

Claire SCOTT

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PHOTOS: CLAIRE SCOTT, DAN SCOTT, GILL NAISBY & MAIRI NICOLSON
CLAIRE HAILS FROM HUNTLY, ABERDEENSHIRE AND IS A SUP COACH AT SUP INVERNESS, AS WELL AS BEING THE OWNER OF WONDER YEARS PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY. WE ASKED CLAIRE ABOUT HER ROLE AS A #SHEPADDLES AMBASSADOR AND ITS IMPORTANCE.



How and what attracted you to paddleboarding?

It's hard to remember exactly what drew me to paddling. There weren't that many people doing it in my area yet. I hadn't got hooked after going abroad and going in warmer waters like many people do. I went to a taster session with Explore Highland on the canal in Inverness. Shortly after that, I did a day-long lesson with the same company, and that was me hooked!

What continues to draw you to the outdoors and paddleboarding?

One of the very few ways I manage to escape from the madness of day-to-day life is paddling. Whether alone, with friends or coaching, I get an amazing sense of calm and joy from being on my SUP. Then there's the Highland scenery! Constantly changing, always somewhere new to explore! It's always stunning in all seasons.

Do you have a mentor?

Many – since becoming a #shepaddles ambassador, I have been given the opportunity to work alongside many inspirational women in the paddleboarding community across many different SUP disciplines, whitewater, river, coastal and more environments, assisting them on expeditions and at events such as The Wild Women's SUP symposium and the SCA SWPS. Over the year, I'd say the women I've spent most time with would be Emy McLeod and Jess Phillips, both previously ambassadors.

Why do you think the #ShePaddles initiative is important?

It's a fantastic way to cultivate, support and promote up-and-coming females within the sport while also using their enthusiasm and drive to get SUP and other water sports out to those individuals or communities that may not have previously been involved for many reasons.

As part of your role as a #ShePaddles Ambassador, are you setting yourself any personal challenges, initiatives or events in the next 12 months?

Yes, and I am planning a SUP retreat for 2024 that will also encompass yoga, mindfulness, wild swimming and more.

#ShePaddles



Are there any paddling events over the past year that have been memorable?

- SWPS – It was amazing to be with so many like-minded women, both coaches and participants
- SUP Norway – It was an amazing one-week self-sufficient paddle on the fjords – just stunning
- Paddling Loch Ness with Jess Phillips
- Assisting at the Wild Women SUP Symposium this year last September, this year in September, I'm back as a coach.
- Several successful club open days where I've coached SUP to new members.

Beautiful rivers, beaches and lochs surround you; where's your favourite place to paddle in Scotland?

I'd have to say probably Loch Marie, Glen Affrick, Arisaig, Loch Duntelchaig. So far!

You've tried WW SUP; any plans for further progression?

Yes, I've done a few day trips with Jess and some shorter sessions. I think I've bought three river boards so far. I'd like to make time to get back out and have another go; I was doing well, and then a few wet and bruised sessions made me give it a swerve for a while!

Have you always been very active outdoors?

Not nearly as much as most women I've met since I took up SUP. I did some hill walking, some road biking, I've done the Highland Cross and the Etape, and a little snowboarding over the years, Not so much the water side of things until SUP!

Do you find SUP helps you with your mental health?

Absolutely!

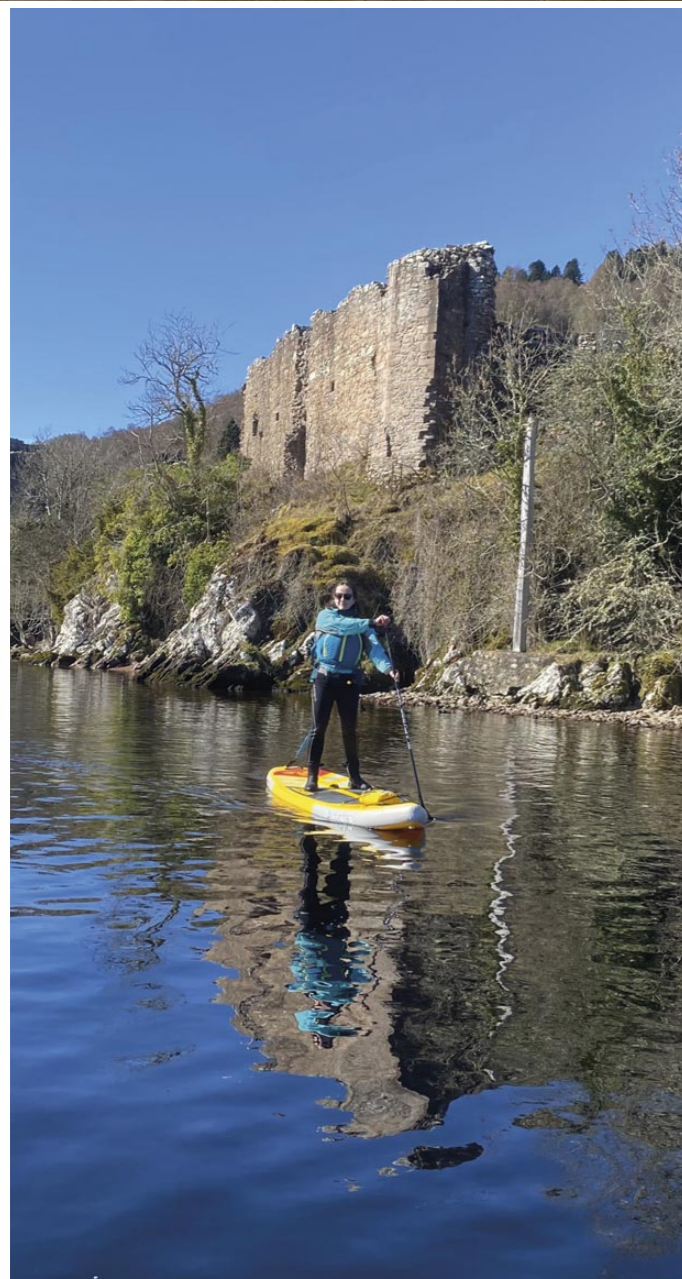
Outside of SUP, what else keeps you on your toes?

Aside from the SUP activities I'm involved with, I run my own business, Wonder Years portrait photography, full time; I'm a mum and co-run a three-day camping/music festival for VW enthusiasts.


Lastly, can we at SUPM say thank you for your cover photo in the October 2022 edition?

Ah, that was a cracking weekend, The Wild Women's SUP symposium! I'll have been along again by the time this is published; watch out for 2024 dates, ladies!

#ShePaddles



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