival badges. Rafted down the Zambezi in 2009 whilst on a young farmer exchange trip – grade 4/5, which was scary after three swims! My family sailed – so I spent many of my teenage holidays in and around the north Wales coast absorbing charts and listening to channel 16.

My hobby was horse riding; I rode all my life competitively until four years ago and had my fair share of falling into the water.

SUP filled that gap when my horse passed away; SUP was cheaper than owning a horse....well it was to start with! Having a strong core and a good natural balance has helped me with my paddling.

I have always been outdoorsy, growing up on the edge of the Clwydian Range AONB and still live and operate my business from there today.

And when did you first hop aboard a SUP?

I am always a little nervous answering this question as I feel people will judge 'the new girl on the block'. I've worked incredibly hard on perfecting skills, conversing with experienced paddlers and submerging myself in books and online resources.

I bought my first board in 2019, after a couple of dabbles in 2018. My first board was a Fanatic Diamond Air Touring, which is still going strong today and is owned by one of my regular clients. I learnt to paddle with legend Ant Ing - Stand Up Paddle UK – he pushed me hard in the early days and got me paddling my first white water race within six weeks of joining him. I now work with Ant as a freelance instructor.

It's important never to stop learning and developing as a paddler, and I still find paddling as fascinating now as I did in the early days. All my training to date has been through WSA, and I must call out Dave Brown from Acwaterra for all of his input into me.





What does SUP boarding do for you personally? Why do you love it?

For me, it is about being in the now, being present and throwing away electronic devices. It provides me with an empty head (when paddling alone!!) and a connection with the outdoors and water - particularly when I was working a screen-heavy job, it provided me with an escape.

SUP is made up of so many disciplines and is much much more than going around in circles. My business model is based around SUP + More, my goal is to broaden the horizons of the paddlers I meet and inspire them to explore new areas within the sport, with safety always at the core.

I am a huge lover of my local river, the River Dee. From its summer lows to its winter highs, the Dee always delivers a varied paddling environment. River topography has always fascinated me, particularly how it changes after big water events.

I have recently been appointed a Trustee of the Welsh Dee Trust – the first female in their history. I am involved with supporting their work on improving water quality and biodiversity on the river, including supporting water litter picks.

What area of SUP did you naturally gravitate towards, and why?

I'd describe myself as a 'Jack of all trades' when it comes to paddle boarding - it's the appeal. I've tried most things from white water through to SUP polo; I have raced too (I am just a bit competitive and wish to take this opportunity to apologise to anyone who has raced against me or ever been on my team!) Enjoying so many SUP disciplines means I have accumulated quite a collection of boards and kit.

My favourite area of SUP is longer expedition and adventure-style trips – river or coast. I have the ability and endurance to keep going and enjoy the more challenging wind and water conditions.





Now SUP's your business. But when did you decide to make it so?

SUP Lass Paddle Adventures was born in January 2021, a few months after I qualified as a WSA Adventure Guide. I ran the business along with full-time employment in the agri-food industry for the first 12 months.

CV19 made many of us think differently about what is important to us. I, for one, had had enough of being stuck in a baby pink home office for 10+ hours a day, talking to grey people in grey suits - it was miserable, and my company back then had made it quite clear they weren't returning to office working. I love people and really missed the human contact. So in December 2021, I stepped off the employed ladder, after 20 years of working for others, to go self-employed with 'SUP Lass Paddle Adventures' and my food and drink consultancy business 'Fodder Lass Consulting'. It was pretty scary and a bold move, but I have been incredibly fortunate to be busy with both so far, and the blend of the two businesses has been working well. So, if I am not out guiding or instructing, I am probably giving talks to farmers, making industrial quantities of ice cream or attending a trade show.

Does running a SUP company detract from personal enjoyment? If so, why?

Nope, not at all. I get immense pleasure from supporting and watching my clients succeed, and I still get excited every time I step on my board. Adapting sessions or overcoming barriers is what I love to do. I am a natural leader and get great joy from inspiring and coaching others; I try and play to my strengths on the water.

My heart is in creating an accessible adventure for everyone – whether it be ability, cost, location, etc. - and for some people, a 1-hour trip down the lower stretches of the Dee is a massively adventurous trip. I've been told on several occasions my passion and love for SUP shines through – I always try my best to be genuine and supportive with my clients.

I still go out regularly to find my own enjoyment – which lies within mixed river paddling or coastal trips in more challenging conditions and environments. I often hook up with fellow local instructors where we take turns to plan and lead days on the water; it helps keep us on our toes and provides us with CPD. SUP Shropshire, Padlo SUP, Dee River Kayaking, Base Camp Paddle Boarding, Liverpool SUP Co... there are some really great instructors and SUP businesses locally.

Run us through your daily SUP routine?

At the moment, it is silly season. I paddle most days of the week, some days on two or three occasions. My clients range from complete beginners to those who want to develop and learn more about river and coastal environments. I have a strong local following and have clients who keep returning for more – which keeps my creative juices flowing.

I worked hard over the winter to improve my booking system which has helped me save time. It is always a challenge to balance marketing and promotion with delivery. it can take over, and I have to be disciplined and run it like a business.

On top of running SUP Lass, I also work freelance for other local SUP businesses and organisations – this adds variety to what I do and helps broaden my experience.

How have the last few years been for SUP Lass Adventures with the pandemic?

The pandemic provided me with a window to focus on my training and to up-skill (turning a hobby into a business) – I attended training when lockdown allowed, plus webinars, reading, guinea pigging, etc. That meant I was ready to hit the ground running as soon as restrictions were lifted. And even when I had no water to paddle on due to travel restrictions in Wales, I found a local farmer who allowed me to paddle in a flooded fodder beet field....which turned a few heads locally.



Tell us a bit about your local paddle grounds and what it offers.

My playground is the River Dee in Wales (there are four in the UK and one in Ireland) – the Dee has it all – from white water to lazy meanders, plus its own tidal bore. I'm super fortunate to have access to most types of water within 20 minutes of my doorstep. As a child, I used to fish on the Dee and play on one of its tributaries – so I know the river and its users well. It has a wealth of Welsh and English history due to its border location – quite often, you find yourself paddling on the borderline, which clients love.

I also regularly paddle on the north Wales coast – my favourite places are the Llyn Peninsula and the Great Orme; both never fail to disappoint when the conditions allow and have plenty of wildlife on offer. Three of my favourite north Wales paddles feature in Jo Moseley's new book 'Stand Up Paddling Great Britain'.

“Since I started paddling, my dream has always been to combine the two – SUP + COOK”

Anywhere specific you still want to tick off your SUP bucket list, home or away?

I will shortly be heading to the east coast of Sweden for a two-week self-guided expedition around Saint Anna and Gryt Archipelago with my partner Jonathan. I am in the process of researching and pulling the trip together as we speak.

I have blocked out 10 days in my diary to travel in September too – all suggestions welcome!

What about personal SUP goals? Got anything still to nail down?

2022 has been about delivery for me and less so on obtaining qualifications – I have been working hard behind the scenes to develop the overall SUP Lass brand, growing my industry experience, and collaborating with other providers.

The only qualification I would love to nail down this year is my WSA Exped Guide qualification. I have been working on my logbook, completing prerequisites, and building my experience through shadowing and planning my own adventures.

Give us some background about your cooking and SUP shenanigans?

I have always worked in the food and agriculture industry and run my award-winning outdoor event kitchen, which involved sell-out pop-up restaurants in various environments, including mountain tops, forests and castles. My other passion besides SUP is supporting small, independent food producers that supply

top-quality local and seasonal products. I am also a longstanding judge for the Great Taste awards.

Since I started paddling, my dream has always been to combine the two – SUP + COOK. I have always enjoyed outdoor cooking and literally have enough kit to sink a SUP. I am forever researching different cooking systems and methods, plus reading cookbooks – one of my favourites is 'Campfire Cooking' by Tim Gent. I am naturally creative and always have more ideas than the ability to deliver... there is a little (!) food-related paddle challenge up my sleeve for 2023 – it's a bit quirky, to say the least.

It always surprises me how much you can fit on a board (12'8 McConks has oodles of carrying capacity) to create gourmet river dining experiences – a few weeks back, I managed to rustle up a four-course lunch for two people. My van always

contains a barrel of wood and an axe for an impromptu brew or cook-up – two of my favourite bits of kit are my Kelly Kettle and my Robens firewood stove.

As we understand, you've incorporated your culinary skills into your SUP biz? How's that panned out so far (no pun intended)?

Yep sure, have, and it's 'panning' out well. I am never without my Kelly Kettle and always have the means to make a brew for clients. And yes, some instructors take the mickey out of me for it! But I truly love it. I was using my Dad's 30-year-old kettle, but my clients were getting fed up with the 'bits', so I thought it would be best to upgrade to a newer one.

Last month we held our first SUP + COOK experience on the River Dee, which was a great experience and valuable for obtaining feedback for future sessions. We will hold further sessions throughout the summer – visit our website for details.

I was recently joined on the Dee by adventure photographer Hari Corp; we spent 10 hours on the water cooking, eating and filming. Quite simply the best day ever; she helped me turn my vision into a reality and create some fantastic content.

I have also run workshops to upskill other SUP instructors on adventure cooking – particularly around food safety and hygiene. I have also been approached to run a SUP + Cook experience in collaboration with other paddle providers in other parts of the UK.







LINKS TO FOLLOW SUP LASS ADVENTURES:

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What's on the agenda for the rest of the 2022 season as far as SUP LASS Adventures goes?

In September, we will be offering our first SUP LASS' Adventure SUP Camp' at Llyn Tegid – the weekend will be jam-packed with SUP adventure skills, including cooking.

The rest of summer will include assistant guiding work on the River Wye, the Trent 100, an expedition to Sweden, delivering SUP LASS sessions – including our weekly SUP Club and working freelance for other local SUP providers.

Shouts and thanks?

It's hard to thank everyone as the community has been so supportive of the SUP LASS Paddle Adventures journey so far... and in no particular order:

- My partner Jonathan helps me a huge amount with my business and deserves a medal for putting up with me.
- McConks – boards, advice, safety and promoting us. Andy, you're a star!
- Ant Ing – for being part of my paddle journey and for the ongoing inspiration.
- Mustang Survival, who have recently adopted me as part of their crew.



- Dave Brown - for your support and wealth of outdoor knowledge.
- Jo Moseley for being a great champion for the women in the industry.
- Kingswood Colomendy - for access to the bijou lake and the home of SUP Club.
- Water Skills Academy - for enabling me to transform a hobby into a business.
- Fellow SUP instructors (North Wales, Shropshire and beyond – you all know who you are, and you are awesome).
- Hari Corp, my amazing adventure photographer.



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Photo: SUP shropshire adventure guiding

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Photographer: Graham Woollven

#ShePaddles INTERVIEWS

Interview: Emma Love

After receiving over 150 applications from around the country, British Canoeing, Canoe Wales and the Scottish Canoe Association were excited to announce the #ShePaddles Ambassadors for 2022. Sixteen inspirational women chosen to promote paddling and encourage more women and girls to get on the water. In this series of interviews, Emma Love chats with seven of the ambassadors about all things SUP!

www.wotbikinipaddleboarding.co.uk
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Lina Patel

Lina Patel, a highly respected professional paddlesport and outdoor instructor, views her #ShePaddles Ambassador role firmly within the realms of supporting awareness and change within the UK paddling scene. In this interview, Lina discusses the start of her paddling journey, how political upheaval instigated her parents to bring their young family to the UK and her own experiences of working in the outdoor industry.

