



Port of Plymouth Canoeing Association

Wet News 96. October 2014.



Club Officers

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(E-mails to this address goes to the club secretary).		

November edition of Wet News.

Items for inclusion in the November edition of Wet News to reach the new editor, Terry Calcott, by 21:00hrs on Fri 31 Nov please. Publication date Sun 2 November.

E-mail address:

terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk

Post: Please call Terry for my postal address if required. Tel: 07981 489857

The new editor (Terry Calcott) reserves the right to edit / reject items submitted.

Disclaimer. Opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the PPCA.

The prologue.

John Elworthy recently told me that he doesn't consider he has finished reading Wet News until he has found my deliberate mistake for the month. Gentle readers, I have neither the wit or the guile to insert anything a devious as a deliberate mistake into these literary masterpieces, all such errors are genuine, home down, organic mistakes. Embarrassingly enough if you pointed these errors out to me it is quite possible that I still wouldn't understand what I had done wrong.

2 star assessment

Congratulations to Aime Ellis, Dan McAllister, James Blackford, Jamie Frost, Jordan Frost, Josh Holm, Kate Retallick, Lauren Miller, Martin Holm & Morag Findlay on gaining their 2 star awards on 13 September. Conditions were somewhat blustery so these people will have earned their award.

Thanks to Justin Frost for running the assessment and to Buck Taylor, Andy Kittle & Andy Nicholls for assisting in what must have been a busy day.

3 star sea kayak assessment.

Congratulations to Bekky Stiasny, Bob Grose & George Hamblin on gaining their 3 star sea kayak award on 14 September. Again conditions were somewhat blustery and these good people have certainly earned their awards.

Thanks to whoever ran this assessment (some gangly ejit) and to Jane Hitchings for her assistance.

Club secretary.

Buck Taylor has resigned as club secretary. Thanks to Buck for his contribution to the committee over the past 11 months.

PPCA AGM, Mon 13 October.

Our AGM will be held at Mount Batten on Monday 13 October in the Family Room. (Turn left as you enter the bar). In addition to the usual items the membership will be asked to vote on an amendment to the constitution clarifying the position of club trustees. Please attend this important meeting if you can. In the absence of a club secretary I have not been advised how you should submit nominations for committee posts however, these can brought forward on the night.

So that was summer.

Tuesday night sessions are now finished for the year. (Splish splash, what jolly fun). Tuesday nights have been busy and full of smiling faces, including those on the newly introduced Tuesday night recreational paddles that have injected some added diversity to our program. The club has run 4 or 5 sessions each Tuesday, each of which has a session leader and a number of helpers without whom we would not smile quite as much. I hope you have all said "thank you" to your hard working, unpaid volunteers.

So is that it for the year? Not likely, we will still be active at weekends throughout the winter months. Our regular Saturday recreational paddles will continue to offer fun and frivolity on, well, Saturdays and our white water season keeps us entertained on Sundays. Our monthly sea kayaking trips will continue on the first Saturday of each month and Ian Ruse is proposing some family Saturday trips from Mount Batten. The message is watch calendar dates / website forum for details, wrap up warm and get nicely damp.

Swim anyone?

There is a great tradition within canoeing circles to poke fun at those that have had the misfortune to take a swim. (Hopefully having checked that our victim is OK first). Well, no such fun is to be poked at Mark Porter who, on Sept 20 and along with nearly 200 other swimmers, swam from the Breakwater to West Hoe, a straight line distance of approx 2 miles, (3K). Mark completed the swim in something like 90 minutes raising money for his chosen charity The Chestnut Appeal, a charity that supports people with prostrate cancer. If you feel able to support Mark he has set up a Just Giving account <https://www.justgiving.com/Porter-and-Lear/> or, of course, he will accept cash. Well done Mark.

The history of Mount Batten. Wed October 29th.

The PPCA is based on the historic Mount Batten peninsular, which was used as a trading post with the rest of Europe in the late bronze age and has been under constant occupation ever since. Robin Blythe-Lord is giving a lecture about the history of Mount Batten to the Ugborough Local History Group on Wednesday 29 October, starting at 20:00 hrs at the Ugborough village hall. This will very definitely be of interest to those of us who like to know a bit about our surroundings and as entry is a bargain at £2 you owe it to yourselves to be there. If you want more details speak to Meryll Docker.

From summit to the next Departement. (David Pedlow).



Seal slide.

In 1930 the Nantes-Brest canal was truncated by the hydro-electric scheme at Lake Guerledan, leaving the Departements it crossed to decide what to do with a Western Rump, with no access to the rest of the French canal system.

