Canoeing, kayaking & paddleboarding

for beginners

Great ways to enjoy your local canal or river



Canal & River Trust

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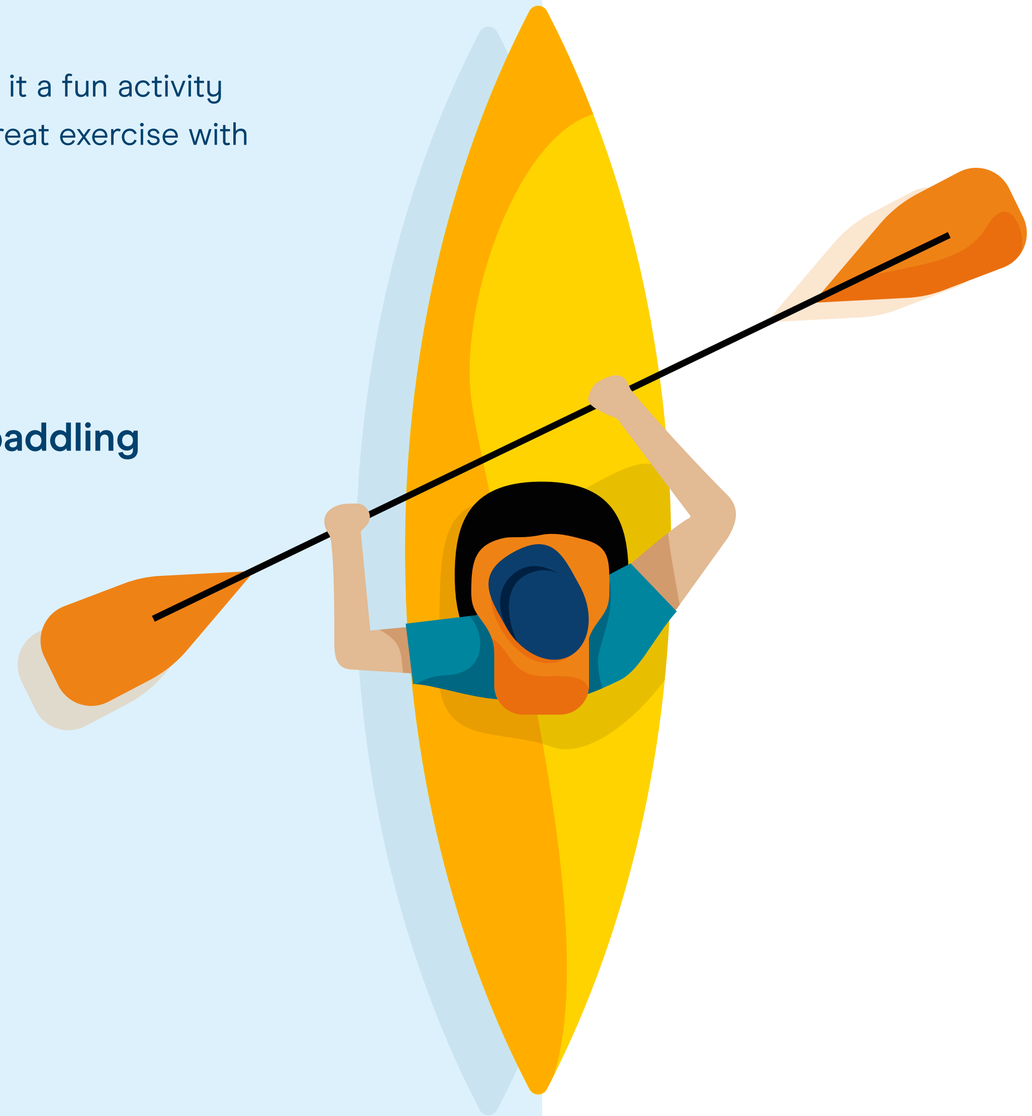


Introduction

Paddling is a great activity that anyone can take part in. Not only is it a fun activity for you to enjoy on your own or as part of a group but it's also a great exercise with many health benefits.

Here are 4 things you need to know before starting:

- **Be sure to use both sides of your craft when paddling**
- **Dress according to the water temperature**
- **Wear a buoyancy aid**
- **Bring a spare paddle**



Benefits of paddling

Paddling can provide a wide range of benefits for your mind and body. As well as helping to improve your core strength, cardiovascular fitness and reduces risk of wear and tear on your joints. It can also help to improve your mental health.

Here is an overview of the benefits paddling can offer to your wellbeing:



Reduces stress levels



Improve cardiovascular fitness



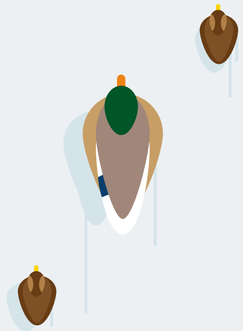
Helps to increase mindfulness



Improves social skills



Improves core strength



What to look for in your canoe

Bow

This is the front of the canoe, and is universal for all boats.