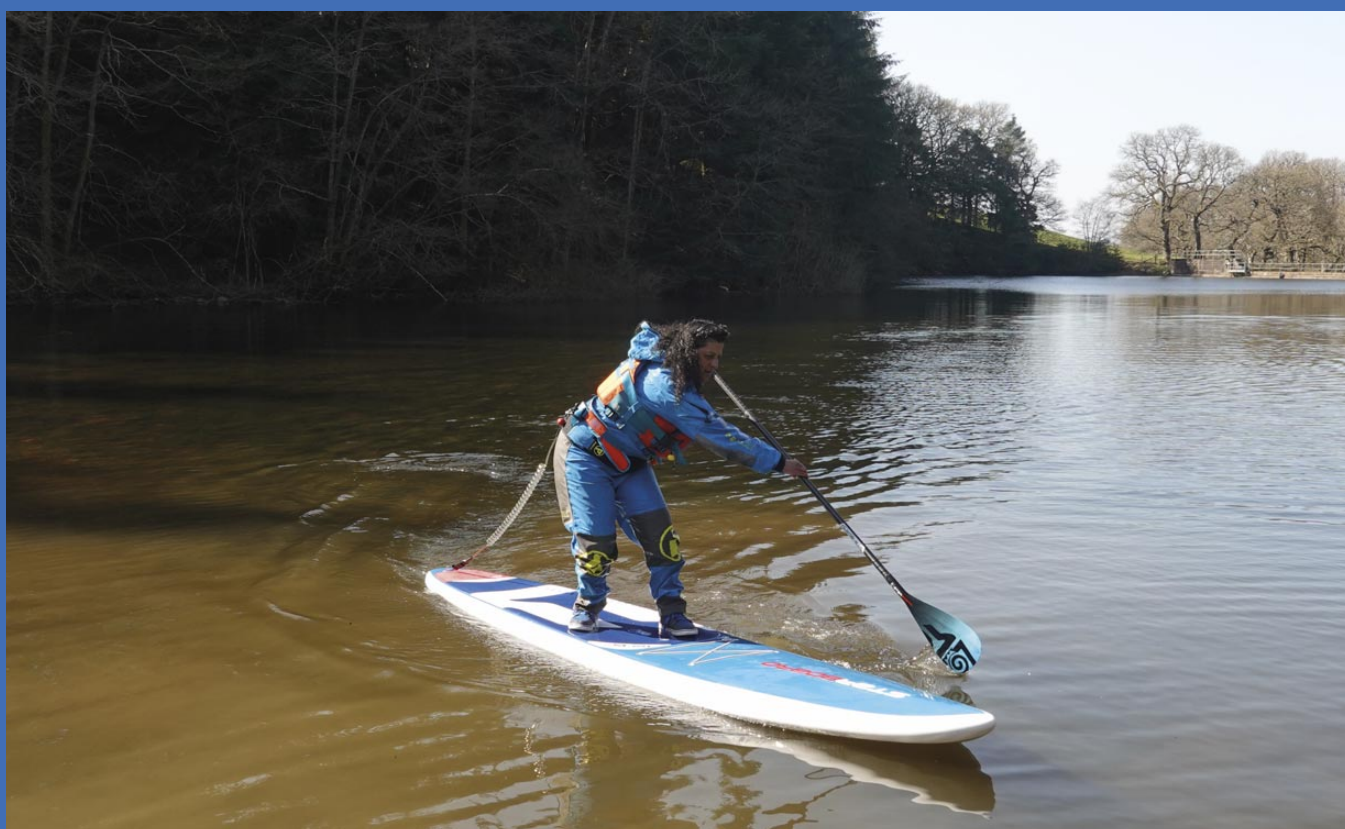
Photos: Ray Goodwin Collection



Lina with Maya and Ray

Where and when did your paddling journey start?

It was kind of by accident, if I am honest. When I was a kid, I spent my time messing about riding motorbikes and mopeds (which you probably shouldn't have been doing, but that's what I used to do) on the canal path by the Grand Union Canal, London. Nearby, there was this community space called Meanwhile Gardens, where this quite amazing bloke, Alec Edy, among other things, used to do some maintenance work. Alec decided he wanted to open a boat club, and so he did! And on passing one day, I decided to give kayaking a go. I guess I was about sixteen years old. I clearly remember, the canal was manky and we were paddling amongst all the shopping trolleys!





Lina with Maya



Above: Lina's parents wedding day

How did your working in the outdoor industry come about?

Alec had managed to get some funding from the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), so even though the club was only open on a Sunday, he could employ a couple of youth workers. After six weeks of attending, the workers decided they saw something in me, and each gave me an hour of their paid work. This enabled my completion of the kayak proficiency award because the ILEA employed me. Looking back, I think the youth workers could see that I was quite a disruptive soul (I used to do crazy things just for kicks), so it was very much by luck that boating came along.

I ended up working at the club for quite a few years. Eventually, I became the primary youth worker and worked for other canoe clubs, including Beecham Lodge Activity Project – run by Mike Smith. I then returned to school (I had left with very few qualifications) because I wanted to complete a youth work degree. But at the time, these did not have an outdoor aspect, and I graduated with an Outdoor Science Secondary. So, my working in the outdoor industry all started just because of those initial couple of hours of work at the boat club.

What made your parents decide to emigrate with you and your brothers to the UK?

My parents are from Gujarat in India but were living in Uganda (my dad was born there). In the 70s, Idi Amin was in power when he decided he didn't want Indian people living in the country. I don't remember this, but troops took me from my mother's arms and threw me into the road when I was a baby. They say it was a miracle I survived because the trucks drove over me, but I was fortunate because I was lying between the wheels. After that, my parents were like, we are done! They left everything behind, and we emigrated to England.

How does Lina, the 'street kid', align herself with the strong cultural identity of both your parents and the British Asian community?

On arriving in the UK, even though my parents chose not to live in the Indian community, my mum would have preferred that I stayed at home and learnt how to cook an Indian dinner and a lovely Thali. But I was like, *"If my brothers are out, then I am going out!"* My dad didn't

"I don't remember this, but troops took me from my mother's arms and threw me into the road when I

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believe that girls should only do this and boys do that. He's like, *"Do whatever you want to do and be happy."* I was good at sports, and my dad was very supportive. When I started paddling, we watched something on the telly, and these kayakers were getting dressed on the side of the road. My dad asked, *"Is that what you do?"* And I said, *"Well, yeah,"* and he replied, *"all right, just put a towel on!"*

You talk openly about how your dad wanted you and your brothers to 'fit in' and be accepted here in the UK. Can you explain his reasons?

My dad gave us first names that weren't full Indian names. When I asked why he explained it was because English people wouldn't be able to pronounce our names. He knew even when naming my brothers and me that we would never stay in Uganda. When I was about 18, he said, *"Lina, change your surname from Patel to another name so that you have a better chance in life."* My dad wanted to make it easier for us to fit in and be accepted. Life was a bit different then, and I would say it's not that different now, in many ways.

What made you decide to apply for the role of a #ShePaddles Ambassador?

My daughter Maya is my biggest driver. Being an ambassador, for me, is about ethnicity. I don't want my daughter to experience some of the things I have as a professional in the outdoor industry because of the lack of diversity. Even though lots of people believe it is diverse, it isn't!

For instance, I remember at my university interview being asked why did an Asian woman want to do an outdoor degree and not be a doctor or a lawyer? That upset me – they wouldn't have asked anybody else that question! These days, I am often invited to help on projects, not because of who I am but as a tokenistic nod to diversity. There is a lot of virtue signalling out there, I'm afraid.

However, I hope that if my role as ambassador helps Maya (now and in the future) experience the outdoors differently, it is ultimately a good thing. My role as an Ambassador is equally about celebrating us as a family. It is about my husband, Ray, my daughter and myself travelling as a unit. It's about experiencing paddling, sleeping and cooking outdoors together. It is about being in blue spaces. It is about being resilient.



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SUP Freestyle

The fun way to improve your flat water paddling

Words & pics: Tez Plavenieks

As a new stand up paddle board owner, following a few sessions meandering about, there's often a question of where to take your SUP next. Adventure paddling, SUP surfing, SUP racing and so on are all applicable. But for anyone keen to keep things fun, possibly remain closer to home, yet still improve there's another option.

SUP freestyle?

As a watersports instructor of many years I was always conscious of getting my groups to progress, learn new skills and push on. But without being 'drilled'. There's nothing worse than feeling like you've 'been to school' (so to speak) when doing something that's supposed to be fun. Which is why during all my coaching sessions I'd aim to come up with some kind of game or alternative method of teaching rather than simply making students learn a new skill.

Just like anything stand up paddle boarding has its own set of techniques. The more you learn and can do the better your overall experience will be. That also knocks on to the additional paddling environments and weather conditions you can cope with.

Keeping both the above elements in mind SUP freestyle is a fun way to get on top of new SUP skills – both board handling and paddle related. It's nothing new as back in the day many of us discovering SUP pre-2010 were seeing what could be achieved whilst standing atop a paddle board. Spinning, whirling, twisting and walking up and down the 'plank' helped us identify just how far we could push the performance of the gear being used whilst developing muscle memory and paddle/board handling skills in tandem.

The word 'freestyle' may conjure up some images of elitist moves being carried out but actually it's just a term that means messing about. There's nothing more to it than that. Anything that you do aboard your SUP, other than actually standing and paddling, can be classed as SUP freestyle. If it means you're moving about proactively and developing your skills, but in a fun way that's also engaging in its own right, then that's all good in my book.



A few simple SUP freestyle moves to try

Depending on how confident you are there are a few SUP freestyle moves you can try to set the ball rolling. You don't need to aiming for the most difficult straight off the bat. Of course, if you want to, then go for it! I will also say that these manoeuvres are just suggestions. The other element to SUP freestyle is creativity. You're free to come up with your own tricks. There's no right or wrong with this. You will probably get wet. In fact, if you don't take a dunking then you're not trying. But the more you try, and the more you fall, the more skilled a paddler you'll be with a broader repertoire of 'tool's you can call upon.

Tail sink pivot turn

The tail sink pivot turn is one of the most fundamental skills in SUP. Stepping back to the tail of your board, sinking it and raising the nose whilst putting in a wider sweeping paddle stroke will see your SUP spin on a dime. Your aim is to see how deep you can sink the tail (and raise the nose) yet still make the turn dry. It's a great skill to have. SUP surfers use it regularly to pivot onto waves they want to catch without going wide of the peak. And SUP racers often use the move to spin round buoys quick smart. There's plenty of practical use for the tail sink pivot turn.

Nose sink pivot turn

Just like the tail sink version the nose sink pivot turn requires the paddler to walk along their SUP to the front, turn back



towards the tail and do exactly the same movement. Sink the nose, raise the tail and pivot 360. The only difference here is you haven't got the stability of a fin in the water. That makes your SUP feel looser and more slippery. You'll probably have to use a few brace strokes the first few times to avoid getting wet. But this is a good thing as you'll intuitively be learning what a brace stroke is.



Trying to get five
toes over the nose

Tail sink pivot turn



Toes on the nose

Perhaps before learning the nose sink pivot turn walking the board and getting your toes as far over the nose as possible is worth practising. Deft footwork is key here. But after a few goes you'll surprise yourself just how far you can get.

