



PPCA Newsletter

March 2018



Introduction

Welcome to March's Newsletter. This month we look at the weather, smartphone apps and boat sales and there's a chance to get your chicken suit or Green Man outfit on.

Editorial

It seems slightly bizarre to be writing this when there's snow on the ground and the country is in the grip of blizzards but the Tuesday evening sessions are just around the corner. Accordingly, my piece on the different types of sessions gets its annual airing and Clive has some information for those of a sea kayaking persuasion. These sessions will of course require coaches and helpers. If you're interested in helping, please see Ian's piece.

The first evening talk was cancelled because of appalling weather but the talk by David Scott is still going ahead so please make a note in your diaries.

Ivor Jones

Newsletter Editor

The Committee

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Club President	Joy Ashford		01752 34425

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.

Sessions for Spring and Summer by The Editor

Tuesday Evenings

This year, we are planning the following sessions

- **Two Star** – Basic skills such as paddling in a straight line, forwards, backwards and sideways and rescues. A joint award in kayaks and open boats so you will need half a dozen or so sessions in open boats. Bear in mind that we only have a few open boats so, if everyone leaves it to the last minute, somebody will be disappointed. Involves getting wet
- **Three Star** – Skills at a higher level. Recommended for those who want to do white water over the winter or those who simply want to paddle safely in all conditions. Involves getting wet.
- **Recreational Paddle** – For those who just want to go for a sociable paddle. There are no formal requirements for this session but please bear in mind that it involves two hours or so of more or less continuous paddling so you will need to have developed some skills and stamina in order to get the best out of the session. Probably won't involve getting wet. Probably.
- **Open Boat** – At the moment no specific training sessions are scheduled, largely due to a shortage of available coaches (there's a hint there). This will be looked at at a later date as it is a requirement for two star. Open boaters are welcome to join the recreational paddle¹ or two star group or to organise a peer paddle.

All sessions, unless otherwise advertised, will start at 18:00 prompt ON THE WATER, so please allow plenty of time to get changed, get your boat out, stand around moaning about the weather etc. If you arrive late it will be at the coach's discretion whether you are allowed to join the group. At the beginning and end of the season in particular, sunset is early and our time on the water is limited so we need a prompt start to get the most from the session.

The syllabuses for Two and Three Star are available on the [website](#). It's a good idea to download the syllabus and tick off the bits you're happy with. The coaches will cover all aspects of the syllabus but it is down to each paddler to make sure they are competent in each area. If you're in any doubt, please ask a coach who will be delighted to tell you how competent you are.

Friday Evenings

Friday evenings will be a recreational paddle with the emphasis on open boats but others are welcome to come along. Some coaching will be available for the open boats but the emphasis will be on having a relaxed end of week paddle. The sessions will be a mixture of longer and shorter paddles depending on who turns up.

Saturday Paddles

These will continue throughout the season, 10:00 on the water. Everyone is welcome and they are an excellent chance to put into practice the skills you've learned on Tuesdays on a longer paddle. They're also a chance to get to know people and to see the local area from a different viewpoint. Highly recommended.

The first paddle of each month will be a sea paddle, in sea kayaks. On three Saturdays, in April, May and September, there will be an additional intermediate sea kayak trip, usually somewhere away from Mount Batten so please read on.....

¹ Editor's note: It might be wise to go tandem on the rec paddle as open boats are a bit slower than kayaks.

Sea Kayaking Anyone? By Clive Ashford

You will be aware that the club runs a sea kayak trip on the first Saturday of each month and jolly good fun they are too if I say so myself, but I am planning more sea kayaking exploits over the course of 2018. This is what I am planning.

Sea kayak training on Tuesday evenings.

Over the last two years we have run some sea kayak training sessions on Tuesdays evenings. They have been either wet, very wet or just plain soaking as we practice our rescue and rolling skills. I am going to run three more of these sessions this year on 1, 15 & 22 May. 18:00 on the water at Mount Batten. These sessions are aimed at those that are / were of a 3* standard and who wish to retain / regain these skills. The plastic club sea kayaks are available for these sessions.

Tide race training.