Port

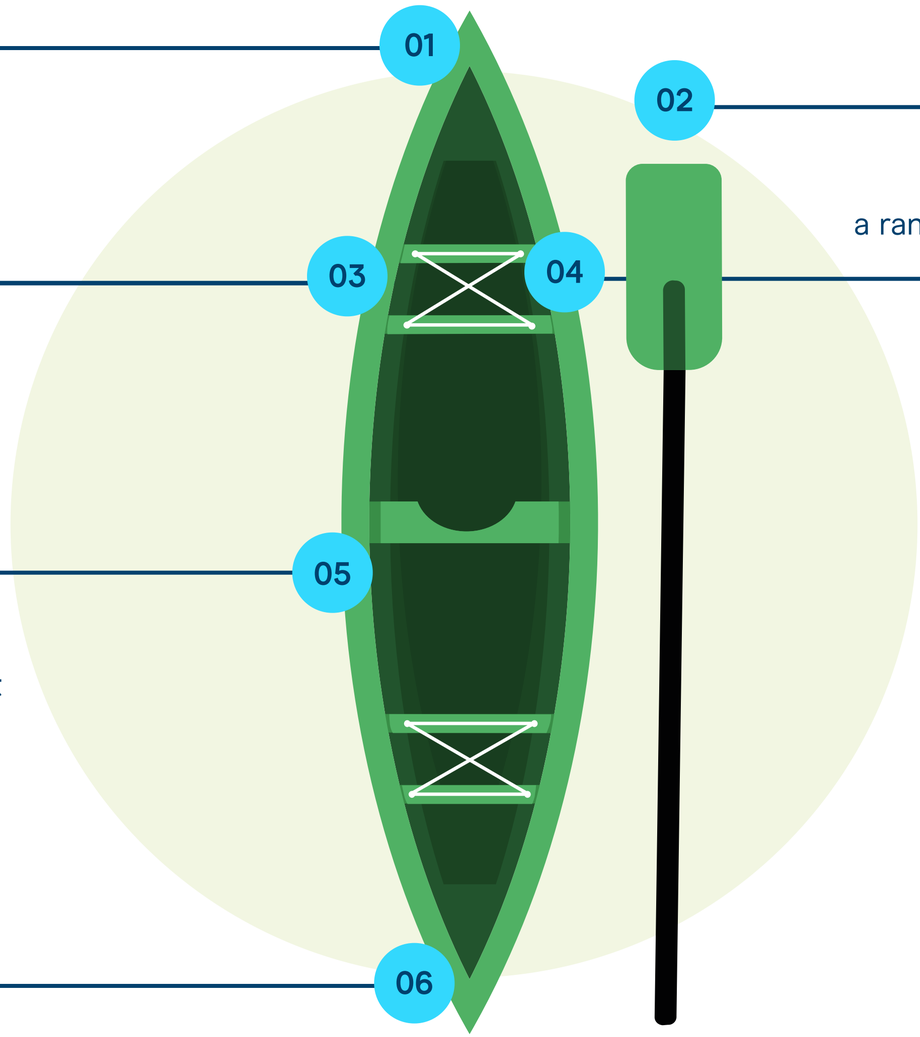
This is the left side of the canoe.

Yoke

The yoke is the cross beam in the centre of the canoe and connects the starboard and port sides.

The stern of the canoe is the back of the boat another universal term.

Stern



Paddle

A canoe paddle is a single blade, they come in a range of different lengths, shapes and constructions.

Starboard

This is the right side of the canoe.

Getting started with canoeing means understanding the different parts and pieces of your gear. We've outlined the basic parts of a canoe to get you started.

It's important to remember that each canoe has it's own unique components, as well as these basics. Knowing the basic parts of your canoe is important in allowing you to communicate well with your fellow paddlers, and also helps you to learn the sport.

What to look for in your kayak

Hull

This is the bottom part of the kayak that submerges in the water when you're paddling.

Deck

The deck is the top half of your kayak.

