

## Bike, Hike & Paddle 2011



### Advanced Elements Advanced Frame Convertible Kayak Review 2011

I had decided that I was not going to sit around anymore, so I made a promise to my self that every year I will do some thing to raise money for charity. So the first challenge came about. I would Walk Coast to Coast (192 miles) unaided carrying all equipment needed and camping wild. I completed this in 11 days and raised a tidy £700.00 for the charity Afghan Heroes.

Upon returning from this challenge, I laid upon the sofa at home, while my wife popped the blisters on my feet, and set up about thinking of a new challenge. After considering a few more long distance walks, I decided that I would do something I had never done before, kayaking. So that was that I would kayak the Caledonian Canal, but wait that would be too easy so I will cycle the great glen way and then kayak back to Inverness, oh and seen as I am in fort William I will take a stroll up Ben Nevis all in 7 days.

So first up learn to Kayak!! Lessons commenced and continued to until they would let me on the water anymore. Any way I faced a small problem, I didn't possess a kayak to do the challenge, so I set about looking for sponsorship. The first person I contacted was Nick at Advanced Elements UK. And what a blessing that turned out to be, he agreed to loan me and **Advanced Elements Convertible** kayak for my challenge.

Things started to look up for me from that point as many companies decided they would help supply kit to the challenge for all disciplines of the challenge. I also ended up with 5 others wishing to take part with me, my brother (who serves in the Army) and 4 of my best pals (one of whom serves with the RAF).

The event took place in June this year and the Kayaks we used were:

- An Advanced Elements Advanced Frame Convertible
- A sevylor Pointer K2
- A Bic YakkAir Lite 2

Now if you wish to read about the going on's of the trip please go to our website [www.bikehikeandpaddle2011.co.uk](http://www.bikehikeandpaddle2011.co.uk) and check out the blog.

The serious business will now begin. All the kayaks were inflatable and they all took roughly the time to inflate.



I did point out to the forces boys who were using the **Bic** kayak that theirs was intended for use on the sea and not the Caledonian Canal! But even on choppy waters (loch Lochy) it did not perform and we had to stop to empty it. At this point the Bic is well out of contention for any kind of prize! As we found out even on the sea it is pretty darn poor as well. Two good points are that it is extremely easy to put up and down and pack away, and is very light, That's about all can be said for it.



Now the **Sevylor** was doing the job adequately and coped with every kind of weather and water it was put through, Canal's, Lochs and Sea now the draw backs with this craft was that it is short on space for 2 blokes which is down to the dry storage area at the back. As well as this if you fail to get the pressures the same in left and right chambers you will track one way or the other and spend the day compensating with your paddling if you have forgot to bring a pump with you, oops! Other bad points are that it looks a bit garish and saggy all the time and gives you the impression that it needs pumping up.



Now the **Advanced Frame Convertible**, what can I say? It tackled every kind of water and weather with ease. It was known through out the trip as HMS Magic as it gave the impression to the others that we were barley paddling.

Straight away you can tell the superior construction of the Advanced Elements craft, barely any sagging and looks generally a lot more welcoming then the others. We also had a backbone which I think made a big difference especially when Loch Lochy got a bit choppy.





We had to be very picky to find something that we could say was a fault with this kayak. And we thought long and hard and came up with 2 things. The first was that the zip at the front of the Kayak leaked if a wave got over the bow no biggy when you have the right gear on and the second is the seats. Don't get me wrong, they are very comfy and supportive but the only problem was that they moved quite a bit. We believe they would benefit from a strip of Velcro underneath to hold them in place.

The Advanced Elements craft stood out from the crowds and drew a great deal of interest from the public who were all pushed towards the Advanced Frame by all the team. It was a pleasure to paddle this kayak and I will miss it greatly when it goes back.

Many thanks to Nick for giving me the opportunity to complete my challenge, in comfort and style.



