



# Port of Plymouth Canoeing Association Wet News 02 January 2015



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

## Intro

Well we are now in 2016 and hope that everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. From all of the committee, we would like to thank you for your contributions and support throughout 2015, as without the timeless commitment of our members we could not produce such a great club. A club that organises a minimum of two trips out on the water every week, whatever the time of year or weather conditions. Please keep this up as we progress through 2016 and beyond.

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 :-

- Chair – Tracy Jones
- Vice Chair – Mike Scott
- Club Leader – Andy Nicholls
- Assistant Leader – Ben Mitchell
- Secretary – Bob Grose
- Welfare Officer – Sheona Grant
- Intro coordinator – Wendy James
- Membership Sec – Paul Hewson
- Treasurer – Jenny Nicholls
- Equipment – Pete Anderson
- Publicity Officer – Nick Campbell
- 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:- **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 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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## Winter Club Challenge Update – Andy Nicholls

For those who missed the article in the last newsletter. For the first time this year we have signed up to the winter club challenge (this has been running each winter for the last few years). Normally with our sea and river paddles over the winter we should rack up lots of miles! I know the weather has hindered us lots on the sea but the river trips have been racking up the miles.



If we do well we are in with a good chance of winning a prize from between £50 - £250. Please can you let me know if you paddle with 3 or more members, where you paddle and how many miles you paddled. As of the week ending

9th January 2016 we have paddled a total of 744.8miles. Fingers crossed the weather will start to improve and allow our salty water goers get some miles up soon.

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### Pool Sessions – Andy Nicholls

The last 2 pool sessions are open for booking, 6th February 2016 and 5th March 2016 both are filling up so grab your spots if you want them quickly! Plympton pool 4-5pm. To book go to our website and follow the link on the first page.

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### Coaches Meeting – Andy Nicholls

Hi All I have booked a classroom at Mount Batten Centre for a coach meeting to discuss plans for next season.

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm. Please can all coaches try to attend so I can discuss and start to sort out the program for the summer. Also anyone who is interested in helping this year or becoming a coach within the next year is also welcome.

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### Mount Batten Watersports – Andy Nicholls

PPCA members get 10% off coaching courses at MBC

The Mount Batten Watersports & Activities Centre is delighted to be working in partnership once again with local British Canoeing Level 5 Coach Lee Pooley in offering Paddlesports Coach Education courses into 2016:

#### BCU/UKCC Level 1 Coach Training and Assessment

5/6 and 19/20 March 2016, £260 per person excluding personal registration fees

#### BCU/UKCC Level 2 Coach Training

14/15 and 21/22 May 2016, £260 per person excluding personal registration fees

To book on either email [enquiries@mount-batten-centre.com](mailto:enquiries@mount-batten-centre.com) or call 01752 404567

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### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

#### Mount Batten Watersports Update – Tracey Jones

We have [received](#) a complaint from users regarding the pontoon.

Given the environmental conditions that we have been experiencing there is indeed limited amounts that physically can be done to stop the pontoon from becoming slippery. We have just had a record breaking December in terms of weather which saw high levels of precipitation, unseasonably warm temperatures all finished off with a healthy dose of storms over the festive week all of which in combination mean almost ideal conditions for the algae based growth to populate the pontoon boarding which when coupled with low levels of use (the foot traffic disturbs growth) means that the pontoon will indeed become slippery.

As this pattern of weather appears to be relatively intent on remaining with us please could you ask your members to exercise additional care when using the Pontoon. We have & will sanded the surface but again with the current weather this does not stay in situ for any real time.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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## White Water Novice to Beginner – Adam Coulson

### Part Two...

We left off after two trips down the lower Dart as a novice first season white water paddler. And thus we start on another Sunday morning, this time in November, but again in the same DIY store car park. Messrs Block & Quayle (or their modern day counterparts) don't seem to mind us parking there and I suspect that the activity based parking outnumbers the retail parking at this site. That doesn't bode well for the store. Anyway, this time my car is to travel to our watery destination and thus Justin's boat goes on the roof and gear inside for the drive up to Denham Bridge. On the way I pick up numerous tips and stories from Justin's extensive experience. Apparently the chap that used to live at The Mill House opposite has shuffled off to abuse ghostly paddlers in another place. I'll leave it with those who have experienced him to decide where! A faster swap around of gear now (I'm getting better at this) and we follow Clive and Jane through some twisty lanes up to Magpie Bridge where there is a large car park. There are also public conveniences but not today as locked up, and so alternative arrangements are made. There is a short walk down to the river where we gather for a couple of minutes silence in memory of those who have suffered as a result of the terrorist attacks in Paris.