Paddling fin first

If you've had some time playing with moving about your SUP not using your paddle a fun exercise is to get on the board's nose, turn to face the back, raise the tail so the fin clears the water by sinking the nose and then paddle your board that way. As with the nose sink pivot turn you'll not have the directional stability of a fin so it'll force you to use various paddle strokes to remain straight and true.



Fin first paddling



A board 360

Body and paddle 360s

For the body and paddle 360 you'll be jumping into the air, on your normal paddling spot, and spinning 360. The aim is to land back on your board, in your paddling stance with the board remaining as flat as possible. You may find a 180 is more achievable to begin. In which case practise that before heading for the full twist.

Pilot your SUP upside down

Flipping your board onto its deck, standing on the hull (fin up) and paddling this way is amusing. It forces riders to focus on their footwork as with no deck grip the hull's PVC bottom is akin to an ice rink. Also, your SUP's rocker isn't designed to be paddled this way so you'll need to employ some positive paddle strokes to push it forwards.

Paddle one legged

This is a great one for improving your overall balance as well as forcing you to rely on your paddle more. It's also slightly trickier than it looks. Once you're comfortable and in your normal paddling stance take one foot off the deck. As you get better and more confident you'll be able to raise your leg higher and stay like this for longer. Using your paddle as a 'crutch' is one way to stay dry.

Combo moves

If you can do any one of the above (or something you've come up with yourself) it's great to try and combine some moves. Maybe get a SUP freestyle repertoire going where the idea is to flow between tricks - without falling. As an example you could try walking to the board's nose and paddling backwards with one foot raised before running back to the middle and spinning 180. That'll certainly get the giggles going as well as a few splashes!

There're no limits to how creative you can get with SUP freestyle. And as I said at the start of this article it's a way to potentially spice up your regular flat water paddling sessions as well as improve your overall skillset. Have a play and see what you can come up with!



Paddling fin first, upside down with one leg in the air

One legged paddling



One footed tail sink pivot turn



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Inclusive paddleboarding SEATED (SIP)



Words and pics: Will Behenna

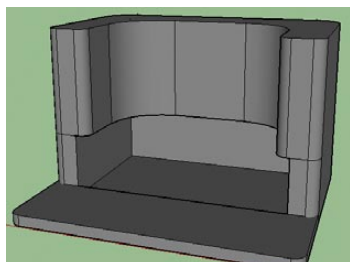
Some 30 years ago, I broke my back in a cycling accident. The resulting spinal injury left me paralysed from the chest down and a full-time wheelchair user. However, this didn't damage my spirit of adventure and three years after my accident, through an amazing charity called the backup trust, I had my first kayaking experience.

1



In subsequent years I have paddled on lakes, canals, rivers and seas and enjoyed every moment. Due to my injury, I've had to adapt each kayak I paddled, carving backrests from foam blocks to provide more structured postural support and using airbags as the footrests.

2



Because I have no trunk muscles or use of my legs, I've always been quite wobbly on moving water, so I feel most comfortable and safe paddling in calm weather. Over the years, I became increasingly frustrated that I couldn't handle a kayak, inherent instability in the water, and the enormous effort required to get back in if I capsized. I even tried a sit-on-top kayak, but the situation was much the same.



Paddleboards

When the paddleboards came out, I realised they offered a real opportunity to get back to paddling independently. I purchased a paddleboard last year and started looking for a seating system. Trawling the Internet, all I could find were thin fabric seats which provided limited lateral/back support, which I knew wouldn't work for me.

With my design head on, I built a seat to fit on my board. Prototype one (see photo 1 above) was made from plywood with additional foam inserts for support. Although not ideal, as it weighed a ton and didn't float!

It was easy to build in my shed and gave me plenty of postural support. I tested it last summer down in Cornwall, and it was amazing to be back on the water, feeling relatively safe and secure. The beach launch was tricky (sand and wheelchairs don't work well together). I needed the paddleboard to be close to the shore so I could transfer from my chair onto it. This meant that I couldn't paddle with fins. As a result, I used a standard two-bladed kayak paddle.

I was surprised at how smooth the paddleboard glided over the water; however, in my mind, I wanted to be paddling using one blade.

Foam Forge

Over the winter, I started thinking about the next seat version. I worked with Ollie from Foam Forge, a specialist foam moulding company, to design prototype 2 (see photo 2), made entirely from closed cell foam.

Using my CAD drawings, Ollie produced a seat consisting of four separate pieces glued together using marine quality double-sided tape. I decided to use straps to fix the seat to the paddleboard because this would give the user access to any paddleboard.

I made all the strapping on my 1937 Singer sewing machine and started testing it on the water. It works beautifully. It was extremely comfortable, provided great lateral and back support, and the straps had little impact on





“I was surprised at how smooth the paddleboard glided over the water; however, in my mind, I wanted to be paddling using one blade.”



Contact Will on:

Please email me if on:

will@thesipproject.co.uk you're interested in getting involved in this seated inclusion paddleboarding project.

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how the board glided through the water. The added benefit of working with foam is, for one thing, it's very light, and just as importantly, it floats. This is beneficial if the paddleboard flips over, as it is much easier to turn the board upright again.

Two-bladed paddle

Because I need the board close to a beach or slipway, I cannot fit fins onto the bottom of the board. The result is I'm paddling without

fins using a two-bladed paddle. I find this very effective; however, I am keen to develop a board that enables the user to paddle using one blade. I've recently made two prototype sets of fins which attach underneath the board easily once the board is in deep enough water. The testing is going well, and I hope to finalise everything in due course.

Over the coming months, I will look at some water safety issues, primarily how to get back on the board if you fall off, independently or with help from another paddler. Alongside this, I'm keen to look at different paddling techniques when seated. This will involve looking at seat position on the board, paddling with or without fins, and using different, one or two-bladed paddles.

I've been working with several great people in the Dorset area. Namely Lynne and Abbie from www.ripplerebels.co.uk, Gary from www.supinflatables.co.uk and Saviour from www.thesupstore.co.uk. Their energy, passion and technical advice have been invaluable, thanks you so much.

Everything is very much in its infancy, but the principle works. Ideally, I'd like to create a community of people interested in developing this project further.



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Iconic COAST



Tower Bridge. Photo by Northern Exposure Rescue

TO COAST

paddle across England

Words: Adrian Angell. **Pics:** Tim Angell, Stephen Angell, Chris Lowe and Moira Barson

Since 2018 I've been doing annual fundraising paddles for Diabetes UK. The initial idea came from a family member with type one diabetes. After hearing me talk about a Maui to Molokai crossing I'd completed with Jeremy Riggs, they suggested I paddle across the English Channel to raise money for charity. That initial spark of an idea has led to success in raising awareness and money for diabetes research and has me thinking

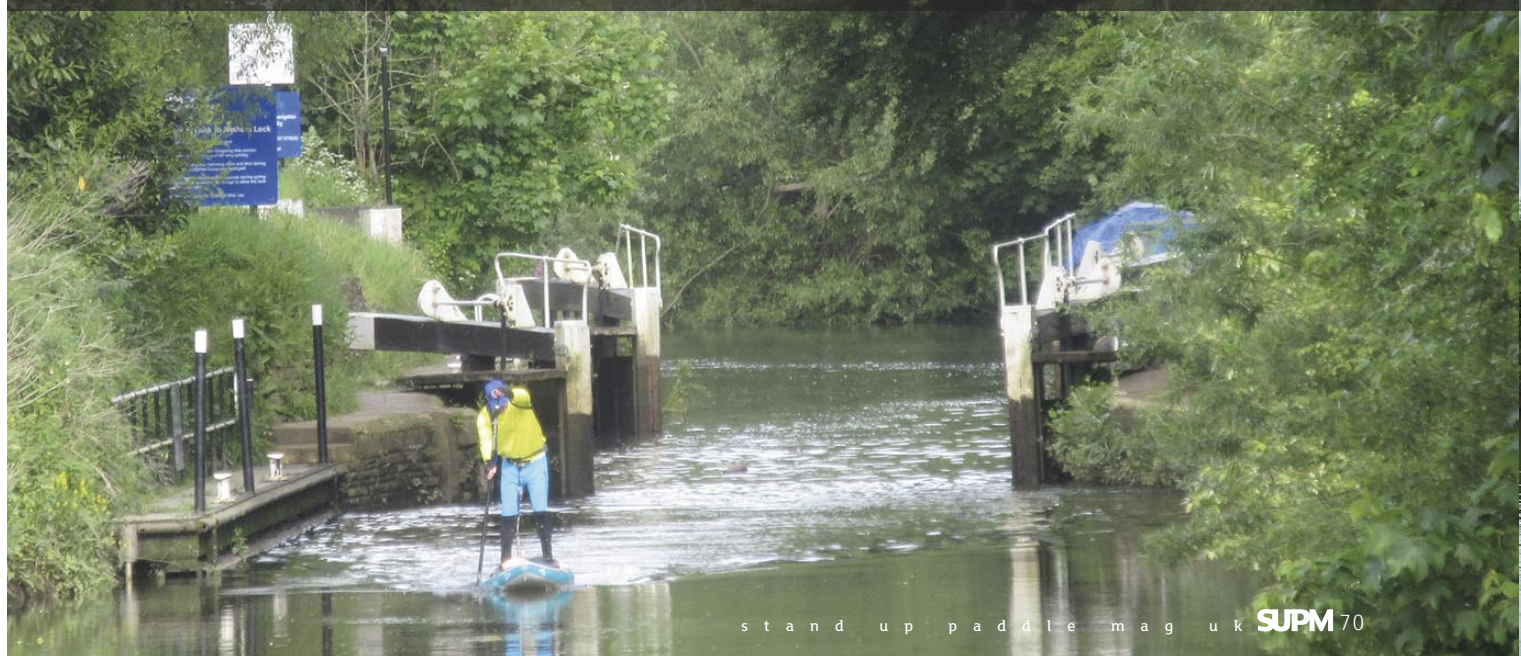
each year about how to keep stretching myself by taking on the next suitably iconic challenge that will capture people's imagination for fundraising purposes.

The Challenge

My two brothers, Tim and Stephen, have been my support crew for the challenges. They both live in southern England, so I was looking for a challenge close to where they live. My initial idea was to paddle the River Thames from 'source to sea'. This route is well known, but after some brainstorming with Stephen, he pointed out that the River Thames connects to the west coast of England via the Kennet and Avon Canal and the River Avon. A much more challenging, interesting and equally iconic plan emerged to paddle the 220 miles/354 kms from Portishead Pier, on the Severn Estuary, to the Southend-on-Sea Pier, on the Thames Estuary. Having paddled across Scotland between Fort William and Inverness as part of the Great Glen race in 2019, it seemed complementary to paddle from coast to coast across England.



Hanham Lock. Lock number 1 on the Kennet & Avon canal. Photo by Tim Angell





Clifton Suspension Bridge.
Photo by Tim Trew

Paddling uphill

Having the idea is one thing, but then comes the research and a realisation of the challenges. The most obvious challenge is that to paddle from sea to sea across an island, a good part of the trip will be uphill! On this trip, I had to plan around the tidal flows of the rivers at the start and finish of the trip, which overpower the fluvial flow of the rivers. Most of the elevation gain was along the Kennet and Avon Canal, which has 105 locks. I gained 452 feet from the starting point in Portishead on the Severn Estuary to the canal's summit between Crofton Top Lock and Wootton Rivers Top Lock.

