

**Issue 180 - £3.50** April/May 2015

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## WELCOME TO CODE 180

No doubt the early spring / summer weather is having the desired effect and providing the impetus for us all to take to the water and plan an exciting summer of paddling and coaching. Whether your focus is on competitive or non competitive coaching, leading journeys or developing club paddlers your experiences will no doubt provide many exciting stories!

That being the case check out this months main article - Reflective Practice through Storytelling to see how you can enhance learning through story sharing, story processing, and story re-structuring. We hope you enjoy this edition of Code and have a great summer.

See you for the next edition.

## **Coaching Matters Events 2015**

#### **NORTH**

#### ■ Yorkshire - Manvers **Waterfront Boat Club**

9th & 10th May

Details available from Adam-Peter Gair coaching.yorkshire@britishcanoeing.org.uk

#### **CENTRAL**

#### ■ Eastern - Leighton Buzzard, **Bedfordshire**

June (TBC)

Details available from Gary Denton coaching.eastern@britishcanoeing.org.uk

#### Eastern - Lee Valley

4th October

Details available from Gary Denton coaching.eastern@britishcanoeing.org.uk

#### East Midlands - Nene White **Water Centre**

25th October

Details available from Jim McCarthy jim.mccarthy@dsl.pipex.com

#### West Midlands - Shropshire

13th September

Details available from Charlie Miller cswm@freenetname.co.uk

#### **West Midlands - Leamington** 15th November

Details available from Charlie Miller cswm@freenetname.co.uk

#### **SOUTH**

#### Southern -**Woodmill Outdoor Centre**

17th October

Details available from Stephen Moore coaching.hampshire@canoe-england.org.uk

#### **South West Wessex -Gloucestershire & Wiltshire** 26th July

Details available from Gavin Lewis coaching.wessex@canoe-england.org.uk

#### South West Wessex -Somerset

18th October

Details available from Darren Sherwood coaching.somerset@canoe-england.org.uk

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**COACHING MATTER EVENTS** REFLECTIVE PRACTICE THROUGH

PROVIDER TRAINING PROGRAMME



## FOR THE WIDEST RANGE OF COACHING COURSES PLAS Y BRENIN Looking for a white water, sea kayak or canoe qualification? You're sure to www.pyb.co.uk find what you are looking for within our massive range of year-round courses. www.plus.google.com/+plasybrenin www.twitter.com/plasybrenin www.facebook.com/plasybrenin

# Reflective practice through storytelling

The aim of this article is to evaluate an approach to learning though storytelling. It is designed to encourage students to reflect and learn from prior paddling experiences, to enable them to better understand their own learning processes. I am intending to encourage paddlers to become reflective practitioners.

My intention is to create a structured set of activities to enable students to reflect critically on the experiences on the river and to evaluate what to do next time. Included in part of the process is to share 'stories' of their learning with peers and/or coaches. Thus encouraging students to come up with prior learning from 'critical incidents' experienced on the river through the process of storytelling using critical friends.

I will look at storytelling as a technique for critical reflection using data gathered from my long-term and other students.

Based on McDrury and Alterio's model 'Links between learning and storytelling' students reconstruct prior learning from critical incidents by developing short critical stories of events on the river and record on-line and through peer/coach support/discussion.

Creating a story is a powerful stimulus for reflection. Sharing experiences with others allows a different perspective to be introduced and new questions to be asked, which can potentially prompt further thoughts and reflections. The sharing of stories is an important element: "For a story to be a story, it must be shared" (Orech, 2008). It is by sharing stories that we can obtain a deeper insight into their meaning.

McDrury and Alterio (2003) outline a



'Leaning through Storytelling' framework, which consists of five stages:

- 1. Story finding
- 2. Story telling
- 3. Story expanding
- 4. Story processing
- 5. Story reconstructing

The first part of the process is telling and not until we get to stage 3 do we actually begin to share the experiences. It is necessary to engage in the process of sharing in order to progress through the final stages of the framework in order to gain greater learning benefits through storytelling. The five stages can be mapped against the 'stages of learning' that form part of Moon's 'Map of Learning'.

We use narrative to communicate with others, represent and understand ourselves, make sense of our experience and make sense of the world around us. If we look at the work by Weick (1995) he argues that knowledge is a social product that is negotiated through interaction with others. Our perceptions of reality are partly reflected as in a mirror.

