



PPCA Newsletter



July 2017

Introduction

Welcome to July's Newsletter. Rather thin stuff this month, I'm afraid as most of the original contributions come from some chap calling himself "The Editor". Sorry about that. I'm sure the quality of the Newsletter will return to its usual standard next month.

Editorial

Sometimes, what seems to be a silly question turns out not to be so silly at all.

While we were away at the Bob Ottley event in Axmouth, sitting around the camp fire, taking after-dinner refreshment, we were approached by one of the other participants who asked us "what exactly do you mean by a high tide?". Fortunately, we hadn't taken so much refreshment that we couldn't keep a straight face but there was a loud thud as all our jaws dropped simultaneously. Andy was the first to recover his composure and gave a pretty creditable answer in the circumstances. It turned out that the lady in question came from a club based in the Cotswolds with members from places like Worcestershire and Chippenham which are believed to exist somewhere beyond Bristol. They were good paddlers who paddle rivers, lakes and white water but because of their location, they never go on the sea. They had come on the weekend to improve their sea skills, of which more later. So the moral is, if you come across one of these poor benighted creatures, please treat them gently. They may turn out to know more than you think.

Ivor Jones

Newsletter Editor

The Committee

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Club President	Joy Ashford		

Next Committee Meeting

The next committee meeting will presumably be at some point in August but, as I'm writing this before the July meeting has taken place, I don't have the date. If you have any points you wish to raise, please contact Bob Grose secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

To All PPCA Members by Terry Calcott, Vice Chair

It is important that the PPCA membership is kept up to date with any developments happening in the club. For those club members who are not aware the club committee has had a number of resignations recently with both the Chair and Club Leader stepping down. Ian Brim has stepped in to take on the role as Club Leader and I will carry out the duties of Chair. The committee now has 10 standing members, this will be enough to make a quorum at committee meetings and to achieve the required numbers to vote on any important club business. It was discussed if an EGM should be held but the consensus was that with the summer holidays imminent the committee in its present form could carry on until the club AGM in October.

A plea to all club members to please think about coming forward at the AGM and standing for one of the committee posts. The club continues to run and function due to the hard work of the many volunteers on the committee, coaching staff and helpers in various guises. I have only been on this current committee for a few months but have been impressed by the dedication of everyone and the amount of time and effort they give to their various roles.

As we are now into July I thought I would take this opportunity to give you a quick review of how I see the club is doing. There are some positives and also some areas of concern. Financially the club is doing well. The negatives are that the club Tuesday evening sessions should be thriving, but the number of members coming along are very low compared to recent years. Another observation is the lack of members coming forward to train as new coaches and ultimately take over the mantle from our experienced club coaches. Our governing body BC is about to announce a complete overhaul of the present coaching scheme and launch a new scheme in the near future. If there are any aspiring coaches out there please come forward and have a chat with one of the club coaches to find out more.

Another area of concern is that the various club recreational paddles have seen very few new club members joining in. These paddles continue to be supported by a core of dedicated club paddlers who regularly attend. I know time constraints are a problem for many but without the club members supporting the organised club sessions they may gradually reduce and potentially cease to be run. The club continues to offer a variety of Paddlepower, Taster and Intro courses to introduce new paddlers into the sport. But again numbers attending these are not what they used to be. July should be one of the peak months for attracting new paddlers but this weekend we ran a 1 star course with only 2 people on it. Although not of concern yet the current trend is that the club membership is starting to shrink. To finish on a positive note we now have a newly fitted out members shed and a club shed with a lot of new kit and a number of new boats for the members to use.

The easy thing would be to ignore what is happening and just carry on until the next AGM and let the new committee sort things out. But it is important to know what the current club membership wants and needs from its club. I was thinking about organising an online survey similar to what we have had in previous years. But I think the best thing is for club members to send me their thoughts, ideas, aspirations, wants, wishes. Then I can collate the information and take it to the committee with a view to passing some suggestions onto the new committee after the AGM.

Please continue to support your club at every opportunity and whenever you can.

