



PPCA Newsletter

July 2019

Introduction

Welcome to July's Newsletter. This month we break with established practice by publishing an article that admits to being total fiction from the word go. The author (The Krafty Kayaker) has asked me to preserve their anonymity, something I'm perfectly happy to do, but that needn't stop anyone trying to guess.

Elsewhere, we have news of a cleanup paddle and Clive gives us the first of a three-part tour of the outer reaches of the Windows spelling checker

Editorial

For a variety of tedious personal reasons, we've hardly paddled at all over the last few weeks. This has led me to ponder the unwritten rules of paddling (which I'm now going to write down which rather defeats the object).

The first, obviously, is that whichever direction you're paddling in, the wind is always in the wrong direction.

The second appears to be that the better the weather for paddling, the less likely you are to be able to take advantage of it.

Anybody care to come up with some others?

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 July are the usual suspects - Terry, Joy and Debbie. Does anyone else ever take photos?

Bovisand Coastal Cleanup Paddle shared by James Hubbard

Following on from last year's very successful Coastal Cleanup Paddle, we'll be teaming up again with Plymouth Beach Clean volunteers to clean the section of coastline from Mount Batten point to Bovisand beach on Sunday 14th July!

The plan is to be on the water for 10am and collect rubbish along the coast and beaches inaccessible from land, to meet up with the shore based crew at Bovisand to drop the haul, skim stones, swim, eat lunch, or other activities befitting the occasion before heading back.

If you could spare a morning to help keep Plymouth Sound clean and raise the profile of the club then please come along, it is also an excellent excuse for rock hopping.

Hopefully this will be the first of more than one such paddles this year!

The 2019 Scottish Isles Trilogy Part One: We went to Spar Cave by Clive Ashford

They say that the west coast of Scotland is a Mecca for sea kayaking, which is a bit odd because I consider myself to be a sea kayaker but if I type “Mecca” into Google Maps I end up looking at a desert location in Saudi Arabia, a location that is totally land locked and thus hardly conducive to sea kayaking. How very confusing.



Photo by Joy: The Southern End of the Strathaird Peninsula

Anyway, Mecca or not Adam, Bob, Clive, Ian, Joy and Karen went to the Isle of Skye to partake in a bit of sea kayaking. Gentle readers, I take great pleasure in telling you that Skye, being an island, is completely surrounded by water and therefore offers plenty of paddling opportunities.

Had you visited us on the evening before this little story you would have seen Bob and Clive pondering over the map, armed with a guide book and up to date weather forecast, trying to decide on a plan of action for the following day. Let's imagine that you slipped out for a cup of tea and came back an hour later. You would have been

hard pressed to notice any difference except that we would have looked at more web sites trying to find a more favourable weather forecast. Were you in a philosophical mood you would, perhaps, have been tempted to mutter the phrase, “desperately clutching at straws.”

We eventually came up with a plan which was to launch at the harbour of Elgol and to paddle around Loch Scavaig, a paddle that would give us stunning views of Skye's iconic Black Cuillin Hills. I was quite looking forward to that but then I turned over the page in the guide book and came upon a description of Spar Cave which, among other things, included sentences like, “Don't be tempted to paddle on by.” and, “One of the natural wonders of Scotland.” To reach Spar Cave you can launch at Elgol Harbour but instead of heading out into Loch Scavaig you turn left and hug the coast for three and a half miles until you come upon the huge entrance canyon. (So the guidebook informed us). It sounded easy and thus a new plan was hatched and a celebratory beer was consumed. As a plus this paddle would still give us views of the Black Cuillin Hills, but from a distance.

Next day we arrived at Elgol. We took the last parking places, unloaded boats, got changed and generally prepared ourselves for our adventure. Bob looked at Loch Scavaig and mentioned that the wind wasn't as strong as the forecast had

led us to believe but before he could propose a revised plan I stamped my feet, threw my teddies around and said, “I want to see Spar Cave.” probably with more feeling that I should have but the result was that a few minutes later we set off with Spar Cave as our objective.

I knew that we were going to have a good day because almost right away we passed a few jellyfish and didn't stop to take photographs. I didn't know such a thing was possible but apparently it is, how very enlightening.