Cotes d'Armor took the easy route. They made their part of the canal un-navigable for boats by the simple expedient of removing one set of gates from every lock, thus keeping the 300 cu metres of water per boat per lock that would otherwise work its way down stream safely in the upper pound. However for the benefit of canoeists they have installed these "seal slides" in each of the lock bypasses so that - subject to their state of repair, and an absence of pounds drained down for chomage - one can enjoy a full in-boat experience (each slide is fitted with a

roller at the top to facilitate access) for 10 km encompassing 31 locks from La Grande Tranchee to the invisible line in the water demarcating the transition from C d'A to Finistere.

Here the canal becomes fully navigable, with two sets of gates per lock, but sadly the seal slides are abandoned for a simple portage past the lock along the tow path for the remaining 45 locks over the 82km to Guily Glas and the open sea.

If you want to see a guide to the Canal (written – badly – for cyclists and walkers, and definitely not for canoeists) DP will happily lend you his.



Chomage.

Bruce and Susann get Wet and Wild in California. (Bruce Burton).

For some time we have wanted to kayak in the Pacific in an area near the town of Fort Bragg, some four hours drive north of San Francisco. We don't have kayaks in the USA (sadly) so the only way was to rent them and, to do the sort of stuff we were interested in, we had to have a guide. We had tried to arrange this a couple of times previously but had been frustrated because the surf was too big to be able to get out. This time we were lucky and found a company called Liquid Fusion based in Fort Bragg who signed us up to do their 'Wet and Wild' trip.

The instructions were to meet Jeff, the owner of Liquid Fusion, on the beach at 7.30 and we arrived promptly, to find nobody there other than a few colourful people who were obviously sleeping on the beach. After a short while an ancient pick-up arrived with two sit on kayaks for us and a sea boat for Jeff. He also provided us with good quality wet suits and all the other gear that we needed. The weather was fine and the surf was slight with some occasional bigger waves. We started off with some basic kayaking skills – after all the guide had no idea about our level of experience – then some fairly gentle rock hopping. We then paddled over to a headland, where the waves were bigger, to a clump of rocks called, ominously 'The Pit'. The attached photo is someone (not us) doing this. Basically we hovered about 5 feet from a wall of rock and waited for a suitably large wave to come in. We then paddled hard down the surface of the wave straight at a wall of rock. Just when you think you are going to crash, the wave lifts you up and (you hope) takes you right over the rocks and down the other side in a welter of spray and foam. Very exciting. The second time that I did it I didn't time things well and ended up with my bows still on the rocks as the wave fell away from under me. Fortunately, with a lot of hard back paddling, I managed to avoid disaster and got back into position for a further (successful) try.



We paddled to a second area where there was a similar structure to paddle over on the crest of a wave. After that we went to some sea caves, including a couple where we paddled into one cave, went through a narrow tunnel and out into another cave. After that it was some fairly mellow rock hopping. I had a try at rolling my kayak on the way back, but failed miserably. I really need to practice that more.

So a great time. Quite pricey at \$100 per person for three hours, with all equipment supplied. We will do it again and hope for a bit more wave power, which would make it even more exciting.

English Canoe Symposium, 31 Oct – 2 Nov 2014. (Info from Hannah Sibbald)

New to some, if not all of you, this event will be running on 31st October - 2nd November from the YMCA centre on the banks of Windermere, in the beautiful Lake District.

A rotating well loved event offering 3 days to meet, mix, canoe and relax. It offers some of the best open water and rivers around, some top class coaches, and access to discounted equipment outlets.

Seminars, sessions, and, techniques are available for booking, and slide shows will celebrate some the great places we get to see.

Check out this lead: <http://www.englishcanoesymposium.com/>

A bit silly?

I was walking around the coast and wandered onto a beach in order to paddle my feet in the water and to have a spot of lunch. As I approached the beach a couple of sit on top paddlers were getting ready to leave. They both put on buoyancy aids but then one of the paddlers put on a back pack. Now I'm not much of an expert when it comes to the floatation properties of a back pack but if it has positive buoyancy it will keep a swimmer afloat face down, and if it has negative buoyancy then it may negate any good done by the buoyancy aid. Also I can imagine how difficult it would be to swim wearing a back pack. I can't see how this can possibly be a sensible arrangement and invite club members not to follow suit.

History of Kayaking. From the howstuffworks website.

<http://adventure.howstuffworks.com/outdoor-activities/water-sports/kayaking4.htm>

The Inuit and Aleut tribes of Arctic North America were the first people to build and use kayaks. There were two basic types of kayaks at this point: One was built with light driftwood, while the others were made by stretching animal skins over frames made of whalebone. The tribe members used whale fat to waterproof the vessels. To improve buoyancy, they'd fill seal bladders with air and tuck them into the fore and aft sections.