We are eight and are buddied up into pairs so that we can look after each other (well that's slightly more one way than it sounds) and seal launch off the bank to play in our first standing wave just below the bridge. This river is really beautiful from the scenery point of view. It's also pretty good from a paddling point of view, providing plenty of challenges and excitement. I am very pleased to say that there were several experienced paddlers found swimming within quite a short period of time, some coming across barbed wire in the process. Now I am never one to be heartened by other's misfortune but also prefer not to be the first to suffer! One thing that becomes very



clear today is just how much team work is involved in river paddling as compared with sea or estuary. You need the others and it is possible that they will need you. The resulting camaraderie adds a great deal to the experience. Nobody is pompous or patronising but mostly quite self-deprecating and happy to share from their own experience. Again, there is plenty of time given to playing on the way down whilst keeping everybody within the same stretch of river for safety reasons. This is quite a task today and I spotted that Clive's smile as leader was occasionally replaced by a slight frown as several mishaps occur concurrently. We gather in the eddies and discuss the best route

over the features as is now becoming a normal experience for me.

And then we get out at a spot where there is something big ahead. They call it "the slot" (actually I think that deserves upper case – "The Slot" – no, thinking some more – "THE SLOT") where water rushes through a tight gap through the rocks, falling into a pool from which it then exits at some speed in part two of the feature. There is a best line to take through it and then the question – who's up for this? To be fair there is never any pressure to tackle a feature and there is always the option of walking around it with no shame attached at all. I think it's always a good idea to see somebody else going first and so Mike is picked as the sentinel. I really should have taken note of him landing the wrong way up but then successfully and with grace rolling up again in the pool below, before progressing safely through the rest of the feature. However in my head valour won over discretion and thus I heard the words "I will" when asked who wanted to go next. It all started really well. I think I got the right line into the drop but it's quite narrow and thus you can't go through with paddle out sideways ready to brace. The next thing I knew was the thinking process done under water when a couple of seconds feels like an eternity "OK what do I do next?" I was still

in possession of everything – well boat and paddle anyway (I didn't bother about checking spectacles, testicles, wallet and watch). I could try rolling up. However the feeling of rushing water forced it's way into my consciousness and I quickly realised that I wasn't sat in one spot preparing my strike like when practising on the Plym. OK then, better bail out and so the deck was popped and I bobbed out still hanging on to paddle and seeing a throw line flying through the air towards me. I got a hold of it but that rush of water makes it hard to hold – I must find out how to do this – and a handy lump of skin was shed in the process. And so it was with the aid of Jane and Clive that I managed to swing/swim into the near bank and clamber out on the end of a rope. Good news - a helpful team member (I think Mike or Darren) had caught my boat only 100 yards downstream and thus it was that I survived my first swim. I'm sure there will be many more and this is all part of the learning experience. Several team members wisely walked around and I failed to see Clive's technique for staying upright. Not sure I'm going to try that again soon. After that there were a few more features that tripped up some other team members but I don't really remember and must admit to being quite pleased to see Denham Bridge once more.