Paddle

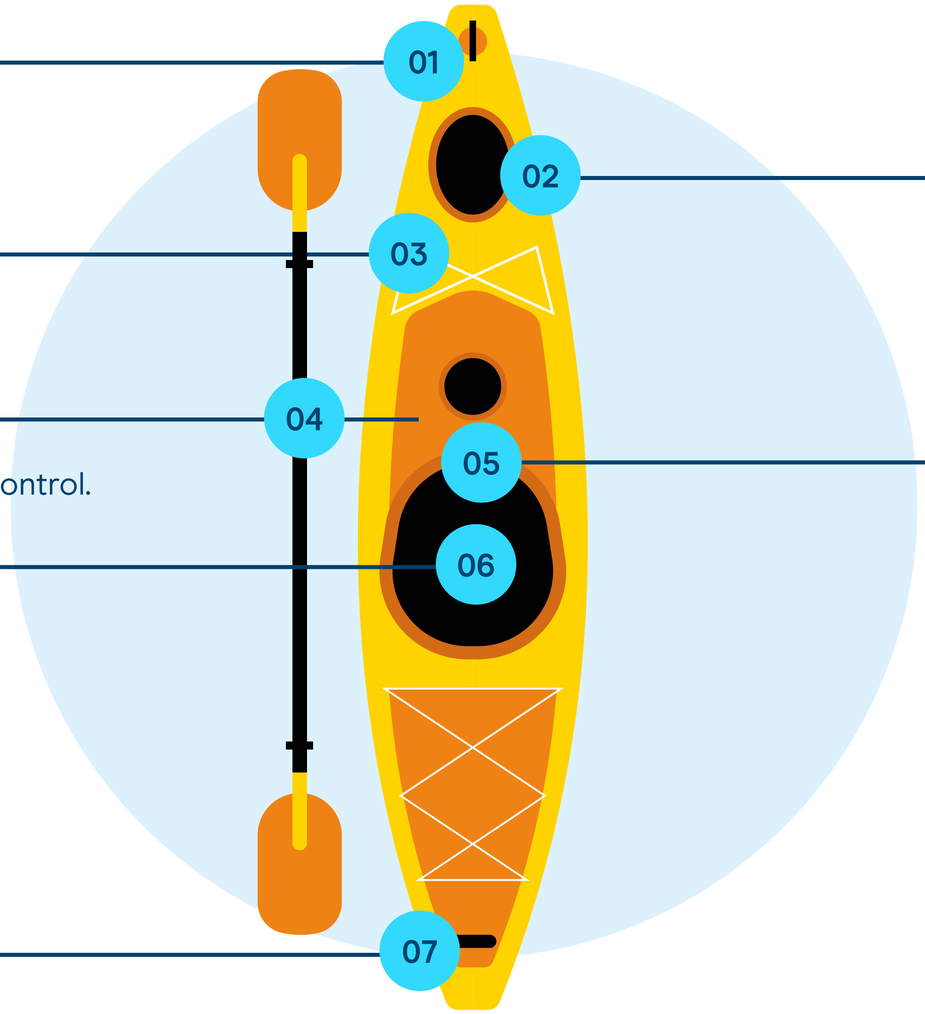
Double ended for alternate paddle power and control.

Cockpit

This is the opening in the deck of the kayak, allowing you to sit inside.

As the name suggests, these are two handles on each end of the kayak.

Grab handles



These are walled-off compartments at either end of your boat and provide storage and aid flotation if your kayak takes on water.

Bulkheads

Sometimes referred to as the cockpit rim, this is the edging around the cockpit.

Coaming

Want to invest in a kayak? You'll want to learn as much as you can about your boat before taking it out on the water.

Knowing and understanding the makeup of your boat and it's unique components will help you to maintain it well and use it as intended. Understanding the basic anatomy of your boat is the first step to becoming a great kayaker.

What to look for in your paddleboard

Nose

This refers to the front of the board and comes in many different shapes and sizes to add stability.

Deck

This is the top part of the board and the platform on which the paddler stands.

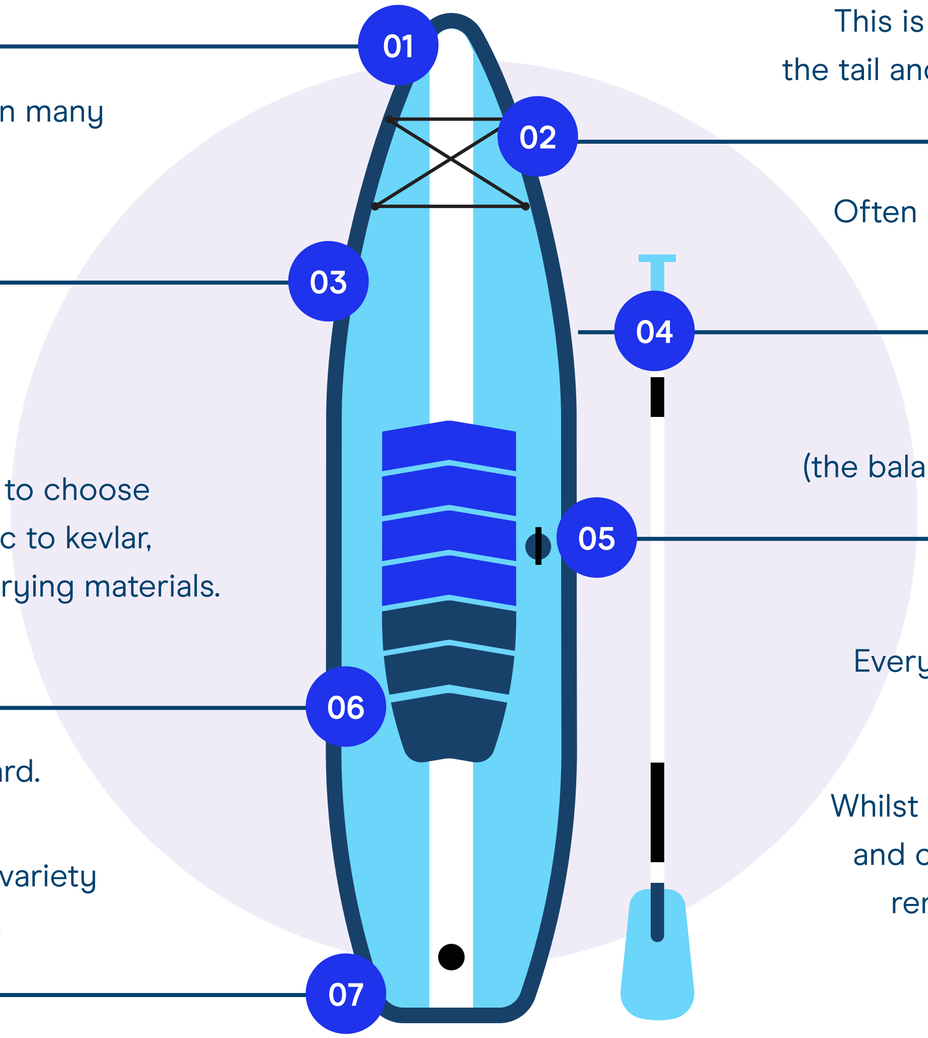
There are many different types of paddleboards to choose from, each having their own benefits. From plastic to kevlar, aluminium to inflatable, craft can be built from varying materials.

