



# PPCA Newsletter

## December 2018



### Introduction

Welcome to December's Newsletter. As the nights lengthen and the temperatures plummet, Stephen takes us to warmer climes, Terry brings news of the Christmas Paddle and a photo competition, Becky talks money, Adam takes to the airwaves and Clive goes out at night.

A reminder that the Mountbatten centre will be closed from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December to Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January so no nice warm showers after the Christmas paddle I'm afraid. Happy Christmas.

### Editorial

It's December and that can only mean one thing – time to thank everyone who has contributed to the Newsletter over the past year. A huge thank you to all our regular and occasional contributors. I was going to produce a league table of contributions but I was afraid the result would go to Clive's head. A special thanks to all those of you who have contributed your first article this year. You can consider yourselves to have passed your one star. Gaining your two star is a relatively simple matter. All you have to do is contribute a few more articles showing greater proficiency in style and technique with each article. Achieving your three star is a bit more difficult. This involves a piece of at least five pages (excluding photographs) preferably with a few words in one of the UK's minority languages. The piece should include poor conditions, a capsize or roll and at least one joke at the expense of an established club member. If this satisfies our expert writing coach, you will be able to call yourself a Regular Contributor.

Finally, please remember that I aim to acknowledge all contributions that are sent to me, ideally on the day I get them or, if not, as soon as I can. If you have submitted something and you haven't heard from me within a couple of days, please hassle me. I nearly didn't find Stephen's article as for some reason Google decided that it was spam so it went to my spam folder which I very rarely look at. I'd hate to think that other articles had gone astray.

Ivor Jones

Newsletter Editor

## The Committee

Committee Post	Name	Club Email	Phone Number
Club Secretary	Jackie Perry	ppca@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk	07523 965748
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Club President	Joy Ashford		01752 344425

## Next Committee Meeting

Please forward any items you would like considered at the next committee meeting to [secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk). They will go to the secretary.

Club Christmas Paddle Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> December by Terry Calcott

Yes folks it's nearly that time of year again, brush off those hats and Santa costumes, and come join your fellow club members for a paddle feast and make merry. The paddle venue will probably start and finish from Mount Batten, but if a good weather window occurs it may be away from MB. The minimum dress requirement for this paddle (in addition to your normal paddling and safety gear) is a festive hat. The preferred costume is fancy dress above the spraydeck. We always have a communal picnic of festive fayre. I will be compiling a list of sweet or savoury, so please let me know what you are bringing along.

Please let me know if you are intending coming along by email [terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk) or phone 07981489857 or a post on the forum (I will start a forum post nearer the date).

The committee have been informed that the facilities at Mount Batten will be closed on this date, so sorry club members no hot showers or changing rooms available. But this will not stop the joviality and festive merriment.



## PPCA Photograph Competition 2019 by Terry Calcott

I first organised a PPCA photo competition way back in 2010, with 18 club members entering a total of 46 photos. Over the years there have been many fantastic photos entered, the winning photo from 2010 is below. To continue this PPCA tradition I will be running a club photograph competition over the winter months.

The theme of the competition is paddlesport, so please submit photographs along those lines. They could include landscape, wildlife, people, action, humour. This is a fun amateur competition open to all club members. Dig out those photos or get snapping over the coming months. Please give any photos entered a suitable title.

The closing date for entries will be Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2019.

The club members will be able to vote for their 3 favourite photos. Entries will be displayed on the club website and Facebook page. More details on how to vote nearer the time. A suitable date to announce the winning photos will be arranged, most probably during one of the club talks in 2019.

### Rules:

Entrants must be PPCA members. All photos entered must be your own work and taken any time in 2018 up until the competition closing date in 2019.

Max of 3 photos per entry.

### Prizes:

For best photo and the runner up.

Please submit your entries by e-mail to [terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk)



Whilst everyone is busy preparing for Christmas and wondering what they might get from Santa I thought I would pose a question regarding future investment options for the club.

I thought it was worth asking our members if they had any thoughts about what they would like to see the club investing our available funds in.

Last year our equipment officer Pete did a huge overhaul of the club equipment and updated our stock of boats and kit causing a sizeable dent in the club's bank balance. Our publicity officer Jacqui went to great lengths to promote the club with flyers, cards and banners and tackled notice boards everywhere she went. Funds have also recently been spent on updating our club website.