Put off you ask? Not a chance and so two weeks later it was back at Buckfastleigh lay-by but this time on a peer paddle on the lower Dart. We chatted to some other paddlers as we changed and transferred boats. This white water camaraderie extends to other groups also. We were introduced as various levels of experienced ww paddlers "and Adam". Oh dear! I had asked beforehand and Andy N who led the group had welcomed me and thus we assembled at Hole Weir and launched. I am beginning to recognise some of the features now. There was quite a bit of water and the five of us made our way from eddy to eddy waiting politely in queues to play in some of the features. I wonder if French paddlers queue like this? All went well and again I was secretly slightly pleased when others capsized. However this was not so good when poor Andy lost his camera off helmet – if it washes up in Dartmouth in a couple of years time I hope that somebody might recognise us! I thought it was going to be another upright trip but then I "caught my edge on an eddy line" – I've been practising the terminology and you see that's the river's fault and not mine! At least on this occasion I could understand why the river had gotten a hold of my little boat and pulled me in. It was fairly shallow and I got my head out for a few breaths but couldn't rollup as my top half bounced along the river bed. At least no rope was required this time and it was fairly easy to get back in and launch off the bank – actually great fun!



At this moment I would like to extend thanks to various club members but especially Brim and Andy for advice over kit – I know – they do sell it. You don't need a lot of stuff but I soon realised that to play a part as a team member I needed a throw line and of course a knife to cut it should the occasion require. I also bought a sling and karabiner. Today we have been out in the garden practising with the throw line – unfortunately the red bucket drowned.

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### **The Search Continues – David Pedlow**

About a year ago Bekky EMU and I set out on a rough water "Training Paddle" across the Sound towards Picklecombe. Bob videoed the start of the trip (I think it was called "SW Gales" but it seems to have gone from Youtube). It was a demanding paddle from the start, with a strong Spring Tide ebb running against a sustained SW wind, setting up a mix of generous swell and chop across the Sound.

It took us a whole hour to get south of Drake's Island, and an interminability of hard paddling to cross the Bridges to Redding Point. Picklecombe was closed to us by great breaking waves that were sweeping the entrance, so we turned towards the Breakwater Lighthouse.

And just like that, we pushed through an invisible barrier into a magic world. Giant swells, perfectly organised, were marching steadfastly West to East across our path, the low winter sun gleaming on their crests, the troughs offering

shelter from the wind that sent small waves skidding along the ridge lines. They were large, they were relentless, and they seemed to be totally devoid of malice. I paddled through them, sliding up and down the sides as I held my track, in a state of wonder. It was a revelation, it was mystical, it was almost out of this world.

And of course, such is the pitiful and pitiable nature of the human condition, no sooner were we on shore than I wanted to go back out again. Since then, I suppose, my paddling has been informed by the quest to re-experience this ephemeral Nirvana.

And so for the last year, with anyone who's prepared to put up with me, I have been searching. Out with Bob Gross one day, between Penlee and Rame, we paddled among the biggest swells he'd ever encountered. And they were big. But they were too amorphous, not well enough organised, they weren't **my** swells.

Of course, inevitably, one hard to accomplish quest becomes overlain with another easier one; the search for mystical swells diverted into a joy in "dynamic rock hopping". We're nowhere near the Californian paddlers, but we're inching there – so far it's only cost me a damaged boat. An increased respect for the hardness of the rocks has at least inspired a greater degree of caution.

So that is where I was coming from when we (Mark, Tall Jane and I) split off from the Club paddle just after they'd been driven back into the Cattewater by a significant rain squall and were about to run up to Hooe Lake. We knew that the weather hadn't finished with us for the day, but despite the stiffness of the Citadel flag, on the water there were gentle breezes as though the wind had lifted over the Breakwater and not bothered to come back down to the surface.

Making the most of it, we headed for Picklecombe, with just the possibility of a foray to the Breakwater somewhere in the back of my mind. It soon became clear that the weather had other plans for us. With the strengthening of the wind, all thoughts of the breakwater disappeared. Picklecombe soon became an unobtainable dream. As the clouds lowered, we switched to the sheltered beach below Lady Sarah's Cottage. Finally, as the squall line drew ever nearer the question was if we could clear the reefs and dragons' teeth before the squall struck.

We just made it. No sooner had we turned up the Bridges channel than the wind and rain hit us in the back. I was surfing one crest out of three, when the boat was driven forward by a sort of tidal bore that swept me up the rest of the channel and round the NW tip of the Island. I could see the Bridges tide just in front of me, running on a few centimetres higher than the Tide coming up in front of the Hoe, until eventually the two evened out and merged, leaving me to ease in to the beach.