Elgol is situated on the west side of the Strathaird Peninsula and Spar Cave is on the east side, so in fairly calm conditions our route took us around the southern tip of the peninsular and outside the low island of Eilean na h-Airde. (Eilean means island but the rest of it is a complete mystery.) The scenery was just as you would expect from Skye, an island which is renowned as a geologist's playground.



Photo by Joy: Port an Luig Mhoir with Ben Mealbost in the Background

We then journeyed along the east coast of the Strathaird Peninsula accompanied by a few inquisitive seals, but Spar Cave's huge entrance canyon eluded us. We pressed on and eventually landed for lunch on a pebbly beach that was occupied by midges, another one of Scotland's natural wonders as in "I wonder where all those midges come from?" For added realism you may like to insert a few expletives in between "those" and "midges". Much time was spent pondering and perusing the map before we re-launched to retrace our paddle strokes. In fairly short time Adam, Ian & Karen alighted onto a rocky ledge to explore a cave, the location of which did not match the guidebook's



Photo by Joy: The End of the Hugely Impressive Spar Cave

description of Spar Cave, while just a few yards further on I found a large gully that could, with a bit of imagination, be called a canyon and at the back of which was a path leading up into the cliff. On investigation it transpired that Spar Cave was lurking at the top of this path. I indicated to Bob and Joy what I had found and they joined me in the gully. We had a quick debate about going back to fetch the others but decided that with three boats on the beach our whereabouts would be fairly obvious.

We had come prepared with head torches. Bob has a particularly bright specimen that comes with a warning not to shine it into people's faces, but he discovered that if you leave it switched on for a few hours while you paddle it becomes incredibly dim, emitting absolutely no light whatsoever. Being intrepid PPCA explorers we coped admirably, Joy making good use of the torch on her phone.



Photo by Joy: Bob Retreating Down the Flowstone Staircase

Spar Cave is truly amazing. After a short muddy passage it turns a corner and you shine your torch up onto a towering staircase of flowstone. (*Flowstone: A layered deposit of calcium carbonate or another mineral, formed by water flowing along the walls or floor of a cave. thefreedictionary.*) This staircase looks like a glacier but when you step onto it you realise that it isn't at all slippery. We scrambled to the top to find stalagmites and stalactites along with columns and other patches of flowstone. We did the usual thing of turning off all our torches (an easy task for Bob) just to see just how dark dark can be. (The answer is very). After taking

many photographs and simply wondering at this geological marvel we returned to the entrance. I experienced the somewhat strange feeling that someone had stuffed a coat hanger into my mouth, but then I realised that all my discomfort was simply the result of me grinning like a Cheshire cat. I suggested to Bob that this was probably better than a close up view of the Black Cuillin Hills. Bob didn't argue.

We were a bit surprised that the others hadn't joined us so we re-launched and paddled back to where we last saw them. They had gone. Looking around they were no-where to be seen so Bob and Joy assumed that they hadn't seen our boats and had gone on back to Elgol. (Bob and Joy rejected my theory that they had been abducted by aliens.) We followed and as we rounded the southern end of the peninsular we found that the wind had picked up and that we were paddling into a force three that made for quite choppy conditions. Eventually, with just over half a mile to paddle, we looked up to see Adam and Ian standing on top of the cliff waving at us. I don't have the balancing skills of my paddling companions so there was no way that I was going to take my hands off my paddle to return this greeting but I assume that my more stable paddling friends did. Everyone was pleased to see each other and once we were re-united Adam, Ian and Karen informed us that our guess was correct, they hadn't seen our boats in the canyon and had duly returned to our start point. (Not aliens then.)

The mention of Spar cave still makes my happy muscles twitch but I am a little sad that only half the group witnessed such a uniquely brilliant place. We completed the day with an ice cream which we consumed looking out over Loch Scavaig and the beautiful Black Cuillin Hills. The distance covered was just nine miles but a very memorable day's paddling for all that.

Next time, don't miss The 2019 Scottish Isles trilogy part two. We went to Staffa.



