



PPCA Newsletter

November 2020

Introduction

Welcome to November's Newsletter. Regular readers of the scientific press may well have noticed a recent article concerning the discovery of a new form of dinosaur in the shape of a fossil found at the back of a museum drawer in Brighton. A rummage in the editor's drawers unfortunately failed to find any new dinosaurs but we do have a piece by Clive by way of compensation. Adam also comes to the aid of the party by continuing our occasional series of pictures of club members in other publications.

Editorial

Another month, another lockdown. As someone who works in the NHS, albeit at a safe distance from the front line, I'm certainly not going to argue with the need for a lockdown but, to reduce a world-wide catastrophe to a totally trivial level, if nobody's paddling then nobody's writing about paddling so the Newsletter gets thinner each month. It's becoming increasingly obvious that everyone's physical and, perhaps more subtly, mental health is suffering under the strains of this year. Let's hope we're all out paddling again soon.

Fortunately the editor is not one given to toilet humour, otherwise Clive's description of our chair as a Number 2 Coach would have provoked some slight amusement.

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 photographs are from Andy, Terry and Joy

Features

A New Season by Clive Ashford (Photos by Joy)

I was going to write up the story of the club's first white water trip of the 2020-21 river season. It would have gone something like this: It was grey, cold and windy. We paddled the lower Dart. Some people got wet and then we went home. I came to the conclusion that this wasn't very interesting and decided to try something else. I can't pretend that this something else is any more interesting, but it was more fun to write.

A digression to set the tone. Regular readers of my literary masterpieces will be familiar with the term "White-water warrior". Regular readers of the PPCA's delightful newsletter will have noticed that in his introduction to the October issue editor Ivor used that term. I couldn't decide whether to sue for plagiarism or to accept that imitation is the highest form of flattery. In the end I decided that being flattered made me feel smug and as I like feeling smug, I would happily settle for imitation being the highest form of flattery.

I don't know if you've noticed this but I am a little bit old fashioned. The particular dinosaur in this little missive is my trait for not paddling white water during the summer months. Today our white-water warriors (to use the term in its rightful place) will take to the frothy stuff at the first hint of rain, but in the old days, that is in my day, there was a river season. As a rule, that season ran from 1 October until the middle of March. (Because river trips need water, and because the winter months tend to be our wettest time of year, the club still sticks to this season.) The upshot of this was that as our Tuesday night training sessions came to a somewhat dimpsy end in September, we river paddlers would check over our river kit and count down the days to October. Those of us with an interest in Morris Dancing may, or may not, have been seen practicing our rain dances. I put that in simply to put an image into your mind of me prancing around waving a hankie, bashing sticks together and jangling bells. I confess that I did try Morris Dancing once and I can assure you that its very exhausting, but I digress, again.



A white-water warrior (Steve)

Covid-19. You are probably a little bit fed up with Covid-19 but I have found two little pandemic silver linings.

1) My boats became home to numerous 6 and 8 legged beasties. It's a good job I'm not a vegan because once we were allowed out to play again in July these wee beasties became homeless.

2) The house had a distinct lack of wet suit boot aroma.

At this juncture it may be wise to remind you that in an article written in some previous epoch I referred to our white-water novices and beginners as "Wobbly Bobs." I see no reason not to continue using this term of endearment.

Under the guidance of Club leader Marty, it was decided that the club river season would go ahead. There would be 2 named coaches each week, meaning that we could paddle in 2 groups of up to 6 in each group, and that in order to keep as safe as reasonably possible face coverings would be worn while paddlers were car sharing, both to and from the river and during the shuttle. I observe that these face coverings probably improved our looks.

So, I was nominated as number 1 coach for the first trip of the season on 4 October and Ken was going to be number 2 coach. During the week leading up to the 4th Ken and I studied the weather forecast with utmost diligence. By the time Sunday came around we had probably accounted for every drop of water that had fallen onto the Devon countryside and had noted just how many of those drops had trickled, or maybe gushed, into our watercourses. Plans were made, largely based on the tried and tested formula of previous years, and were advertised on the unbeatable medium of the club website forum. As far as I am concerned the website forum is the cutting edge of modern technology, long live the website forum.

