



PPCA Newsletter

December 2019

Introduction

Welcome to December's Newsletter. This month we have two articles on white water from, I think it's fair to say, two different perspectives. If you're feeling a bit chilly reading the Newsletter, it's because hell has frozen over following one of the comments in Clive's piece.

Editorial

As it's nearly Christmas, it's time for me to wheel out the seasonal goodwill and thank everyone who has contributed to the Newsletter this year, both the regulars and those who have dipped a toe in the water for the first time this year. Hopefully the regulars won't be offended if I hope for a few more toe-dippers next year. Thanks also to everyone whose photos I have used on the front cover. I've enjoyed compiling the collages, hopefully you've enjoyed looking at them.

This year, instead of that last minute dash to the 24 hour filling station on Christmas Eve, don't forget the club has a wide range of clothing, courses etc. which would make ideal Christmas presents for that special someone in your life. The club also do pre-paid vouchers which can be redeemed against courses. And don't forget the publications of our resident authors.

Ivor Jones
Newsletter Editor

Next Committee Meeting

Please forward any items you would like considered at the next committee meeting to secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk. They will go to the secretary.

Next Edition

There is no specific deadline as such for contributions but please bear in mind my general sloth and indolence and let me have anything time-sensitive well in advance.

Contributions

Please send any contributions to newsletter@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

Acknowledgements

The cover photographers for August are, as ever - Joy, Debbie and Terry

Christmas Paddle, Saturday 21st December by Terry Calcott

Yes folks it's very nearly that time of year again, brush off those hats and Santa costumes, and come join your fellow club members for a paddle feast and make merry. The paddle venue will probably start and finish from Mount Batten, but if a good weather window occurs it may be away from MB. The minimum dress requirement for this paddle (in addition to your normal paddling and safety gear) is a festive hat. The preferred costume is fancy dress above the spraydeck. We always have a communal picnic of festive fayre. I will be compiling a list of sweet or savoury, so please let me know what you are bringing along.

Please let me know if you are intending coming along by email terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk or phone 07981489857 or a post on the forum (I will start a forum post nearer the date).

The good news this year is that the facilities at Mount Batten will be open as usual.



First Aid Course by Joy Ashford

It is a British canoeing requirement that all coaches and leaders have some level of first aid training, 1 day or 2 day depending on the type of water they are operating on. More details can be found by clicking [here](#) where there is a pdf of the BC first aid policy at the bottom of the page.

<https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk/news/2017/british-canoeing-first-aid-policy-update/>

Whether a coach/leader or just out for fun, the more of us that are able to lend a hand to help one of our fellow paddlers if something goes wrong the better. Most of us carry safety equipment when out on the water; throw lines, tow lines, survival bags, VHF and of course First aid kits! While it is great that most of us carry these, they aren't much use if we don't know how to use them effectively! Even if previous training has been undertaken, thankfully we don't use it very often, so keeping skills and knowledge up to date and at the front of our minds is a good idea!

So, come and join us on this 2 day first aid course, on the 18th and 19th of January, and learn or refresh some new skills that might very well do someone a favour!!

Booking via the PPCA website | [Courses](#)

For Sale by Joy Ashford

White fibreglass Lynx kayak.

Doesn't leak. A few repaired dings.

Open to offers.

Tel Jane 07814993635.



Features

White Water Warrior or White Water Worrier? by Debbie Rowlands

"How can you not like it, you've never tried it." I often heard that phrase as a child when I refused to eat my vegetables.

When some of the wonderful PPCA coaches, who had guided me through my basic training over the last couple of years, encouraged me to try white water kayaking, I politely declined, again and again.

How I came to be frozen in fear, staring at the frothy and fast flowing water of the River Dart one chilly October morning is beyond me. Originally, there were going to be quite a few beginners on this trip. That morning, it was just me and John, the new 'virgin beginners' to white water. My anxiety level soared.

John and I were allocated our respective coaches to guide us down river. I was to have Becky and Doug with Kevin as an extra back up. John had two coaches to help him too. There were also quite a few experienced Club members on hand to help if we needed it.