Although it's not a particularly big tide we will play in the Devils Point tide race and then do some equally interesting things around Drakes Island. Once again this session is aimed at the 3* paddler. The date for this session is 28 July. The plastic club sea kayaks are available for this session. Watch the forum for more details nearer the date.

Intermediate sea kayak trips.

As with the last two years I am again going to run some intermediate sea kayak trips. These will hopefully be a bit more challenging than our first Saturday in the month trips and we will try to go away for each of these. These trips are for anyone who finds the first Saturday of the month paddle fairly easy and who wants to do something a bit more interesting. The dates for these are: 21 April, 19 May, 22 September. All club boats will be available for these trips. Watch the forum for more details nearer the date.

Overnight camp.

There will be an overnight camp on 14 – 15 July. Weather permitting the plan is to paddle from Mount Batten to Ayrmer Cove, camp at Ayrmer Cove and return the next day. Approx mileage is 16 each day on a reasonably exposed coastline, intermediate level paddling is required. Watch the forum for more details nearer the date.

Club Helpers by Ian Brimacombe, Club Leader

With the season approaching I would like to get an up to date helpers list. If you would like to help on any of the PPCA activities then could you make your interest known either on the forum or on the Facebook page. DBS checking is required but this can be done by the club's welfare officer at no cost to the helper.

Boat Sales by Pete Anderson, Equipment Officer

The club has now funds to replace the composite sea kayak fleet and the plastic Cappella.

We also need to make space in the general purpose racks.

The following boats are up for sale:

- Blue Romany sea kayak
- Yellow Romany sea kayak
- Fuego Blue sea kayak
- Orange Capella sea kayak
- 2x Perception SPARC GP kayaks
- 1x Perception ARC GP kayak.

The format this time will be sealed bids, to be sent to myself by the 31st of March.

Please note each boat has a reserve.

All kayaks will be sold as seen and any inspection is welcomed. If you require access to the club shed, please feel free to make an appointment with myself.

Easter Paddle, Saturday 31st March, Wembury Beach by Terry Calcott

The Easter paddle will start & finish from Wembury beach. Meet at the beach car park (GR 518484), ready to paddle for 10:30, (0930 at Mountbatten for club equipment).

It has become a PPCA tradition over the years that paddlers dress in some form of Easter theme. We also have a communal feast of Easter food to share with each other. Details will be posted on the forum nearer the date.

Where we paddle from will still be dependent on the weather/sea conditions on the day (if inclement it will be from MB).

Also please phone, e-mail or post on the forum to let me know if you are coming along.

07828652775 or terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk



I'm just written a story and I invite you to read it. If you are so inclined make yourself a cup of something soothing and then relax for a few minutes, you deserve it. Reading on is optional.

Photo by Clive



Ice sculptures along the Devonport Leat

For this particular tale I need to set the scene, so imagine if you will a week in which the first three days brought cold, dry easterly winds, winds that sucked the moisture out of the air, froze the surface of Dartmoor and caused beautiful ice sculptures to form along the Devonport Leat. Now imagine these three days followed by a further two days of cold, easterly winds accompanied by a weather system that dumped a large quantity of snow over the whole country. Finally imagine the resultant chaos as Britain slipped and slid into immobility. Oh how we Brits love a bit of weather.

The news was full of reporters telling us how dangerous it was to travel and that we should stay indoors unless our journeys were absolutely necessary. This information was always imparted by a reporter broadcasting from a remote rural

location depicting a snow covered landscape.

One previously unreported anomaly is that I saw a Waddle of penguins. (According to the Penguins World website the term Waddle is the collective noun for a group of penguins on land. I do the research to bring you such amazing snippets of information; I trust that you appreciate my efforts). In case you were wondering we're just about to get onto the paddling bit, thank you for your indulgence.

So, with Britain under an icy siege I had the task of running the PPCA Sunday river trip, just two days after the scene that I have so carefully set out before you. Staying in bed and staying warm would have won the approval of the nanny state but we are the PPCA and we like to go paddling if at all possible. The forecast was for temperatures to reach a balmy eight degrees and for a little rain to fall. Not knowing exactly how much rain was going to fall or how quickly the temperature rise would cause the snow to melt I decided that running the Loop section of the Dart was going to be our best option.