"...the ongoing, retrospective development of plausible images that rationalize what people are doing." (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005, p.409)

Sensemaking comes into play when

people encounter disruptions to their worlds, events that deviate from the normal order of things (our usual run on the river), people who challenge their preconceived notions (critical friends) and actions that are unexpected or unusual (just not happening today the application of skills and thoughts). When people encounter these kinds of interruptions to the norm, they will seek to explain them using preexisting frames of knowledge and views e.g. I can usually make these moves I don't understand why I can't.

Sensemaking involves more than just explaining unexpected events of interruptions. It is a cycle of creating our experiences and environments by such activities as identifying the specific problems within problematic situations and identifying cues to be attended to in the process of interpreting events. Doctors engage in sensemaking when they diagnose diseases. They are presented with a set of symptoms that could indicate any number of illnesses. They use their knowledge and past experiences to attend to certain symptoms over others or to examine the interaction of symptoms. They then draw further on their expertise and experience to prescribe a course of treatment out of any number of options. Coaches engage in the same kind of process in determining the cause of poor or indifferent student performance and assigning coaching interventions to correct Diagnoses of paddling and learning styles are not presented directly to Coaches. They have to notice, first, that there is a problem (a disruption), then determine the nature of the problem, and then determine what to do next. This is the fundamental process of sensemaking. It is not merely about interpreting the world around us, but about creating that world as well by noticing and responding to disruptions that differ from our expectations.

Although sensemaking may seem like a private, individual process, it is inherently social. Because we make sense of disruptions to normal orders by placing those events into existing frameworks and knowledge, we draw on the meanings we have constructed of our worlds through our past experiences and interactions in society (Weick, 1995). Doctors' knowledge is created and informed by interactions with instructors, supervisors, and colleagues. Coaches' experiences are made up of interactions with their students, colleagues, specialists, parents, and many others from whom they have learned. They also make their diagnoses and assign interventions not in a vacuum, but in the context of relationships and expectations of colleagues and others directly and indirectly related to the cases at hand. We draw on the same kind of socially constructed knowledge in noticing and responding to events in our own lives.

## Story finding – noticing

The first part of the process was to find a critical incident using Tripp's (1993) definition. Further requirements were that the incident had to be drawn from a prior paddling experience. Each critical incident provided the potential for exploration and discovery about what meanings the incident held for them and what they could learn from that experience. The critical incident was defined as a river based incident that made them stop and think.

A critical incident is one which causes a person to pause and contemplate the events that have occurred to try to give them some meaning. This may be a positive experience or a negative one. Using a critical incident as a way of reflecting involves the identification of behaviour deemed to have been particularly helpful or unhelpful in a given situation (Hannigan, 2001).

Each critical incident was to be drawn from a river based scenario and this then presented the potential for exploration and discovery work in order to understand them better and find alternative ways of reacting and responding to them.

Students were guided in the process of finding an incident by being made aware that normally a critical incident is

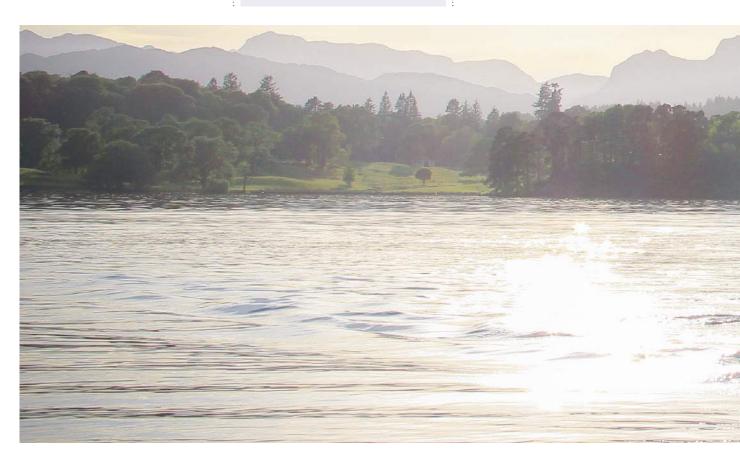
associated with emotions that range from positive feelings to negative feeling such as anxiety.