Inuits continue the tradition of crafting boats from sealskin.

In addition to the single-person versions that look like modern kayaks, they also used umiaqs - larger kayaks that could carry entire families and their possessions. Some umiaqs were as long as 60 feet (18.3 meters). The smaller kayaks were primarily used for hunting. The word kayak actually means "hunter's boat." Kayaks are ideal for hunting because of their stealth nature. Inuits could sneak up on unsuspecting animals on the shoreline or in the water.

The kayak found its way to Europe in the early to mid 1800s as a soft-sided frame boat, and German and French men soon began kayaking for sport. Kayaks also maintained their

practical use in icy waters - explorers of the North Pole and South Pole carried them in their expeditions. Soon after, kayakers got a little adventurous. In 1931, a man named Adolf Anderle became the first person to kayak down the Salzachofen Gorge. This may have been the birth of modern white-water kayaking. The International Scale of River Difficulty was established not long after to classify how dangerous a river's rapids were - the same classification system used today.

In 1936, the Olympics included kayak races in the Berlin games. The United States began to get on board at this point, as did women - two years after the Olympics, Genevieve De Colmont paddled the white-water of the Green and Colorado rivers. Fiberglass "rigid" kayaks came on the scene in the 1950s and were the standard until polyethylene plastic took over in the 1980s. Kayaking enjoyed modest participation as a fringe sport in the U.S. until the 1970s, when it began to move more to the mainstream. Now the Olympic Games feature more than 10 different white-water kayak events.

RNLI accommodation in Poole. (John Dow).

It may be of interest to Club members to be aware that it is possible to have a hotel break at the RNLI College in Poole, Dorset.

Having stayed at hotels in the Bournemouth area Ros and I (mainly me) thought it would be interesting to have a short break staying at the College, which is part of the RNLI HQ site, most of which is very new. It operates as a hotel, using the study bedrooms which are not needed to accommodate RNLI personnel on courses, in the way that lots of universities let their accommodation during university holidays. Prices vary seasonally and weekdays/weekends but are comparable with 3/4 star hotels in the area. However, the bedrooms, which are of a very good standard, are much roomier and each has views over Holes Bay on the upper area of Poole Harbour and the amazing Twin Sails lifting bridge - a real jaw-dropper when you first see it opening. Meals are good and bar prices significantly below pub prices. Any profit is ploughed back into RNLI funds. Secure on-site parking and wi-fi are free.

As a resident you can join one of the very interesting twice-daily guided tours of the training complex which includes seeing the boat handling simulator - very realistic indeed. (Bigger boys - bigger toys.) You can also have free use of mountain bikes and most of the surrounding area is pretty flat.

If you want to get more info look up "RNLI College" and go to "STAY". The e mail address is reception@rnli.org.uk and the phone number is 0870 833200 or 01202 308500. We were able to look it all up and do the booking online but if you are flexible for dates you might find it quicker to ring up and ask what dates are available.

A nice bit of symmetry.

Looking back at the very first edition of Wet News I see that I was somewhat critical about the BCU, so I thought it would add a nice bit of symmetry to proceedings if I were to criticise them in my final edition of Wet News as well, but I can't because the BCU have changed their name to British Canoeing. Here are a couple of points that spring to mind. (Other opinions are available but they are wrong).

- 1) ***If it isn't broken don't mend it.*** Historically the BCU had an excellent system of star tests and coaching awards. They destroyed all that and instead foisted the current (almost unworkable) regime upon us.
- 2) ***If it is broken then a change of name probably won't help.*** British Canoeing really is broken. They can call themselves whatever they like but they really do need to get themselves fixed. Quickly.

There, I feel much better now.

End of a rut.

I'm not really very sure as to how I landed the job of PPCA newsletter editor but I always claim that I stole it from my predecessor Andy Smith. I'm equally unsure as to what the committee of the day thought they were going to get but once I had dusted off my trusty old John Bull printing set Wet News is what they got. This delightful (?) little publication started ploughing a furrow that by issue 2 had become a bit of a rut, a very muddy, murky and ultimately deep rut in which Wet News has languished for the past 8 years. I have thoroughly enjoyed producing the newsletter and judging by the comments from those of you that read this you have also enjoyed the Wet News experience; but as the time honoured saying goes it's best to quit whilst ahead, so my trusty old John Bull printing set is going back into its box. Terry Calcott is mounting an expedition to rescue Wet News from the bottom of the aforementioned (now canyon sized) rut and next month will produce his version of our newsletter. I wish Terry all the best and hope that he enjoys the job as much as I have. Personally I am looking forward to reading a publication written by someone with more than a passing acquaintance with the English language, it will be a breath of fresh air I'm sure.