A brief stop close up under the landing stage for coffee and respite from the buffeting of the wind, and it was time to head for home. Looking across the white strewn crossing to Mountbatten, and knowing another heavy squall could well be on the way, I called the Long Room to tell them what we were doing. Then we pushed out of shelter, more or less in line abreast. Mark the southernmost, then Jane, then me.

Almost immediately Mark began to trend upwind, until he was 50m or so separate. It wasn't the track I would have chosen but it turned out to be the right one. With another squall hiding the Breakwater I called to Jane that we should follow before the viz closed in. I set off after him; not knowing that Jane was at full stretch fighting the way her boat was leecocking, and she couldn't follow me upwind. When I realised she wasn't following, I decided that the two small boats had to stay in touch. If one of the three of us went over, then Jane at least had the chance of self-rescue, Mark and I in small boats didn't.

The squall swept down on us. My world contracted to Mark's boat, the crazy waves which set a different question for each paddle stroke,, and every now and then a quick glance downwind for Jane's helmet and paddle above the swell. It was a heart stopping moment when I checked on Jane, and she wasn't where I expected her to be. I shouted out to Mark (by now I'd closed to about 10m behind him and he'd been checking on me whenever he could snatch a look over his shoulder). Relief flooded through me when he replied that she was just behind us, nicely in my blind spot. She must have made a superhuman effort to drive her boat into the wind to come up with us.

Things didn't get any better. As the wind peaked at 35knots and the waves grew larger and more demanding, chances of a self contained rescue dwindled. I was reduced to hoping that if we did go over, the Long Room would spot us when the viz picked up again. I didn't realise that we were in much safer hands. Clive was keeping a lonely and very wet vigil out on the end of Mountbatten breakwater, watching out for us, and hoping that his prodigals would come safely home.

And so we did; laughing like maniacs as we reached the shelter of the breakwater, drawing breath, telling the Long Room we were safe, and letting the wind and rain gentle us home.

So where does that leave my quest? Well the memory of those great swells moving inexorably onwards across our track is still there; but with the question as to whether we could have successfully prosecuted a rescue attempt in those conditions still very much in the air, I reckon my paddling companions may want to clip my wings a little in future which, Clive may well agree, is probably all to the good.



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### **Fund Raiser - Joy Ashford.**

As part of our fundraising venture, we are holding a live music night at the Mount Batten Centre on **Saturday 13th February** 2016. We are hoping that many of our club members will come along and support us.

**Rick The Stick**, will be playing live music ( no backing tracks); the greatest hits from the 60's, 70's, 80; and 90's.

Time; **8pm - 11.30pm.**

Cost **£10** which includes a pasty supper.

Tickets will be available from any of the ladies taking part in the event and from Paul Brady and Clive Ashford.

Feel free to get in touch with any of us to order your tickets. We do need a rough idea before the night, to make sure we get enough pasties in. Never fear, the bar will be open.

Please see attached poster and support the event!!!

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### Charity Cycle Ride ( **28 May 2016** ) - Joy Ashford

Eight female members of the PCCA along with a lapsed member and friend are going to take part in "RIDE THE NIGHT", a charity cycle ride. The ride is 100Km long, its in London and its at night. None of us have cycled that far in one go, let alone at night. But we are up for the challenge.



We have joined together to raise money to do our bit in the fight against Cancer.

The team members are:- *Helga Pinn; Joy Ashford; Mary McArdle; Rowena Cerrino ; Sharon Gardner; Jane Hitchings; Linda Brady; Jackie Walters; Valerie Jobling and Merryl Docker.*

We all know people who have been affected by cancer, some of us unfortunately have had more personal experience of this than others. We all know the emotional and physical impact cancer has on the individual, extended family members and their friends. Statistically, 1 in 2 people born after 1960 in the UK will be diagnosed with some form of cancer during their lifetime. We want to do our bit to reduce those odds and to support those who will experience this disease.

We have set up a few Just Giving pages were people can sponsor us; These are

<https://www.justgiving.com/J-ASHFORD/>

<https://www.justgiving.com/Jane-Hitchings/>

<https://www.justgiving.com/LINDA-BRADY1/>

This is our opportunity to support "RIDE THE NIGHT" and raise money for "Women v Cancer".