Brief descriptions of student's critical incidents:

- Running Backbarrow on the River Leven – RG.
- Expedition to Siberia, long walk in then stuck on the river after 10 swims but need to carry on - RP.
- 3. Leading a group with leadership decisions to be made MY.
- Developing the confidence to boat harder – RR.
- 5. Loss of confidence on a river SL.

## Storytelling – making sense

The next stage was to get the students organising and ordering further thoughts about their critical incident. At this stage I requested that the students wrote a paragraph via social media to give a brief account of their critical incident. 'It was a great day when...' or 'It was a bad day when...' and it should indicate how their situation had either helped them to learn or made them question aspects of their paddling practices. This was to get them thinking about how the situation had



helped them learn or made them question aspects of their paddling. (50 words max).

It was a bad day when I made the decision to run Backbarrow on the Leven resulting in a bad line and bad swim under the bridge. Everyone was confident and several ran the drop straight away. I felt nobody was quick enough to assist me and the river tactics were wrong – RG.

It was a bad day when after multiple swims in the first hour I was exhausted and still had 5 hours of paddling left to go and I needed to get myself prepared. We had walked the boats in the day before to make the trip swifter. The first few drops I just penciled. I had never been taught how to boof. I needed to keep my focus and battle on – RP.

As the quality of reflection develops so too does the ability to stand back, self question and examine multiple perspectives on the scenario (Moon 2000).

Using social media I attempted to get my students to reflect on their incidents and look to take further meaning from them. This involved discussions over social media and face to face discussions on the river bank and after paddling. These discussions were not in a classroom but usually on an ongoing basis to keep the process going, sometimes there were long breaks between discussions due to other influences e.g. work commitments/ distance.

Using social media can gain you quite an insight and an in depth opportunity to gain ongoing reflective practice. Having a more 'distant' discussion gave the opportunity for further and/or deeper reflection however it can give students the opportunity to ignore and delete any correspondence if they choose.

## Story expanding – making meaning

This stage was to get the students to deepen their learning from their critical incident, "to reshape, reassess and reconstruct particular events...by encouraging them to extract new meanings from it" (McDrury and Alterio 2003, p86) the purpose to explore and expand their critical story of how they had developed their skills in preparation for future paddling.

Tripp (1993) and James (2001) believe that the value of critical incidents lies in the questions that people are supposed to answer in the process of analysing the incident. The following questions may help to recall and analyse the incidents.

Who? What? When? Where? How? Why? What really happened?

How did I feel? What do I think about it now? What did I learn?

Other questions that I used included:

When and where did this story happen? How did others react? Why do you think things happened the way they did? Who was involved?

With further correspondence via e-mail and social media I continued to develop their stories. This ongoing contact allowed further periods of reflection, enabling the students to evaluate the way they had told their stories and to be critical about what they had learned from the experience:

After discussion with my coach the question 'is there anything you would do differently in that situation' enabled me to challenge my previous assumptions.

The feedback I received from my coach was helpful and I was able to incorporate these ideas into my next story draft. The experience has encouraged me to focus on certain aspects of my paddling to perform more confidently.

For some students this part of the process was not for them and it didn't work, however other students responded well in discussing the critical incident itself (which can be a massive confidence boost) but also to respond positively to critical feedback.

I felt that some students embraced the idea others dismissed it from the beginning, of those that were quite dismissive several did engage in the process. Possibly by my dogged approach or by further questioning each time we



were out on the river. At certain venues/ and or times I would bring up their story and that would be a long-term link that we could discuss and bring out paddling/ coaching issues that could be used in their development.

Sensemaking is a process of clarifying situations in order to understand and act upon them. The implication is that this is a retrospective process. Events must be noticed before they are able to be interpreted and understood. To make sense of events, individuals and groups look at an outcome and then create meaning out of the actions and circumstances that occurred before it. On the river the paddler was not performing as well as they have previously, technically the skills are there but potentially other issues are involved which are having an impact on performance. So people engaged in sensemaking create accounts, or histories, of events to explain them and fit them into their frameworks of values and beliefs. These frameworks are, of course, socially constructed and so the histories that people create will differ according to their own experiences. This is not to say that 3 paddlers making sense of an event will come up with 3 totally different explanations. Histories are created by interacting with others to reflect on events (whether by engaging in personal conversation or listening to others debate and discuss). This means that groups of people with common backgrounds and frameworks will share understandings of events.

Sensemaking is more about determining whether decisions are needed and defining the questions to be answered or problems to be resolved (Weick, 1995).

