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## The Menai Straits Challenge

### Latest 2012 Rankings Here



#### Aim:

The aim of the Menai Straits Challenge is to encourage paddlers to improve their performance, skills and fitness through paddling an informal and self-timed challenge course within the Menai Straits. Times will be posted on the Performance Sea Kayak website allowing paddlers to judge improvement compared to their previous attempts, their peers or even their paddling heroes! Paddlers will organise their own paddle and then submit their result to the Performance Sea Kayak website. Prizes will be awarded annually.

#### SAFETY NOTE: (See also: [PSK Safety Info](#))

Paddlers are entirely responsible for their own safety and welfare whilst attempting or preparing for the Menai Straits Challenge. All paddlers should carry relevant safety equipment; suggestions include: waterproofed mobile phone, VHF radio, flares, spare warm clothing, exposure bag, first aid kit etc. Paddlers should be well versed and competent in self rescue techniques and open/moving water paddling; solo paddling is most strongly not recommended. Participants must wear a CE approved personal flotation device (PFD) and paddling clothing relevant to the anticipated conditions.

It is recommended to notify Holyhead Coastguard or a shore contact before you set out.

The Menai Straits and especially the Swellies section incorporates fast flowing and turbulent waters resulting in demanding and advanced level paddling conditions. The Menai Straits can be very exposed to the weather and this often results in seriously challenging paddling conditions. Conditions out on the water are likely to be more demanding than they appear from the shore.

Note: Times for Under 18s are not eligible/will not be recorded.

Do not attempt either course unless you have good knowledge of this stretch of water and the skills required.

If you are not **fully** confident in your abilities and preparation then do not go!

If you have ANY doubts whatsoever about your trip then do not go!

#### Course:

The Challenge course runs between the slipway nearest to (50m to the east of) the Anglesey Sea Zoo entrance (SH 480 653 – parking spaces 200m to the west) and the slipway on the west side of Gallows Point (SH 597 751 – parking in the lay-by on the road side nearby or car park 150m to the east – do not egress via the boatyard). Both Challenge courses can be run in either direction, it is down to the paddler to decide the better option.

The Standard (approx. 17 km) course runs from the chosen start point directly to the corresponding finish point.

The Advanced (approx. 21 km) course also takes in a lap of the Swellies. This involves a turn around the central island of both bridges with a paddle back up through the Swellies against the tide in between.

Details:

On the Flood (start at Sea Zoo):

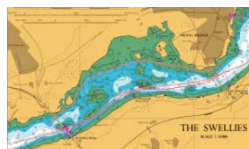
Start: direct line extended between the Sea Zoo slipway and the first buoy/sandbank. Finish: beach immediately next to the Gallows Point slipway.

Paddle under Britannia Bridge and continue to the Telford Bridge (Menai Bridge). You can either paddle downstream through one of the smaller arches and then turn and head back up through the large main span, or downstream through the large span and back upstream through one of the smaller arches - you must paddle through the large span at some stage - no turning just around the smaller arches! Now following either shore head back up to Britannia Bridge (against the tide), pass upstream through either span of Britannia Bridge and then ferry glide across *above* the bridge (leave PLENTY of room!) and then turn to pass downstream through the opposite arch. Continue on to the finish.

On the Ebb (start at Gallows Point)

Start: beach immediately next to the Gallows Point slipway. Finish: direct line extended between the Sea Zoo slipway and the first buoy.

Just run the course in reverse – the downstream turn is now at Britannia Bridge (pass through one span, turn and then head up through the other span) and then work back up through the Swellies to the Telford Bridge - again passing through the main span and a smaller arch in turn. The route between bridges is not defined – it's down to individual choice. Suggested route in the following image:



### Tidal Tips:

On the FLOOD: To run the Advanced course, starting at the Sea Zoo, there will not be enough water to circle the Telford Bridge until approx 4:30 hrs before High Water Liverpool (at the bridge) - if you get there too early you won't get around! For either course you probably won't have enough water to start at the Sea Zoo until after HW Liverpool -4:30 to -5:00 anyway.

On the EBB: For either course starting at Gallows Point there should not be any issues due to lack of water but aim to start between HWLP -2:00 to +2:00.

THESE TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE, THEY ALLOW FOR A 2HR TRIP AND MAY VARY SIGNIFICANTLY WITH TIDE AND WEATHER.

