



# Port of Plymouth Canoeing Association Wet News 05 April 2016



Website:- <http://www.pcca-canoe-club.org.uk/>

## Intro

That's it!!! The clocks have now gone forward and the summer sunshine is slowly arriving. These lighter evenings and post Easter Egg munching can mean only one thing!! That's right we have moved into the summer timetable of water activities, so back out into Plymouth Sound it is. Getting out there and tasting the salty water splashing upon our lips!! Tuesday evenings are back at Mount Batten for the club, where it's key to get there early as possible, so that there admin is completed, boats are ready and you can get out on the water to maximise your time and the coaching available, as mentioned in last month Newsletter. Also there are courses running throughout the timetable as normal but with the addition of SOT Safety...so have a look and if you know anyone then get them to come along.

If there is something you want to write about or feel passionate about then please send me an email [newsletter@pcca-canoe-club.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@pcca-canoe-club.org.uk) and we can look at including it in future iterations.

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## Committee

Your Committee is :-

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| • Chair – Tracy Jones             | • Intro coordinator – Wendy James   |
| • Vice Chair – Mike Scott         | • Membership Sec – Paul Hewson      |
| • Club Leader – Andy Nicholls     | • Treasurer – Jenny Nicholls        |
| • Assistant Leader – Ben Mitchell | • Equipment – Pete Anderson         |
| • Secretary – Bob Grose           | • Publicity Officer – Nick Campbell |
| • Welfare Officer – Sheona Grant  | • Youth Dev Officer – Damean Miller |

Full contact details can be found on the club website under "Contact Us" tab.

\*\*Next Committee Meeting will be held:- **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016**, any points you wish to raise contact Bob Grose [secretary@pcca-canoe-club.org.uk](mailto:secretary@pcca-canoe-club.org.uk)

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## WHITE WATER NOVICE TO BEGINNER, PART 4 – Adam Coulson

Attentive readers may remember, but for the less attentive I finished my last chapter with the words: *For the rest of the day Karen talks about nothing else and fails to stop grinning. Was I really that bad? Maybe I should get her to write the next chapter (if there is one).* ..



No chance of that but I can't complain as she is currently arranging the summer holidays (how did we ever cope before the internet) involving paddling around a Greek Island next September. We'll each stick to what we're best at. Looking at the sunny photos seems a million miles removed from a cold Sunday morning next to a Devon river. However one thing in common this winter is the lack of rain on/in both.

Having failed to launch my boat on any rivers since the start of the year due to other commitments or either an excess or lack of content it was a rare date – the 29<sup>th</sup> February – when I next found myself in the B&Q car park of a Sunday morning. This was a trip that had been cancelled by the primary coach but then picked up by Julie and John (bless 'em) knowing that there were a few folks aspiring to the next step up ("The Loop"). Even better, due to a night out on Saturday we all had a further 30 minutes in bed, with a slightly later start.

This trip I shared transport with young Steve (sorry no good at surnames) who is primarily a river paddler. He is very enthusiastic and thus we launched just above the famous slab (at least I can now picture it when people talk about inches above or below) just above the new bridge. I must say it didn't look especially new to me. I did learn that launching into the river at 90 degrees to flow is not a great idea. Major wobble but stayed upright. On a positive note, it wouldn't have been long ago that I would have been swimming at this point. The loop has a great start as one can play on the waves under the bridge and have a relatively gentle introduction prior to the more major features to come. To be fair the step up was less than I expected. There are large gaps between the major features so that they can be picked off one at a time with detailed instruction from Julie and John to this new intermediate, which was much appreciated. The features on The Loop have great names – thus we negotiated the "Washing





Machine" (unwashed) and "Lover's Leap" (unloved – sorry Karen!) and the first two falls of "The Triple" unscathed. However the third drop proved the hardest and I took a swim but with a fairly easy swim out. I am very pleased to say that I was not the only one to swim at that point – always makes you feel better! Steve Edwards was so determined that he took a second run at the third. Unfortunately, failing to get into his boat prior to launch proved the boat more competent than the paddler! Banjo published it all on video. The same feature also caught out Sheona who insisted on head butting a rock at that point. The rock proved to have greater density and so she was

patched up by a very capable team of doctor and nurse, with two vets on the sidelines if the patient proved difficult to handle! The "spin dryer" was negotiated without incident and I was quite pleased to arrive at Holne Weir without any further spills.