At 04:00 on Sunday morning the Environment Agency river gauge was showing the river Dart to be running at a low level but the rainfall graph was rising steeply. Heavy rain and thawing snow meant that the river was quite likely to rise and that we wouldn't really know how high the river would be until we were there looking at it. This was far from an ideal set of circumstances but as coping is our watchword, we coped.

Five intrepid paddlers congregated at the Dart and made ready to paddle. We drove to New Bridge and looked at the river level. It was high. (For those that know about these things the water was trickling through the third arch). I wandered away to let people digest the situation and to make some sort of decision without my influence. After a few minutes I returned to see how we were set. Karen had very sensibly decided that she had better things to do, which saved me the problem of telling her that she did indeed have better things to do. (Under the circumstances I suspect that poking herself with a sharp stick would have seemed to Karen like a better thing for her to do). Adam and Mark were keen to give it a go and although Ken seemed a bit less enthusiastic he said that he would join us. So, then there were four.

We gathered around and in order to cover all the health and safety aspects of the trip I gave a detailed briefing. I'll tell you what I said, I said, "Let's make an effort to stay together and let's make an effort to arrive at the bottom in one piece."

This was to be Adam's first trip on such high volume and fast moving water, so I gave him a bit of extra information

Photo by Karen Sargent



The helter skelter, roller coaster, bucking bronco, super dooper whirlwind begins.

regarding what to expect and then we were off. It was a helter skelter, roller coaster, bucking bronco, super dooper whirlwind of a ride. We stopped in a few eddies but generally we just kept on moving with the exception of the rapids known as Triple Two and Three, where Ken, Adam and Mark got out for a look. (I was going to look with them but had failed to make the eddy; I then decided that running the rapids on sight was a far better option than trying to stop).

We are very used to running this river at relatively low levels but it looks completely different swollen with such a high volume of water. Features take on an angry, threatening demeanour, the eddy lines become boil infested areas of unstable water and a lot of the places that people have learnt to know and love at low levels have changed beyond recognition. For people not used to

the river at such a level it all becomes a little disorientating, and I think it's fair to say that Adam was never more than vaguely aware of where he was at any one time!

We arrived at the end of the trip all together and with each of us wearing a huge grin, which leaves me to conclude that my previously mentioned briefing was just about perfect. We had taken under 90 minutes to complete a trip that would normally have taken three hours but were we despondent? Were we heckers, we all thought that it was 90 minutes well spent.

Events

2018 PPCA Bake a Cake Competition and Terry's Talk

Unfortunately, this was cancelled due to the weather. It will be re-scheduled for later in the year so watch this space for details.

PPCA Photograph Competition by Terry Calcott

The entries are in and there will be a poll running via Facebook and the forum to pick the best six. These will be judged by naturalist David Scott and the winner will be announced at his lecture on Monday 19th March at Pomphlett Methodist Church.

There's a handy poster advertising this talk at the end of the Newsletter.

GPS Trackers by The Editor

One of the joys of a smartphone is the number of apps that are available that allow you to bore your family and friends for hours on end. Gone are the days of subjecting them to Super 8 movies of your holidays. Today, you can show them precisely where you were every minute of the day, who you were with and what your heart rate was at the time.

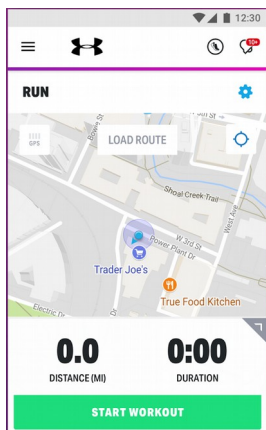
One of the more useful apps for a paddler is a GPS tracker. Before I say what they are, I'll say what they aren't.

They are not designed to be navigational aids. If you don't have a phone signal, they will show your position as a dot on a blank screen. If you want to navigate by GPS get the proper tool or learn to read a map.

They are also not emergency beacons. They might give you a position you can send to the coastguard but they won't send a distress signal and they are purely manual.

Basically they're a bit of fun that will let you look back to see the route you took up the Yealm a couple of years ago or see how long it took you to get from Cawsands to the breakwater with the ferry looming over the horizon.