On the Advanced course it will be necessary to use the eddies to make headway against the tide when working back up through the Swellies. It may be difficult to work around the bridges, especially so on spring tides.

### Rules:

Both courses can be run in either direction. It is left to the paddler to decide the best direction, route and tide to use. The challenge can be undertaken on whichever day the paddler considers safe and suitable. Kayaks can only be propelled using kayak paddles - no sails, kites, engines etc.

The challenge will be self-timed by the paddler; the clock starts when you leave the first slipway and stops when you reach the second slipway.

Record and then forward your details to [paddleanglesey@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:paddleanglesey@yahoo.co.uk)

Details required:

- Name,
- Sex,
- Age (if you want),
- Boat Model/Manufacturer,
- Club/Organisation,

- Date,
- Start Time & Start Point,
- Time Taken and
- Course (Adv or Std).

Times are submitted by the individual and will be taken on a trust basis. All paddlers should consider providing GPS track to backup their claim.

However: **ALL times claiming a top ten place will require validation (Preferably GPS track – but exceptionally plan details or photos etc.) No proof - no posted result - no exceptions!**

All times submitted for the standard course will be ranked below the slowest time recorded for the advanced course. Please time using a stopwatch (down to seconds preferably). If any times draw on the same minute I will round *up* to the next minute any times submitted without seconds.

Latest results will be posted on the Performance Sea Kayak website - [Results](#)

Note: Times for Under 18s are not eligible/will not be recorded.

### Classes:

There will be two classes; one for single sea kayaks (K1) and one for double sea kayaks (K2). There will be no class distinctions for boat design, gender, boat length, boat construction, boat colour, weather, lack of training or any other excuse. Crack on and don't be a wuss.

### Kayaks:

The Challenge is open to all paddlers of purpose built sea kayaks which must incorporate at least two dry, sealed compartments separated from the cockpit area by permanent watertight bulkheads. Kayaks must be fitted with full length deck lines; the fitting of toggles/grab handles and additional buoyancy (air bags etc) is strongly recommended. There are no length restrictions. Spraydecks must be worn at all times. Only sea kayaks are currently eligible – no skis, WWR boats, open canoes etc. Sea kayaks may only be propelled with paddles - no sails, outboards etc! Wash-hanging of other *eligible* sea kayaks **is** allowed, however wash-hanging of other craft (powered or non-powered) is **not** allowed.


[Rockpool Kayaks](#) have generously offered demo versions of their kayak fleet (inc. the Taran) for use.


### Prizes:

At the end of the calendar year prizes will be awarded. All paddlers who successfully completed either course in that year will be eligible. Prizes will be awarded on a raffle basis i.e. all paddlers will have an equal chance of winning irrespective of time or performance. Prizes will be awarded on a one per boat (not one per seat) basis.

#### 2012 Prize Sponsors:

[Anglesey Stick](#) – a fantastic Greenland paddle

[Kayak Essentials](#) – Sea Kayak Essentials DVD Vol. 1 & 2 plus a 1 day of tide race or sea kayak surf coaching on Anglesey/Llyn. 

[Peak UK](#) – Paddling accessories from the manufacturer of top class paddling kit. 

[Rockpool Kayaks](#) – TBC 

[Sea Kayaking Cornwall](#) – TBC 

[Summit to Sea](#) – Shop vouchers: 1 x £50 and 2 x £25 

[Sea Kayak Anglesey](#) – a 2 day coaching course



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Anglesey Stick




**2011 Prize Sponsors:**

[Kayak Essentials](#) – Sea Kayaking Skills DVD 

[Peak UK](#) – Paddling accessories from the manufacturer of top class paddling kit. 

[Rockpool Kayaks](#) – A shiny new Rockpool kayak at a healthy discount! 

[Sea Kayaking Cornwall](#) – free 2 day coaching course 

[Summit to Sea](#) – Shop vouchers: 1 x £50 and 2 x £25 

Other sponsors pending: Please contact [Performance Sea Kayak](#) if you would like to be included.

Small Print: All sponsor prizes are provided generously in good faith. All prizes are: not transferrable, non negotiable, have no alternative cash equivalent and any prize offer can be withdrawn at any time without prior warning by the relevant provider.