Fins

The fins helps to improve the tracking of the board.

This is the back of the board, and can come in a variety of shapes and sizes to affect speed and stability.

Tail



This is the side of the board, running from the nose to the tail and affecting the stability and speed of the board.

Rails

Often called SUP paddles, Stand Up Paddles, the extra length allows you to still power whilst vertical.

Paddle

Usually found in the middle of the board (the balance point) and is used to easily carry the board.

Handle

Every paddler should know the basic components of their paddle board.

Whilst the design of paddle boards is one that evolves and changes frequently, the basic, main components remain the same and so it's important to learn and understand these as a paddler.

Tips and tricks for

Paddleboarding

First, place your board onto the water surface by using its centre handle. Lay your paddle across your board, then sit or kneel on the board's traction pad.



Try kneeling at first

The key to standing up is your core muscles. Once you have "got it" it's easier than you first think.



Standing for the first time

Ready to put the "Stand Up" in SUP?

Moving one foot at a time, place your feet in the place where your knees had been resting. Slowly rise up from a squat, with your heels flat, and slide your hands onto your paddle.



Balancing tips

As soon as you stand up, make your first stroke with your paddle. This will help you build momentum and in turn, remain more steady.



Tips and tricks for

Kayaking and canoeing



Orient your paddle blades

- Hold your blade perpendicular to the ground.
- Hold the shorter side of the blade on the bottom.
- The concave side of the blade should be facing you.



Technique tips

- Use your core muscles to power your strokes not your arms.
- An upright posture will help maintain balance and gain efficiency.



Turning

- A repeated forward stroke on one side of the boat, will cause the boat to turn in the opposite direction. A sweep stroke on the side of the boat is a more efficient method to turn the boat.

Our **Go Paddling** starter sessions are open to everybody and are a great way to get started find out more at **www.gopaddling.info**

License your craft

It’s not just narrowboats that need a licence on our canals and rivers. All portable, unpowered craft such as canoes, kayaks, dinghies, rowing boats, paddleboards and even light inflatable craft do too.

Can I canoe on the canal?

Yes, everyone is welcome to canoe on our canals and rivers. However, you will need to get a small craft license before paddling on the water.

Why does my canoe or kayak needs a licence?

As well as maintaining things like canal walls or water flow, your licence fee goes towards making sure there are enough easy access points, ramps and slipways for example.

What’s the easiest way to licence my canoe, kayak or paddleboard?

You can buy a week, 30-day or annual licence for your craft through licensing.canalrivertrust.org.uk Alternatively, a British Canoeing ‘waterways licence’ gives you access to 5,000 miles of inland waterways, including our canals and rivers. It also gives you access to the waterways managed by the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority. For Welsh canals and rivers see membership details for Canoe Wales.

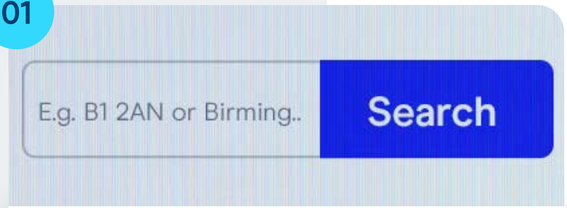


Where/how to rent

There are a number of different gear and tool hire companies from which you can rent out the equipment and gear you need from wherever you are online. We recommend visiting the **British Canoeing** or **Canoe Wales** website to find your local club and hiring all of the equipment you need to get you out on the water.



