

HEAD OVER HEELS
Wakeboarder tries out a few tricks



BOOK OF THE WEEK



New book, Tom Simpson: Bird on the Wire, has been published by Bloomsbury.

The £36 hardback, written by Andy McGrath, and with a foreword by Sir Bradley Wiggins, details the life and dramas of one of British cycling's biggest icons. Simpson died dramatically on Mont Ventoux during the 1967 Tour de France, after which amphetamines and alcohol were found in his system.

His cycling career is fascinating. He was the first Briton to win the elite men's World Championships and to wear the Tour de France's yellow jersey.

Tom Simpson: Bird on the Wire explores the rider's feats and complexities through untold stories from those closest to him. ■ See www.bloomsbury.com



GEAR OF THE WEEK

Merrell AVALAUNCH TOUGH MUDDER footwear

New running footwear from Merrell promises a shoe that is "race day ready".

The AVALAUNCH TOUGH MUDDER features a speed-lacing system and grippy outsole for traction in mud.

A bellows tongue keeps debris out while the footwear has a padded Lycra collar for comfort.

Other details include anti-microbial agents to reduce shoe odour and neoprene lining in the heel area.

The shoes weigh 7oz and cost £110.

■ See www.merrell.com/UK/



EVENT OF THE WEEK

Entries are open for the Galloway reCycle Sportive on August 12.

Cyclists will ride three distances – 30, 67 or 102 miles – on quiet roads into the beautiful Galloway hills.

The event is run by volunteers from the Rotary Club of Kirkcudbright and all money raised goes to charity.

The sportive costs £25 to enter.

■ See www.gallowayrecycle.sportive.co.uk or www.sientries.co.uk

12. Cable wakeboarding

Wakeboards look like snowboards but they are made for skimming along the surface of water.

An overhead cable pulls wakeboarders along and then returns them to the start at the edge of the lake or pool.

There are two Scottish cable wakeboard centres – Glasgow WakeBoard at Pinkston Basin and Foxlake Adventures in East Lothian.

■ See www.glasgowwakepark.com/ and www.foxlake.co.uk/

Adventure holiday



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SUMMER FUN

1. Bushcraft

Sessions teach back-to-basics survival techniques, such as how to start fire without matches, sourcing fresh water, wild food foraging, building shelters and tracking animals.

You'll find a number of Bushcraft courses taking place across Scotland.

2. Everesting

The aim of Everesting is to climb to the total height of the world's tallest mountain.

Families could walk hills over the summer and add up the height as they go. The target collectively is 29,028ft.

3. Pond dipping

Whether it's your garden pond, a stream or an organised activity at a park, pond dipping offers an exploration underwater (without getting too wet).

You'll need a mat to kneel on, a fishing net, a light-coloured shallow tray for observation and a spoon for fishing out tiny beasts from your tray.

The RSPB (www.rspb.org.uk) have identification sheets to download so you can identify the creatures you find.

4. Geocaching

There are millions of geocaches hidden across the world – and to find the caches you need to sign up to Geocaching.com

Like a treasure hunt, you use a phone app and GPS positioning to seek out hidden "caches" following a detailed route.

A cache is normally a water-tight container. Once you find it, sign and date the logbook, hide the geocache and share your experience online.

5. Quad pods

First, adults got the quad bike, then there were 50cc mini quads for younger thrill-seekers. Now toddlers have the quad pods convoy, which is pulled along by an adult on a quad bike. On offer at several activity centres.



6 Wild food foraging

If you know where to look and what to pick, there are hundreds of wild things to eat in the countryside.

Join a wild food foraging walk to discover a range of natural foods, including mushrooms, berries, garlic, grasses, flowers, leaves and seaweed.

7. Land sailing

Land sailing, or land yachting, combines the grace of sailing with the buzz of motor racing as sailors zoom across the ground or sand and try to out-race friends and family.

The "yachts" have three wheels (two at the back), a sail and a hull for the pilot. In 10 to 15 minutes most beginners have grasped the basics of accelerating, turning and stopping.

8. Walk at night

A walk can look and feel very different after nightfall. You'll need a hand-held torch or headtorch, as well as warm clothes, a walking route and a sense of adventure.

Try to stay as quiet as you can while walking and look around with just the beam of light. You might see creatures of the night such as bats or the eyes of foxes and rabbits.

Also turn off the torch and just listen. You'll be amazed at what you can hear, especially in the

country, woodland or in a park.

9. Canyoning

Several of Scotland's gorges provide the perfect location for the organised activity of canyoning or gorge walking. Dressed in wetsuits, helmets and buoyancy aids participants jump, swim, slide and abseil down water-filled rocky gorges.

10. Aerial adventures

Scotland is home to a number of centres that offer an aerial adventure in the trees.

Participants can walk on high-rise platforms, cross bridges, traverse ropes and whizz through the air on zip-lines.

There are three Scottish Go Ape centres, as well as two TreeZones, one at Aviemore and one on the shores of Loch Lomond.



11. Trig bagging

A trig is short for "triangulation" point. These concrete pillars were installed between the 1930s and 1960s to help to create the Ordnance Survey (OS) maps.

These days, people "bag" trigs by walking to them and ticking them off a list of more than 6000 existing pillars.

To go trig bagging, locate a trig point on a map – it's a small triangle with a dot at the centre – and walk to it.

Join me on my adventures in Scotland's great outdoors by checking out my award-winning website at www.fionaoutdoors.co.uk. You'll find lots of great information about walking, cycling, running and other outdoor activities, as well as kit reviews.

Advice and ideas