Getting permission

Talking about my plans with my friends Simon Frost and Andy Crocker at Bray Lake Watersports in December 2021, I learned about what seemed like a more daunting challenge, which is that paddleboarding is not permitted along the River Thames through central London. This is for very good reason, given the strong tides on the Thames in London, and the high volume of fast-moving boat traffic, which combine to make for choppy and potentially hazardous conditions. Simon and Andy connected me with Paul Hyman of Active 360.

Paul has developed training courses recognised by the Port of London Authority, which ensure anyone paddling on the upper sections of the tidal Thames, has the right skills and knowledge to paddle safely. Paul connected me with the Port of London Authority Harbour Masters. Following some dialogue, I created a special event with a detailed event plan and risk assessment. After thorough review and revisions, I was granted a letter of consent from the PLA for paddling along the Thames on

specific dates, which was shared with the coast guard and other authorities along the route. A critical requirement had a support boat with a VHF radio to stay in contact with the authorities and shipping.

Similarly, I connected with the authorities responsible for the other sections of the route to ensure I complied with permits. I also worked with local expert Tim Trew from SUP Bristol to leverage his expert knowledge of the strong tides and hazards at the start of the journey along the Severn Estuary and up the tidal River Avon to Bristol.

Equipment used

I decided that inflatable boards would be best, given the transportation needed. All the transitions around locks would inevitably lead to some bumping and damage to hard boards. I used a SIC 14' X 30" Okeanos iSUP for the tidal sections, which I brought from the US as checked baggage, and Bray Lake Watersports kindly supplied me with an Allstar 14' X 26" iSUP, which I used for the non-tidal sections. Bray Lake also lent me a QB V-Drive 91 paddle, and I had my Quickblade UV 88 travel paddle as a backup.

Nutrition

I remembered just before the Great Glen Race in 2019, the famous endurance SUP paddler Bart de Zwart said that endurance events are all about getting enough nutrition after six hours. With this in mind, I prepared my daily nutrition each evening, which included Tailwind and snacks. One advantage of paddling on an old commercial canal, which is now visited by tourists, is that there are many pubs and tea rooms along the route, making it convenient to stop for a quick lunch and a cup of tea. Since this



Caen Hill Locks.
Photo by Tim Angell



Bristol Harbour Master.
Photo by Tim Angell



Dundas Aqueduct. Photo by Tim Angell



Bath. Photo by Tim Angell



Teddington. Photo by Tim Angell



Bray, River Thames



Houses of Parliament. Photo by Northern Exposure Rescue



Reading town centre. Photo by Stephen Angell

wasn't a race, this was a very welcome luxury. Similarly, I got a quick hot meal each night with a good pudding and custard to consume as many calories as possible. Averaging 36 miles/58 km daily takes a lot of calories, and I still lost weight.

The paddle

With all my plans in place and my brother Tim as support crew, I started paddling from a small rocky beach by the Portishead Pier at 05:51 on May 18th, 2022. Starting mid-tide, I could ride the fast-moving tide up to Avonmouth, where I joined the River Avon. Going up to 8 miles an hour, I was soon at the village of Pill, where I met up with Tim Trew from SUP Bristol. We paddled together to Bristol Harbour, where Tim's local knowledge was invaluable to finding the best route up the riverbank and into the harbour.

From there, I paddled through the beautiful and historic Bristol Floating Harbour and re-joined the River Avon above the main weir. I continued paddling upriver to finish day one after 28 miles at Bath. Bath is where the man-made section of the Kennet and Avon Canal starts, after which the canal parallels the Rivers Avon and Kennet.

Day two was a long 46-mile day, continuing 'uphill' for most of the day through the beautiful English countryside and taking advantage of some impressive 18th and 19th-century engineering. This included two aqueducts, the Dundas Aqueduct and the Avoncliff Aqueduct, where I had the unique experience of paddling high above the River Avon. I also passed through the Bruce tunnel, which at 453 metres, is the longest on the canal. The tunnel is wide enough for one narrowboat, and I had my eyes fixed on the opposite end as I paddled briskly to get

through before a boat arrived from the other direction. The tunnel is also the canal's summit, and even though the flow is only small, once I passed the summit, it was a huge psychological boost to see my speed increase on my Speedcoach and to know I was now paddling downhill.

Joining the River Thames

On day three, I was joined by Dan Balda, whom I met at a Paddle Monster SUP surfing camp in Florida. Dan was on vacation in London and took an Uber to rural Wiltshire to meet me at 05.30. We paddled 47 miles along the Kennet and Avon Canal through the city centre in Reading to join the River Thames. Then we continued down the Thames to Marlow, where we were met by my brothers and another family. We were also joined by my cousin Vanessa, who cycled along the canal path with us for a while.

The canal through Reading passes through the Oracle Shopping Centre, and before proceeding, we had to press a button and wait for the traffic light to turn green. After so much time paddling through the countryside, the contrast of paddling through shops and restaurants was quite a change.

My brother Stephen saw me off from Marlow on day four, and I paddled 38 miles to the outskirts of London, finishing the day at Teddington Lock, after which the River Thames is tidal. I was joined by Candice Betts and Sam Barfield from Bray Lake Watersports, who had paddled upriver from Bray to meet me, and we paddled together for a few miles back to Bray.

I had scheduled day five as a buffer day, with a short 11-mile paddle from Teddington to Putney. From a scheduling point of view, the rest of the journey was



River Thames in Kingston Photo by Tim Angell

Thames Barrier Photo by Northern Exposure Rescue



London Eye Photo by Northern Exposure Rescue

determined by the tides, support boat logistics and the Port of London Authority permit, so having a buffer was important in case I was behind schedule. It wasn't needed, but it felt great to have time to recuperate a bit before the big push through central London to the finish.

On day six, I started at the Putney public landing an hour before the tide turned. With the support of the Northern Exposure Rescue boat, I made my way down the Thames past the landmarks of Central London, being cheered on from the riverbank by family and supporters from Diabetes UK at various points. As expected, the river conditions were choppy but manageable through Central London, and once through the high traffic areas, I was able to get into a good paddle rhythm.

Through the Thames Barrier

The plan was to paddle with the outgoing tide as far as it would take me, and we made it 35 miles through the Thames Barrier, under the M25 Bridge, past Tilbury

Docks to Gravesend, arriving there in the pouring rain as the tide turned.

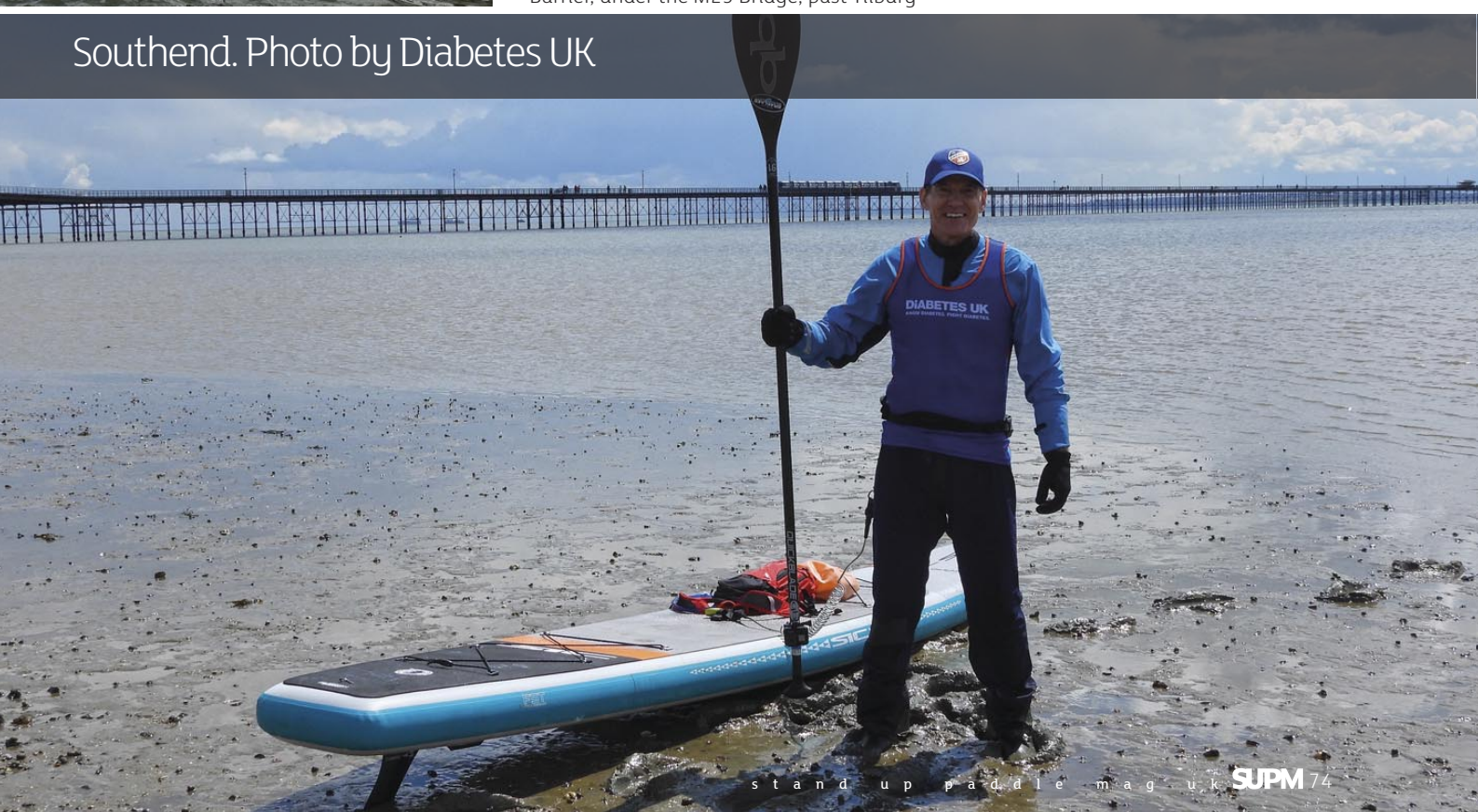
On the final 15-mile stretch, and now with container ships and supertankers for company, the estuary opened out to the sea, with the shipping channel marked with green and red buoys. We waited a few minutes to get permission to cross the shipping channel while a container ship passed us, generating a bow wave that would have been easily surfable. Once across the shipping channel, the Southend pier was in my sights.

The finish line

Southend-on-Sea has the longest pleasure pier in the world, at 1.34 miles, making it a great 'finish line' to aim towards for the last few miles. Before paddling under the pier, I stopped at a small beach to meet some supporters from Diabetes UK, then headed back out through the mud to the rapidly receding water as the ebb tide continued. I crossed under the pier at 12:56 on May 24th, six days, seven hours and five minutes after setting out from Portishead Pier.

As far as I know, this was the first SUP crossing of England and undoubtedly the biggest physical and logistical fundraising challenge I've taken on. Thanks to everyone who supported me in person and through donations. If you'd like to donate to Diabetes UK, please see www.justgiving.com/fundraising/adrian-angell5

Southend. Photo by Diabetes UK



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Battling the **BROADS**

A paddler's perspective on the Norfolk Broads Ultra 2022

Words: Alexandra Tyrer, performance paddle board coach at 'Up Your SUP'

Pics: Scott Turner, Adrian Lomas and Alexandra Tyrer

This was my hat-trick event in the world of paddling ultras; this by no means makes me a seasoned pro, but it does allow me to share my experience and learnings from my most recent battle on the Norfolk Broads.