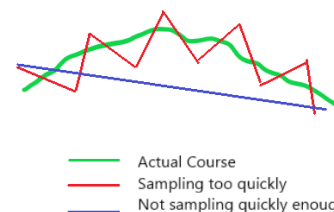
Inevitably, there are a multiplicity of apps available. My personal favourite is Map My Walk but Tracy hates it. Which you choose depends on what you want from it but as far as I can see, there's no need to pay for one, so long as you can put up with the occasional advertisement. Which you choose will depend on what you want from it. Do you want a simple record of where you went? Do you want to know your speed (with split times for each mile)? Do you want to know what your heart rate or stroke rate was?



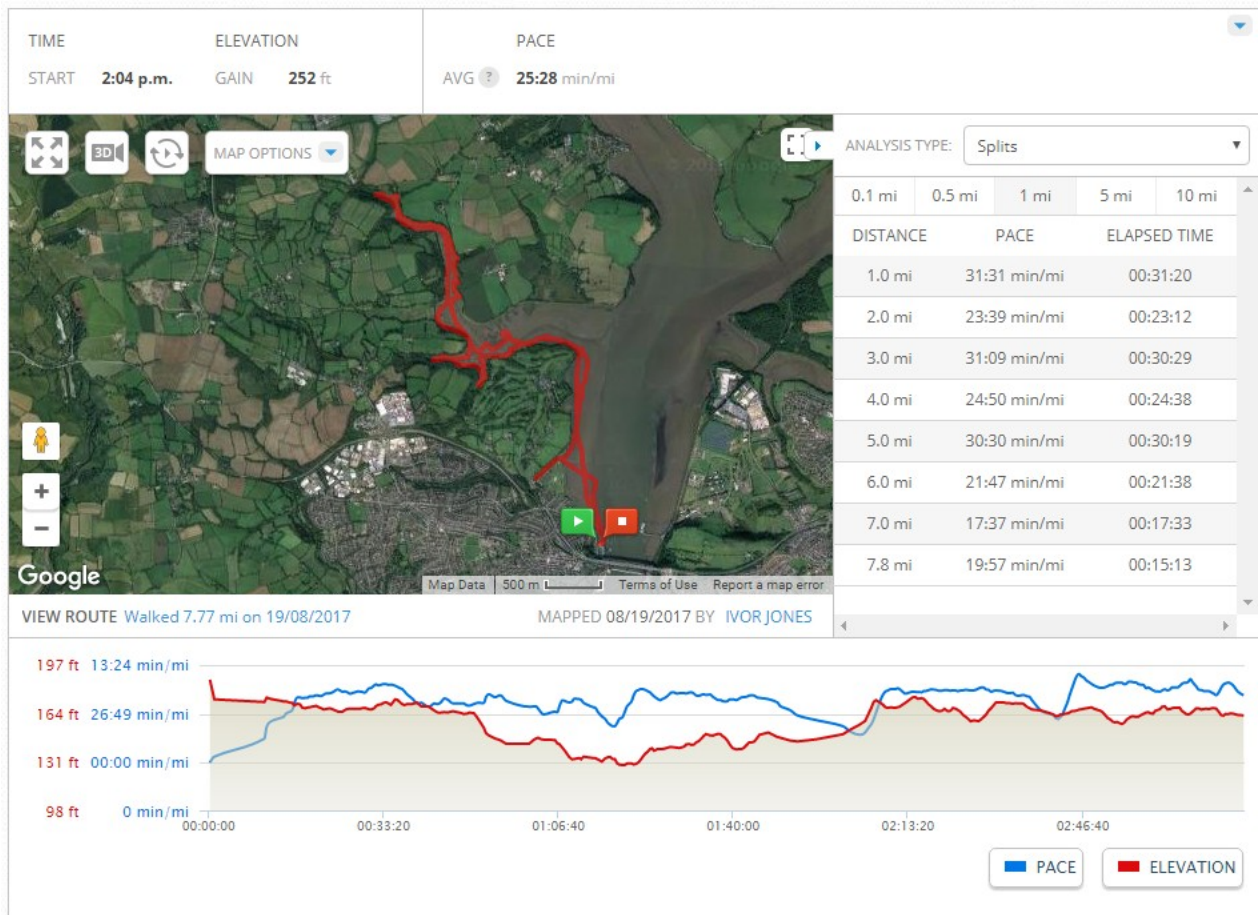
What you get will depend on the format the app records the GPS track in. Without wanting to get too nerdy, there are almost as many formats as there are apps and not all of them will record everything. It's worth doing a little bit of research to make sure your app will record the data you want. There are apps that will translate one format to another but they can't create data that isn't there.