The following Saturday there was a swimming pool session held in Plympton and I determined to improve on my slightly unreliable Eskimo roll. Many thanks need to go to Pete who was immensely patient as I failed to make a great deal of forward progress for the greater part of an hour! This is, however, a great opportunity to improve one's technique with good tuition in a safe (and warm) environment. This last session was somewhat under-subscribed and I would encourage anybody wishing to improve on technique to use these – they will restart in the autumn.

The following day we met again at B&Q and this time I shared transport with Colin who is only slightly more experienced on the rivers than I. It's nice to share the learning process with others at a similar level. Speaking of levels, there was an increasing lack of water, which makes for less of a rush, but does result in more rocks popping up out the water to catch you out. Under the expert and hugely experienced tutorage of Ken I did a better, if still wobbly, launch at New Bridge and we all had a play under it. I did experience a slight problem with "River Etiquette" on this occasion as a rather smug canoe paddler sat on a standing wave preventing anybody else from using it for a full quarter of an hour. I hope he capsized later! In spite of the lack of water there was an excellent spot for surfing a little further on and we spent quite some time with much encouragement learning to "use the river" on a standing wave and I managed to perform my first spin. Definitely a high point and good to watch others demonstrate how it should be done. Low point was capsizing on a simple ferry glide – doh!



I also learnt a little about rescues on this paddle. Trying to hang on to an empty boat on Lover's Leap I got myself stuck on the rocks and the boat ended up in the pool under the cliff where it would have ended up waiting for it's absent paddler in any event – best not to bother. However I did at least get to use new sling for the first time and tow the boat back across the river to the waiting paddler. We all negotiated the triple uneventfully on this occasion – there was a lot less water and the hole on the third drop failed to suck anybody in. However I did get into a spin at the dryer but with a little assistance managed to roll up – feeling jolly cold by this stage I was determined not to pop the deck. A hot drink at the end of this paddle never tasted so good!

Like most sports, the participants like to talk about their kit. Advice and recommendations are always good but most folks think that their own choice is the right one for everybody which does pose a small dilemma. As far as I can gather one can choose between a flattish boat with edges and tapers as against a rounded, larger, heavier and higher volume boat. They both have pros and cons and I really don't know which might be the right one for me. I'll worry about that next autumn. However at least paddlers are a lot less snooty than cyclists over their choice of kit! Many thanks go to PPCA for the opportunity to experience white water paddling for the first time this season. Despite being firmly into middle age I have proved that it's never too late!

And so to a boring summer with no opportunities for paddling adventures? Well the PPCA calendar appears to be packed with opportunities. Training sessions on Tuesday nights start just as soon as the clock changes. There are planned sea boat trips to Roseland and The Scilly Isles. There is talk of some sea kayak refresher sessions and Clive is laying on some extra longer sea kayak outings on Saturdays. So many opportunities – lets hope for some sunshine too, but it'll be all smiles regardless! ☺

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### **PPCA Introduction to Sea Kayaking - Terry Calcott**

If you have wanted to try sea kayaks out but never had the opportunity now is your chance. The full day sessions are aimed at those who are paddling around 2 star and above standard and are novice sea kayakers but if numbers allow also those who wish to brush up on their sea kayak skills. The sessions will cover some theory and a lot of practical aspects of sea paddling, culminating with a sea paddle somewhere in the sound. The sessions will be held on Saturdays in April / May, dates to be decided once I know numbers. Sessions will be in small groups (max 6).

These sessions are ideal if you are thinking of coming on the club Roseland and Scillies trips this year or want to join in the monthly sea kayak paddles but have not yet been out in a sea kayak.

Club sea kayaks are available for use or bring along your own if you have one, if you would like to book a place and a boat or have any questions please let me know by email [terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk) or telephone 07828652775.