## Story processing – working with meaning

I then tasked the students with Schon's (1983) theory of reflection in action (during an event) and reflection-on-action (after an event had taken place). In particular, Schon differentiated between "hard high ground" and "swampy low ground". As McDrury and Alterio (2003) explain, swampy low ground is where there is constant change and high hard ground is a place where competence and confidence develop. This is most likely to occur through reflection-on-action. To learn from previous actions and previous reflections requires a deep level of evaluation and reflection finding opportunities to work with such reflection will be a challenge itself. Atkins and Murphy highlighted five key requirements for this to take place:

- 1. Self-awareness (particularly of feelings surrounding an event).
- 2. Description of the event.
- Critical analysis which means examining the relevance of existing knowledge, challenging assumptions and imagining alternatives.
- Synthesis which means the finding of new meanings and new perspectives.
- Evaluation which means making judgements about the value of something.

Using this framework I tasked my students with extracting new and multiple meanings from their stories using a straightforward linear story for further development. We used the following issues:

- The context of the story
- The main characters in the story
- The main actions that took place
- The key turning points or landmarks in the story

The following is from a student giving the basic story plot to use for further critical development:

Assisting in guiding a group of intermediate paddlers on the Dee, levels are high and it is cold. 4 swimmers down Town Falls resulting in a broken nose, lots of scattered kit (all recovered) and a member of the public calling the emergency services.

I then tasked the students with understanding their own learning processes and in reconsidering their experiences to uncover new meanings. Two insights from the story processing stage below:

Storytelling has helped me learn what I have already learned. It has made me assess the strengths that I have and the further skills that I need to develop. I was able to use the process to create a goal orientated personal plan based on what I learned about myself from the storytelling experience.

Based on my original story I could identify and include a couple of weaknesses, as it is important to demonstrate an awareness of skills that I am perhaps not proficient in. It also made me reflect not just on the situation but also my personal emotions.

## Story reconstructing – Transformative learning

The final stage was to look for a deeper level of critical reflection finding new meanings and new perspectives by synthesis and further evaluation making judgements about the value of something.

This particular aspect of the process I found the most difficult to facilitate. I wanted to encourage my students to demonstrate transformative learning as a result of their reflections. This process evolved by students linking to pictures and others via social media. Although difficult this proved several insights including the emotional roller coaster of dealing with a Siberian paddling trip and surviving the day.

How did the students feel about the process?

Using the McDrury and Alterio's (2003) model, during the process my students engaged in critical reflection using the format discussed. Each student had to focus on experiences which were highly relevant to their own personal paddling development. The storytelling technique gave students the means with which to understand and make sense of learning so that this can be applied to their boating and other aspects of their lives.

The process of writing a small paragraph via e-mail/social media rather than a report seemed to make the process more accepted by the students, this gave a good starting focus from the beginning to get them engaged. It needed to be snappy rather than a report style of description; otherwise I would never have gotten them engaged.

I deliberately let them pick a critical incident as they are very personal to the individual and from this point they are then thinking about it and reflecting on the incident. What I then did was to ask the questions to gain further insight into the incident and draw out the learning points. This also gave further insight into the individual.

Students developed ownership of their story as well as an ability to be reflective and self-critical. One student commented:

When you're telling a story to others you think about what has happened but also about your feelings.

This links to the role of emotion, identified by Moon (2000) as significant in the process of reflective learning.

Developing the skill of critical reflection is a process which takes time and can work

effectively when facilitated by mentors or peers (critical friends). By working with their stories of personal incidents through storytelling and social media (digital stories) they then were able to show how their learning could be transferred to a new circumstance such as the development of future learning and wants for their paddling development.

What I had intended is that the students would be able to see some transformation in their learning by following the process outlined in McDrury and Alterio's model and apply their learning to new situations.

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"It was a great day when...": An exploratory case study of reflective learning through story telling. Angela Tomkins.



#### **Conclusions**

# National Go Canoeing Week is coming!



May 23rd - 31st is British Canoeing's annual celebration of paddling, which encourages people of all ages and abilities to get out on the water and enjoy everything that paddlesports have to offer. We would love to have as many coaches on board as possible.



Our aim this year is to encourage British canoeists to paddle the equivalent of the journey from the UK to Rio de Janeiro and back: that's 24,901 miles.

