



PPCA Newsletter October 2021

Introduction

Welcome to October's Newsletter. This month Debbie describes the memorial paddle for Bob and Clive takes us to Brixham. We also have a very personal piece from Birgit which shows how the PPCA (and other clubs like it) have an importance that extends far beyond simply paddling.

Editorial

October's Newsletter can only mean one thing, the highlight in everyone's calendar that is the AGM. This year is no exception but please note that the meeting is at Marjon and not Mount Batten so please don't go on autopilot. As ever, there are a number of committee posts up for grabs. Every year the appeal goes out by email. Every year I echo it in the Newsletter. Every year, it goes down to the wire with the posts being filled in the dying minutes of the AGM. Maybe this year, we should have a break with tradition and people volunteer for the posts in advance?

Ivor Jones

Newsletter Editor

Next Committee Meeting

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

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

Acknowledgements

The cover photographs are from the usual suspects plus another newcomer - Lisa Curtis.

Memorial Paddle for Bob Grose 25th September 2021 by Debbie Rowlands

In memory of Bob Grose, PPCA Club President and paddler



There have been many lovely tributes to Bob Grose, whose unexpected death in December 2020, shocked and saddened all who knew him.

A Memorial Paddle was organised by the PPCA for the 25th September 2021 from Mount Batten Centre. Bob was a keen paddler and this seemed a fitting way to remember him.

We met on a calm but dismal morning at the Mount Batten Centre. Despite the inclement weather, it was evident far more paddlers than normal were appearing. Considering the weather conditions, it was a little unusual to see this many paddlers arriving for a normal Saturday Rec Paddle.



Bob enjoyed kayaking far and wide and made many friends along the way. It was nice to see new faces as paddlers from other clubs and locations joined us to remember him. One couple had travelled up from Penzance.

The plan was to paddle in Plymouth Sound and return to Mount Batten beach at 1.00pm for a buffet lunch which Ken Hambin, Mark and Jackie Perry had arranged and set up. Here we would meet up with Bob's wife Jane. Clive and Joy Ashford had helped Jane and her daughters Catherine and Eleanor raise money for the RNLI by selling Bob's paddling gear. The RNLI would also join us on the beach to receive a cheque for the money raised (£1,430.80).



It was still very misty by the time we set off so we were asked to pair up with a paddling partner. Becky and I paired up, although our paddling preferences couldn't be more different. Becky enjoys white water, while I enjoy flat calm.

Despite the mizzle, we set off along the coast towards Jennycliff. It was a very colourful flotilla gliding through the mist with paddlers reminiscing and recounting tales of their kayaking adventures with Bob.

We reached Bovisand Harbour and as there was still time to enjoy some rock hopping, we continued around outside the harbour wall. There were a few small waves to provide fun for those who enjoy surfing among the rocks. My paddling partner apologised and was gone. The magnetism of white water was just too good to miss. She disappeared behind some rocks poking out of lots of white foaming water.

Now Becky is a very experienced kayaker, so I knew she would be fine. However, one of the visiting paddlers saw the waves bounce Becky from one rock and towards another and rather prematurely shouted "Swimmer"! Becky appeared beaming and bone dry. I think Bob would have found the situation amusing.

The return trip in the mist was more relaxed and atmospheric, exploring the caves and gullies along the way.

Arriving at Mount Batten beach, the visibility was so poor we couldn't see far across the Sound. Ken, Mark and Jackie had kindly laid out the food and drink for us. We had all been asked to bring a variety of food to share as we usually do on Christmas or Easter paddles. There were four hardy souls that went for a swim, just as the RNLI boat came into view.

We gathered round as Jane joined us and Ken read a few words about Bob. It was felt that rather than have a traditional trophy named after Bob, it would be nicer to name a boat after him. The boat with the name 'Bob G' was unveiled and Jane duly christened it. Jane also wanted to share some of her stories about Bob's kayaking adventures and explained how he wasn't the sort of person who joined clubs. However, with PPCA, he enjoyed the group paddles, made new friends and over the years became an experienced paddler. Jane only heard about some of Bob's rather hair raising anecdotes after he admitted what they had been up to.

After the cheque presentation to the RNLI, the mist began to lift slowly. It was very appropriate with Bob's environmental interests, that in the distance emerging out of the gloom the Greenpeace Rainbow Warrior was moored, as if paying its own tribute to Bob.

One tribute came in from Rick Cooper,

"I remember Bob as a man of both vigour and compassion – a rare combination in my experience. The world is a lesser place since he left. "

Amen to that. RIP Bob.



The AGM - 28th October 2021, Marjon, Derriford

SAVE THE DATE

PPCA AGM - 28TH OCTOBER 2021 - MARJON, DERRIFORD (AGM COMMENCES 7PM BUT FOOD WILL AVAILABLE FROM THE BAR FROM 6PM UNTIL 7PM)

You are invited to attend the PPCA AGM on 28th October 2021 at the Student Refectory/Dining Hall at Marjon, Derriford. The actual AGM will start at 7pm but food will be available from 6pm if you would like to attend earlier to have a bite to eat and socialise with other members, with a student bar nearby. A Table Top Sale will also be available for any of you who have kayak related kit you would like to sell on - so don't forget to bring some cash.