I extend my thanks to all of you who have contributed to Wet News over the years, either by sending in items for publication, (particularly David Pedlow and Terry Calcott), or by allowing yourselves to fall victim to my somewhat dubious sense of humour without too much complaint. Special thanks to those of you who managed resist the temptation to "send the boys around!"

Finally my leaving present to you is this: ::;::;::;::;,"""""!!,,,,,,,,,. """""""""" I invite you to look back over past issues of Wet News and insert these where you see fit, 'cause as you know it's all a mystery to me!

Old Nosey, our roaming reporter...

...was out in the Sound with all his friends a few days ago, (yes, he was paddling all alone), when he encountered the Mount Batten Squid. The squid slowly disassembled Old Nosey digit by digit and limb by limb leaving a rather nasty slick across the Sound. I am delighted to report that like all Hollywood villains Old Nosey came to a slow and sticky end, such that I am never expecting to hear from him again, and jolly good riddance too.



**That's all folk; see you somewhere cold and wet.
Good paddling, Clive.**

Diary dates.

These diary dates are correct at time of going to print, please check the website forum or speak to the session leader for any changes nearer to the event.

Date	Type of paddle	Location	Session leader
October.			
Sat 11, TBA	Open boat river trip	TBA	Ian Ruse 07980 355019.
Sat 11, 10:00	Recreational paddle	Mount Batten	Ian Brimacombe 07720 957304.
Sun 12, 09:00	Beginners river trip	TBA	Clive Ashford 01752 344425. <i>Final details to appear on the website forum. Please meet at Plympton B&Q ready to leave at 09:00. Don't forget to leave time to swap boats around on roof racks before this time.</i>
Mon 13,19:30	Club AGM	Mount Batten	
Sat 18, 10:00	Recreational paddle	Mount Batten	Terry Calcott 07828 652775.
Sun 19, 09:00	Beginners river trip	TBA	Chris Doidge 07973 285969. <i>Final details to appear on the website forum. Please meet at Plympton B&Q ready to leave at 09:00. Don't forget to leave time to swap boats around on roof racks before this time.</i>
Sat 25, 10:00	Recreational paddle	Mount Batten	Clive Ashford 01752 344425.
Sun 26, 09:00	Intermediate river trip	TBA	TBA. <i>Final details to appear on the website forum. Please meet at Plympton B&Q ready to leave at 09:00. Don't forget to leave time to swap boats around on roof racks before this time.</i>
November			
Sat 1, 10:00	Sea kayak trip	Mount Batten	Ian Brimacombe 07720 957304. <i>The club sea kayaks can be booked with the Club Equipment Officer, Alan Ede, by a text to 07799 556876 or an e-mail to alancede@hotmail.co.uk</i>
Sun 2, 09:00	Beginners river trip	TBA	John Elworthy 01752 823381. <i>Final details to appear on the website forum. Please meet at Plympton B&Q ready to leave at 09:00. Don't forget to leave time to swap boats around on roof racks before this time.</i>
Sat 8, 10:00	Recreational paddle	Mount Batten	Terry Calcott 07828 652775.
Sun 9, 09:00	Beginners river trip	TBA	Ken Hamblin 01752 365404. <i>Final details to appear on the website forum. Please meet at Plympton B&Q ready to leave at 09:00. Don't forget to leave time to swap boats around on roof racks before this time.</i>
Sat 15, TBA	Open boat river trip	TBA	TBA
Sat15, 10:00	Recreational paddle	Mount Batten	Neville Cannon 07773 342787.
Sun 16, 09:00	Intermediate river trip	TBA	Chris Doidge 07973 285969. <i>Final details to appear on the website forum. Please meet at Plympton B&Q ready to leave at 09:00. Don't forget to leave time to swap boats around on roof racks before this time.</i>
Sat 22, 10:00	Recreational paddle	Mount Batten	Joy Ashford 01752 344425.
Sun 23, 09:00	Beginners river trip	TBA	Clive Ashford 01752 344425. <i>Final details to appear on the website forum. Please meet at Plympton B&Q ready to leave at 09:00. Don't forget to leave time to swap boats around on roof racks before this time.</i>
Sat 29, 10:00	Recreational paddle	Mount Batten	Ian Brimacombe 07720 957304
Sun 30, 09:00	Intermediate river trip	TBA	Doug Sitch 07966 740025. <i>Final details to appear on the website forum. Please meet at Plympton B&Q ready to leave at 09:00. Don't forget to leave time to swap boats around on roof racks before this time.</i>