01



Find

Head to Google and search for paddling equipment near you.

02



Select

Find your local supplier and select all the gear you need.

03



Collect

Retrieve your gear in time for your canoeing adventure.

04

Learn

Make sure to read up on our safety tips before your trip.

Safety on the water

Paddling is great fun, but water can be dangerous. Follow our tips for safe and enjoyable paddling on our canals and rivers.

Our waterways code for smaller unpowered boats

- Beginners should always be accompanied
- Wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid while afloat
- Check the local waterway safety regulations before you set out
- Make sure your craft is suitable for the waterway and that you are competent to use it
- Locks, weirs and sluices can be very dangerous. Don't stay aboard your craft in a filling or emptying lock - carry it around. If it's too heavy, use ropes to keep control from the side
- Larger boats need deeper water so keep to the side of the canal where the boater can see you
- Consider others and share the space

Paddling through tunnels

- Make sure you carry a light and whistle to warn other craft of your presence
- Travel through in groups if possible
- For your own safety, you're not allowed to paddle through some of our tunnels, so be sure to check beforehand



How to clean your kayak, canoe or paddleboard

- Make sure the inside of your boat is dry to prevent mildew and premature wear.
- If it is an inflatable, blow air into it through the valve with a pump or vacuum to remove moisture.
- Do not use an abrasive cleaner – instead opt for a mild detergent to clean your gear.
- Allow your craft to completely dry after cleaning and washing it.
- Apply a light layer or 303 UV protectant on your craft once or twice a year.



Canoeing, kayaking & paddleboarding

Top Trails

You can paddle on any of the 2,000 miles of waterways that the Canal & River Trust look after, but here's a few of our top trails we'd recommend!