If you want to find out more about the cycle ride, please follow this link

<http://www.actionforcharity.co.uk/index.php> or <http://www.ridethenight.co.uk/>

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### Diary Dates:-

| Day            | Date     | Type of Session   | Location  | Coach                     |
|----------------|----------|---|---|---------------------------|
| <b>January</b> |          |   |   |                           |
| Saturday 10:00 | 30-01-16 | Recreational paddle   | Mount Batten<br>Final details to appear on the website forum. | Joy Ashford 01752 344425  |
| Sunday 9:00    | 31-01-16 | Beginners River Trip<br>Final details to appear on the website forum. | TBA   | Ken Hamblin 01752 365404. |

| February               |          |  |   |                                     |
|------------------------|----------|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Saturday 10:00         | 06-02-16 | Sea kayak trip - The club sea kayaks can be booked with the Club Equipment Officer (Pete Anderson) Please send a text to 07958694434 | Mount Batten<br>Final details to appear on the website forum. | Terry Calcott<br>07828 652775       |
| Saturday 16:00 - 17:00 | 06-02-16 | Swimming Pool Session  | Plympton<br>Swimming Pool                                     | Jenny Nicholls                      |
| Sunday 9:00            | 07-02-16 | Intermediate River Trip Final details to appear on the website forum.  | TBA   | Ken Hamblin 01752 365404.           |
| Saturday 10:00         | 13-02-16 | Recreational Paddle  | Mount Batten<br>Final details to appear on the website forum. | Joy Ashford 01752 344425            |
| Sunday 9:00            | 14-02-16 | Beginners River Trip Final details to appear on the website forum.   | TBA   | Clive Ashford<br>01752 344425       |
| Saturday 10:00         | 20-02-16 | Recreational Paddle  | Mount Batten<br>Final details to appear on the website forum. | Ian Brimacombe<br>07720 957304      |
| Sunday 9:00            | 21-02-16 | Beginners River Trip Final details to appear on the website forum.   | TBA   | John/Julie Elworthy<br>01752 823381 |
| Saturday <b>11:00</b>  | 27-02-16 | Recreational Paddle, <b>Please note 11:00 Start</b>  | Mount Batten<br>Final details to appear on the website forum. | John Mitchell<br>01752 219246       |
| Sunday 9:00            | 28-02-16 | Intermediate River Trip Final details to appear on the website forum.  | TBA   | Doug Sitch 07966 740025.            |
| March                  |          |  |   |                                     |
| Saturday 10:00         | 05-03-16 | Sea kayak trip - The club sea kayaks can be booked with the Club Equipment Officer, ???  | Mount Batten<br>Final details to appear on the website forum. | Ian Brimacombe<br>07720 957304      |
| Saturday 16:00 - 17:00 | 05-03-16 | Swimming Pool Session  | Plympton<br>Swimming Pool                                     | Lead Coach TBC                      |
| Sunday 9:00            | 06-03-16 | Intermediate River Trip Final details to appear on the website forum. <b>(End of river dart WW season)</b>                           | TBA   | Ken Hamblin 01752 365404.           |
| Saturday 10:00         | 12-03-16 | Recreational Paddle  | Mount Batten<br>Final details to appear on the website forum. | Terry Calcott<br>07828 652775       |
| Sunday 9:00            | 13-03-16 | Intermediate River Trip Final details to appear on the website forum.  | TBA   | John/Julie Elworthy<br>01752 823381 |
| Saturday <b>11:00</b>  | 19-03-16 | Recreational Paddle, <b>Please note 11:00 Start</b>  | Mount Batten<br>Final details to appear on the website forum. | John Mitchell<br>01752 219246       |



|                |          |                                       |   |                               |
|----------------|----------|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Saturday 10:00 | 26-03-16 | <b>Easter Paddle- Fancy Dress</b>     | Mount Batten<br>Final details to<br>appear on the<br>website forum. | Terry Calcott<br>07828 652775 |
| Sunday         | 27-03-16 | Clocks Change Start of Summer Program |   |                               |