

**Lee Pooley 00:00:13**

Hi, welcome everybody. My name is Lee Pooley. I'm the director of coaching and qualifications at British Canoeing and thanks very much for joining the British Canoeing Awarding coaching podcast. As you probably know already that we are running a mini series. And the miniseries is all about delving into those experienced coaches and guides and what do they carry in their buoyancy Aid and what do they carry in their boat or in their craft? And today we are absolutely delighted to be joined by Jenna Sanders. Hi, Jenna.

**Jenna Sanders: 00:00:45**

Hello!

**Lee Pooley: 00:00:46**

Thanks very much for joining. And first of all, I think it'd be really nice. If you could just give it a bit of an overview of your experience as a canoeist because that's what we'll be concentrating on today and a bit of your paddling background.

**Jenna Sanders: 00:00:59**

Fantastic, thanks for having me really great to be here. And so I'm Jenna I've been paddling for more than 20 years now started out a bit of kayaking and then discovered canoes and absolutely fell in love with canoes in my kind of early 20s.

I have been paddling and coaching canoe for most of the time since and I've really enjoyed getting out with all sorts of people getting people into the environment and really helping people to find a love for the craft but also for the places it can take you. I really love getting for example Duke Edinburgh groups out into Scotland so that they can see some real wilderness.

**Lee Pooley: 00:01:43**

And in terms of your canoeing, have you got a preference of white water, open water, sailing, or polling?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:01:53**

I love open water and it's only more recently that I think I've really found that love, it definitely requires some skill and it requires some effort as well And I've Loved white water for a long time, but actually more recently. I've been paddling Open Water probably more.

**Lee Pooley: 00:02:13**

Lovely, as you know, we're going to delve into your buoyancy Aid today. What do you carry when you're paddling coaching and leading?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:02:22**

So I guess start off with the basics. I've always got a knife in there, always got a whistle and a safety tape with a locking carabiner. And those sort of things that just live in there pretty much permanently and then my phone and my car keys in their waterproof cases go in and I like to keep those on me so that if anything ever happens to my boat, I've got my way out.

And then after that it depends where I'm going. So if I'm paddling white water, then I might well have some extra carabiners in there and I'll definitely have my saw and I'll have it somewhere that's

really really accessible. and I might well have a bit of a mini pin kit as well. That might be in my buoyancy aid, but more likely it's going to be on a waist belt with a throw line.

There's a few little kind of nice to have bits in there as well: a lip balm because we're always need one of those when we're out and it's windy and some zinc oxide tape and it's just one of those things that a second somebody starts getting a little bit of a blister or a small Cuts or something on the hands. You just really quickly get it taped up and get it sorted. So there's none of that sort of it's going to take me a while to get my stuff out of my boat and to get my first aid kit out and I don't want to open it and actually when it's a tiny thing. It just gives you that impetus to sort it out really quickly.

The other tiny thing I've got in the buoyancy aid is a little tiny mini canoe. Which a friend gave me but it's brilliant. It's a fridge magnet, but it just lives in my buoyancy Aid for just showing people kind of what I mean by trim or what I'm talking about boat angles I can draw a little picture and stick my little canoe on it and it can really help people to understand what I'm trying to get.

**Lee Pooley: 00:04:00**

Great and Jenna you mentioned a saw. Under what sort of circumstances would you actually use your saw and I'd imagine it's a folding saw that it goes into itself.

**Jenna Sanders: 00:04:11**

Yeah, so it's a folding saw and it's actually a sort of a gardening Bushcraft type saw and I hope to never have to use it in anger but it's there in case I or anyone else gets pinned against a rock and stuck in our canoe and the idea is that you can use it to cut the wood of the kneeling thwart to get out basically

**Lee Pooley: 00:04:34**

So you mentioned is there any differences when you might be on an open water setting then because a lot of that. when I listened I thought that was quite Centric to our White Water chat that we had with Georgina earlier on in a white water environment. Is there any differences of how you would pack your buoyancy aid for an Open Water venue?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:04:59**

So in Open Water, I probably have a little bit less in it to be honest. I'm more likely to have a snack in there and a bit of energy. But other than that, everything I tend to carry probably will end up in my boat rather than on my buoyancy Aid.

