

Derwent River Cruise 2nd May 2026

Site Specific Risk Assessment: River Derwent – Belper to Ambergate

Risk Assessment completed by: Peter Montgomery
 Updated: 18th February 2026

Review and update before event – Next Assessment before next event

RISK ASSESSMENT

L=LOW RISK (IF ADVICE FOLLOWED); M=MEDIUM RISK AND H=HIGH RISK (IF ANY CRUISE RISK DEEMED HIGH THEN RACE TO BE CANCELLED DUE TO BEING ADVERTISED AS SUITABLE FOR COMPETENT RELATIVELY INEXPERIENCED PADDLERS)

HAZARDS	RISK TO WHOM	RISK AVOIDANCE, ACTIONS AND ADVICE	RATING IF PRECAUTIONS ETC FOLLOWED
1. PADDLER CONTROL	Paddlers	Paddlers and participants etc. to follow instructions and safety, site etc. plans and directions from the organisers and marshals. It is their responsibility to acquaint themselves with this. We hope to operate a drop off and 'park away from site' system on the day. This will also be operated for picking up equipment after the event. Signage will be in place by 8.00am on the day.	L
2. RACE ORGANISER	Organisation	Paddle Peak Club on behalf of The Belper 250 Celebrations and part of Paddle UK as a member of a Paddle UK affiliated club: Cover by a 10 million pound third party liability insurance. It is a P. UK requirement that the event has a designated safety officer who has completed the "BC event safety course". Peter Montgomery has met the requirements and will be the designated safety officer.	L
3. EVENT SIGN IN & BIB COLLECTION	Paddlers	Paddlers will need to sign in to Event Control (near to the Tea room and launch point) from 10:00 onwards. They will need to bring their equipment to be checked at a holding station where they will be issued with their numbered bib for the event. This will be proof that they have conformed to our event requirements and safety equipment.	L
4. INSURANCE COVER CHECKS	Organisation and Paddlers	All participants will be checked for insurance cover at race entry as either having: <input type="checkbox"/> British Canoeing membership. <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliated club British Canoeing membership.	L

		Or participants will need to take out an on the day membership.	
5. COMPETENCE	Paddlers	<p>Paddlers are solely responsible for their own competence, medical fitness and suitability to take part in the event for the conditions present on the day.</p> <p>We will be encouraging competent paddlers to enter the event. However, it is anticipated that some relatively inexperienced but competent participants may wish to take part. We will be vetting all applications at the point of entry, at registration and also closely observing participants after launching.</p> <p>Any participants who are observed as needing further assessment will need to perform a competency check before they will be allowed to join the cruise up river.</p> <p>Any participants deemed below the level of skills required at this point, will be asked to stay locally at the river gardens under the watchful eye of safety paddlers.</p> <p>We will be organising safety cover at locations along the route and have sight of paddlers on all sections. Any participants that are observed to be struggling will be requested to return to the finish.</p>	L
6. START AND FINISH NUMBERS MATCHING	Organisation and Participants	<p>All participating craft will have a start number. Start and finish numbers will be compared.</p> <p>Paddlers will be briefed on ensuring they do not leave the cruise without first reporting their withdrawal.</p> <p>Contact details will be held on entry forms.</p>	L
SITE SPECIFIC			
7. NON PADDLERS & MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC		<p>The start / finish location is a popular local destination, so we are expecting plenty of people in the vicinity of the cruise.</p> <p>Participants will be reminded to be careful when they move boats, paddles around etc.</p> <p>Members of the public and spectators are solely responsible for keeping away from the water's edge but we will have signage posted to that effect.</p>	L
8. PROTECTED LAND AND PRIVATELY		Much of the cruise course is flanked by private land and so egressing will only	L