We would encourage all members to attend as this is your opportunity to find out what has been happening over the past year, help elect next year's Committee and meet up with other club members.

Committee Nominations

Any members who would be interested in volunteering for a position on the Committee can find a description of each role under the PPCA Club Committee Roles & Responsibilities tab in the Members section of the Website. You can also ask current Committee members about the role and amount of time involved etc. If you are willing to step up would just need to find a proposer and seconder to recommend you for the post. If you do have any difficulty regarding finding a proposer and seconder this can be organised on the night of the AGM.

Nominations should be emailed prior to the AGM to the Secretary, advising what you would like to volunteer for at: secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk.

If you are unable to attend the AGM then apologies can be sent by email to secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

Further information and an Agenda will be sent nearer the date.

Jackie Perry

Secretary PPCA

Features

Not Plymouth Sound Volume 4 by Clive Ashford with Photos by Joy Ashford

With a nod in the general direction of Douglas Adams this is the 4th and final instalment of my Not Plymouth Sound trilogy. (If you are going to steal someone else's ideas then you may as well steal from the best). Avid readers will remember that last time out, due to the forecast winds, we had to abandon my plan to paddle out of Brixham and instead paddle from Teignmouth. Well, never one to waste a good plan on 12 September the weather gods smiled on us and once again the plan was to paddle out of Brixham.

The day started well in that I remembered to wake up. Remembering to wake up is a prerequisite to having a good day in much the same way forgetting to wake up isn't. Anyway, we left Plymouth under a leaden sky but as we neared Brixham that had lightened. Had we been travelling in a weather forecaster's dream we would have moved from driving under a black cloud to driving under a white cloud. To make life even more pleasant there was hardly any wind.

Seven intrepid explorers congregated in the Breakwater car park in Brixham and arranged a second mortgage before parting with a hefty £8.50 for the privilege of parking there. The Torbay lifeboat house shares this car park and we were delighted when a crew member informed Andy and Bob that they liked sea kayakers because we were always so well equipped. Getting the seal of approval from the RNLI is definitely something to feel pleased about.



Adam gives a briefing

Brixham's Breakwater car park boasts some facilities but to use these facilities you have to part with 30p. After stumping up £8.50 to park this did seem a bit mean but our ever-resourceful club members managed to reduce the cost by surreptitiously not letting the door close in between our various occupations. I wonder what the RNLI would have thought about that? I expect they would have been far more impressed than Torbay Borough Council!



A kaleidoscope of grey calmness

As with previous adventures Adam had expressed an interest in leading this paddle in order to gain experience and to add another tick in his paddling log. Always keen to demonstrate my ability to slope shoulders I readily, nay eagerly, agreed that Adam could lead this trip. Adam gave us a briefing which was to paddle to Berry Head, carry on out to sea in a SE direction for some 40 minutes in an attempt to find some wildlife, paddle back to shore for lunch and then to hug the coast on our return journey. Thus briefed we launched into the calmest sea that I have seen for a long time. The sea was a kaleidoscope of greys that was matched by sky and the horizon was just a fuzz of greyness. Gentle readers, I'm sure that you

have already worked out that this narrative is steadily and inevitably grinding towards combining the number 50 and the words shades of grey into one sentence, so we will move swiftly on.

As we launched we noted that we weren't the only people taking advantage of the waters off Breakwater beach. There were divers under the surface and a group of swimmers bobbing around in the water having what I will describe as a social swim, that is swimming without actually moving. So, there were people under, in and on the sea. All we needed was someone hovering over the water to complete some sort of set and oh look, there is someone standing on the shore fishing. I wonder if that counts?

The paddle to Berry Head was uneventful and once there Adam gave a lesson in how to paddle on a compass bearing. We paddled SE hoping to see some wildlife and it wasn't long before we spotted a harbour porpoise. I can tell you it was a harbour porpoise with some confidence because I asked Lisa, our resident marine life expert. Bob was very excited because he had never before seen a porpoise from his kayak. Having seen one porpoise we very soon spotted two others, so the decision to paddle out to sea proved to be a good one.