Find the best route for you at
canalrivertrust.org.uk/paddlingroutes

01



Lancaster Canal

02



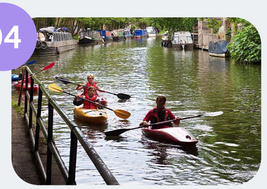
River Tees

03



Wyrley & Essington Canal

04

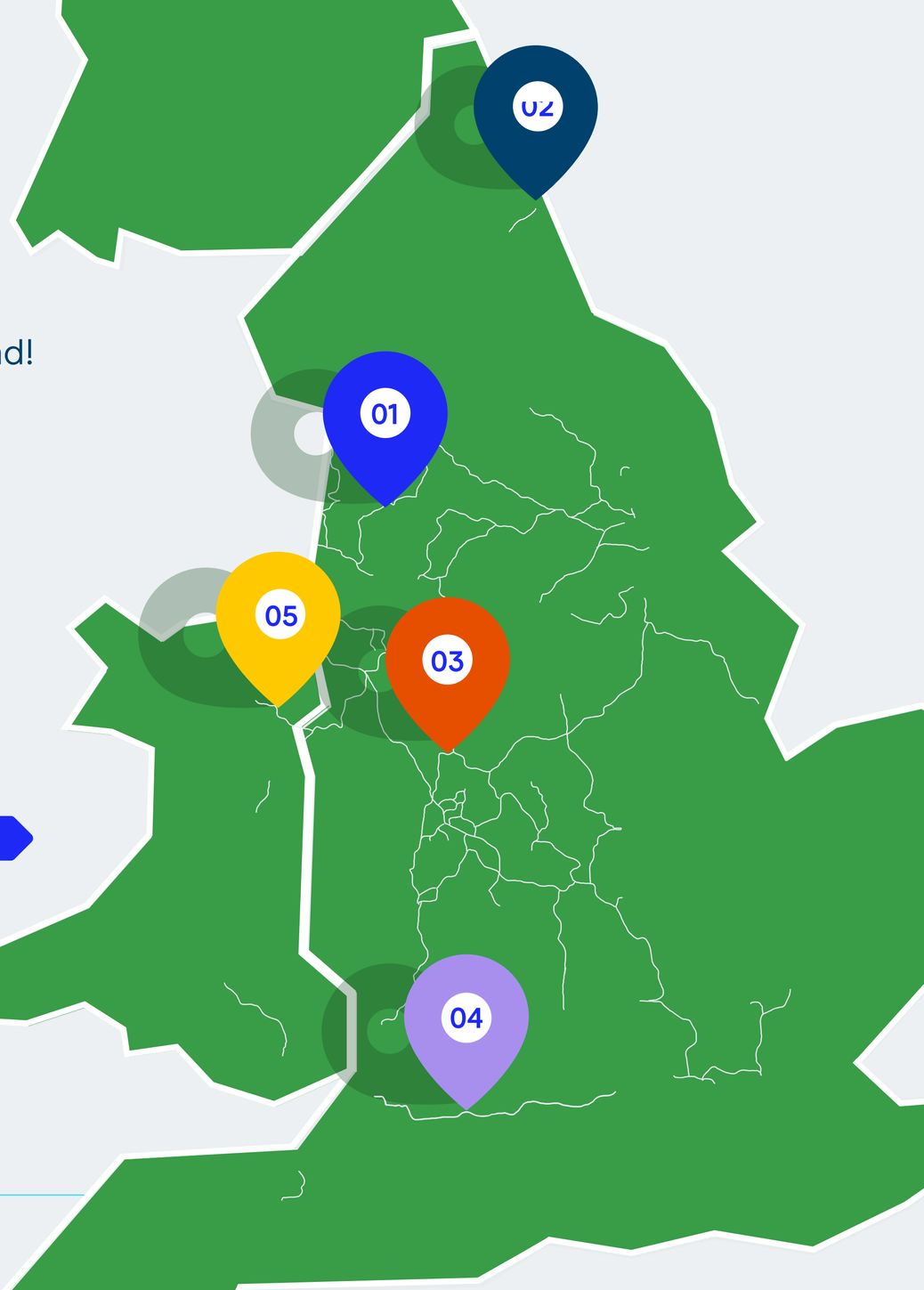


Kennet & Avon Canal

05



Llangollen Canal



Lancaster Canal

Garstang to Salwick

Start point
PR3 1PB

End point
PR4 0SA

Distance
12 Miles

Approximate Time
3 - 5 Hours

Enter the canal at the bridge making sure that you face south. You'll then travel past Th 'Owd Tithe Barn and Garstang Marina.

Soon after the start of your journey you'll cross the River Wyre on a stone aqueduct designed by John Rennie. As far as aqueducts go it's a stunner. If you're not in a rush it's worth getting out and walking down the steps at the side of the aqueduct to see it at its best. Further along the canal you'll pass the ruins of Greenhalph Castle, built in 1490.

The canal then passes under a number of bridges and meets up with a number of busy roads before arriving in Bilsborrow.



Delightful scenery

You can then enjoy four miles of pristine countryside before bumping into the M55 and local pubs.



Canoeing, kayaking & paddleboarding

River Tees

Tees Barrage to Yarm Circular Trip

Start point
TS18 2QW

End point
TS18 2QW

Distance
17 Miles

Approximate Time
4 - 6 Hours

This is a lock free trail along the River Tees starting and ending at the Tees Barrage in Stockton. There are plenty of places to launch you boat and there's only one direction you can head in.

Leaving the Barrage behind you'll pass through Stockton-upon-Tees before passing through a number of new neighbourhoods. The river then wiggles through the countryside for a few miles, passing a bird sanctuary on your left, which has been created upon reclaimed industrial land.

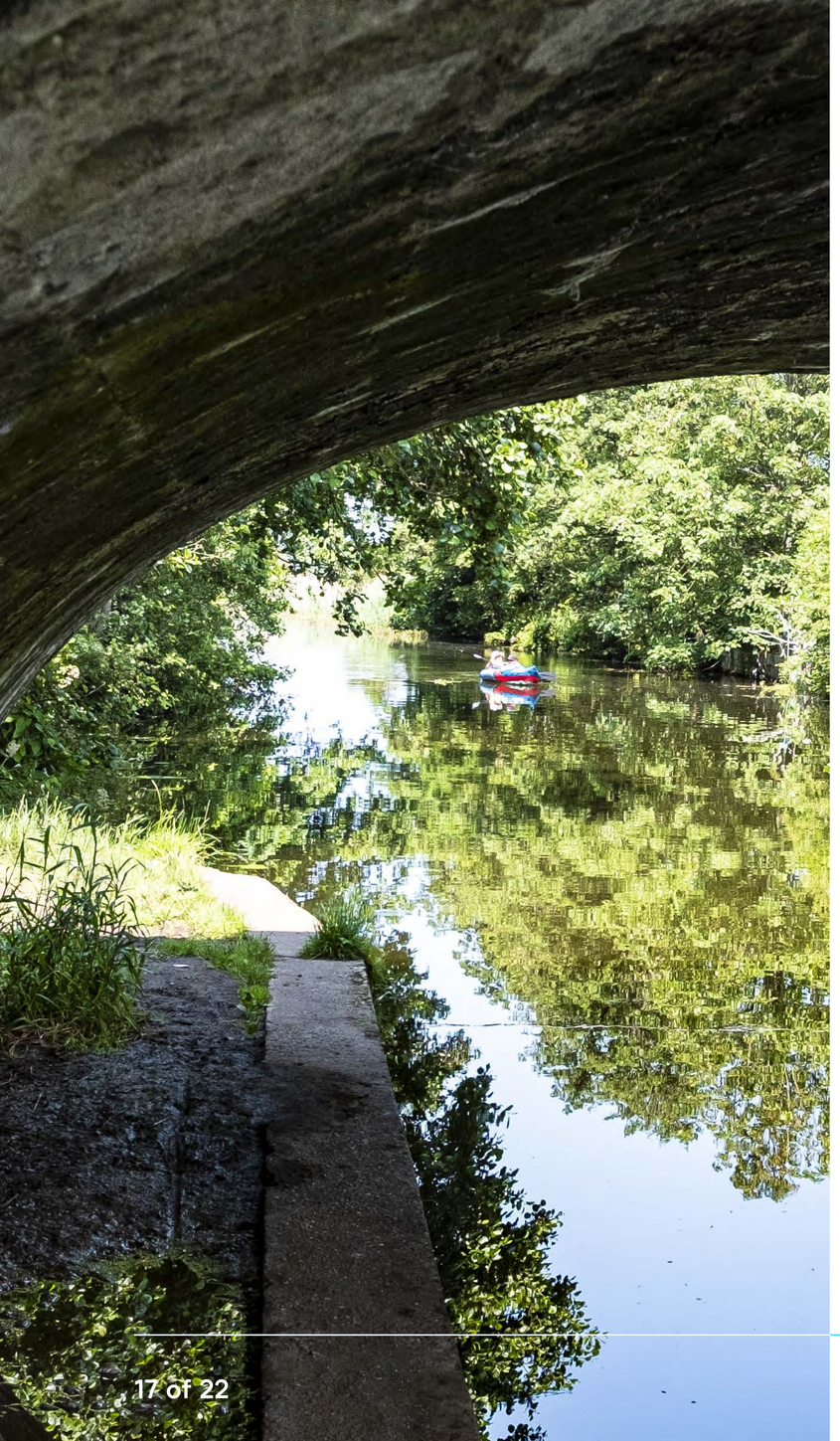
As the river straightens out you'll paddle through an increasingly urban landscape before entering Yarm, where you have the opportunity to leave the river. The exit point can be found between the road and railway bridges.