All my basic training had been around Mount Batten and Plymouth Sound. Here I had got used to calmly paddling along in our group and if asked to stop while waiting for instructions, my kayak stayed more or less where I wanted it to.

On the River Dart however, it was only 5 minutes before I made my first mistake. Becky explained and showed me how to 'break out'. I duly followed and was quite pleased with my progress. So I stopped to wait for further instructions. While I stopped, the Dart didn't. My world literally turned upside down and I promptly parted company with my kayak. It was reassuring to be rescued so quickly by Becky and Doug. On the positive side, although I was in a wetsuit rather than a dry suit, the water wasn't as cold as I was expecting.

I somehow managed to stay upright for the next few sections. With the noise of the water roaring past it's not always easy to hear instructions. On one section I could hear someone shouting, "Go left". I was trying, honest. Despite my best efforts, I was heading for the branches of an overhanging tree. No problem, I thought. I will just hug the biggest branch while I get my breath back. Mistake no. 2. While I stopped, the Dart continued taking my kayak with it again and leaving me floundering once more.

John and I were allowed to miss out a couple of the features on the Dart as they weren't suitable for beginners due to the water levels on that day. John was a lot braver than me and attempted one of the weirs while I watched from the river bank.

I did get cold and tired but was glad to survive the day with just a few minor bruises (including bruised pride).

Over the next three weeks it rained consistently and river levels rose. I followed my gut instinct (I'm a Worrier not a Warrior) and declined the offers to join the White Water group on the Dart again. I had also been watching the Dart River webcam and could see how high the water levels were. Not for me thank you.

The following week, Kevin kindly invited me to join him and some Plymouth University students on a trip to the River Exe for a gentle introduction to white water. The River Exe levels were high and the water was flowing fairly fast. Once on the river Kevin encouraged us to practise exercises. Without angry white water and large lumps of granite to negotiate, this was a lovely introduction to white water and one which would encourage me (and probably other nervous beginners) to try more white water.

By the next week the river level on the Dart dropped in time for the Beginners White Water Open Boat session. I'm not competent going solo in an Open Boat. (I now know why the outboard engine was invented). So I was very grateful when Brim kindly agreed to take me in his boat. When we went over the rapids and down drops, I felt completely safe and enjoyed the trip. However, my body ached for three days afterwards!

After our white water experience, John and I tried our luck at kayak surfing with Doug at Bigbury. Now that was fun! After the initial worries about capsizing, our confidence grew quickly. We attempted more and more waves. We did both capsize but it didn't bother us. We knew we could quickly walk out of the water, empty our kayaks and carry on. It was quite a thrill to catch a wave for the first time. But as I found out, waves have a way of playing tricks and can tip you over without any notice!

I have now tried white water kayaking / canoeing and kayak surfing (and SUPs but not on white water). I know I haven't given white water a chance yet but from first impressions, I feel safer surfing. I don't mind my exfoliating my face on a sandy beach but bouncing off Dartmoor granite is another thing.

My favourite kayak comfort zone has to be gliding along the sheltered calm rivers in search of kingfishers and other wildlife. If it isn't already, then calm kayaking should be on prescription for anyone suffering from high blood pressure or mental health issues.

Therefore, I will probably always remain a White Water **Worrier** and leave the Dart to the experienced, adrenalin seeking, White Water **Warriors**. Good luck and enjoy!

Voyager upon life's sea,

To yourself be true,

And whatever your lot may be,

Paddle your own canoe.

Paddle your own canoe by Sarah T Bolton



The author's preferred type of paddling

Remembrance (Banjo's on the Dark Side) by Clive Ashford

Remembrance Sunday 2019 fell on 10 November. On that date the PPCA were running separate river trips for both our kayakers and canoeists.