If any members have any suggestions about what possible equipment/ services/ courses/ coaching or other miscellaneous items they would like the committee to explore for the coming year we would love to hear your suggestions. I have been warned that people may come up with all sorts of wonderful ideas that may cost the equivalent of a small house but I figured it was worth taking the risk and posting this question in the newsletter.

I am fully aware that the club does have a limited spending budget but I think it would be great to hear from club members about what they feel the club might benefit from. If club members have any ideas about how they would like the club to use it's funds then please get in touch. I will happily discuss your suggestions at the next committee meeting. My email is [welfare@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk](mailto:welfare@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk)

Look forward to hearing your suggestions

### Warm Water Paddling by Stephen and Nicola Pryor

Where: Espiritu Santo, off Baja California in Mexico, just north of the Tropic of Cancer

When: late October/early November.



Some months ago our non-paddling friends, Ruth and John, rang up to enquire whether we thought that they would enjoy a few days' kayaking whilst in Mexico. We assured them that they would have a wonderful time!

This set us thinking and we consulted the club sea kayaking gurus, Clive and Joy, who had paddled around the island of Espiritu Santo some years ago. They referred us to Clive's book, "Based on Fact – paddling stories" where he gives a vivid description of this trip. We were hooked, and booked a two week holiday in Mexico followed by a week's paddling .

Our dates were not flexible and so we were "forced" to book Baja Outdoor Activities' (BOA) more luxurious option, the fully catered trip around Espiritu Santo, "one of the planet's iconic sea kayaking destinations". Fully catered meant

that in addition to the Guide (Chino, a local English speaking kayaker) we were accompanied by a support boat with Cook (Edgar) and Captain (Gabriel). The support boat carried all the gear so our kayaks were light, loaded only with what we needed during the day. We did not have to lift a finger in camp, except to erect our tent. All meals were prepared for us, sometimes with freshly caught seafood.

Espiritu Santo is an uninhabited island lying in the Sea of Cortez approximately 10 miles off the coast of La Paz in Baja California on the Pacific side of Mexico. The island is about 15 miles long and 2 miles wide. Circumnavigation is about 44 miles. It is a UNESCO biosphere reserve, which essentially means that the land and surrounding waters are a protected environment. Water temperature was in the mid twenties (what a hardship!) and land temperature varied between the low thirties during the day falling to high teens at night. The geology and landscape are shaped by active tectonic plates and desert conditions created by the cold Californian current in the Pacific.

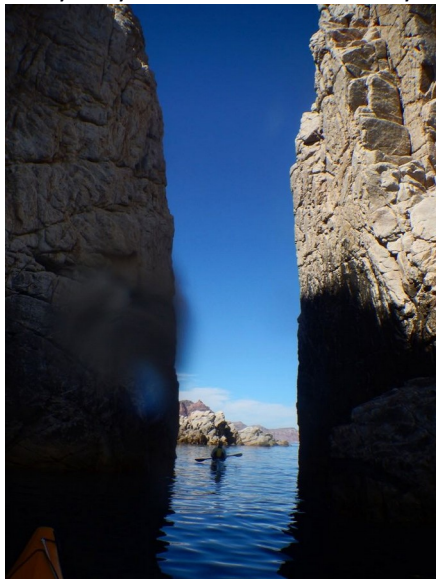
BOA provided the kayaks (good selection of double and single, plastic and fibreglass), spray decks, buoyancy aids and tents, and we hired snorkelling gear. Our essential paddling kit comprised a swim suit, wide brimmed hats, sun glasses, long sleeved shirt, sun cream and water bottles. We also wore gloves and bandanas for protection against very strong sunshine.

The evening before departure we met our guide and fellow paddlers. The group comprised another couple from the UK who were experienced paddlers, a couple from Canada who were experienced white water canoeists but had not done much kayaking and a Canadian lady who was a beginner. Transport to the island the following day was a 45 minute motor boat ride. On arrival we were allocated/selected kayaks and then had wet exit practice - a pleasure in warm water.