Going long

I'm working on assuming that most of you have at least heard the 'Ultra' prefix used in a sporting context... 'ultra-marathons, probably being the most well-known. Basically, it means a race that is generally longer than the standard course by some distance and, for this reason, presents a significant physical and mental challenge to its competitors. The Norfolk Ultra delivered on that promise.

The Norfolk Broads saw 73 competitors take on a lofty 78km. Some people opted for the epic one-day non-stop and others, including myself, subscribed to the more modest (but definitely nonetheless challenging) two-day event, which was split as 43km on day one and 35km on day two.

Motivated minds

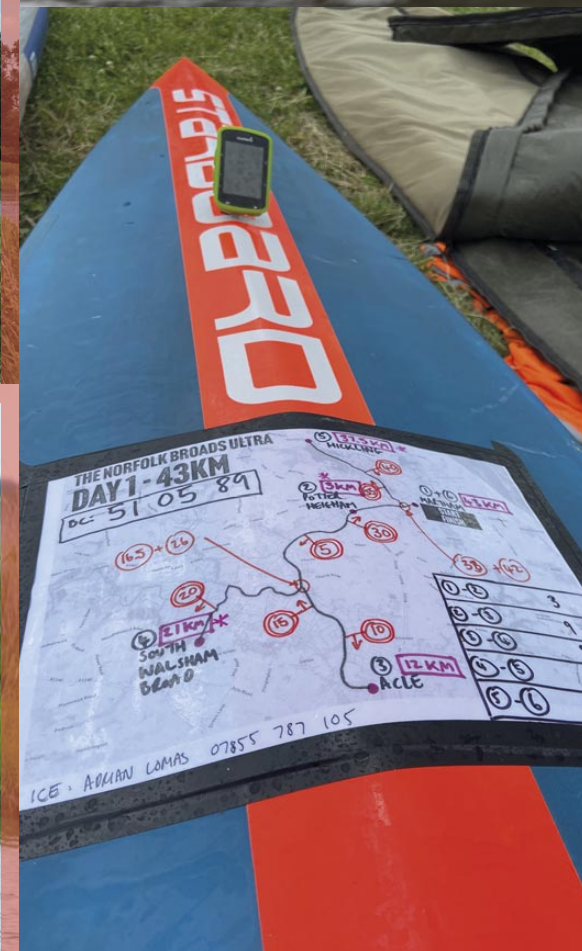
What intrigues me is what motivates people to sign-up for events like the Norfolk Broads Ultra...

Is it a badge of honour in the SUP world to paddle an ultra?

Maybe they love the hypnotic motion of paddling for endless hours?

Or could it be simply 'fun'?





Whatever the motivation, you will find like-minded folks passionate about SUPing.

My motivation was simply that I'd subscribe to it as a two-day timed training paddle ahead of the 'SUP 11-City Tour' in September, but it just so happens that I've decided to postpone until 2023, as logistically, it's simply too challenging with two babies in tow (more to follow on this in the October edition).

OK, so I know what you're asking... Why bother if you're not doing the SUP 11-City Tour?

Well, paddling the network of Broads is pretty special. I did the non-stop route last year, and I found it a paddlers paradise - varying expanses of water that are connected by a network of waterways; there are straight bits, meandering bits and darn frustrating bits, but they afford the opportunity to explore the area from the water, and somehow, it feels like a given right for a paddler to be there. The other great thing about it is that there's no need to get off your board for portages, so you can get into your paddling groove.

The two-day event is forgiving because it has a more modest start time of 08:30, unlike the non-stop one that starts two hours earlier. It means that you get to experience a misty and moody start to the day - the lifting of the morning mist from the water tinged with a pink haze, with the route lined by soft banking of reeds that act as a natural sound buffer. Dreamy.

Monotony and mother nature

My paddling roots are in flatwater paddling; I appreciate for many, this may be boring, but I like the head games of the monotony; I guess it has something to do with thousands of mind-numbing hours I've spent on a road bike, so it comes as second nature to me. Still, the dynamic and 'fun' element of flat water paddling can be found in what mother nature throws at you. The great thing about the Broads is that the wind and tide play a massive part in the race, making it frustratingly unpredictable, not to mention the variability created by the expanse of water or which often lacks depth, so you have to keep your wits about you when choosing your line.

A tale of two halves

Although the sun was shining and we had no rain, day one was brutal due to the wind, which presented as either a relentless headwind or menacing side wind. There were brief patches of respite where we





“This year we were battered by 27km/hr cross winds at circa 35km into the route. Brutal.”

benefited from a tailwind and were further assisted by the tide, but these were far and few between. I like a headwind, it gives you something to chew on, so I got my head down and pressed on.

The route was familiar to the previous year, but this still didn't prepare me for the return to Hickling Broad - an open expanse of water with a navigable boat channel but venture off course, and you run the risk of being grounded or getting stuck in the weeds. In the cycling world, you always have hills you hate; you'll never be able to put your finger on why(?), but it's just a drag - for me, Hickling Broad has to be my paddling

equivalent. Having paddled across Hickling twice last year, I knew roughly what to expect, but this year we were battered by 27km/hr cross winds at circa 35km into the route. Brutal.

On the flip side, day two presented us with much more favourable weather conditions and a beautiful route that allowed getting off the main waterways and explore Ludham Broad and Horsey Mere, which were new for the 2022 route. The sunny weather also brought out the fishermen and novice boaters, which presented some race obstacles along the way, but that's all part of the fun.



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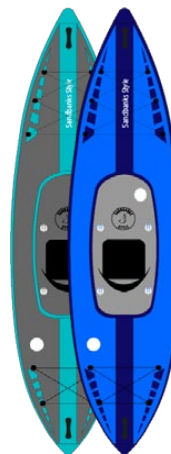
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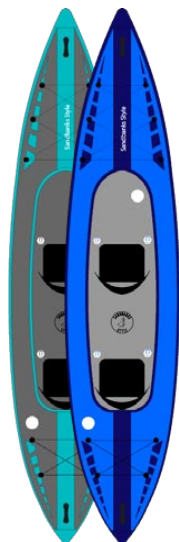
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BIO

Alexandra is a paddleboard performance coach at 'Up Your SUP' and is passionate about supporting SUPers to reach their paddling potential by increasing their fitness, skills and knowledge. She is currently training as a PT and strength and conditioning coach, specialising in pre and postnatal exercise.

Alex has been paddleboard racing since 2018 and brings a unique perspective to training from her background as a road cyclist, triathlete and rower.

We revisited Hickling Broad, but this time there was nothing more than a gentle breeze, but this didn't change my feelings. The enemy of day two was the final 5km that took us past the start/finish up to a non-descript turn, which was made all the more challenging as it's like paddling through treacle due to excessive weed and retracting tide.

Something I'd overlooked in my race prep was the time between day one and two. This extended transition was equally as important, if not more so - hydration, nutrition, and rest should have been my focus. However, the reality was somewhat different, with two-under-two babies to contend with.

Sub ten

My cumulative time was 9 hours 57 minutes to cover the 78km, placing me as first lady and 5th overall. The winning time was an impressive 8 hours 34 minutes by

Michel Keersmaekers-Michiels of Belgium, who just so happens to be the Mater Men winner of the 'SUP 11-City Tour 2021'. Lining up against an international field gives the race a different dynamic and demonstrates the potential of the event to go from strength to strength.

I was happy with my performance and kudos to all paddlers that took on 'Battling the Broads' - it certainly wasn't an easy paddle, but then again, where's the fun in that?

Are you up for an ultra?

So my parting shot is that if you're curious... get signed up for Norfolk Ultra 2023; it's an exceptionally well-organised and super friendly event. If nothing else, you'll discover your tolerance for distance paddling and come away with the pride of giving it your best shot. DO IT; you might just like it.

Top tips

Here are my top tips if you decide that ultra padding could be for you:

1. Structure your training and build-up to race day; if you can invest in a coach, do so.
2. Have a race plan and tape it to your board - break the event into manageable chunks.
3. Complement your on-the-water time with off-water prep - to include strength, condition and stretching.
4. Stroke analysis - ultras are all about efficiency, so find those small incremental gains as they will make a significant difference when consolidated.
5. Be kind to your kit, and it will be kind to you - the last thing you want after months of prep is having to quit a race due to equipment failure.
6. Be kind to yourself - hydrate and nourish your body before, during, and after racing.
7. Get a post-race massage to relieve those achy muscles and stretch (gently).
8. Take a break post-race and try something different - this helps to maintain your racing mojo.



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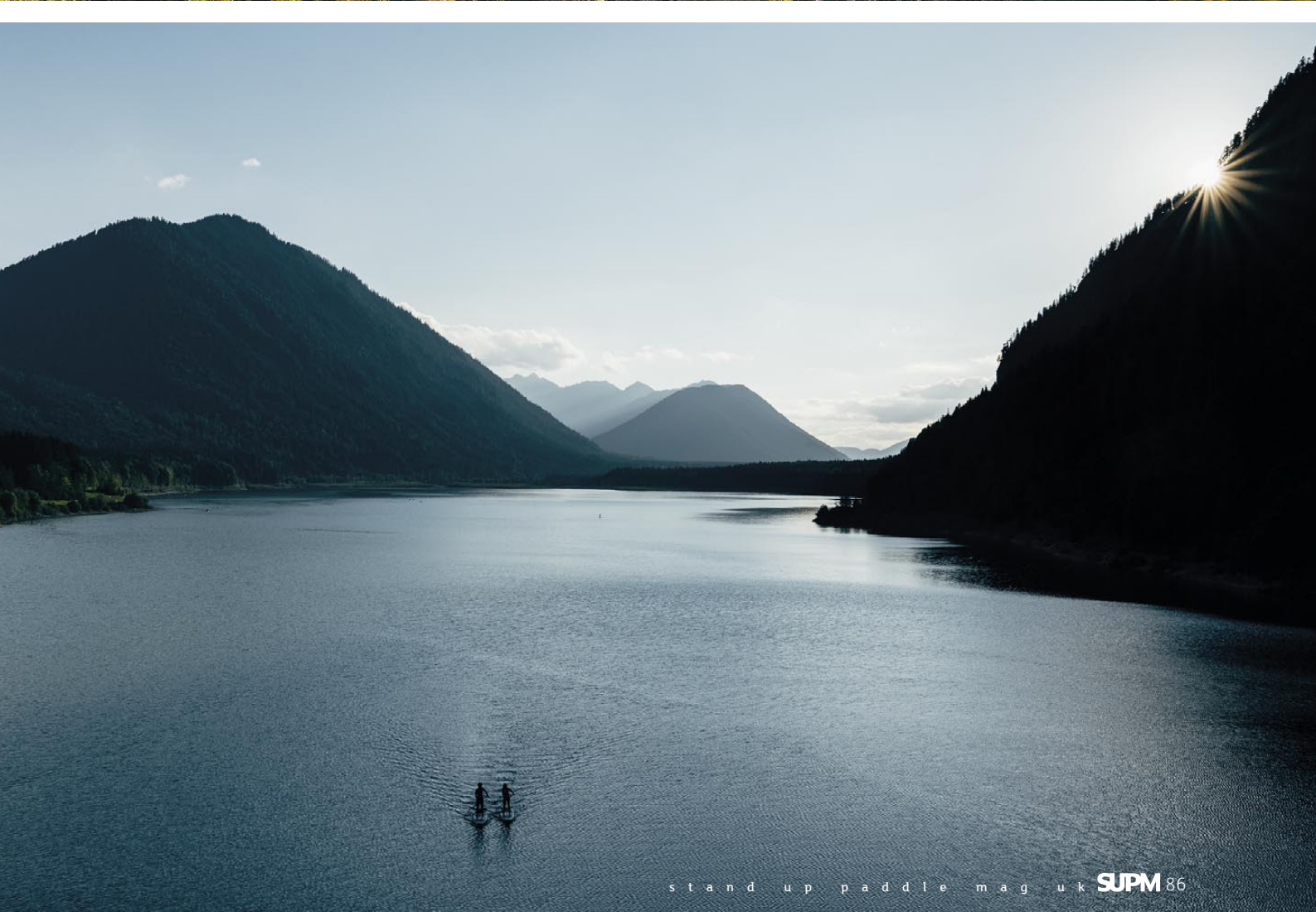


Lake Sylvenstein SUP

Words: Valentin Illichmann

Pics: Oliver Farys

The leisurely country roads through the valley resemble the eternal vastness of Canada. The Isar River meanders through a wide valley surrounded by the Alps – thus, the journey to our paddling spot is already worth a trip. The idyllic mountain lake glistens in the most beautiful shades of blue as we drive over the small pass next to the dam wall in my old VW bus. What a breathtaking view of the Sylvenstein Reservoir. You don't realise at first glance that this is a reservoir that regulates the Isar River and its water levels to protect cities like Munich from flooding during snowmelt.