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### **A weekend of paddling part 2. The fresh, frothy bit. - Article by Clive Ashford, photos by Joy Ashford.**

Sunday 14 Feb saw Joy and myself once again setting out for another fun day of paddling. It was all somewhat different this time because we had swapped the salty waters of the sound for a beginners river trip on the Walkham, and instead of Joy being the session leader it was my turn to poke my head above the parapet. I was fairly delighted to see that 12 paddlers had turned up to this trip compared with the 8 who paddled yesterday. I will tell you that this is because I am more popular than Joy but other, more accurate opinions are available.

If you have read Adam Coulson's excellent series on the trepidations of the white water novice, (see previous editions of Wet News), then you will know that there is a lot of teamwork involved in river paddling. The club is blessed with an ever increasing number of white water warriors who paddle to a high standard and at least 4 of these marvellous people came along to this beginners river trip. These experienced paddlers have generously encouraged and inspired our mere mortals throughout the season, while at the same time giving our novices the time and space they need in order to improve their skills. Our experienced boys and girls have also provided an enhanced level of safety cover, resulting in very enjoyable and rewarding river trips. I cannot tell you how grateful I am that some of our best paddlers turn up to support our club beginners trips, if you think this paragraph is about you then please feel free to take it personally.

There is a fair bit of responsibility involved with running any club session but on the plus side, when the jobs are being divvied out the session leader gets to pick the best ones for him / herself. So it was that Sheona found herself spending the day being guided by me. Sheona had the grace to keep smiling but I'm sure that she was secretly traumatised; she even tried to drown herself on 2 separate occasions!

The day followed the same pattern as any river trip; we paddled downhill all the way from Bedford Bridge to Denham Bridge and along the way we found plenty of white water action to keep us amused. The river season starts in October so by the time February comes around we don't really have any true beginners, hence this trip bobbed along in a very civilised fashion.



River paddling. Is it enjoyable?

When running rivers the hardest rapids and features are often given names. On the Walkham there is only 1 named feature, the infamous Slot and Drop. (Paddlers do seem to suffer from an almost complete lack of imagination because there are many "Slot and Drops" scattered around the country). Anyway, we stopped to look at this feature, talked about it and then set up safety cover. Again referring to Adam Coulson's experiences there is never any pressure on anyone to run a particular rapid, and so it was that Joy & Sheona decided that walking around Slot and Drop was their best option.

Ken was providing safety cover with a throw line just below the slot and I wanted another throw line a bit further downstream. I looked at Joy but she was rooted to the bank, camera in hand with a look on her face that said, "Don't even think about asking me, ever. I have far more important things to do." And so it was that Sheona, our most inexperienced paddler, found herself on throw line duties. What could possibly go wrong? Well, Steve can tell you what could possibly go wrong because while he was taking a refreshing dip Sheona was rescuing a passing fish, which I suppose is marginally better than rescuing a passing cloud, (as I have witnessed on previous occasions), but hardly helpful. I must remember to organise this better next time.

I will now mention Colin, whose previous attempt at Slot and Drop resulted in him engaging in a piscine conversation.



The author on Slot and Drop.

On this occasion Colin didn't even get his hair wet, well done indeed, I take my hat off to you. Oh, and I must also mention Jane, who at the same feature managed a high recovery from a very long way off balance without audibly swearing. (The river does make a lot of noise at this point, Jane's expletives may well have been masked by the sound of rushing water).

The Walkham eventually spills into the Tavy and very shortly after this we got out to look at a rapid called the S bend. Everyone ran this rapid in eloquent fashion with the exception of Joy who tried to demolish a rock that had been a part of the river bed for probably millions of years. Needless to say Joy came to a very sudden stop as the rock simply refused to budge.

It would be unfair to mention Alan's unique style of exiting his boat at the S bend, so I won't.

The Tavy mellows out to a very scenic run down mostly flat water until a particularly nasty weir (which most of us ran down the fish steps) and then a gauging weir that owns quite possibly the most friendly surf wave in the world. Gentle



readers, there was much surfing, followed by more surfing and then even more surfing until, with tired arms and shoulders, we bobbed down the last few hundred metres to our get out at Denham Bridge.

The weekend had been almost enjoyable. No, that's wrong; the weekend had been all most enjoyable and so happy was I that our evening meal consisted of a Chinese take away washed down with a couple of well deserved beers. (Hobgoblin if you are interested). What a splendid way to end a weekend of paddling.