Photo by Joy: Bob in Choppy Conditions with the Black Cullin Hills Behind

The Fabulous Five Go Paddling by The Krafty Kayaker

Allow me to introduce you to some new club paddlers who have joined recently. I will tell you a bit about them so that if you meet you might recognise them. Although these paddlers are completely fictional and bear no resemblance whatever to past, present or future members of our club, you might nevertheless think “haven’t I met someone a bit like that before?”

(Note from the Author: it is hoped no-one will take offence as we all have some of these characteristics).

The Leader: wise even beyond his/her years, immense experience and first class kayaking skills. Sound in mind and body except for a dependency on cake at lunchtime.

The Ancient Mariner: not as wise as his years but completely reliable in a crisis. Extracts maximum value from his kit and considers buying anything new a scandalous wanton luxury.

Median Middling: is really quite average, neither short nor tall, does not like it hot but feels the cold. Politely accepts half a piece of cake at lunchtime. Might try 3* next year.

Victoria Sponge: has become somewhat of an institution, no paddle would be complete without him/her (them?), probably the most popular member of the club.

Ginger Bread or his sister Lava: youngsters, both could swim before they could walk. Ginger first rolled a kayak before the age of six. Are usually dumped on the Leader by their parents on the way to Tesco’s. Freely tell maturer paddlers how to improve.

The Fabulous Five are always accompanied on their paddles by an avatar (on the cloud - where else) who watches over them for good or bad. This extra-terrestrial being is quite capricious so we will refer to it as Lucky or Shortstraw depending on the prevailing mood.

We will follow the fortunes of the Fabulous Five through the summer. Possibly they might have a few incidents to deal with. These will be faithfully reported and laughed about. And who knows we might even learn something.

The Amazing Disappearing Hatch Cover

“Lovely day for a paddle” said Median. “Yeah, looks perfect just a bit of chop later but we’ll be OK round Bovisand” was the response.

Says Ginger “you need a new hatch cover mate”.

“Funny you should say that, I’ve been thinking about it for years, only had it for 20” replied the Ancient Mariner.

At lunch Shortstraw glanced down from the cloud, noted the freshening breeze and thought “Let’s have a bit of fun”

Funnily enough, a bit later, when the Five got off the beach in small surf, the sea was more lumpy than choppy. There followed three plops. The first was a wave dropping onto the Ancient Mariner’s foredeck, the second was the hatch disappearing into the briny leaving just a dangling piece of binder twine. The third plop filled the hatch near to the brim.

At that point the Ancient Mariner’s spray deck split like a wet paper bag.

They took it in turns but water slopped into the hatch faster than they could pump. “Where’s that bin liner?” asked the Leader.

“Last seen at Paddlefest with the re-cycling”

Up above Lucky was sympathetic: “Poor man, rotten kit but his re-cycling credentials are in the right place. I’ll get the tide to help”

And so it did. Minutes later an eddy swept the group out of the ebbing tide and into Bovisand harbour. The

Leader took charge. "Get your survival bag out, take this tow rope, tie the bag round the hatch and cover your cockpit"

Well, they did eventually get back and later, in the bar, told me all about it.

That's it from me. Aye and Anon.

The Krafty Kayaker.

The Long View - a word from the Canny Coach

Did it work or was the survival bag so large that it acted as a drogue? Is it possible to tie a tow rope tightly round a hatch? What else could they have done?

Two lemons and you can cope. Another throw and you could end up with three lemons and a minor epic.

Purpose, conditions, skills, destination all lined up. In theory nothing could go wrong on a day like that. But it did. Check your kit, check your buddy's kit. Had the Ancient Mariner checked his properly, all would have been OK.

Responsibility for the group starts with paddler.

Safe paddling.

The Canny Coach

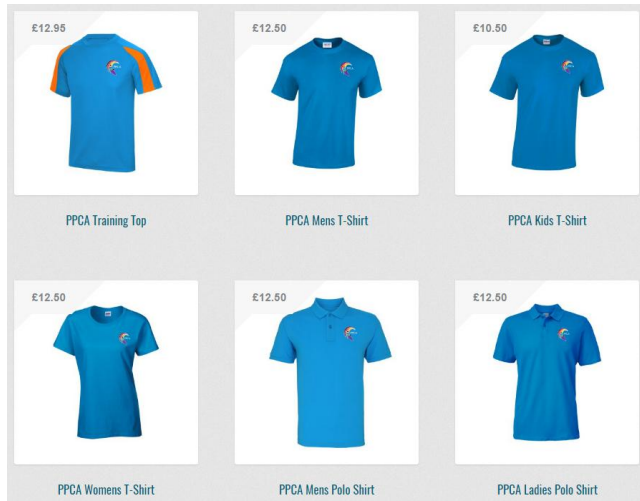
Watch out for next month's Fabulous Five Go Paddling adventure: "Zip Me Up".