In the car, our iSUPs are well packed in the backpacks, a natural route we have not thought about; we hope to enjoy the sunset from the water and also to get to places that are not so easy to reach from the road or the hiking trail.

SUP is perfect for such adventures! We carry the backpacks with the boards down a small staircase through the woods to a gravel beach.

It is a hot late summer day, and people meet to swim and sunbathe on the shore where we pump up our boards. A few other paddlers are also launching their boards here. After the boards are inflated and we have adjusted the paddles to the right length, we are ready to go. I particularly like trips to Lake Sylvenstein because I can reach it quickly from southern Munich, and the little adventures you experience here still work after work. The lake lies like a fjord in front of us as we make our first paddle moves.

The Walchenklamm

Lake Sylvenstein can be divided into two parts. The place where the Isar flows into the lake and the inflow through the Walchenklamm. The Walchenklamm is a small tributary that winds through a narrow gorge. The water here is calm and extremely clear. The water surface glitters like a sapphire.

On the bottom, you can see giant old trees and stones forming a fascinating underwater world. The view while standing from our boards is incomparable; we can see our shadow on the bottom and feel floating. Many fishes jump to the side

when they catch sight of us. We even spot one or two big pikes and some otters hiding in the bank. Flies buzz above the surface, and the sun's rays cast golden spots on the water. The moment is almost magical.

Flooded village

We paddle through the lake once from east to west and pass under the big highway bridge. Beneath the bridge, in the depths of the clear water, is an old village that was flooded with the creation of the reservoir. Unfortunately, it is too deep here to catch a glimpse of the old ruins. I quickly realise that we are getting closer to the mouth of the Isar River. The water is milky and bluer, and the landscape around the lake opens up. We look at many small reed-covered islands washed by the





<https://goo.gl/maps/N9bx6oLnH6bhXBCJ6>

History

It's hard to believe, but Sylvenstein Lake is an artificial lake. Built in 1954-1959, the dam helps to protect the area from flooding. Managing the water level is extremely important in spring when snow from the mountains starts melting. In addition to its 'protection services', the lake also produces hydropower.

How to get there?

The best way to visit Sylvenstein Lake is by car along the windy mountain roads. Take the German Alpine Road, one of Germany's most beautiful and oldest tourist routes.

Another great lake, Walchensee, is just a few kilometres away, so you can easily visit both in a day.

Best time to visit

There's no wrong time to visit the lake; however, for SUP, it would be during the spring and summer; the lake is a gorgeous turquoise surrounded by lush greenery as far as the eye can see, well into the surrounding mountains. During the autumn, the changing colours of the leaves bring this entire area to life, surrounding it with beautiful orange, red, and yellow hues. During the winter, the mountains seem twice their actual size, and the snow-covered terrain is reminiscent of a winter wonderland.



mountain river flowing into the lake. The river delta is very wide here.

Again, the view from our SUP's is worth its weight in gold; here, too, we discover old driftwood sticking up under the water. The shore is lined with old spruce trees. The colours of the forest are reflected in the bright water; what an incredible sight. The afternoon sun burns on the skin, and we long for a cooling. That should be no problem here. In summer, you can jump

from the board into the water, but the lake with its clear meltwater from the mountains always remains cooling and never really gets warm.

Especially during dusk, you can watch the fishermen from your SUP board as they catch a pike or two. While the setting sun slowly settles in the Isar Valley and we follow the last warm rays until it completely disappears behind the mountains of the Bavarian foothills. What an impressive view.



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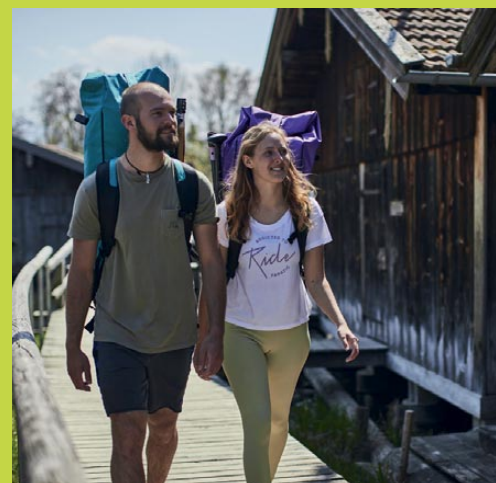
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Pretty in pink (and yellow) – O'Shea 10'2 x 32" x 250 QSx

Review & pics: Tez Plavenieks

I haven't been on an O'Shea 10'2 QSx before. But with the compact length and additional stiffening technology (QSx stands for quad stringer) I was intrigued to see how it felt afloat. Disappointed I wasn't...



Price:

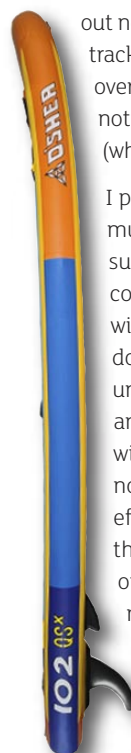
£549

Info:

<https://osheasup.com/102qsx/>

There's no question the 10'2 is another quality inflatable paddle board from long time UK brand O'Shea. You get a lot of bang for buck with this QSx model but without it being a cheap SUP. O'Shea do not do cheap, instead offering quality manufacturing and performance tailored to what its target audience is. In this instance, the 10'2 is a beginner friendly and all round iSUP with lighter riders in mind (primarily).

Even with the above being said, the 10'2's intelligent design makes it applicable to a wider user group. I'm 90kg dry, yet still had no issues driving this particular paddle board along in moderate chop and wind. Stability is bang on and the board's drawn



out nose encourages straight line tracking. Glide is good, relative to overall length. But what really is noticeable is the board's rigidity (when inflated correctly).

I paddled the 10'2 across multiple sessions in quick succession with variable conditions. Even when faced with short sharp chop it doesn't buckle or deflect unnecessarily, there's a small amount – which is standard with iSUPs, but it's barely noticeable. This means efficiency is tip top and sees the 10'2 able to cope with a lot of different Mamma Nature moods. For all paddlers this is great news, as it delivers a wide range to a board demographic.

CONCLUSION

O'Shea's 10'2 QSx is a lovely board to pilot. More on the compact side, it still has a lot of usability across a wide range of SUP scenarios for a wide ability of paddlers. Yes, it would suit lightweight beginners to a tee, but experienced riders will also have a blast using it. Fun I think is the word that sums up another quality inflatable option from O'Shea. Oh, and did I say I love the pink aesthetic?



Easy breezy – Gladiator 11' WIND 11' x 34" x 5.9"

Review & pics: Tez Plavenieks

This is the second inflatable SUP from Gladiator I've laid hands on. Gladiator's 11' WIND iSUP is a four in one, multi-discipline, air board that's primed to get riders on the water whatever the weather and whichever method of propulsion you choose. Paddle, windsurf sail, wing or sit down paddling. However you fancy making the most of your time afloat the Gladiator 11' WIND is poised to get you there.



Price:

£549

Info:

<https://supinflatables.co.uk/gladiator-11-6-wind-inflatable-paddle-board-2022.html>

Manufactured in quality double laminated, fusion lay up with high density Dropstitch, reinforced rails and the ability to comfortably take 26PSI, it's a tough old beast that's for sure. The 11' WIND also has double fin box inserts on the hull, as well as a windsurf rig attachment fixing point on the deck. Supplied with two fins the idea is you attach both when doing any kind of wind sport. The middle fin then helps prevent downwind drift. This is particularly key when learning to wing. But actually windsurfers will appreciate the feature as well.

Hopping aboard the Gladiator 11' WIND is super stable and planted. A few strokes of your paddle has it vrooming along efficiently. Cutting a confident track through the brine it glides along happily and does a decent impression of a longer iSUP. Any paddler beyond those initial learning stages will get on well with the 11' WIND no troubles.

If you're into covering a bit of distance you can certainly load up the Gladiator with a bunch of



essentials. Day long sojourns are applicable with perhaps the odd overnighter chucked in.

As mentioned the 11' WIND is poised to get you windsurfing and winging as well as paddling. With a sail attached it's very akin to a traditional longboard windsurf sled. As a long time windsurfer myself, the breeze powered ride felt familiar and fun. It's great for cruising about and moves faster than you'd imagine.

Any budding wingers out there will also find favour with the Gladiator. It'll allow those initial wing surfing steps to be taken. Riders wanting to learn wing skills can definitely do so with the 11' WIND. It does an admirable job of staying upwind while you dial in tacks and gybes. I'd suggest a slightly bigger wing (5m or 6m) to drive it along comfortably.

CONCLUSION

Gladiator's 11' WIND iSUP is a nifty multi discipline sled that versatile water goers will appreciate. Great as an adventure touring SUP it covers ground easily and efficiently under paddle power. Add a windsurf sail and it transforms to a very adept longboard style windy board. Touring missions a go go! And then there's the wing element. Which it's not bad for. With a drivy wing the 11' can be used to learn all those essential wingin' skills. Oh, and you can also attach a kayak seat for some sit down paddling fun. What more do you need?



Multifaceted – McConks V2 Go Free 9'8 x 32" x 6" crossover SUP

Words & pics: Tez Plavenieks

I've had a lot of experience aboard the McConks Go Free 9'8 – my family also. This being the McConks brand's crossover, multi-sport inflatable, my son and daughter have used the V1 to good effect whilst learning to windsurf. The V2, tested here, is the version without a windsurfing attachment. Although you can still get this type if you wish via the McConks website. For this model, however, there are foot straps if you fancy using with a wing in wing SUP mode when there's breeze.



Price:

£750

Info:

<https://mcconks.com/shop/mcconks-98-go-free-crossover-wingsurf->

The V2 Go Free has a few tweaks over the V1 as far overall shape goes. The biggest change is the reduction in tail rocker. It's now much flatter now. But the board does still have a hard release rubber edge. The nose of the V2 is also slightly more drawn out for additional efficiency.