**Lee Pooley: 00:05:16**

Let's delve into your canoe, for a lot of people it's quite a large vessel and can carry quite a bit of substantial kit can't it for over, big long Expeditions and also short Journey. So yeah, how would you set your boat up? and what would you carry within your canoe in different environments?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:05:36**

So it very much depends on where I'm going, who I'm going with, how long I'm going there for and what the weather's doing and all the different factors that make decisions for you. But as a general rule, I'll try and have certainly for day trips one big bag and that's one of my Watershed backpacks because they're really really good at staying dry And in that there's always a first aid kit. And there's always a group shelter. And a boat repair kit and some spare clothing. But whether I go for the big

massive first aid kit or the little one whether I go for the big repair kit or the little one whether I go for just one or two layers or loads of big warm stuff for the spare clothing will say depend a great deal on as the weather but also on how long I intend to be out.

And there's a few other bits that will go in there. So if I'm particularly going anywhere, that's more moderate and advanced conditions. I'll take a spare airbag. Which means that if I or anybody else manages to pop one we can still float, which is always very useful.

I quite often will put some spare painters, Spare ropes and swim lines those sorts of things in my bag and I don't like to have loads of rope hanging all over my boat. I don't like that snag hazard. So when I do put a rope on my boat, I put it on deliberately for that day for that environment. But I do then carry a few extra bits in my bag so that if I need them, I've got them if I want to build a Great Big Raft. I've got a few painters hanging around I can do that with

**Lee Pooley: 00:07:13**

And Jenna with this large bag and the other day I heard the term leash lash and loose. Do you fix it in your craft or in your canoe or what's your choices that you have?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:07:28**

So again, it does depend a lot on where I am and what I'm doing and most of the time if I'm in a moderate environment or an advanced environment will have it attached one way or another purely because it's got my first aid kit in it. It's got the kit I need to look after my group and I don't want to lose it. If I'm white watering it will be lashed down to the bottom of my boat. So it's stuck there. And if I'm open watering, it will be on a leash. That's probably a metre and a half or thereabouts so that it's long enough that the boat can be emptied and sorted and I can get myself back in it and then pull my bag back in and get back on the way. if I'm just paddling in sheltered water or a moderate Open Water environment and I'm feeling pretty confident. I quite often just leave it loose because that's actually the most convenient I can pick it up and chuck it on my back really quickly and easily.

What other things? So in my actual boat and So outside of the bag, I've got a spare paddle. Usually at least one. And I tend to keep that personally I'll keep it on top of my front airbag, which means it's really quickly grabable if I drop one. Sometimes I'll take a couple of spares.

Especially if I feel like I might decide to change paddling style and take a couple of different paddles with me. I've got my bailer. And a sponge and the size of that Bailer will kind of depend again on where I am. It might be a kind of couple of litres container if I'm white watering or if I'm just somewhere where it might rain and I get a bit of water and I want it out again if I am in open water and I think there's a reasonable chance that I might need to bail a lot of water. Then I take a massive great squishy bucket. And that's really good at really quick bailing.

If I'm white watering I've got my throw line in there and that's either on a waist belt or just tucked with my airbag at the back of the boat. So it's really quick for me to grab and go. and then if I am open watering, I might have my sailing kit and some spare bits of rope. And maybe a tarp for setting up a group sail as well.

**Lee Pooley: 00:09:42**

In terms of that, are you carrying poles on white water or does it depend on the environment and one of the things around poles as well is and I have seen some people carrying that almost feels like

if they stop suddenly would almost spear them. What's your thoughts on poles? Do you carry them? Where do you carry them?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:10:03**

Yes, so I don't always carry them, I don't like doing anything as an always and so I'll make a decision based on do I actually think I'm likely to want it today? And if I am then again, I tend to store it on top of my airbags, but I'll put them at an angle and I've got a little elastic sort of bungee that I can them to the side of my boat so that they stay out the way but I totally agree that there's definitely a worry that it's a pretty long thing and it's fully pretty metal and pretty solid. Yeah, keeping it out of the way and keeping it so it's not going to hurt you. It's quite important.

**Lee Pooley: 00:10:44**

Yeah. Do you use them for rig up sails, or?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:10:47**

Yeah bit of both and as long as you've got two between you in a group, you can make a really cool a frame and put a tarp up there and get the whole group sailing. And you can get a good bit of speed up. That's good fun. but also I'll use it either in moving water environments for upstream or downstream travel. And sometimes actually in open water as well can be really useful if you've got quite a shallow area. It's getting a bit too shallow and annoying for paddling. But for example, it might be really windy and you're trying to hug the shore and stay out of the wind as much as you can. So you kind of do a little bit of polling up there as well.