Suitably informed 11 keen and eager paddlers gathered together on the river bank adjacent to Holne weir, all excitedly anticipating a run down the Lower Dart, a very pleasant river that allows our Wobbly Bobs to acquire river skills and an equally pleasant river on which our experienced paddlers can hone their skills/dark arts. The Lower Dart has 6 named features, (7 if you include Holne Weir) they are: The Anvil, School Rapid, Broken Weir, Island Rapid, Furzeleigh Wier and The Narrows. In between these features are many little jets, chutes and waves that form



Young Jack

an ideal learning environment for our Wobbly Bobs. For the white-water novice the learning curve is steep and unforgiving and comes with a new vocabulary that includes such phrases as: eddy, break in, break out, ferry glide, standing wave, stopper, upstream V, downstream V, and swimming. (The latter is often post fixed with the word "again," "not again" or even "yet again".)

Probably due to the decimated summer programme young Jack was the only complete river novice on this trip. Let me tell you about young Jack. He's young and he's called Jack and he smiles a lot. He smiles so much that he makes a Cheshire Cat look positively grumpy. Jack spent the day learning river skills,

improving his swimming skills and teaching us old timers that smiling is infectious. Jack also taught us that it is possible to smile whilst cold, I have a memory of white teeth framed by a blue face. Whilst Jack did give our white-water warriors plenty of rescue practice his progress up the learning curve was impressive, well done Jack.

Some people had forgotten some of their river skills. Adam is one such person as demonstrated by his boat launching into the river with Adam standing on the bank watching helplessly. Luckily Adam wears a dry suit so swimming after his craft was just humiliating and embarrassing rather than cold. Made me smile though.

Some people found new skills. Joy, the club's latest honorary member, (about time too) found a stopper to surf on all on her own, which is quite possibly a first for her.

Our group included Ken's grandson George. I note that they are looking more like each other with each passing year, the main distinguishing difference is that George is the one smiling.

Your favourite correspondent proved his lack of river reading skills by getting things horribly wrong on Furzeleigh Weir and ending up far wetter than he had anticipated and leaking some of his precious blood. Thanks for your sympathy. In case you were wondering I'm told that Old Speckled Hen is just the thing with which to replace lost body fluids. Oh, you've ignored that haven't you?



Ken and George

Quite often our October river trips are graced by warm autumn sunshine. It's not unusual to sit beside Broken Weir having a snack while watching our white-water warriors playing in the stopper and surfing the adjacent standing wave, all the time accompanied by leaves softly falling from the trees like gentle golden snowflakes. Today wasn't one of those days. The weather was dull, grey and cold so we didn't tarry. Instead we pressed on down to Buckfast where we changed in a windswept layby dodging the shower. Oh, the joys of river paddling, we must do it again.

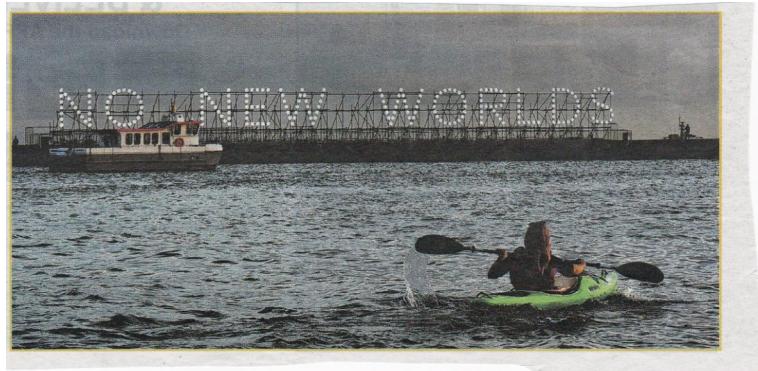
So, to sum up, it was grey, cold and windy. We paddled the lower Dart. Some people got wet and then we went home.

Plymouth Chronicle by Adam Coulson

I don't always read the Plymouth Chronicle that pops through our letterbox from time to time. However the other day I found two paddlesport images within it's pages. The first is of one of our members and leaders who most of you will recognise. Well done Gavin for lending support to Neil in this brilliant swimming achievement. I know it's first light but do I see Gavin yawning?

The second image is clearly NOT a PPCA member. Can anybody see why not? Answers on a postcard

Editor's Note: the whole story and a couple of very nice photos can be read by clicking [here](#)



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://hsclighting.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.



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

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