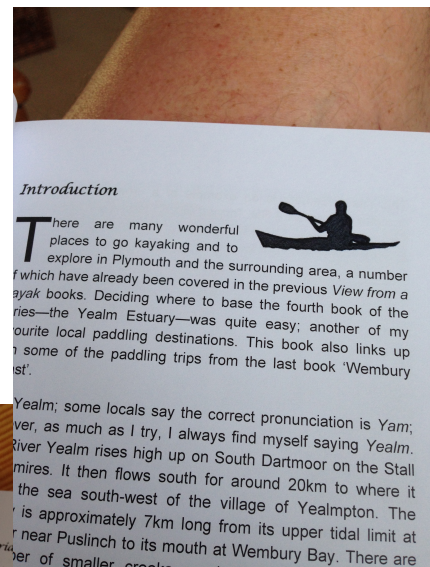
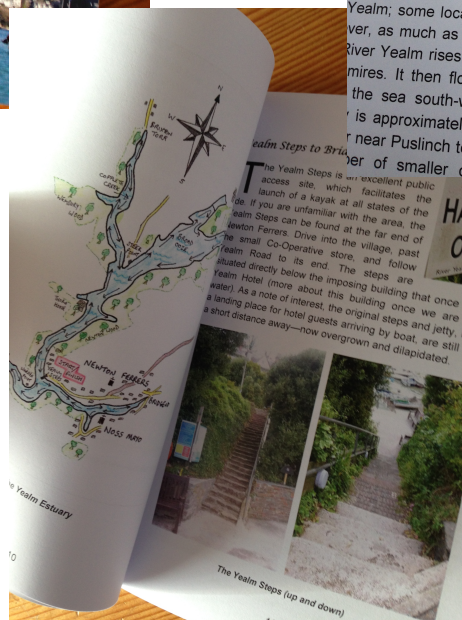
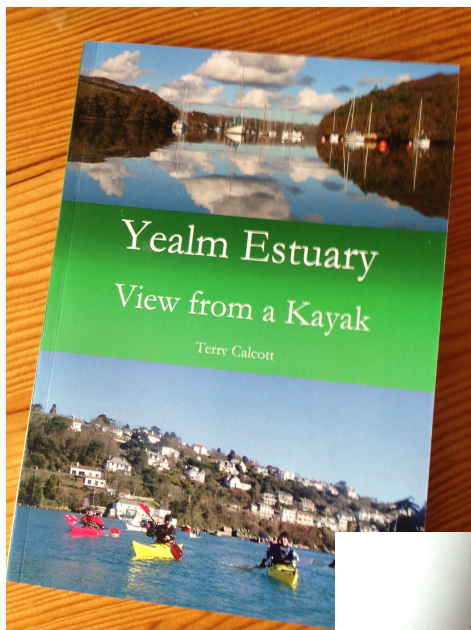
View From a Kayak 4 by Terry Calcott

A little good news to brighten up your day.

I would like to offer all past readers of the View from a Kayak series of books the opportunity to pre-order book number 4, titled the **Yealm Estuary**.

It follows much the same format as before and most of you will appear in the book, some more than others. I have attached a couple of photos from the draft copy to give you an idea of the content.

This book is currently at the printers and should arrive in a few weeks' time. If you would like a copy please let me know as it is a limited first print run. Price is £6 per copy with all profit going to Plymouth RNLI.



Bob's Open Canoe Weekend by The Editor

Bob's Open Canoe Weekend (or "The Bob Ottley" as it's known down here) is an annual event put on by the Axe Vale Canoe club in conjunction with the OCA where, for roughly 30 years, open boaters from much of the south of England have gathered together in a field in Axmouth to eat and drink and participate in the occasional paddle.



Axe Vale always do us proud with a long paddle to Lyme Regis, a shorter paddle to Beer, a trip down the River Axe and one- and three-star skills sessions. This year quite a large contingent from Plymouth went up, largely PPCA members but also some "Friends of Ian's" a term which covered pretty well everyone on the weekend. We got there in time to bag a corner of the campsite where we set up a ring of vehicles and tents and, most importantly the washing machine drum firepit. Many thanks to Andy for borrowing the K&P van and trailer to transport some boats which made the trip much easier. The PPCA also provided the only paddler not in an open boat – Steve in his sit-on-top¹ attracted some interesting questions.