As always, wind was the determining factor in the choice of route. A northerly wind was blowing but it was expected to turn southerly over the next couple of days, before going northerly again. Wind speed maximum in fact was less than 10 knots. With this forecast in mind our guide elected to take us north up the east side of the island and then south down the west side back to our starting point on the south west corner.

Everybody found the first half day's paddling tough and was relieved to see the camp. The east side of the island is



much less accessible than the west where there are numerous sandy coves. The east side comprises volcanic cliffs 200 – 300m high with only a couple of potential campsites. We did not reach our first campsite until dusk, some four hours and 8 miles after starting out. The last three hours were spent battling into the north wind. Thereafter the days were easier, although day two was another four hours (11miles) without a land break. A cooling dip was the only way to have a pee. There were plenty of opportunities to play among the rocks for the more adventurous of the group.

Except for the first and last days there was a daily routine. Breakfast at seven, pack the tents away and, depending on distance, ready to leave between eight and nine. We had lunch when we arrived at our destination beach for the night (anytime between twelve and three), although fruit bars and fresh fruit were available during a long paddle. On arrival at the beach the support boat team had the tarp erected to provide shade, and there was always a selection of cold drinks and beers available, plus water. After pitching the tents, afternoons

were either spent sitting around, perusing an extensive library (bird, water, and plant life books– carried in a waterproof box), snorkelling or maybe a hike (guided, as access inland was only allowed in limited places). Happy Hour with a margarita or pina colada was at five, supper at six and as it was dark by eight everyone was in their tents not long after. Fresh ceviche, hot tortillas and tropical fruit were memorable culinary delights.

On the fourth day we were joined by another guide, Mario, and an American and, by complete coincidence, our friends who had initiated our trip. Strong northerly winds were forecast (usually a characteristic of the winter months) and so the guides kept us in a close group whilst paddling and moved us down the west coast fairly rapidly so that we arrived at our point of departure on the sixth day. The final morning was therefore very relaxed with a gentle paddle through some mangroves before packing up for return to the mainland and a much needed shower to remove six days of salt before the farewell Mexican supper.

What were the highlights? Our guide Chino was a fount of information on all aspects of Espiritu Santo including geology, early natives, plants, marine life and birds and the night sky. We loved the birds (pelican, frigate, heron, kingfisher, osprey, turkey vulture, brown and blue footed boobies, double crested cormorants and more), the marine life (snorkelling with sea lions, the clarity and colour of the water and life on the coral reefs), and the stars (visible through the mesh of the tent). The team were all very enthusiastic and cheerful.



The whole trip was very professionally organised and we highly recommend BOA ([www.kayactivities.com](http://www.kayactivities.com)) for the kayaking and Journey Latin America ([www.journeylatinamerica.co.uk](http://www.journeylatinamerica.co.uk)) for our overall itinerary. At the end Chino thanked us all for coming and asked us to tell our friends to visit Mexico, emphasising that for visitors it is not the dangerous place that one hears about in the media. We would go again tomorrow, except that Mexico City is a nine hour flight and La Paz is two hours beyond that.

This luxury trip certainly proved that paddling outside your normal (dis) comfort zone is great fun.



I used to think that I was a bit savvy and immune to the advertisers' subliminal suggestions and guile, but the first of many surprises contained within this little tale is that I may well have to re-appraise my gullibility rating.



Setting off down the Yealm estuary.

It all started in mid August when Tony asked me if I had ever thought of running a night paddle for the club. I said no because while I enjoy paddling on the dark side I do like to pick and choose both the quality and quantity of my night time paddling companions. With this in mind I was a bit surprised on 25 September to find myself standing on the pontoon adjacent to the River Yealm Harbour Masters office at Newton Ferrers, giving a briefing at the start of what was quite possibly the first ever official PPCA night paddle.

As with all good trips the plan was a simple one.

We would launch into the Yealm Estuary, paddle down to the sea, cross to the Mew Stone, find a beach for a cup of coffee and then return. We would watch the sun go down and the moon come up and we would go home happy.

Some of us opted to seal launch from the end of the afore mentioned pontoon. Two surprises awaited us here, 1) With just 30 minutes to go before high tide there was still a significant flow of water past the pontoon. 2) Unknown to us the end of the pontoon has a rubber sill attached to act as a fender to protect mooring boats. This rubber sill gripped our kayaks and meant that our gentle seal launch was somewhat steeper than would normally be the case, thus giving our spray deck fitting skills an early test. (We passed.)