**Lee Pooley: 00:11:28**

Jenna, can I just ask about you said about a tarp, and could you just explain what you mean by a tarp and what sort of size would you be carrying?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:11:40**

That's a good question. So the one that I take out most of the Is probably about four metres by three at a I guess so it's pretty chunky and it's basically just a really big sheet of material that's got lots of eyelets and Loops all the way around the side so that you can use it for all sorts. You can either sort of gather up one side and put that as the top of your sail. You can use it on the bank. You can use it as a shelter. You can camp underneath it. And so really multi-use bit of kit.

But especially if they're that size even a fairly lightweight bit of material. It's quite a chunky thing to carry around. So it's definitely well designed for putting in canoes and possibly less so for smaller craft, if I'm taking my SUP out. I think very carefully before I take tarp with me.

**Lee Pooley: 00:12:29**

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. What else is on your list and in terms of what you might be carrying?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:12:35**

In Whitewater, I will definitely have in my bag a much sort of bigger pin kit. So some carabiners, some pulleys and prussic loops and probably some extra bits of rope or throw lines as well. so that if we manage to get a boat stuck on a rock we've got A fair bit of Kit to be able to get it out. I can't keep all of that on my body because I'd sink so I tend to have the absolute Essentials in a small bit on me and that was after a bit of learning where I've managed to pin my boat and I was the only one

with a pin kit and it was in my boat so I had to go and get it. So yeah, try to keep a little bit on me so we can at least make a good start of getting the boat out and then all the sort of the bigger kit lives in my bag and I think that's pretty much it. There's obviously food and drink and all those things that make life enjoyable when you're out on the water.

and I certainly enough for me sometimes spare for the group as well. But as a general rule I'll try and encourage my group to be self-sufficient to bring their own sort of spare food and their own flasks and their own warm clothes Etc. So that I don't end up a) carrying an entire boat full of spare kit for the six people, but also to try and breed some self-reliance as well.

**Lee Pooley: 00:14:02**

And Jenna, what's your choice of food? I mean does it differ white water to Open Water? I'd imagine if it's open water you're not always gonna land. So yeah, just interested in what's your choice?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:14:14**

What's my choice? And so I like real food and so quite often in the winter it was most likely to be a flask of soup. And a really nice sort of chunky vegetable kind of soup that is really warming and tasty. But also pretty good in terms of lots of energy. In the summer might be more likely to be sandwiches or I've never seen very far away from a pot of hummus. And it seems to be a bit of a running joke like those that paddling with me now is that if I haven't got my hummus they wonder what's wrong with me. And drinkwise coffee. Lots of water and coffee. Keeps me going.

**Lee Pooley: 00:14:55**

The staple diet the coffee. You talk about a pin kit. I'm just going back to what you were saying about a pin kit, we all probably understand that a pin kit is there to give you some advantage of pulling your boat off if it gets pinned, but what do you carry in your Pin kit?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:15:16**

So I've got a couple of prussic loops. I've got four pulleys, about half a dozen locking carabiners and then in the mini kit, I've got a couple of pulleys a couple of carabiners and one prussic loop so I've got enough to get a couple of ropes on a boat and then if I'm paddling in more advanced environments and with a bit of luck more than one of us will have some of that as well so between us we should be able to get a few lines onto a boat. I know there are people out there that will carry even more than that.

For me it's a compromise between how much do I want to carry around weightwise and how likely are we to be sticking boats on rocks. It does happen and it happens in the places you least expect it. But at the same time there's an element of the better prepared you are in terms of paddling skill the less likely you are to get yourself stuck somewhere.

**Lee Pooley: 00:16:20**

I was talking to Jon Best recently around rafting and what they carry in their rafts, and he was talking about, at times they carry canyoning ropes and I'm just wondering do you choose particular size, throw lines diameters of ropes depending on the environments you're going to be working in?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:16:45**

So I definitely go for the thicker chunkier throw lines I tend to throw lines rather than canyoning rope because their multi-use and we do all sorts of things with them. Personally at the moment I go

with the peak ones. I think those are really good quality bags. They pack really easily. They throw really well and they've got really good quality line in them. Yeah at least one fifteen and one 20 with me and it kind of depends on who else I'm paddling with and what they've got in their boats as well.