OWNED LAND & EMERGENCY ACCESS		<p>be possible in exceptional circumstances. We will be contacting land owners as a matter of courtesy and we will be locating possible evacuation routes in an emergency.</p> <p>THERE WILL BE NO ACCESS FOR SPECTATORS along the cruise course above the River Gardens.</p> <p>We will be advising and liaising with emergency services of our plan and where we intend to be operating some marshalling.</p>	
WATER GETTING IN AND OUT			
9. GETTING IN AND OUT	Paddlers and spectators	<p>All paddlers getting on the water and officials working near to water MUST wear a CE approved buoyancy aid.</p> <p>It is recommended officials overseeing launching/start/finish on the bank wear a buoyancy aid.</p> <p>We are hoping to have the use of the River Gardens launch pontoon and are also hoping to increase the launching points.</p> <p>Paddlers will be advised to be careful getting in and out and request assistance if required.</p>	L
10. ROCKY AND MUDDY BANKS	Paddlers	<p>The banks upstream of the River Gardens can be very slippery and the mud much deeper than you might think.</p> <p>In an emergency ensure you get out on firm ground/banks.</p>	L
11. RIVER CONDITIONS	Paddlers	<p>River Derwent is a natural river lined with trees and other hazards. At low water these present little risk, however it is always wise to avoid overhanging low branches. Any specific hazards will be highlighted during sign in.</p>	L
12. CONDITIONS E.G. WIND,WEATHER, RIVER LEVEL ETC.,	Paddlers and Spectators	<p>Review before and on day of race. Option includes cancellation. No Cruise Event will be run if the river is above 1.25m on the gov.uk gauge at MATLOCK</p>	L
13. RIVER TRAFFIC	Paddlers	<p>There should be plenty of space on the river, participants and are reminded to treat all other users with respect and be aware of those taking part in the timed race.</p>	L
CAPSIZE			
14. CAPSIZE	Paddlers	IN ALL CASES THE PADDLER TAKES	L

		<p>PRIORITY OVER SAVING BOAT AND/OR EQUIPMENT.</p> <p>The paddlers code of conduct requires all paddlers to offer support to other paddlers when requested or if they see someone in potential difficulty unless at risk/danger themselves.</p> <p>The paddler should get to the bank as quickly as possible with their canoe/craft and paddle if they can. If they need help they MUST stop the next paddlers by calling for help from them.</p> <p>Experienced paddlers will be on the water to assist with safety.</p> <p>NB: If a boat is abandoned then please let the race organisation know to prevent any unnecessary searches.</p>	
BOAT SPECIFIC			
15. SAFETY CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT		<p>CHECK YOUR KIT BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME</p> <p>Paddlers are required to ensure their safety clothing and equipment is in good order and is river worthy.</p>	L
16. BOATS/CRAFT FLOTATION	Paddlers	<p>All boats/craft must comply with the current safety rules and have inherent buoyancy.</p>	L
17. BUOYANCY AIDS / PFDs	Paddler	<p>All paddlers MUST wear approved buoyancy aids that are in a good condition and are well fitting and suitable for the size, and weight of the wearer.</p> <p>All BA's will be checked at the sign in.</p>	L
ILL HEALTH INJURY			
18. ILL HEALTH and or INJURY	Paddlers	<p>If you have an injury or health problem; pull to the side or safe bank area, or an area you can beach the boat or hold on safely to something. If you can, get out and rest on the bank. Call for help in this situation. Safety paddlers are qualified first aiders and will be carrying first aid equipment.</p>	L
19. HYPOTHERMIA / HEAT STROKE	Paddlers and spectators	<p>Paddlers can withdraw from the event by attracting a safety paddler's attention.</p> <p>Paddlers are advised to wear clothing appropriate to conditions and that suits their own bodily temperature control needs.</p>	L

20. WEILS DISEASE	Paddlers	<p>WEIL'S DISEASE</p> <p>Weil's Disease is a RARE but very serious illness which is caused by bacteria carried in the urine of rats (and some other animals). It can be contracted anywhere but especially around waterways. The descending scale of risk is: Stagnant water, canals and slow moving rivers (particularly after flash floods), swifter streams.</p> <p>Precautions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid capsize drill or rolling in stagnant or slow moving water • Wash or shower after paddling Cover minor scratches on exposed parts of the body with a water-proof plaster • Use foot-wear to avoid cutting feet • Thoroughly wash hands before eating or drinking after being on the river. <p>Should you become ill after paddling (2-19 days) with a flu-like illness (temperature, aching limbs & joints) call your doctor and tell him/her you have been paddling and may have come into contact with the Leptospirosis bacteria – or go to A & E</p>	L
21. WATER QUALITY	All Participants	The quality of water is nowadays an ever present consideration therefore we will use data streams to assess the state of the river and make participants aware of any concerns.	L
22. FIRST AID	All Participants	A.N.OTHER (xxxxxxxxxxx) is one of the qualified first aiders on site for the event.	
EMERGENCY			
23. EMERGENCY	Paddlers and Spectators	Call 999 or 112 and request the correct service, explain the situation and contact the race organiser as soon as possible.	L