The weather was fine and calm as we paddled down the estuary towards the sea. The sun was fast approaching the western horizon and colouring the sky to give us a foretaste of the sunset to come. Once we reached Mouthstone Point we turned left towards Gara Point. I think most of us were soaking up the ambience but there were some choppy waves that allowed our more desperate paddlers to indulge in a spot of twilight rock hopping.

At Gara Point we re-grouped and headed off to the Mew Stone. On other occasions I have paddled at sunset in oily calm conditions that have turned the sea into a kaleidoscope of colours, but this wasn't one of those occasions. While there can be no denying that the sunset was a bit special the choppy waves did spoil the effect a little bit. Picky aren't I? As well as the choppy waves there was also a gentle swell. As the sun got lower and lower this swell caused the sun to dip below the horizon and then to re-appear. We were treated to the somewhat surprising spectacle of seeing the sun rise in the west. Many times.

We arrived at the Mew Stone and paddled around to the cave. (There's a cave on the north side of the Mew Stone.) In the gathering gloom some people explored the cave and were surprised to find that at high tide this cave has 2 entrances. I, of course, already knew this but I was more than happy to listen to the gleeful cries of surprised exclamation emanating from my less knowledgeable companions.

The Mew Stone was alive with birds. Gulls and other sea bird were either roosting on the cliffs or wheeling around overhead, and smaller avian species were to be spotted flitting around the rocks and shoreline. By this time it was almost dark and identifying any particular species of bird was a bit tricky but it was all very atmospheric.

The moon gently rose over the Yealm and cast its soft glow over the sea. The moon has an Albedo of 0.12. (Wikipedia informs us that *Albedo is the measure of the diffuse reflection of solar radiation out of the total solar radiation*

received by an astronomical body. It is dimensionless and measured on a scale from 0 to 1.) To put that another way the moon reflects 12% of the light it receives. This is my surprising attempt at being educational. Apparently the earth has an Albedo of 0.39, but I can't begin to imagine how you could possibly measure this.

We landed on a beach for some refreshments. It was Adam's birthday, (Lade Dada Deedoo, that song's in your head now isn't it?) this was no surprise, least of all to Adam. Also unsurprising was the fact that Karen produced a cake to mark the occasion. What was a bit of a surprise was that the cake had been baked to a made up recipe that included Mars bars and beer. Karen very imaginatively called this cake a Chocolate Mars and Beer cake. It was very yummy as vouched for by the hundreds of flies that surprisingly descended out of nowhere to join in the party.

By now it was dark but the surprises were far from over. Whilst sitting on the beach, eating cake and watching the Eddystone Lighthouse flash out its warning to mariners, we were treated to an aerial display of bats flying overhead. I've never associated bats with the beach before but there they were. What species of bats were they? I've no idea, it was dark.

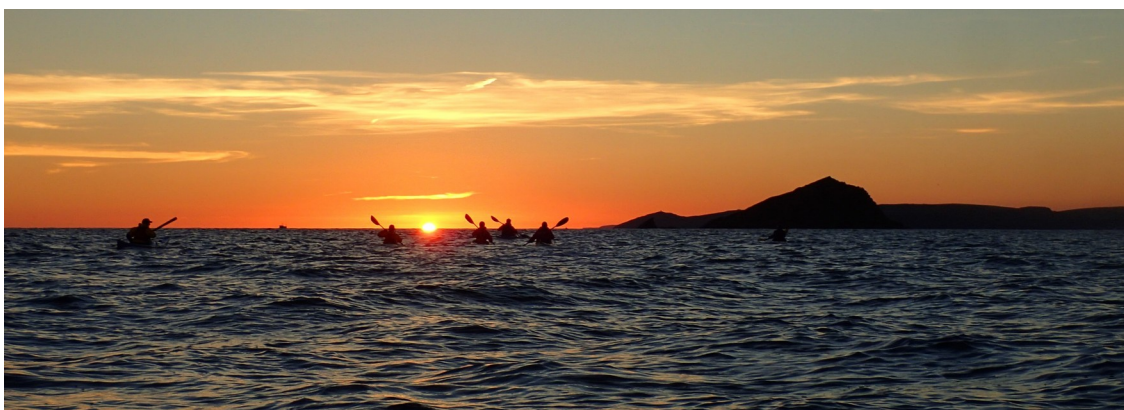
We got back on the water illuminated by a variety of lights ranging from Joy's black hole to Gavin's most excellent and surprisingly effective homemade lantern.