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## **Do you shop online? – Andy Nicholls**

Help Fund Our Club!



The Club has an Easy Fundraising account. Simply go to our website, you will see on almost every page, the above image. Simply click on it and it will take you to the sign up screen for our cause. You can download a reminder tool and then it will automatically pick up when you visit a website where we can collect donations. You do your shopping and Easy Fundraising will give us some money, it won't cost you a penny.

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## **Recreational Paddling - where are all the new paddlers? - Terry Calcott**

This is my own viewpoint as a coach and regular recreational paddler.

For those club members that do not know one of the main aims of our club is 'to offer recreational activities that provide a safe, enjoyable and enlightening experience for members'. That is a quote from our Constitution.

One of these recreational activities which is very much at the heart of the club is the Saturday recreational paddle. These paddles take place virtually every week throughout the year come rain, wind or shine. The majority are run from our home base at Mount Batten but sometimes they are planned at venues away on a local estuary or stretch of coastline.

The purpose of this article is to promote the Saturday rec paddle and encourage the members to come along and join in. It has become apparent that in recent years the number of new club members coming on the rec paddles has dwindled. Traditionally new paddlers would come along soon after completing a 1 star course and it was a natural progression in their paddling experience. We do still get a few new paddlers but nothing like the numbers we used to get.

If you are new to the club then the rec paddle is great for meeting other club members. It can seem daunting joining in, but everyone is friendly and will make you most welcome. The relaxed social nature of the group allows you to chat and pick up tips and knowledge from more experienced paddlers. Rec paddling is great for using those paddling skills you already have and for building up paddling stamina. The coach leading the paddle will always take into account the ability of the paddling group and run the trip accordingly.

Normally the Saturday paddle is about 4 to 5 hours duration but sometimes it is possible to split the group and run a shorter trip if it is someone's first time out. We aim to be on the water around 10:00 with a lunch stop at midday. The trips tend to be around Plymouth Sound and its locality taking into account the weather and tide conditions. The

sea conditions can be different each week so there is always something of interest to keep the paddler occupied be it flat calm, a bit of surf, swell, rock hopping, observing wildlife, the scenery but most of all the friendly company with likeminded paddlers.

If you have not yet taken the plunge and have thought about coming along on a Saturday recreational paddle then have a look at the club calendar and website forum for details about what is coming up. Give the nominated coach a ring if you have any questions otherwise just turn up and give it a go.

Just out of interest I looked back over just the past 10 years in my kayaking logbook and counted the number of Saturday rec paddles I had been on either leading or participating. The number was well over 300. I never bore of what is on our paddling doorstep and getting out on the water in the fresh air. Spring has sprung and now is an ideal time to start rec paddling.

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## **How knowledgeable a Sea Paddler are you? – David Pedlow**

I've been pondering recently on the idea of "knowing one's patch", especially as it relates to coastal sea paddlers.

I don't suppose anyone will argue that one should have visited the patch at every state of the tide, in as many as possible conditions of wind and sea, and that one should have a mental map of just where the reefs, outliers, overfalls, and what have you, are.

So far, so trivial. It gets "interesting" when one tries to put some numbers in to this general statement, to try and quantify just when one might reasonably claim to be "knowledgeable".

Conditions vary with both the flood and ebb of the tide, so one could start by suggesting a visit in each tidal hour. But conditions vary significantly over the cycle of Spring and Neap tides, which means that rather than just twelve visits, we are looking at 14 x12, or 168.

Coastal paddling, by and large, takes place through flat calm to, let's say, Force 5, which means, as a gross over-simplification, given that wind and tide are independent factors, we would now need 168 x 5 visits = 840.

But that assumes the wind is always from the same direction, which as I have recently enjoyed confirming, it isn't. The weather forecast settles for 16 compass points – N, NNW, NW,WNW, W etc – so it seems reasonable that we should do the same. Which brings us to 840x16 =13,440 visits.

Underlying sea state can be argued to be independent of both tide and wind. So, settling for our own scale of flat calm, alive, interesting, and very interesting, pushes the numbers up to 13,440x4=53,760.