Exchange and Mart

PPCA Club Clothing by Jackie Perry, Publicity Officer

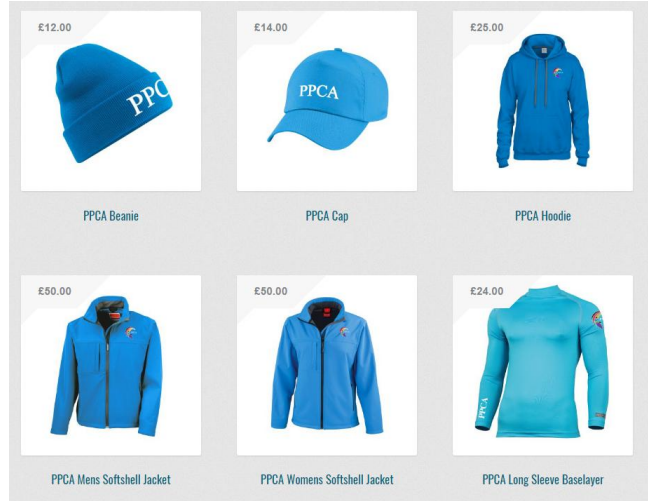
A full range of customised kit in either blue or black is available to order direct from Tailored Branding via the link below

<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 Check Website for Updates

For the Diary

2nd to 4th August Open Canoe Wye trip

Recreational Paddles (Saturdays)

6th July - Joy Ashford (Sea Paddle)

13th July - Gig race at Mount Batten

20th July - Gavin Bennett

27th July - Terry Calcott

3rd August - Terry Calcott (Sea Paddle)

10th August - Brim(Fastnet Week)

17th August - Andy Kittle

24th August - Joy Ashford

31st August - Bob Grose

Open Canoe (Friday)

5th July - NO SESSION

12th July - Brim

19th July - Sam Pluckrose

26th July - Jen Nicholls

2nd August - NO SESSION

9th August - Pete Anderson (Fastnet week)

16th August - Brim

23rd August - Sam Pluckrose

30th August - Jen Nicholls

Intermediate Sea Paddles (Sundays)

21st July - Clive Ashford

18th August - Clive Ashford

Courses

4th July - Intro - Ken Hamblin

13th July - Intro - Jane Hitchings

10th August - Intro - Andy Kittle

Evening Sessions (Tuesdays)

2nd July	Explore Award - Brim Late Start - Sam Pluckrose Rec Paddle - Clive Ashford Sea Award - Ken Hamblin	9th July	Explore Award - Brim Late Start - Sam Pluckrose Rec Paddle - Clive Ashford Sea Award - Dave Fisher
16th July	Explore Award - Brim Late Start - Sam Pluckrose Rec Paddle - Clive Ashford Sea Award - Dave Fisher	23rd July	Explore Award - Terry Calcott Late Start - Jenny Nicholls Rec Paddle - Alan Ede Sea Award - Ken Hamblin
30th July	Explore Award - Terry Calcott Late Start - Jenny Nicholls Rec Paddle - Alan Ede Sea Award - Ken Hamblin	6th August	Explore Award - Terry Calcott Late Start - Jenny Nicholls Rec Paddle - Alan Ede Sea Award - Ken Hamblin
13th August	Explore Award - Terry Calcott Late Start - Jenny Nicholls Rec Paddle - Alan Ede Sea Award - Ken Hamblin	20th August	Explore Award - Pete Anderson Late Start - Brim Rec Paddle - Andy Kittle Sea Award - Clive Ashford
27th August	Explore Award - Pete Anderson Late Start - Brim Rec Paddle - Andy Kittle Sea Award - Clive Ashford		

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