The moon was now shining down the Yealm Estuary so we all paddled along its silvery (Albedo 0.12) pathway back to Newton Ferrers, observing as we went another item from our box of surprises. There were shoals of fish swimming just below the surface, often jumping out of the water and making splashes as we passed by. Sadly I never caught one, now that would have been a surprise.

I saw a shooting star. My thought process went something along these lines, "What's that? Oh, it's a shooting star, I'll tell the others. Ah, it's gone."

Our final surprise came when we crossed the estuary back to the pontoon. As we left the shelter of the shore we found that the tide was running out at a rate that suddenly made us concentrate on the paddling, not what we were expecting at all and certainly a bit of a surprise right at the end of an otherwise gentle paddle.

And so seven paddlers packed up, bade each other farewell and went home. I'm going to assume that Tony was a very happy man but I'm not going to ask him in case I find myself running another surprising adventure. Actually, that wouldn't be such a bad thing so perhaps I will ask him after all. Are you a happy man Tony?



Approaching the Mew Stone.

Until now I have never carried a VHF Radio for Short Range Communication. I carry a mobile phone and a Personal Locator Beacon (in case of disaster). However, with doing more independent paddling I thought it time to invest in a VHF radio. There is a whole other article on the pros and cons of different type – do you need GPS and DSC and a host of other acronyms which I am not intending to write about now?!

You do need a license and also an authority to operate and that will require some training. I have therefore approached local RYA training body called “Searegs” who are based down at Turnchapel Wharf. If any other members (or friends) would like to do the training with a view to sitting the test then we can reduce the cost a bit by making a block booking. To be viable the classroom course would require 8 people and the on-line course a minimum of 4. Here is a section reproduced from their e-mail reply:

*Just to clarify there are two licences, you will need a Ship Portable Radio Licence for your hand held VHF which is free if you apply online through Ofcom. The other licence is the Authority to Operate and is achieved through taking the RYA SRC Exam, this is required to operate a VHF Radio no matter what vessel the VHF is on. Please see section 10 of the Terms and Conditions of Radio Licences on the [Ofcom website](#) –*

*We do offer the course either as the classroom based version which has the exam at the end of the course or the online version where the exam would need to be arranged at a date to suit in the classroom.*

*For the classroom course, numbers are limited to a maximum of 8. We could add a course for your members at a group price of £760 for the course (£95pp) price includes VAT, training materials and lunch.*

*For the online course, for a minimum of 4 bookings, we could offer a reduced price of £65 per person, again the price includes VAT and training materials.*

*The exam fee for either option is £60 pp, this is payable directly to the RYA in advance of the exam.*

There is a bit more detail on the [searegs website](#):

If you are interested in doing this in the New Year then please get back to me now and I will take this further. You can contact me at [membership@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk](mailto:membership@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk) or on 07834 286461 or by Facebook, Whatsapp or just talk to me!

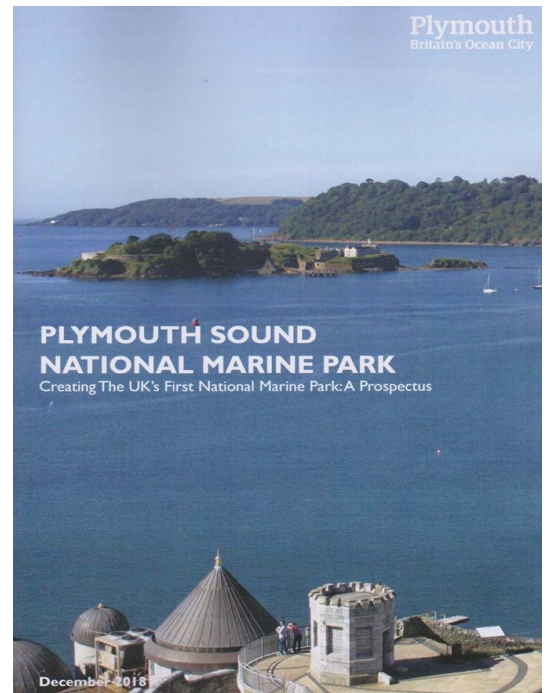
**Out!**

## Plymouth Sound National Marine Park by The Editor

This came up on one of my Facebook feeds the other day and I thought it might be of interest. I hadn't heard about it but that might just be me being slow. It stems from a [conference held in June 2018](#) on marine parks.