Mainly the Go Free 9'8 is just a really fun iSUP to paddle. It may only be 9'8 in length but there's plenty of stability and intermediate to experienced paddlers will enjoy the board's nimble nature. It's stable but lively.



McConks have always been about the best manufacturing techniques and materials at the right price with their range. This is tangible with the Go Free. Deflection at a bare minimum, and when pumped up to its correct PSI there's no question about the board's rigidity. It's efficient in a straight line – relative to length. And the rear rubber rail does seem to do a good job of releasing water and helping momentum.

Foot straps are included with the Go Free, and for those who wish to use them there are two different settings. If you don't want to bother with the straps, then they're soft in nature and can be trodden over without issue. This may feel a little odd at first but you quickly get used to it.

I've enjoyed a number of sessions just pottering about and messing atop the Go Free.

It's playful nature lends itself to SUP freestyle (see my article elsewhere in the mag), and I'm sure others will appreciate this too. The reduced tail rocker does allow for a faster ride – especially on a wave. Just like the V1, McConks' Go Free enjoys a bump. Whereas the V1 would fit right in the wave's pocket, the V2 is quicker out of the blocks and has a bit more vroom.

CONCLUSION

The McConks V2 Go Free 9'8 is one of my fave models from the Cotswolds based brand. It's a lively ride that fits many different areas of SUP. I enjoy the more manoeuvre oriented experience it delivers. And I'm sure others will too. If you fancy an iSUP with loads of versatility in a compact package then here you go.



Carbon stiff –

Fatstick Carbon Race 14' x 26" x 6"

Review & pics: Tez Plavenieks

It's been a while since I've tested a Fatstick stand up paddle board. It's also been a while since I jumped aboard a 14'. So it was nice to have the Fatstick Carbon Race iSUP land on my driveway.



Price:

£799

Info:

<https://fatstickboards.com/shop/14ft-carbon-race-inflatable-paddle-board/>

The carbon stringer, which apparently adds rigidity, certainly makes it a unique looking inflatable. That and the Carbon Race's overall javelin like profile! You sort of know what this puppy's going to perform like even before getting it wet. And just as I thought, it does what it says on the label. Which I love.

Having attached a suitable race orientated fin a few strokes (like, two) saw the 14' rev up to speed. The glide of 14' boards – inflatable or hard – just can't be beaten. I appreciate why many want shorter, more compact boards. But once you feel the glide of a longer, needle like shape, it's pretty hard to go back in terms of the momentum you carry over distance. The Carbon Race just keeps on going. Aided by its 26" width, which is the narrowest SUP board you can get, but it sure helps with that glide and tracking. Any time you reduce width, you reduce the area in contact with the water, and this helps with efficiency.

As I say, 26" isn't super narrow, and the Fatstick Carbon Race 14' is applicable to anyone a who has a solid set of paddling skills. You don't need to elite level to unlock this board's potential



that's for sure. But if you are I'm pretty confident you could easily be vying for podium positions with this iSUP.

And that's where the Fatstick board's fun really lay for me. It was super fun just putting the hammer down during testing. I haven't been on anything that encourage laps for a while, but the Fatstick Carbon Race does. It eggs you on to paddle harder, faster and longer. Before you know it, sweat will well and truly be dripping off your forehead, and all this in a well manufactured air board from a south coast brand possibly mostly associated with the recreational end of SUP. The only thing I would add is pairing the 14' with a quality SUP paddle to get the absolute most out of it.

CONCLUSION

Fatstick really delivers on the promise this board's namesake with the 14' Carbon Race. I've already mentioned how it could be a potential race winning inflatable SUP under the right pilot. For me it was a fun test sled, to bang out some high cadence paddle reps, burning up and down my local stretch of flat water in the process. If you haven't looked at the performance range of Fatstick boards lately maybe you should...



Lean green machine! –

Indiana SUP & Surf Wing Foil 5'8 x 118L x 29"

Review: Tez Plavenieks **Pics:** Tez Plavenieks & Oli Lane-Peirce
This is the second Indiana SUP & Surf foil board I've tested, and the third product from Indiana. The first flying machine was the brand's 5'8 x 128L, which on paper – dimensionally at least – is bigger. But as I've said so many times in the past dimensions mean nothing. It's more about the overall shape, volume distribution and how the designer actually incorporates all the key elements into the final product.



Price:

£1510

Info:

<https://foilshop.co.uk/product/indiana-carbon-wing-foil-board-square-nose->



As such foiling paddlers (and wingers) will be glad to hear the 118L is extremely stable. The board's squared off nose and tail ensure a decent amount of area's in contact with the water at rest. And whilst it does have rail chines (which can often reduce the wetted area and overall stability), they're high cut so don't really take too much away. Also, the 118's tail is super boxy and squared off with minimal rocker. Standing in the paddling sweet spot, you'd be forgiven for thinking you're atop something much bigger.

The Indiana 118L may say Wing Foil on the tin but it's also an adept performer for SUP foiling, sans wing. OK, the length (or lack thereof),

means it doesn't glide or track particularly well, but then no compact foil board does. Take your time getting to the line up, however, and you'll be fine. No rush, no hassle just ease of use. Once on the peak, it's simple to find and maintain position before spotting your wave to take off on.

With proactive, hammer down paddling the 118L picks up momentum quickly. The hard edges on the board's tail mean it unsticks quickly. If paired

with a foil with low stall speed, riders will fly in an instant, and once up on foil, the whole experience is a joy. Being super compact the 118L is nimble underfoot and allows plenty of feedback from the foil. Beginner SUP foilers will appreciate the board's stability whilst advanced riders can throw it about with ease.

In wing foil mode, the Indiana 118L displays

much the same performance. Releasing early, it'll foil riders up without hassle and provide a fun and engaging ride. Being so short means swing weight is minimal. It performs much like a smaller sled – especially through transitions. There's certainly plenty of reason why a dual discipline board like the 118L would be tempting.



CONCLUSION

As SUP foil boards go, the Indiana SUP & Surf Wing Foil 118L is one of the easiest and most fun I've tested, and that's the same in wing foil mode too! Super easy to pilot it'll teach all riders the ways of the foil whilst remaining engaging and fulfilling for any advanced flyers who fancy a whirl. Any competent SUP surfer would find it a breeze to use so don't be put off by the dimensions.



Indiana carbon 81 three-piece paddle

www.indiana-paddlesurf.ch/

Words & pics: Tez Plavenieks



For many stand up paddlers, three-piece paddles are the norm. Mostly because that's what's supplied as part of their purchased inflatable SUP package. From a paddling efficiency point of view, paddles without additional moving parts and attachments are better placed for performance. That said, the technology, manufacturing and design of three-piece SUP paddles has improved over the years.

Enter Indiana SUP & Surf's three piece carbon 81 paddle, tested here. First off, it's a high-quality product with a super high end finish. Indiana may still be a new brand in the UK, but they're definitely worthy of your attention. Now four products deep, in terms of testing everything I've laid hands on and used from the Swiss brand has been impressive, and that's from a production standpoint and when in use. The Indiana three-piece carbon 81 paddle being no different.

Coming in a nifty, compact padded bag the paddle's three component sections are well protected. Unsheathing the top adjustable section, shaft and blade end all fit together snugly. You will have to be careful and clean thoroughly after use. With such a secure fit any grit, sand, salt or other grime getting stuck between the connection pieces will result in your paddle becoming stuck and not breaking down. This is the same with anything that slots together and immersed in water.

In use the Indiana paddle is dependable and powerful. A narrow, moderately raked blade, with double dihedral, ensures maximum drive and efficiency through each stroke. The paddle's shaft doesn't flex, and there's no movement or play where the connections sit. At times I forgot I was using a three-piece paddle!

CONCLUSION

As far as three piece SUP paddles go, this one from Indiana is a good example. With plenty of performance on tap, its high quality design ensures there's plenty for all levels of paddler to tap into. If you're looking to upgrade your SUP paddle but still don't want a fixed shaft, you'd do a lot worse than this offering from Indiana.

Price: £260

Selk'bag Nomad sleep bag suit

www.selkbag.co.uk

By Sarah Thornely



"Wearing a Selk'bag is like climbing into a cosy sleeping bag onesie and still being able to move around. It's a full-body sleeping bag with arms and legs – your own personal duvet onesie" – from the Selk'Bag website.

The Selk'Bag is beautifully well made, which is evident from the moment you take it out of its compression stuff sack. The super-soft

fabric is incredibly lightweight, with this size coming in at 1.9kg. The shell and lining are recycled polyester, whilst the insulation, which feels like the softest Down, is made from 100% recycled Primaloft®. The whole suit, including all the zippers, is made from 140 recycled plastic bottles. Selk'Bag are proud members of the 1% For The Planet Organisation, and if you investigate their website and that of Primaloft®, you know their hearts are in the right place.

Their top of the range 'Nomad' suit comes with a sturdy side entry dual zipper, which makes it easy to get in and out of; there is a kangaroo pocket at the front with two side-entry zippers and a nice little cargo pocket on the side for your phone or whatever else you might need on hand. The elastic cuffs have neat little fold-overs to keep your hands warm too.

An adjustable insulated hood with a very clever balaclava (like a big face mask) would undoubtedly add more warmth and protection depending on the temperature and wind. There are leg vents near the knees, so you could easily open them for some fresh air if you got a bit warm at night. We love the removable boots, which are reinforced with durable nylon.

The suit's temperature rating is between 2°C (limit) to 6°C (comfort), and it's completely machine washable and water-resistant. There are five other styles with a great choice of colour and prices ranging from just under £100 to £250.

After a tough day on the water or hiking, there was nothing nicer than being able to change into the suit and be comfortable with complete freedom of movement whilst relaxing in the evening. I was cosy warm, and there were no issues when trying to turn over during the night, which, being a wriggler, I often get with a regular sleeping bag.

CONCLUSION

The Selk'Bag suit will now be a regular addition to my travel kit – it may look like a fun bit of kit, but it does tick all the boxes for warmth and versatility whilst being out and about in the great outdoors as well as being beautifully made. The suit feels snugly and warm and so easy to wear – too easy I think as in the winter months, this might be my go-to lounge suit at home!

Style: Nomad. Size: large. RRP: £249.99

Double trouble – Ftero Surf V2 Dome 5m &

Review: Tez Plavenieks **Pics:** Oli Lane-Peirce

Wings are certainly evolving at a rate of knots with many brands bringing out upgrades on their original designs regularly. A case in point being Ftero Surf who have their V2 Dome hitting shelves. And the Hyde V2 Blast which is also now out. Having the opportunity to check earlier incarnations of both designs it was interesting to see what improvements had been made.



Ftero Surf V2 Dome 5m

Ftero Surf's V2 Dome has grabbed attentions because of its keen price point. Being so budget friendly means there's been lots of interest. But we all know low prices don't always equate to quality.

I had opportunity to test the V1 Dome. And after some back and forth the Ftero guys have implemented changes based on feedback received (from em and others). The wing is now much upgraded with a more rigid leading edge and middle strut, improved handles, a stiffer canopy and more refined overall wing geometry. This delivers better efficiency on the water.

The V2 Dome is lightweight and able to fly riders in light airs. At 90 kg, with a little pumping (made all the more feasible by the improved shape), I can lift in 12-15 knots (ish). Along straight lines the Dome is easy going and does a good job of handling gusts. Through moves and transitions it sits level, is balanced and won't chuck riders off without warning.