Watersports Centre

Why not visit the white water sports centre on the River Tees, offering a range of activities from white water rafting to paddleboard hire.





Wyrley & Essington Canal

Brownhills to Sneyd

Start point
WS8 6DZ

End point
WS3 2LT

Distance
8.5 Miles

Approximate Time
2.5 - 4.5 Hours

From the slipway at the canoe centre enter the canal and head to your right. Follow the canal underneath a number of bridges.

After two hours you'll paddle under York Bridge and past the local pub, on your left. Shortly after this you'll reach Pelsall Junction on your right. Don't turn off here. The canal then crosses Pelsall Common.

At 6.8 miles you'll reach Birchills Junction. Keep right here so that you don't end up on the Walsall Canal.

The trail finishes 1.5 miles on at Sneyd Wharf. Pass the moored boats and then paddle under the footbridge and turn right into the stub of an old canal arm, where you can get out of the canal.



Nature Reserves

This trail is a haven for wildlife, passing through Clayhanger Common and Pelsall Common.

Kennet & Avon Canal

Wootton Rivers to Crofton

Start point
SN8 4NQ

End point
SN8 3DW

Distance
5-6 Miles

Approximate Time
1 - 2 Hours

Put your boat in the water to the east of Wooten Rivers Bottom Lock and then paddle north through some of the country's most picturesque rural scenery.

This route will take you through Bruce Tunnel. Take care through this tunnel.

Your trip finishes at Crofton pumping station where you can enjoy the facilities of a tea room and take a peak around one of the world's oldest working steam beam engines.



Pleasant Countryside

Enjoy views of narrow boats, locks, aqueducts, and landscapes with a level towpath to either walk or cycle as you pass through pleasant countryside and small rural villages. On a weekend you can also visit the Crofton Beam Engines - check their website for opening times.



Llangollen Canal

Horsehoe Falls to Chirk

Start point
LL20 8BN

End point
LL14 5BS

Distance
11 Miles

Approximate Time
4 Hours

The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site extends along the Llangollen Canal from Chirk through to Llantysilio across the Dee Valley. Paddling is a fantastic way to discover and admire a unique, picturesque landscape of aqueducts, viaducts and long tunnels. The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct itself is one of the most amazing engineering feats on the canal network, a cast iron trough supported by giant stone pillars 39 metres (127 feet) above the River Dee.