Similarly, you need to think about how you're going to display your track at the end of the day. Google Earth is the obvious and prettiest way but it doesn't display data such as heart rate. You may find that there's a sting in the tale in that the app to record the data is free but you have to buy something to display your track. If you haven't got a GPS on your camera, you can use the track to add locations to your photos. You can also display the track on electronic navigation charts which is nice if you can buy them cheaply but can be expensive.

A critical question is how accurate is the result. This doesn't depend on the app, it's all handled by the GPS chip in your phone. Typically the accuracy is about 5m (anything better is reserved for the military). This may not sound bad but it depends on how often you record your position. Bear in mind that with an accuracy of 5m, if you sit still, two successive points could be 10m apart. How frequently you record your position depends on how fast you're moving. If you sample too quickly your track may appear to zigzag and be artificially long. If you don't sample frequently enough, you may cut corners and lose distance.



At the end of the day, they're a bit of fun and they give you a nice souvenir of a trip but please bear in mind that, like any app that's constantly running, they tend to eat the battery of your phone so be prepared with a spare battery pack if you're going on a long 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

As ever, please remember that the definitive calendar is on the [website](#) and what's printed below, while correct at the time of going to press is subject to change at a moment's notice.

Saturday, 10 March

10:00 Recreational Paddle - Joy Ashford

Sunday, 11 March

09:00 River Trip - Doug Sitch 07966 740025

Saturday, 17 March

10:00 Recreational Paddle - Andy Kittle

Sunday, 18 March

09:00 River Trip - Ken Hamblin 07790293952 last river trip

Monday, 19 March

Photo competition and a presentation by Wildlife Artist David A Scott at Pomphlett Methodist Church PL9 7BL from 1830

Saturday, 24 March

10:00 Recreational Paddle - TBC

Sunday, 25 March

River Trip Chris Doidge

Saturday, 31 March

10:00 Recreational Paddle - Clive Ashford

Tuesday, 3 April – Season Starts

1 x Rec Terry Calcott

2 X Andy Kittle

3 x Chris Doidge

Saturday, 7 April

Sea Paddle Ian Brim

Tuesday, 10 April

1x Rec Paddle Terry Calcott

2 x Andy Kittle

3 x Chris Doidge

Friday, 13 April

Open Canoe Jen Nicholls

Saturday, 14 April

Rec Terry Calcott

Tuesday, 17 April

1 x Rec Terry Calcott

2 x Andy Kittle

3 x Chris Doidge

Friday, 20 April

Open Canoe Ian Brim

Saturday, 21 April

Intermediate Sea kayak Trip Clive Ashford

Tuesday, 24 April

1x Rec Terry Calcott

2 x Andy Kittle

3 x Chris Doidge

Friday, 27 April

Open Canoe Sam Pluckrose

Saturday, 28 April

Recreational Doug Sitch

DIARY DATE

The Port of Plymouth Canoeing Association presents:

A presentation by Wildlife Artist & Photographer David A Scott

Followed by

PPCA 2017/18 Photo of the Year Competition

Mon 19th Mar 2018. Doors open at 1830hrs for tea & coffee. The lecture commences at 1900 hrs.

Pomphlett Methodist Church, Pomphlett Road, Plymouth, PL9 7BL

David Scott was educated in Plymouth and lives in Devon. He travels extensively across the globe in search of subjects to paint or photograph. He also maintains a sanctuary for a wide variety of different species of birds. His other passion is being a licensed ringer for the British Trust for Ornithology where he is involved with discovering nests & the monitoring of birdlife.

The second part of the evening is the PPCA Photo of the Year competition, full details will be promulgated in due course but main points are a) photos must have been taken during 2017/2018 and b) the photos should reflect the ethos & purpose of the PPCA.



Note: All photos courtesy of David A Scott <https://www.dascottartist.com/> .