**Lee Pooley: 00:17:16**

Brilliant. A lot of information there Jenna, obviously that's drawn on a huge amount of experience that you've got but like all the others that I've spoken to around this particular series. Jenna is there isn't a Standard I always carry this this is about appropriate decision making and about thinking about the environment and who you're paddling with. So, how do you go through that particular process? What are things you're ticking off?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:17:48**

So I'm really lucky to have a little kit room at home where I've got all of my stuff in boxes on shelves and when I come home, I've got a little drying area in there. So I come home and everything gets dried out and then goes back away in its boxes and I've got the box for canoeing and the box for supping and the box for when I'm running coaching courses, etc. So It's really easy for me to get the appropriate sized bag out and then just go through my box going I need that, I don't need that, Etc. And then I'm just deciding do I want the big one or the small one? So if I'm just for example paddling fairly close to a base then. I might just take a little first aid kit out if I'm going for a big Expedition, then I'll take the giant first aid get out that can sort out more than one incident over the course of a few days.

The same goes with repair kit, if I'm in an environment where if something breaks, we're probably just going to replace it for the day and then fix it later then I don't take much of a repair kit. Maybe just a few cable ties and some para cord and a bit of gaffer tape and flex tape. If I'm again going expeditioning then I need to be able to get a boat through several days worth of paddling. So I'll go a bit chunkier on the repair kit.

**Lee Pooley: 00:19:02**

Yeah and Jenna just yeah, one of the things that just really aware of, especially with the mode of Transport. If you don't mind me calling me that's what it was originally designed for is for journeying and voyaging wasn't it and so in terms of navigation if you've got to, what type of navigational things do you take with you?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:19:25**

So I will always make sure that I've downloaded a map of where I'm going on my OS app on the phone and then I'll always print out an A4 sheet and the OS and using that on the laptop is really really cool. You can just Find the area that you want hit print laminate it jobs a good un. And so that's a real game changer in terms of not having to go out and buy the sheet for the place where you're going. So I'll always have that but I'll be totally honest I tend to keep that in my boat in front of me so I can keep track of where I am. But if I really need to know I will probably just go and get on the phone app because it's really quick and really easy. if I'm stressed if things are going wrong. then It's one less thing to have to engage your brain on to. That's said, they're not always reliable. They're not always perfect. And you do need to Just check and sort of go. I don't think I'm actually there. I'm definitely in the water and you've got me halfway up a mountain. That's probably not right. So yeah, definitely requires a brain not just hitting the button and going where am I and being done with it.

I do carry appeal PLB as well, sometimes and that again depends on the environment I'm in and the people that I'm with but it's something that I decided sort of about a year or so ago that probably was becoming accessible to the point where I feel like it should probably be there. I don't always carry around I don't carry it in sheltered water particularly, but if I'm somewhere a little bit more exciting. Then I take that with me.

**Lee Pooley: 00:21:10**

Yeah, and especially lone working as well I'd have thought, probably gives you that personal location Beacon is just that not get out of jail free card, but it's there as part of that risk mitigation process.

**Jenna Sanders: 00:21:25**

Absolutely that. Hope to never use it

**Lee Pooley: 00:21:28**

No, no, I hope you don't. Yeah. Jenna just that wonderful insight into the way that you set yourself up and the processes you go round and I'm sure a lot of people listening are quite jealous of your kit room and able to be able to select all those bits and pieces of kit. As always we round off the podcast with some questions really and the first question for Jenna is In the next 12 months What's on your tick list for personal paddling? And why?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:22:04**

Ooh cool I'm gonna upset you by not saying a canoe thing because I'm really excited about a week in Anglesey with my sup in January, which I'm with a couple of really good friends and really excited to hopefully get some nice weather that we can go and explore The anglesy coastline we did the same last year. We ended up on the Straits a lot because it was a little bit feisty. But yeah, really looking forward to that.

**Lee Pooley: 00:22:34**

Lovely and what at the moment are you focusing on for your own personal development?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:22:43**

So I've just started a masters in coach development. which is really exciting really challenging already but yeah, I'm really excited to be looking at my own professional practice and trying to just be as best as I can be really.

**Lee Pooley: 00:23:06**

Lovely, that's definitely gonna keep you busy. Isn't it Jenna?

**Jenna Sanders: 00:23:08**

Yeah very much.

**Lee Pooley: 00:23:11**

Thanks for your time much appreciated. I'm sure everyone that was listening in there has thoroughly enjoyed it and gained huge amounts from your experience. So, thanks very much and take care.

**Jenna Sanders: 00:23:21**

Thank you for having me.