So let's start this little missive in an educational frame of mind. Dictionary.com define a canoe as: *Any of various slender, open boats, tapering to a point at both ends, propelled by paddles or sometimes sails and traditionally formed of light framework covered with bark, skins, or canvas, or formed from a dug-out or burned-out log or logs, and now usually made of aluminium, fibreglass, etc.* When referring to a canoe British Canoeing, our almost pointless governing body, uses the term open boat. Dictionary.com gives no definition for the term open boat, but any remotely intelligent reader (that's you) will realise that the term open boat can apply to canoes, dinghies, rowing boats, gigs, coracles and a myriad of other craft where the occupant(s) is/are exposed to the elements. It's fairly typical that British Canoeing chooses to use two words where one would do, and to use language that is imprecise and open to interpretation. (Other, more positive opinions are available, but they are wrong.) I told you it would be educational.



Photo by Joy Ashford

Debbie & Brim encountering the fish pass at Holne Weir

Anyway, back to the story and to the 10th November. The kayakers met as usual at the Co-op car park in Plympton. While we were there we were treated to the spectacle of watching the local youth organisations march off to the war memorial to take part in an act of remembrance. Our young people don't always get the good press that they deserve so I interrupt this narrative to give them three cheers. Hooray, hooray, hooray.

Sometime later, after changing and setting up the usual shuttle logistics, our eight kayakers gathered together beside Holne Weir. We avidly listened to Ken's safety briefing and then partook in a minutes silence to mark Remembrance Sunday. We had to start our minutes silence twice because just a few seconds into our first attempt Banjo, who hadn't realised what was going on, loudly announced that we would be in the pub by one. So perhaps some of us hadn't been quite so avid in listening to Ken's safety briefing after all! Booya indeed.

River paddling is rarely dull and once again I found myself being entertained. Firstly there was another group of paddlers just getting on the water at Holne Weir. This group included two people in a double kayak. When paddling a double its common practice for the more experienced paddler to be in the back and for the weaker paddler to occupy the front seat. On this occasion it was fairly obvious that the front paddler was very inexperienced. What gave me this impression? Well, it was the expression of abject fear on his face as they pushed away from the bank coupled with the frantic splashing sounds as they managed to capsize in almost record time.



Photo by Joy Ashford

School Rapid

Secondly, as we arrived at Holne Weir the club canoeists were just getting on the water. There were 8 paddlers in 6 boats and a jolly little bunch of paddlers they were too. Some of these intrepid explorers took the opportunity of running the new fish pass that has recently been constructed at Holne Weir. This fish pass took this same opportunity to dump large quantities of water into our canoeists boats. Oh how I smirked.

And then thirdly, just after we had launched, Ken took the opportunity of taking an early bath by falling foul of a fairly innocent looking wave. It just goes to show that even top paddlers can provide us with their share of the entertainment. Personally I'm not a fan of swimming and try to avoid it if I can, but whatever happens I always feel unduly smug when I manage not to be the first wet paddler of the day.

By the time we had reached the feature called The Anvil the kayakers and canoeists had merged into one group and both sets of paddlers ran The Anvil and the following School Rapid with a fair amount of control and skill. The dictionary of Clive defines a canoe as: A boat from the Dark Side. This somewhat tongue in cheek definition comes with the acknowledgment that whilst I can just about control a canoe on flat water, with no wind, I can only watch in awe when I see canoeists gracefully dancing down the rapids with apparently little effort. I take my hat off to you all. (I can't believe I wrote that, please pretend that you haven't read it. Being nice about canoeists, whatever next?)

The day had started off rather grey and cloudy, but as time wore on the sun came out and by the half way point we were paddling in bright sunshine, through a valley that was filled with brilliantly vivid autumn colours. Just being there made your heart sing.

The trip continued to Broken Weir where much time was spent watching, playing, rolling and in some cases swimming. There were smiles. At this juncture something strange happened. Our salty paddlers are well used to being treated to homemade cakes etc. on our Saturday trips, but there is no such tradition associated river paddling. That may have changed because whilst the aforementioned activities were taking place (playing, rolling and swimming you'll remember) Debbie wandered among us passing out delicious pieces of flap jack. Thank you Debbie. There were even more smiles.