The mental map is not an independent factor. But a useful map would seem to require paddling a grid made up of sides 20m long (and visiting each square), for a full cable length from the sea/land interface. This doesn't add any visits, but would suggest that each visit should probably be restricted to just 1km of shore line.

But is one visit enough? After all a significant mental database is being created. Surgical practice on the basis of "watch one, do one, teach one" would suggest an absolute minimum of three, giving us a grand total of 161,280 paddling visits for each kilometre of shore line.

## **No wonder it's a life time's work –**

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**Diary Dates:- As @ 04 Apr 2016**

**NB. – Make sure you check online for the most up-to-date version of the calendar and for details within the forums of any trips being run.**

Day	Date	Type of Session	Coach		
April					
Friday	08-Apr	open family	Ian Ruse		
Saturday	09-Apr	rec paddle	Joy Ashford		
Tuesday	12-Apr	2 star kayak 2 Star Canoe 3 Star Kayak Rec Paddle	Andy Kittle Ian Ruse Clive Ashford Terry Calcott	Damean Miller	Adam Mumford
Friday	15-Apr	open family	Ian Ruse		
Saturday	16-Apr	rec paddle	Ian Brimacombe		
Tuesday	19-Apr	2 star kayak 2 Star Canoe 3 Star Kayak Rec Paddle	Andy Kittle Ian Ruse Clive Ashford Terry Calcott	Damean Miller	Adam Mumford
Friday	22-Apr	open family	Ian Ruse		
Saturday	23-Apr	rec paddle	Clive Ashford		
		T1 Starter Session	Andy Nicholls		
		SOT1 Safety Course	Andy Nicholls		
Tuesday	26-Apr	2 star kayak 2 Star Canoe 3 Star Kayak Rec Paddle	Andy Kittle Ian Ruse Clive Ashford Terry Calcott	Damean Miller	Adam Mumford
Friday	29-Apr	open family	Ian Ruse		
Saturday	30-Apr	rec paddle	Terry Calcott		
May					
Tuesday	03-May	2 star kayak 2 Star Canoe 3 Star Kayak Rec Paddle	Andy Kittle Ian Ruse Clive Ashford Terry Calcott	Damean Miller	Adam Mumford
Friday	06-May	open family	Andy Nicholls		
Saturday	07-May	sea kayak	Joy Ashford		
		OSC 1 One Star	Brian Taylor		
Monday	09-May	Paddle Power	Andy Nicholls	Adam Mumford	
		Sportivate 1	Sami Pluckrose		
Tuesday	10-May	2 star kayak 2 Star Canoe 3 Star Kayak Rec Paddle	John Mitchell Andy Nicholls Jenny Nicholls Joy Ashford	Pete Anderson	Adam Mumford
Friday	13-May	open family	Jenny Nicholls		
Saturday	14-May	rec paddle	Doug Sitch		
Monday	16-May	Paddle Power	Andy Nicholls	Adam Mumford	
		Sportivate 1	Sami Pluckrose		



Tuesday	17-May	2 star kayak 2 Star Canoe 3 Star Kayak Rec Paddle	John Mitchell Andy Nicholls Jenny Nicholls Joy Ashford	Alan Ede	Adam Mumford
Friday	20-May	open family	Ian Ruse		
Saturday	21-May	rec paddle	Joy Ashford		
Monday	23-May	Paddle Power	Andy Nicholls	Adam Mumford	
		Sportivate 1	Sami Pluckrose		
Tuesday	24-May	2 star kayak 2 Star Canoe 3 Star Kayak Rec Paddle	John Mitchell Andy Nicholls Jenny Nicholls Joy Ashford	Pete Anderson	Adam Mumford
Friday	27-May	open family	Ian Ruse		
Saturday	28-May	rec paddle	Terry Calcott		
		T2 Starter Session	Andy Kittle		
		SOT2 Safety Course	Andy Kittle		
Monday	30-May	Paddle Power	Andy Nicholls	Adam Mumford	
		Sportivate 1	Sami Pluckrose		
Tuesday	31-May	2 star kayak 2 Star Canoe 3 Star Kayak Rec Paddle	John Mitchell Andy Nicholls Jenny Nicholls Joy Ashford	Alan Ede	Adam Mumford