Stunning Heritage

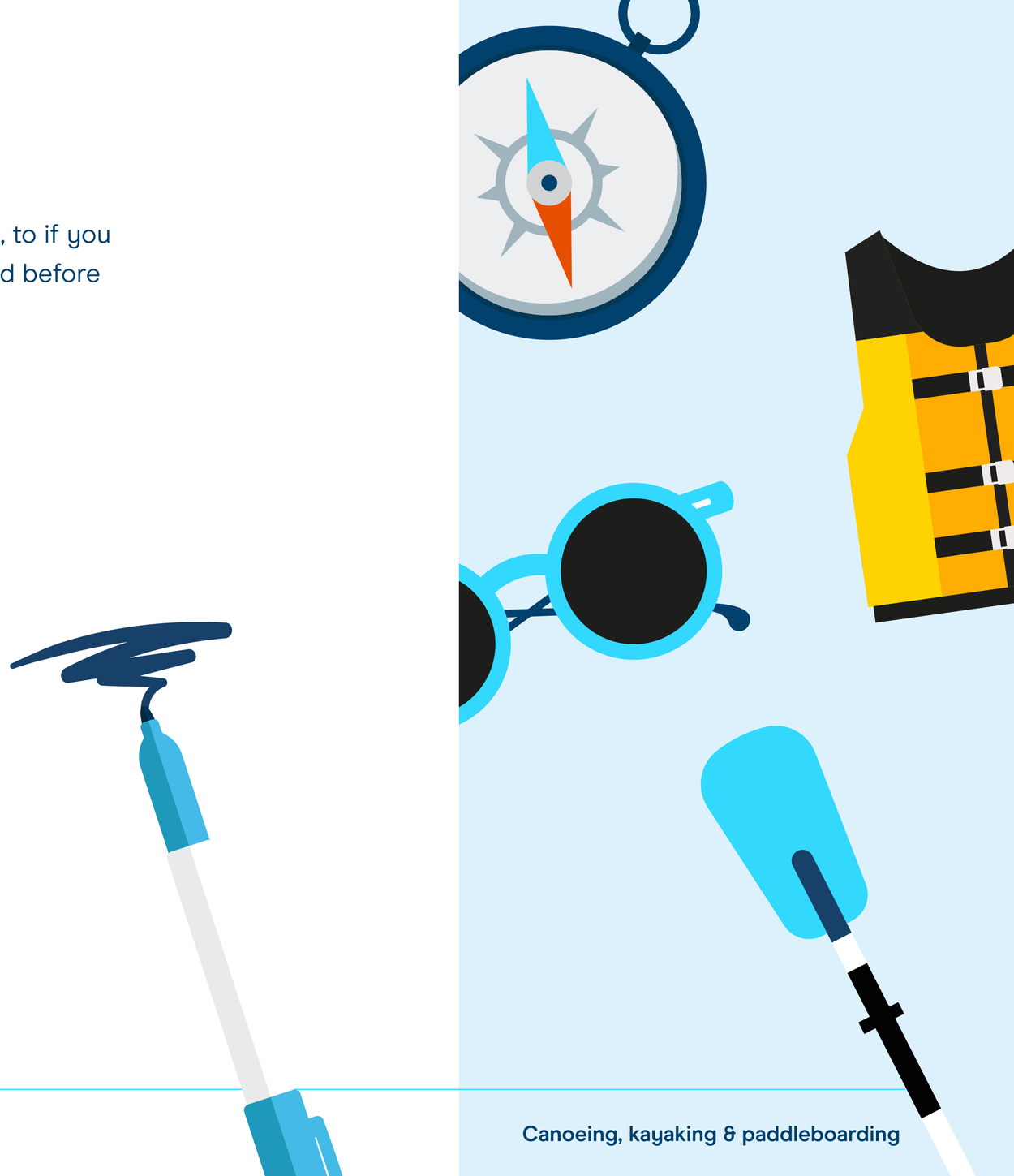
Nestled in a beautiful valley within the Welsh Mountains and passing both the Chirk Aqueduct and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, this trail is one of the most spectacular and scenic canals in Britain.

Ready?

After everything you've learned from the difference between a canoe and a kayak, to if you need a license to be on the water, here is a handy checklist for the things you need before heading out onto the water.

Checklist

- [ ] License
- [ ] Spare paddle
- [ ] Lightweight rain jacket
- [ ] Non-oily sunscreen
- [ ] Life jacket
- [ ] Compass / GPS
- [ ] Food / drinks for energy
- [ ] Spare clothing
- [ ] Sunglasses



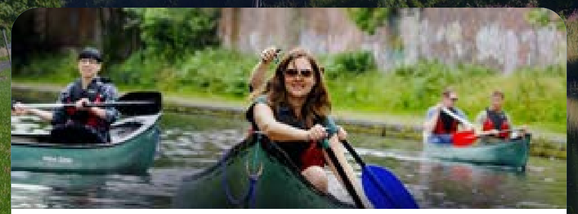
Paddling for a cause

Get started and help us to create more blue, green and better spaces by water in our cities and towns.



Fundraising for Canal & River Trust

Sign up to get your fundraiser pack today, full of ideas, inspiration and advice to help you put your fundraising plans into action.



Paddling challenge

Take on a canoeing challenge to fundraise.



Fundraising pack

Download your pack now at

canalrivertrust.org.uk/donate/lets-fundraise

Life’s better by water

Find out more at
canalrivertrust.org.uk/kayak

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