On the first day we divided up among the various trips in glorious summer sunshine.

One of the trips went to plan. The river trip, apparently, was excellent - a nice relaxed paddle and plenty of damsel flies.

The Beer trip managed to bypass Beer altogether and didn't manage to get to Branscombe either because of the winds. That said, everyone who went on it raved about it, the scenery making up for the lack of crab sandwiches.

Merryl, Mark, Tracy and I decided to go on the Lyme trip. If what follows is a rather long account, it's because it was a rather long day. Jeff, the coach who took the trip said it was a 14-mile trip that should take about four hours and we would be back by four o'clock. That was important as Chris from Axe Vale was going to present Ian Ruse's daughter Rachel with Ian's Lifetime Achievement Award from the OCA at 6. The timing seemed a little optimistic but given the calmness of the sea and the relatively calm wind nobody was terribly worried. We should have got a



clue when Jeff asked if anyone was paddling solo and seven or eight hands went up. His face fell a bit and he said "that might affect our timing a little bit". In fairness to the solo paddlers, they did phenomenally well in the circumstances and one chap in a [PakCanoe](#) was out-pacing the tandem boats for most of the way.



We got to Lyme in about three hours with the wind behind us. The sky was blue, the sea was calm and the water clear and Mediterranean in colour. All was right with the world. Several of the solo paddlers had sails which, once they got them rigged had them shooting out ahead of us. Looking at my GPS, we were doing 3-4mph most of the way and, even though we only had an hour left of our 4 hours, we still thought we would be back in time for the presentation.

¹ Note for next year, Steve – there's a clue in the title of the weekend

Then the fun began.

The wind that had been behind us for the journey there was now in our faces. It had also got considerably stronger. One of the local coaches estimated it as a Force 3. That was clearly on the Axmouth wind scale where you divide the wind speed by 2 before converting it to the Beaufort scale. We did the trip in three stages with a couple of stops on beaches. In the first stage, the tandem boats completely outpaced the solos for obvious reasons and we were in danger of the group splitting up completely. At the first stop, some of the Axe Vale members who had been paddling



tandem took over some of the solo boats to give the solo paddlers a rest. They swapped again at the second stop so all the soloists had a breather of some sort. I have to take my hat off to Tash from Axe Vale who, when he thought one of the tandems was getting too far ahead accelerated past us and caught them up. Our speed fell and fell as time went on going down from about 2mph for the first half to barely above 1mph as we got closer to Axmouth and the wind got even stronger. We kept telling ourselves that the harbour entrance was just around the next corner but the corners just kept on coming. We finally got back after about 4½ hours of paddling into the wind (estimated as the upper end of a Force 4). Again, hats off to Tash who went ahead and guided us safely through the currents to shore. We bypassed the notorious harbour mouth and paddled up to the club house to be helped up the slip by relays of Axe Vale members.

We started paddling just before 10:00 and returned at about 19:00. The journey back from Lyme had taken longer than the original estimate of the whole trip. Fortunately, they delayed the presentation to Rachel until later in the evening when everyone had had a chance to have a shower and eat something.



On the water, we just put our heads down and kept on paddling. Despite the effort required, everyone stayed in good humour and we all really enjoyed it, albeit in a rather strange way. On land, they were on the point of calling the harbour master to send out a rescue boat for us. Our first clue of their concern was when we spotted Chris from the club on the beach the best part of a mile from Axmouth who was obviously looking out for us. The look of relief on his face was clear, even from where we were out at sea. Apparently their main concern was that if we had turned back to Lyme, there wouldn't have been anyone sober left on the campsite to pick us up.

Strangely, there weren't any takers for the Lyme trip the next day and everyone who had been out to sea on the Saturday went up the river on the Sunday. That was a rather different trip...



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

Club Calendar

I'm afraid this will be unavailable for a while - could everyone please check the [website](#) for updates?