We'd like to get as many people as possible to take part and **register their mileage** on the Go Canoeing Week website to help us towards our target. There's also a great **prize draw** as an incentive!

Anything that you can do to help spread the word about Go Canoeing Week among your paddlers and club members would be fantastic. This could be as simple as displaying a Go Canoeing Week poster where you coach, or encouraging your paddlers to register the miles they paddle during the event.

Of course, if you've got the time to organise an activity during Go Canoeing Week, that would be fantastic. Although there are lots of great activities on offer across England during the event, we encourage you and your paddlers to clock up your own miles too, in any way you choose.

#### Visit www.gocanoeingweek.org.uk for

- · Activities listings
- Information about how to get involved
- The latest news and miles logged
- The mileage registration page
- A promotional toolkit containing a range of resources that you can download and print to help spread the word about Go Canoeing Week
- Information about the prize draw and more.

If you have any questions about Go Canoeing Week, please contact Amy in the Go Canoeing team via <a href="mailto:amy.roberts@gocanoeing.org.uk">amy.roberts@gocanoeing.org.uk</a>.

We hope you'll join us on the Road To Rio!





## JOIN US FOR FUN ON THE WATER!

With the 2016 Rio Olympics on the horizon, we want everyone to feel part of the excitement!

There are lots of ways for you to get involved; from Starter Sessions to personal challenges. There's something for everyone!



www.gocanoeingweek.org.uk





## **News** round-up

#### **COACHING REPRESENTATIVE ELECTIONS and VACANCIES**

## Regional Coaching Representative

#### **Elections & Vacancies**

The following RCR positions are up for election and we invite nominations:

## North East, Devon & Cornwall, London, Channel Islands.

Our thanks go to Mickey Gordon for all his hard work as the London RCR. The role of **West Midlands RCR** is up for reelection in June and we invite alternative nominations.

## Area Coaching Representative Elections & Vacancies

The following ACR roles are currently up for election and we invite nominations:

**Team North:** Durham, North Yorkshire, South West Cumbria.

**Team Central:** Suffolk, Lincolnshire, North Derbyshire, South Derbyshire

**Team South:** East London, Central London, Oxfordshire, Isle of Wight, Suffolk, Lincolnshire, North Derbyshire

Our congratulations go to Dee Paterson, newly elected **Bedfordshire & Luton ACR**. The **Dorset ACR** role is currently going through a vote. All British Canoeing coaches within the area eligible to vote will receive email notification of this. Our congratulations and thanks go to Jim

McCarthy who will be continuing as the

Northamptonshire ACR.

nominations.

The Wiltshire ACR, Jersey ACR, Surrey ACR and Hertfordshire ACR roles are up for election and we invite alternative

All applicants must submit a profile (not more than 200 words) and must be proposed by two current RCRs/ACRs or by five other coaches. These coaches must meet the British Canoeing Coach Update Scheme requirements and live, work or be a member of a canoe club in the respective

area. These all need to be received by Natasha Devonshire in the British Canoeing Office by 4:00pm on 31st May 2015 – so please don't hesitate to get in touch if you are keen.

Please get in touch! If you (or someone you know) are interested in taking on one of these roles please contact Natasha Devonshire (natasha. devonshire@britishcanoeing.org.uk) who can help answer your questions.

**Note** - before nominating anyone, please ensure you have discussed this with them and that they are willing to stand.

### **British Canoeing Coach Educator Opportunities 2015**

British Canoeing is opening applications for Level 1 and 2 Coach Educators.

Applications for Tutor and Assessor roles will be considered from active and updated coaches with a minimum of a Level 3 qualification or Moderate Water Endorsement.

Applications for Director roles will be considered from active Level 1 or Level 2 tutors/assessors who hold a UKCC Level 3 or Level 5 Coach qualification (or are working towards completion of one of these qualifications).

The strongest applications will be selected considering the following:

- Depth and breadth of coaching qualification / experience
- Tutoring qualification / experience
- Assessing qualification / experience
- Knowledge and understanding of the award syllabus
- Fit to Home Nation Delivery Centre workforce demands

Application Packs are available on request from karen.bagshaw@britishcanoeing.org.uk. The closing date for submission of applications is the 31st May.