After a suitable amount of time we carried on to tackle such features and Island Rapid, Furzeleigh (Buckfast) Weir, and the Narrows before we eventually hauled our boats off the water at the delightful Salmon Steps Cafe. Oh how we like the Salmon Steps Cafe.

So, to sum up, we had an act of remembrance, we were entertained, we paddled through beautiful scenery, the kayakers and canoeists paddled together without fighting and by the time we got home we had all experienced a great day out . Thanks to Ken for leading the kayakers, to Brim for leading the canoeists and to all you paddlers simply for being there.

Until next time.



Photo by Joy Ashford

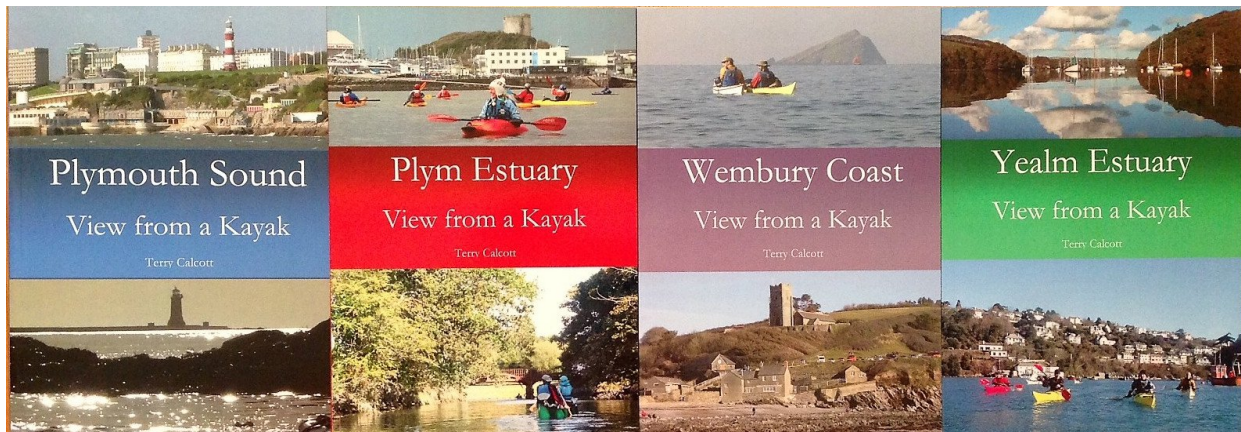
Canoeists and Kayakers together at Broken Weir

Shameless Commercialism

View From a Kayak Book Series by Terry Calcott

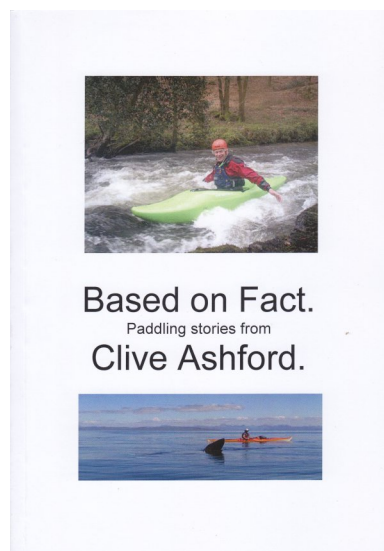
For those club members who missed out on the earlier print runs the following books are still available to purchase.

'View from a Kayak' Plymouth Sound, Plym Estuary, Wembury Coast and Yealm estuary. The books are a mix of local history, nature, with plenty of maps and photos to accompany the text covering everything that you can see from a kayak in the local area. A must for anyone who paddles regularly around our fantastic local coastline. Price £6 a copy, or a special of £20 for all 4 books (all profits going to St Luke's Hospice). If you would like any of the books please email me at terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk or have a look at Facebook 'viewfromakayak'



Based on Fact Series by Clive Ashford

A few copies are believed to be still available - please contact Clive for details.