All in the Ftero V2 Dome is decent wing worthy of beginner and early intermediate winger's hard earned readies. The 5m, in particular, being a sensible size to start out on.

Price: £489

Info: <https://fterosurf.com/products/ftero-dome-v2-foil-wing?variant=40362501275841>



Hyde V2 Blast 5m

Hyde's V1 Blast has served me well. It's a wing I discovered and as such used extensively. The second incarnation has a lot to live up to! But happily, I can report it takes all the V1's ingredients, refines what's already there and improves upon the concept.

New, more high performance materials (making for a stiffer leading edge and middle strut), Improved canopy rigidity, a rejigged handle configuration and efficient overall performance make the Hyde V2 Blast equal to many other more recognisable brand wings.

There's plenty of bottom end grunt on tap (much like the V1 Blast). In the V2's instance, however, that power is channelled into more drive but without sacrificing its light handling. The V2 Blast drifts extremely well and is a joy through moves. Upwind is a dream and there's no question regarding its bombproof build quality. If you're after a super high performance wing, that won't break the bank like some, you'd do a lot worse than the Hyde V2 Blast 5m wing.

Price: £690

Info: www.hydekiteboarding.co.uk/blast-v2





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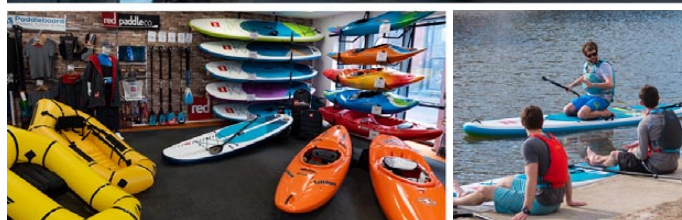
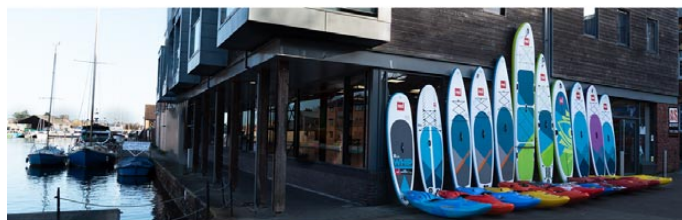
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By Darren Farrar @Standuppaddleuk



I've been wearing SunGod sunglasses since 2017. At that time, I owned the casual sunglasses called Renegades and Sierras – these fast became my everyday eyewear. Both are very cool in review, with light and well-made frames. After all, a company offering a lifetime guarantee says how confident they are about their products.

While I use the bulk of their range, from Velans to Ultras, let's show off with my favourite everyday pair and go-to paddle sunglasses, Sierras.

They offer a recycled frame option, with the 'Infinite' frames offering a 100% recycled frame. This option helps with a 7x lower impact on the environment when compared to using virgin plastics! Varying optics can be chosen when building your selected pair, making some shades as cheap as £55! That is excellent value for money.

- They are ultra-light, weighing in at just 25 grams.
- I have the 4KO polarised lenses (excellent for paddle boarding, snowboarding and even cycling), but these can be upgraded to 8KO/polarised (a very cool slider on their website shows the difference in a standard view vs your chosen lens type). The lenses are also interchangeable, which is excellent and easy to do; these have triple-layer scratch resistance and Impact resistance.
- My five-year-old pair have been used heavily and never been scratched!
- Offer 100% UV protection.
- A lifetime guarantee. They are built to last a lifetime and are up for the challenge of heavy use!

These have been my go-to, everyday pair for many years, ousting my love for Oakley (that was no mean feat!). SunGods being so light, comfortable and excellent value for money makes them a market leader, in my opinion.

CONCLUSION

I've been a SunGod customer for many years, which recently turned into myself and Dale of @StandUpPaddleUK becoming brand ambassadors. So much choice for customisation means you can genuinely make any pair of your own with SunGod. I honestly can't recommend the sunglasses range enough.

@We_are_Sungod on Instagram for more.

NCW 3/2mm backzip wetsuit

www.northcoastwetsuits.co.uk

By Tez Plavenieks. Pics: Oli Lane-Peirce



Whilst there are many different types of attire to be worn when stand up paddling (depending on the discipline in question) for many a wetsuit remains the go to choice of SUP clothing. Wetsuits are certainly fine - if not perfect for SUP. That's no reflection on any brand, instead it's more about the sport itself. For my money a wetsuit is probably

the right choice if you're practising any kind of SUP where you're taking regular dunkings. As an example I'd be wearing rubber if SUP surfing or SUP foiling. Beginners will probably also be wearing a wetsuit as they're more likely to tumble in the drink.

For SUP, a wetsuit needs to be well fitting – snug is best – but also be flexible and not restrictive. Especially around the shoulders, arms and lower back. Ideally it'd also not feature too much evaporative cooling effects. Otherwise paddlers will get quite cold quickly. Wind chill can be a killer (sometimes literally if hypothermia sets in).

North Coast Wetsuits (NCW) are a UK, home-grown brand based down in Cornwall whose products I've had extensive experience with. The company's 3/2mm back zip wetsuit features high quality stretch neoprene, glued and blind stitched seams, fine mesh (anti wind chill) chest panel and collar, smooth skin wrist and ankle seals to reduce water flushing, Duratex heavy duty kneepads, a heavy duty YKK zipper and tail fastening Velcro on the back zip.

Conceived and designed in Cornwall, means the NCW 3/2mm is a wetsuit fit for UK conditions. Also, the guys at NCW are stand up paddlers themselves. Meaning the suit is definitely fit for some SUP action.

And fit it is. Both in terms of actual fit and performance on the water. It allows the paddler to move freely, unhindered but remains tailored to the wearer keeping he/she warm and toasty. I'd go so far as to say any competent paddler would be fine in the NCW 3/2mm back zip suit during shoulder seasons – especially autumn where the water's at its warmest.

CONCLUSION

A brand with SUP and the UK scene at its core, NCW deliver their 3/2mm back zip wetsuit in fine fashion. Comparable to other more visible brand wetsuits its quality materials, manufacturing and on water performance should make it a winner with SUPers. And the price is bang diddly tastic!

Price: All sizes (men and women) - £89.95

Info: www.northcoastwetsuits.co.uk/product/32mm-back-zip-full-gulf-stream-wetsuit-gbs-seams/

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The perfect companion – Stand Up Paddleboarding in Great Britain by Jo Moseley

Review & pics: Sarah Thornely & Pistyll Productions

Having paddled and been around SUP for over ten years, I am still constantly surprised and love it when something exciting happens in the SUP world. I feel that way about Jo Moseley, her journey and now her utterly brilliant new book, Stand Up Paddleboarding in Great Britain.



You will find this book invaluable if you love paddleboarding and are new or 'old' to the sport. The research is extensive not only for the paddle journeys, of which there are over 30 but the local knowledge too, which Jo has cleverly drawn out of willing locals, keen to show off their favourite paddle areas.

The book is published by adventure book specialists Vertebrate Publishing and has a lovely weight and feel about it, always so important in a book. The introduction is full of helpful information, from Jo's own SUP journey, the history of SUP, how to get started, kit, safety, planning, weather, and the environment, to how Jo chose the locations to include in her book.

She then takes us on a beautiful journey from Wales, through Scotland and then on to England with some unique finds and places that I certainly now want to visit. Each paddle is a love story to that area, taking you on Jo's journey with the local paddleboarders, with top tips and recommendations to make your trip truly memorable. I appreciated all the other information in each area, from the technical details of distances, launch points with alternatives to how to get there, the route information, and where to eat and drink. There's also information on local instructors, guided tours, and equipment hire – really

practical help and everything you need to know in one handy place.

Not only is there a running theme of stunning and interesting paddles, but safety is clearly and quite rightly up there, with a 'difficulty' paragraph for each route and some great advice on safety kit.

Jo has been clever enough to reference and include some fabulous advice from really knowledgeable experts who have been in the water sports industry for many years as well as being great paddleboarders – this is no lightweight book; it's incredibly thorough and I believe will stand the test of time and become a SUP 'bible' for many paddlers.

This book is written with love and passion, not just for the sport of SUP, but for the people and places Jo has met – a wonderful book to own or gift to friends and family interested in SUP, whatever their level. It's also an excellent travel guidebook in its own right.

I plan to keep my copy in the van so that it can be referenced whenever we go away and possibly find ourselves in the very places Jo has visited – I recently went on a Sail and SUP holiday in Scotland organised by the Water Skills Academy and took this book with me. I happened to find myself reading about Jo's adventures around the Isle of Mull which was quite surreal, as I was paddling there at the time – her local knowledge was spot on! The book created a lot of interest with all the other guests on the trip, and we were constantly picking it up and browsing through Jo's superb stories and marvelling at the glorious photos. There are many incredible images throughout the book, together with helpful maps.

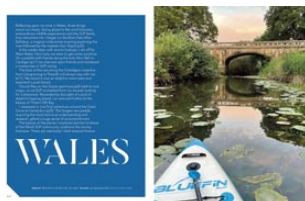
This book will inspire you with its magnificent stories and imagery, and I feel blessed to have contributed in some small way – I now own a signed copy with a beautiful, personal inscription. Thank you so much, Jo, for bringing this book to life for us all.

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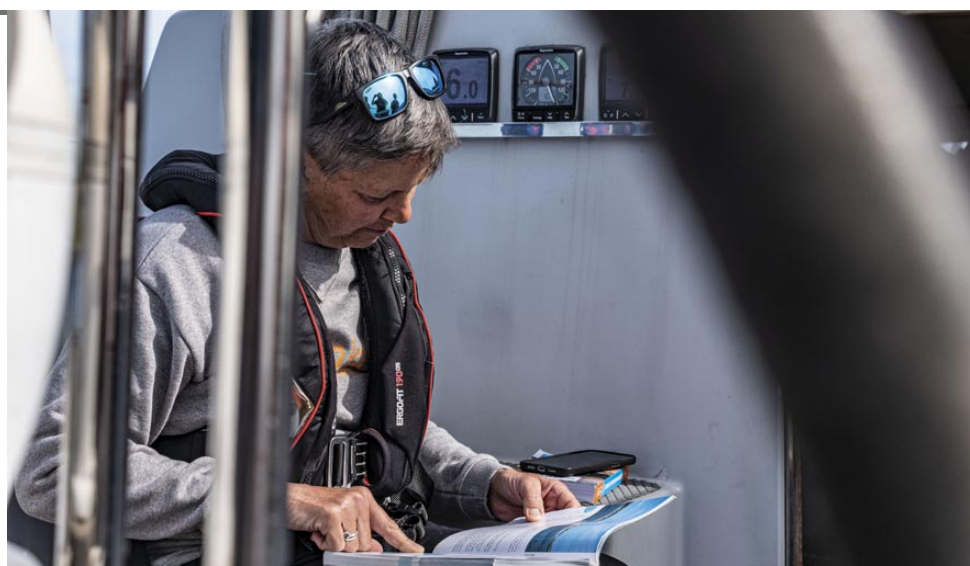
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CONCLUSION

This book will inspire you with its magnificent stories and imagery, and I feel blessed to have contributed in some small way – I now own a signed copy with a beautiful, personal inscription. Thank you so much, Jo, for bringing this book to life for us all.



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