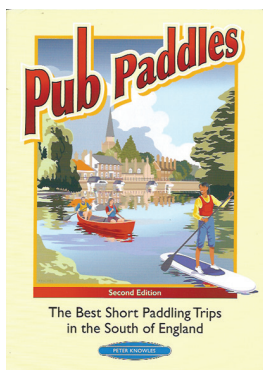


BOOKS

Reviews of books and publications

Pub Paddles



Peter Knowles
Rivers Publishing
978 0 9957513 5 4
2010. 2nd edition 2025
240 x 170mm
214 pages, paperback
£19.95

A mark of the success of *Pub Paddles* (Dec 2010, p49) has been the increasing number of other books on the theme. This one is the market leader and is now updated.

The many contributors have brought the details up to date and the end sections have been largely rewritten. The most

significant change is that paddleboards are now included, not least among the many pictures. The one chapter change in the content is that the Swift Ditch has been ditched, replaced by Houghton Mill on the River Great Ouse.

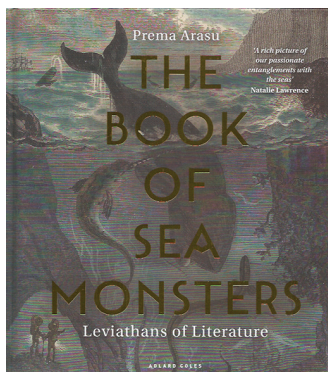
Maps continue to be of good quality, not just vague sketch maps.

The book again begins 'Some purist, old school canoeists will throw their hands up in horror because this is a *selective guide book* designed to highlight what we consider to be the most interesting and convenient short trips.'

Could this be aimed at *Canoeist*, where we give you all the information and leave you to make the selection to suit your needs?

Either way, we are not taking ourselves too seriously and own up to undertaking the layout again for the updated version of Pete's excellent guidebook.

The Book of Sea Monsters



Prema Aresu
Adlard Coles
978 1 3994 1452 4
2025
240 x 210mm
219 pages, hardback
£25.00

Paddling into Luce Bay, I saw ahead of me, close to my intended route, a black conical buoy. Then I spotted another in the same vicinity. They should have been green but there is a bombing range in the centre of the bay, sometimes resulting in unusual buoyage not

intended for navigation. Soon I realized they were fins, large ones. Furthermore, they were both on the same creature, very large. Although I had never encountered one before, I suspected it was a basking shark, the world's largest fish. Not absolutely certain, I made a large detour. A yachtsman confirmed to me later that there had been a basking shark about during the previous couple of days. I make no apology. Unusual creatures are being seen more often around our coasts, including real sharks close to the Cornish cliffs.

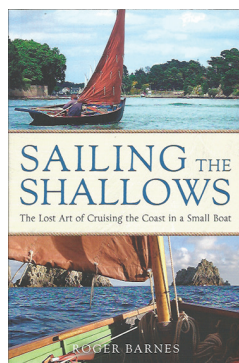
'Monsters are human creations.' So begins this book of prose and verse extracts over the millenia, accompanied by sketches and paintings,

some wildly imaginative, some surprisingly normal. Apparently, huge size is not essential, even mermaids being included. Mostly, though, they are fearsome. Not so much enormous sharks with rows of teeth, huge squid are some of the most sinister, perhaps none more unsettling than *Toilers of the Sea* by Victor Hugo and *The Thing in the Weeds* by William Hope Hodgson.

Homer, Vergil, Ovid and Pliny introduce creatures to be identified. There is Jonah's whale, Moby Dick, Coleridge, Tennyson, Browning, Edgar Allan Poe, Jules Verne, HG Wells, Ezra Pound, Arthur Conan Doyle and more. In *The Temple* HP Lovecraft cleverly moves from a sinister wartime U boat to a totally unrelated ending.

This book with its subtle subtitle is one to dip into when you get too confident about being on the sea.

Sailing the Shallows



Roger Barnes
Adlard Coles
978 1 4729 8302 2
2025
230 x 160mm
303 pages, paperback
£16.99

'This book is about a lifetime of sailing the shallows, on the margins between land and sea: about exploring creeks and estuaries, venturing up rivers and navigating canals.' So begins this set of memories which have much on sailing small dinghies in and around Brittany but much more beside. The range is extensive but the emphasis low tech, the photographs accompanied by the author's paintings and sketches, even the maps attractively clear, perhaps a result of his training as an architect.

Ransome's stories are mentioned frequently, in the Lakes and the Broads. The Solent, Loch Shuna, Lundy, Clovelly, Land's End, the Loire, Venice, Cuan Sound, Southport marine lake, Carrick Roads and the canals from Tarleton to Limehouse give a rich mix of venues.

While the boats are mostly dinghies, usually sleeping aboard, they range from Edwardian steamers of the Lake District to punting on the Cherwell in Oxford. The Aulne is explored in a Kolibri 3, an East German canvas double kayak of excellent design but lousy materials, including plywood which delaminated when it got wet, and there is a brief description of the Gironde raid. Reference is made to other canoe use, particularly on Windermere and Coniston.

Several concerns are addressed, including fish farms, parking a boat trailer in Ilfracombe and elsewhere and midges which prefer not to fly over water. (My longest day on the water began at 4am off Red Point, doing my paperwork after midges drove me off the beach.)

The Broads' 'National Park status is still controversial, and it is violently opposed by those who believe that navigation rights should trump wildlife conservation.' Would it not be more correct to say that wildlife conservation should not trump navigation rights, not necessarily the same thing?

Land's End to John o'Groats is stated as having 'the longest straight-line distance in mainland Britain', a common error, Lizard Point to St John's Point being 7km longer.

'The lost art of cruising the coast in a small boat' has not been lost by sea kayak users. There is much of interest here.