



**Wilderness Development**  
**Outdoor Pursuits Instruction**  
[www.wilderness-development.com](http://www.wilderness-development.com)

Whitewater Paddling :: Mountain Sports :: Challenge Events :: First Aid Training

### **Improvers paddlesports course at Toddbrook Reservoir (leading to the British Canoeing Explore Award)**

If you have a little experience paddling canoes or kayaks under your belt, then the Improvers course will teach you the additional skills and techniques you need to effectively control your boat on sheltered water in style and safety. You'll build the skills you need to become a self-sufficient paddler, confident to make your own independent paddling outings. If your course takes place over two or more days, you'll paddle in two or more different venues, normally a canal and a lake giving you ample opportunity to learn multiple techniques appropriate to different locations.

Wilderness Development base our courses at Toddbrook reservoir, and our preferred second venue is Whaley Bridge Canal Basin. An idyllic paddling venue, Toddbrook reservoir provides an the ideal location to learn some new skills, complete a short journey and explore the edge of the Goyt Valley from a totally different perspective. Whaley Bridge basin is just five minutes drive from Toddbrook, and gives us access to quiet canal sections, steeped in industrial history.

#### **What will I learn?**

You can complete the course in either kayaks or canoes. You may have the opportunity to try both craft! Please let us know if you have a preference at the time of booking.

Successful performance at this level indicates that the paddler can use fundamental paddlesport skills on flat water to control movement of either canoes and kayaks, and have an understanding of how the paddle, boat, and water interact. You'll become self-sufficient to take yourself on future trips.

- Lifting, carrying and launching the boat into the water.
- Paddling it in a straight line.
- Steering, manoeuvring and controlling the boat.
- Preventing capsizes.
- Dealing with a capsize and other minor emergencies!
- Loading boats on to vehicles or trailers reliably.
- Personal risk management and awareness of others.
- Background general knowledge theory, like where you are allowed to paddle, some legal access considerations and environmental knowledge.

Our aim is to give you the best possible chance to improve your paddling skills. Everyone receives personalised coaching; whether you complete the

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0161 667 1406 | 07941 645 520 | Wilderness Development Outdoors LLP, trading as Wilderness Development | Registered Office (not for correspondence) 12 Regina Ave, Stalybridge, SK15 1DN



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course above or below Explore Award standard, we will make sure you still get the most from the course, sometimes even getting you on the way to British Canoeing White Water Award (previously known as 3-star) level.

## **Complete Syllabus**

You can view and download the complete syllabus that you'll be taught here:

<https://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/paddle-awards/>

## **Venue**

The meeting point is outside:

Toddbrook Reservoir Sailing Club clubhouse.  
Reservoir Rd,  
Whaley Bridge,  
High Peak,  
Derbyshire  
SK23 7BL

A [map and directions can be viewed here.](#)

## **Directions to Toddbrook Reservoir**

Toddbrook Reservoir Sailing club is found easily from the A5004 Buxton Road, which is the main road through Whaley Bridge. As you pass through the centre of Whaley Bridge, turn *past Whaley Bridge rail station*, and up Reservoir Road.

## **Public Transport**

The closest rail station is Whaley Bridge. From the railway station, turn right up the hill on to reservoir road. Toddbrook Reservoir sailing club is under 5 minutes walk.

## **Pre-requisites**

Paddle Discover or BCU 1\* award held, or equivalent experience. This is *not* a complete beginners course. (We offer beginners courses too, visit: <http://www.wilderness-development.com/watersports/flatwater-kayaking>) The Improvers Course is suitable for age 14 upwards. You'll need to be water confident (able to swim 25 meters wearing a buoyancy aid).



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## **Course Duration & Cost**

*Typically training and assessment take one day each, with a few weeks time between training and assessment to allow for practice and consolidation.* If you feel you would benefit from more training, we also offer two-day-long training courses.

*If you are already reasonably close to the Explore Award standard, you might consider taking a two-day-long combined training and assessment course, without a consolidation period in between.*

For open courses cost is £76 per person per day. A private course for up to 4 people costs £220 per day. Discounts are available for group bookings. A full pricing list can be found at <http://www.wilderness-development.com/booking-information/costs>

## **Pre Course Learning and preparation**

You might be asked to complete some home research before the course or homework between training and assessment. Besides paddling, this is likely to include some Googling to research some theory topics.

## **Essential Kit and Equipment**

The correct kit is important to keep you safe and comfortable during this activity. Remember that on this course you will be practising entering the water, and you could encounter wind and rain.

All the boats, paddles, buoyancy aids (life jackets) and *essential* kit are provided, free of charge, but you will need to provide your own personal clothing. This might be a wetsuit or drysuit, but at the bare minimum you should arrive with:

- Three layers of warm loose-fitting clothing on top. For example
  1. Thermal or sports tee.
  2. Micro fleece or hoody or "soft shell" jacket
  3. Waterproof coat or paddling cag.
- Shorts or long trousers that stay warm when wet. Sports leggings, skins or tracksuit type trousers are perfect. NO JEANS, as these stay wet for ages, chafe and are cold.
- Old trainers that can get wet, or some other shoes that can be secured to your feet, like strap-on-sandals. Flip flops and bare-feet are NOT OK.
- Complete change of clothing and towel.



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## **Car Parking**

There is free car parking, but the car park is public and so you're advised to be wary about security; leaving valuables on display etc.

## **Changing**

Changing for small groups of adults can be provided indoors at the sailing club, but for children, large groups and at Whaley Bridge Marina, changing is Al-Fresco! This means that if you get wet, you'll need a big towel to get changed under or to go home in damp clothes.

## **How to receive certificates**

If you reach "Explore Award" level during the course, you will receive a British Canoeing pass slip. This can be sent to British Canoeing directly along with a "pass fee" currently at £7/6 for non/members. British Canoeing will then post you your certificate. British Canoeing don't charge any fee if you don't receive (or don't want) a certificate.

## **Dates and availability**

For more information call 07941 645 520. Alternatively, you can see a full list of course dates and availability at <http://www.wilderness-development.com/booking-information/availability>

## **Lunch**

We'll try to have a relatively short lunch break, and this may be on the lake shore, so please remember a packed lunch.



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### **Provisional course outline**

- 9:00 Meet at Toddbrook for introductions / welcome
- Warm up and kit issue
- Teaching session on technical and boat-control skills.
- Journey circumnavigating Toddbrook Reservoir, including rescue and journeying skills.
- Canal journey trip briefing
- 12:30 Lunch
- Reconvene to Whaley Bridge Marina
- Journey to Bugsworth Basin Marina incorporating journeying techniques and group awareness.
- Theory Questions from section D and river leadership theory
- 15:30 Change and review of Theory homework. Any questions from the day; Personal action plans.

### **What our customers say**

“Really enjoyable day out in the countryside and excellent tuition from the instructor.”

### **Problems? Questions?**

Please drop Will Sheaff an email at [will@wilderness-development.com](mailto:will@wilderness-development.com) or call 07941 645 520.