*"The proposition discussed was that Marine Parks could improve the conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the UK's coastal waters and create more opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of outstanding marine areas by the public."*

It sounds like there is widespread support for the idea among politicians so there's a reasonable chance of something happening. There's not a huge amount of information out there but there are some bits on the council's [news room website](#). I think the message is probably "watch this space" for a chance to get involved.



## Exchange & Mart

### Discount Available at Millets, 38/40 New George St, Plymouth PL1 1RW

One of our new members of the PPCA works in the Millets store (Big 'Thank you' to Lee McKenzie!) on New George Street, Plymouth and has negotiated with his Manager a great discount of 15% on production of your PPCA club membership card. Usual T's & C's apply, e.g. goods already discounted/sales items might be excluded.

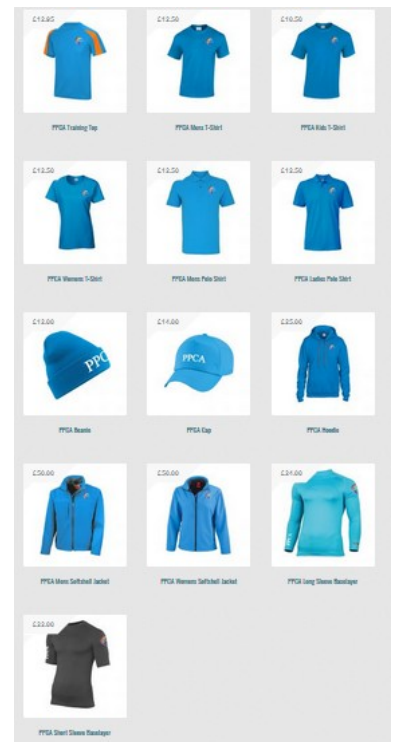
### Discount Available at Kayaks and Paddles

Kayaks and paddles offer discount to local kayak and canoe clubs. The PPCA and Tamar Canoe club can get a discount up to 15%. This is an offer not a right for the person that is making a purchase, so please do not go upsetting Kayaks and Paddles employees as this discount might be taken away.

### PPCA Club Clothing by Jackie Perry, Publicity Officer

A full range of customised kit in either blue or black is available to order direct from Tailored Branding via the link below

<https://hsclothing.co.uk/ppca-3/>



## 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](mailto: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. Syncing your Google calendar with the club calendar via the website is a good way of ensuring you stay up to date.

### Saturday, 1 December

Sea Paddle Terry Calcott

### Sunday, 2 December

White Water Pete Anderson

### Friday, 7 December

Pool Session

### 19:00

PPCA Quiz Night

### Saturday, 8 December

Rec Paddle Joy Ashford

### Sunday, 9 December

White Water Ken Hamblin

### Saturday, 15 December

Rec Paddle Ian Brim

### Sunday, 16 December

Open Canoe River Trip Ian Brim

White Water Doug Sitch

### Saturday, 22 December

Rec Paddle Terry Calcott

### Sunday, 23 December

White Water Clive Ashford

Saturday, 29 December

Rec Paddle Pete Anderson

Sunday, 30 December

White water Chris Doidge

Friday, 4 January 2019

Pool session

Saturday, 5 January 2019

Sea Paddle Joy Ashford

Sunday, 6 January 2019

White Water Ken Hamblin

Saturday, 12 January 2019

Rec Paddle Ian Brim

Sunday, 13 January 2019

Open Canoe River Trip Ian Brim

White Water Doug Sitch

Saturday, 19 January 2019

Rec Paddle Terry Calcott

Sunday, 20 January 2019

White Water Clive Ashford

Saturday, 26 January 2019

Rec Paddle Andy Kittle

Sunday, 27 January 2019

White Water Pete Anderson