

Access for All on our canals

Background

The Swansea Canal Society was formed in 1981. It is run by volunteers and became a registered charity in 2004. The canal is 6 miles long overall, it is broken up by areas that have been filled in. At the moment only the mile between Clydach and to Trebanos is used for our Canoe Hire.

A partnership involving the Inland Waterways Association, the local canal societies and a number of other organisations are working together to develop and 36 mile long network of canals leading into Swansea Bay. This longterm restoration process will cost millions and is extremely labour intensive using up all available volunteer resources.

We all share the same Aims:

To promote the heritage and history of the canal.

To protect its wildlife.

To restore the canal to unnavigable standards.

To improve the canal environment for the help and benefit of all visitors.

On our Swansea Canal Society Homepage we state:

The canals mainly rural setting gives pleasure to walkers, cyclists, joggers, and runners alike. We have a linear water park that we should be proud of and the SCS aims to improve that amenity for everyone's benefit.

At the moment only the mile between Clydach and to Trebanos is used for our Canoe Hire which opens from April to September on Sundays and in school holidays also on Tuesdays. We work with a number of organisations ie Beavers, Cubs, Brownies, Scouts, Ponty Paddlers and the Gower Activity Centre.

Although our Canoe Rental Team already provides some adaptations to the canoes, we wish to improve access to all the canal which will require a variety of further adaptations for a variety of boats and the provision of launching aids to create safe access points on the northern parts of the canal.

To this end we have established the "Access for All "Project Group, made up of interested volunteers from the Swansea Canal Society. Whilst the majority of our volunteers concentrate their efforts on the skilled restoration work and the all year round maintenance, we hope to draw in more volunteers to focus on the Well-Being and the Access for All aspects of our vision.

Progress in encouraging more people of all ages and abilities to discover and participate in our paddling sport can be made with minimum financial support. Instead it needs primarily enthusiasm, commitment, creative thinking and flexibility.

We hope to establish links and collaborate other organisations who are also working towards improving access to water sports on our canals so we can learn from each other's experiences, share ideas and promote our cause.

We have the loan of a workshop from the CRT where we will build prototypes and do some testing before deciding on the final designs.

Access For All Action Plan

1 Clean and tidy up CRT workshop and set up work area

2 Agree a name and our vision

3 Set up Facebook group on our Swansea Canal site to promote and document our project

4 Explore adaptations to launching facilities:

slipway

pontoon

floating pontoon

roller launch

slides

frames

5 Explore different designs for adaptation and aids to boats

stabilisers and outriggers

seats and supports

platforms,

steps,

folding frames,

rails,

sliding seats

paddle floats

gang planks

All these will have to be considered in relation to these boat types:

kayaks

canoes

SUPs

dories

catamarans

6 Liaise with key organisations throughout the process

7 Start practical work making mock-ups

8 Testing on different sections of the canals with people who have range of special mobility needs

9 Finalise design and carry out required health and safety tests.

10 Procure funding

11 Build adaptations and structures to agreed specification

Photos and screenshots of examples for boat adaptations and launching aids

Yakport- self contained pontoon with adaptive support system



The advantage of this pontoon is that it is mobile and can be used at any location on the canal as long as there is a solid wall.

Adaptive launch with transfer bench



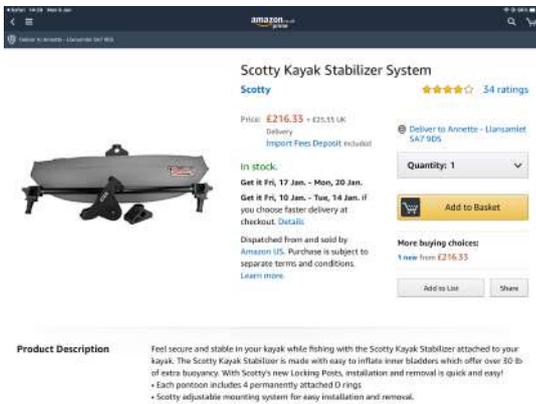
Transfer bench with overhead assist bar



Stabilisers and outriggers

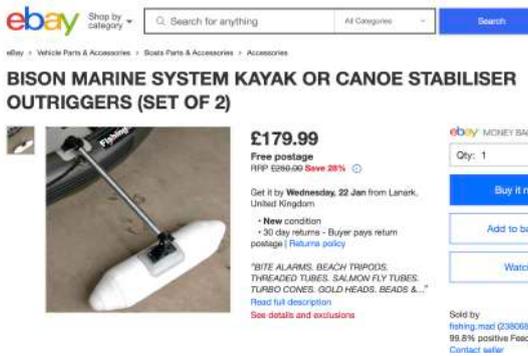
A number of these are commercially available in this country.

Inflatable:



The screenshot shows an Amazon product page for the 'Scotty Kayak Stabilizer System' by Scotty. The product is priced at £216.33 (reduced from £255.55) and is currently in stock. It features a 5-star rating from 34 reviews. The product description highlights its stability and ease of use, mentioning 'locking ports' and 'locking points'. The page includes an 'Add to Basket' button and a 'Quantity' dropdown set to 1.

Solid



The screenshot shows an eBay listing for 'BISON MARINE SYSTEM KAYAK OR CANOE STABILISER OUTRIGGERS (SET OF 2)'. The price is £179.99, with a 28% discount from the original price of £259.99. The listing includes a 'Buy it now' button, a 'Watch' button, and a 'Quantity' dropdown set to 1. The seller is 'fishing_mad' with a 99.8% positive feedback rating.

Larger stabilisers or Ama single outriggers usually have to be built to the specific requirements of the kayaks or canoes.