Successful applicants will be invited to progress to Orientation on the 12th-13th September after which they will be required to work through an individualised action plan supporting delivery on courses and completing a portfolio of evidence tracking their development. A £250 fee is payable by successful applicants wishing to attend the orientation, and contributes to the costs in providing support through the whole process.

#### **Recruitment Opportunity: Field-based Internal Quality Assurance Officers**

British Canoeing is currently seeking to recruit two Officers to join the English Quality Assurance team. The purpose of these roles is to support the verification and continuous improvement of delivery standards for British Canoeing UKCC Level 1 and Level 2 awards. The closing date for applications is 29th May. For more information please see the Job Description and Person Specification or for an informal discussion about these roles please contact the English Coaching Manager on 08453709539

## **Provider Training Programme 2015**

The 2015 Provider Training Programme offers events for both aspirant and existing providers. Course Fees are typically £60 per day unless otherwise specified. For more information or to book your place on any of the following, email Karen.bagshaw@britishcanoeing.org.uk or download a Booking Form.

#### **ASPIRANT PROVIDERS**

The first step towards becoming a Provider of Foundation Safety and Rescue Training, White Water Safety and Rescue Training or Four Star Leader Awards is to obtain the relevant Provider Logbook. We are also inviting applications for Foundation and Intermediate Module Tutors. Please click here to view eligibility criteria for each of these roles.

Logbook holders and successful applicants are invited to attend the following Orientation events:

#### **FOUNDATION SAFETY AND RESCUE PROVIDER ORIENTATION:**

10-May-2015	Manvers Waterfront Boat Club, South Yorkshire
19-Sept-2015	Tees Barrage International White Water Centre, Stockton on Tees
26-Sept-2015	Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre, Leicestershire
17-Oct- 2015	Exeter Canoe Club, Devon

#### FOUR STAR PROVIDER ORIENTATION (DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC):

1-Nov-2015 South Brent, Devon

Note: To attend a Discipline Specific Orientation, coaches must first attend an Assessor Training event

#### FOUNDATION MODULE PROVIDER ORIENTATION:

16 & 17-May-2015 Burton Canoe Club, Staffordshire

#### **INTERMEDIATE MODULE PROVIDER ORIENTATION:**

18-Apr-2015	National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham (Optimising Fitness)
19-Apr-2015	National Water Sports Centre, Nottingham (Coaching the Mind)

#### **EXISTING PROVIDERS**

Moderation events are aimed at existing Providers and serve as an opportunity to share practice as well as a standardisation exercise to ensure consistent delivery standards across the country.

#### FOUNDATION SAFETY AND RESCUE PROVIDER MODERATION:

FSRT Moderations are run across the country throughout the year. The next available events are listed below. A full list of events is available here

8-Jun-2015	Manvers Waterfront Boat Club, South Yorkshire
28-Jun-2015	The Graham Sports Centre, Durham University

#### **UKCC MODERATION:**

Moderation for British Canoeing UKCC Tutors and Directors will take place on the following dates and is free to licensed Coach Educators.

24-Jun-2015	Adventure Dolphin, Berkshire
26-Sept-2015	Manvers Waterfront Boat Club, South Yorkshire

#### **ASSESSOR TRAINING - NEW FOR 2015**

British Canoeing has recently launched a programme of Assessor Training days aimed at supporting 3, 4 and 5 Star providers as well as those aspiring to any of these roles. The next training day is:

	31-Oct-2015	South Brent, Devon
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## Live the adventure

Tollymore National Outdoor Centre, Bryansford, Newcastle, Co. Down, BT33 0PZ
Tel: 028 4372 2158 www.tollymore.com

Tollymore National Outdoor Centre, situated on the edge of the Mournes, is Northern Ireland's National Centre for Mountaineering and Canoeing Activities and is funded and managed by Sport Northern Ireland







Star Award Courses/ Coach Education Courses

4,5 Star Leader Courses FSRT and WW Safety and

Cardiff International White Water, Watkiss Way, Cardiff, CF11 0SY Tel: 02920 829970. Fax: 02920 877014

Email: info@ciww.com

**Rescue Courses** 



## **Qualification Courses**

Offering the full range of BCU coaching, performance, safety & CPD modules

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Glenmore Lodge offers a full range of qualification courses, we are confident that we have a coaching or leadership pathway that will meet your needs. With years of unrivalled experience our instructors are as passionate about coaching as they are about paddling.

www.glenmorelodge.org.uk