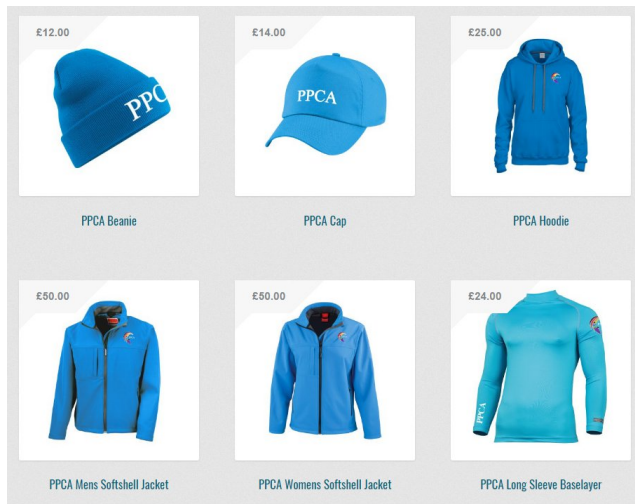
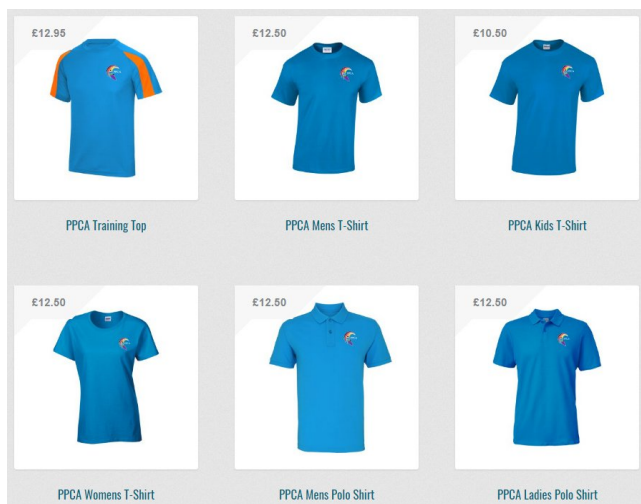


Exchange and Mart

PPCA Club Clothing by Jackie Perry, Publicity Officer

A full range of customised kit in either blue or black is available to order direct from Tailored Branding via the link below

<https://hsclothing.co.uk/ppca-3/>



Discount Available at Millets, 38/40 New George St, Plymouth PL1 1RW

One of our members works in the Millets store (Big 'Thank you' to Lee McKenzie!) on New George Street, Plymouth and has negotiated with his Manager a great discount of 15% on production of your PPCA club membership card. Usual T's & C's apply, e.g. goods already discounted/sales items might be excluded.

Discount Available at Kayaks and Paddles

Kayaks and paddles offer discount to local kayak and canoe clubs. The PPCA and Tamar Canoe club can get a discount up to 15%. This is an offer not a right for the person that is making a purchase, so please do not go upsetting Kayaks and Paddles employees as this discount might be taken away.



Raise free donations for us every time you shop online with easyfundraising!



<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ppca/>

Club Calendar

Please bear in mind that, while the calendar is correct at the time of going to press things can, and often do, change at the last minute, particularly in the white water season. Please double-check with the online calendar before putting on your dry suit.

For the Diary

7th August 2020: Isles of Scilly

Recreational Paddles (Saturdays)

7th December - Bob Grose (Sea Paddle)

14th December - Brim

21st December - Terry Calcott(Christmas Paddle)

28th December - Joy Ashford

4th January - Brim (Sea Paddle)

11th January Gavin Bennet

18th January - Andy Kittle

25th January - Bob Grose

Pool Sessions (19:15)

6th December

White Water (Sundays)

1st December - Pete Anderson

8th December - Chris Doidge

15th December - Phil Cleave

22nd December - Ken Hamblin

29th December - Doug Sitch

5th January - Clive Ashford

12th January - Pete Anderson

19th January Chris Doidge

26th January - Phil Cleave

Open Canoe White Water

8th December - Brim

12th January - Brim

Courses

18th-19th January - First Aid

25th-26th January - White Water Safety and Rescue

The Committee

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