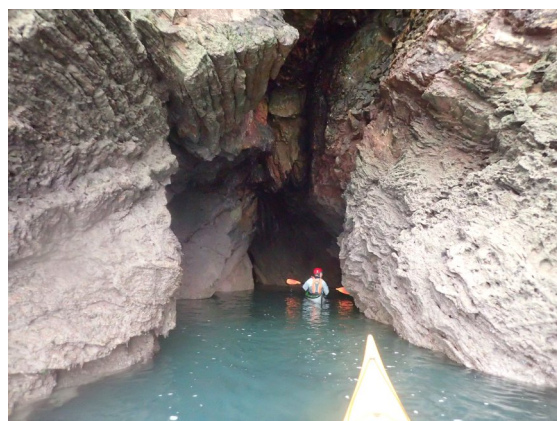
We carried on for our allotted 40 mins then turned back to shore. It wasn't long after we had turned back when Andy and Joy said they had spotted dolphins. The sighting was confirmed by all our other paddlers except me but eventually (had you tried to time this you would have needed a calendar rather than a watch) I saw fins and splashes in the distance. We stopped paddling and watched as these fins and splashes got closer and closer until five dolphins swam right through our group, one of them swimming under Bob's boat. This made us all very happy but no-one was more delighted than Bob who added dolphins to his list of firsts for the day. Earlier there had been jet skis causing their usual noise pollution but they had gone and the scene we were witnessing was unfolding in silence. You could have heard a shrimp splash, although I am fairly certain that I heard one of the dolphins say thanks for all the fish. The dolphins swam away and we made our way to a beach for lunch, but not before we saw either more porpoises or the same porpoises once again. Lunch was consumed in a very smiley sort of a way.



Dolphins

We relaunched and started to paddle back to Brixham. We indulged in a little rock hopping, or rock gardening if you prefer, nosed our way in and out of various caves and found a seal who seemed to think that following Bob was a good idea. I have my suspicions that in order to attract wildlife Bob had tied some fish to the back of his boat, but I can't prove this. Whatever the reason Bob was definitely in favour.

The sea conditions were what I would describe as glassy calm. A swell of just a few inches made an almost musical sound as it gently lapped against the cliffs. Gurgling, tinkling, whooshing and swishing sounds emanated from every crevice in gentle contrast to the silence of the dolphins noted earlier.



There were caves

I previously mentioned that Adam was leading this trip. The conditions were as calm as you could imagine and the paddlers were all experienced and suitably skilled. I'm not sure that it would have been possible to lead an easier trip or maybe, like a truly great leader, Adam was so good that we just didn't notice his input.

We rounded Barry Head to find that the tide was flowing out of Torbay. We weren't surprised by this but I'd hate you to think that we weren't aware of what was going on.

A short time later we landed on the Breakwater beach and set about the laborious business of unpacking the kayaks, changing, loading kayaks onto the cars and generally saying goodbye. Joy and I

treated ourselves to an ice cream but we did seem to be alone. My thanks (in alphabetical order) to Adam, Andy, Bob, Joy, Karen and Lisa for your splendid company on what turned out to be a very memorable day.

As a postscript I was very happy. To give you some idea of just how happy I was I can tell you that I was still smiling a few days later as we packed our boats to set off around the Isle of Wight. In fact, writing this has made my happy muscles twitch once again, probably not for the last time. Not a bad day's paddling.

Thank You for All Your Support by Birgit Kloos

I would like to thank everybody in the club who supported me over the last 6 months during an often not so easy journey. It made me feel less alone and part of something bigger.

Back in March 2021 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I know that I am not the only one. There are approximately 55,000 women and 400 men who receive that diagnosis each year in the UK. Currently 1 in 7 women will get breast cancer in their lifetime (that means 6 in 7 won't, just to reassure women).

Dealing with cancer can make you feel lonely and very anxious especially during a pandemic. It suddenly happens and then turns your life upside down. Questions went through my head whether I should have done things differently in my life. I thought about all the things which are important to me and gosh suddenly ordinary things like having a cup of tea in my garden and listening to the birds become so special and treasured.

Luckily there are so many people especially in the kayak club who have helped me throughout those initial 6 months.

The treatment of breast cancer usually involves surgery, medication (which sometimes is chemotherapy) and often radiotherapy. Everybody's story is a bit different, and the treatment depends on various characteristics of the tumour. After the surgery it takes regular exercise to regain good arm and shoulder movement. When I was told that I need a mastectomy one of my main wishes was to go kayaking again after the operation and to be fit enough to do so.

My prognosis is good since I found the lump early, the tumour characteristics are favourable and there was little delay in having surgery. Often, I think that I am very lucky but it also takes courage to live with uncertainties. Life isn't quite the same anymore.

There is more and more evidence that exercise is good for all of us, it improves our mood, keeps the body in shape, prevents diseases (it can even reduce the risk of the cancer returning) and with kayaking it is also a way to socialise whilst enjoying the countryside and wildlife.

Many thanks to everybody who carried my boat in the first few months after returning on the water and for sharing their stories whilst paddling. I would like to thank especially (and apologies if I have forgotten somebody):

Linda. What would I have done without Linda? After having had the biopsies which looked very suspicious for cancer the Consultant breast surgeon signed me off sick since I didn't quite look like I could go to work the next day checking chemotherapy prescriptions (I work as a Cancer Services Pharmacist at the hospital). That was a relief. But what do you do when you wake up the next morning and all sorts of things run through your head? Luckily, I remembered that I had Linda's phone number somewhere. So, I gave her a call and we met up for a walk despite Linda's knee injury. It helped a lot just to talk to somebody who understood.

I had my operation on the 1st April (afternoon) just before the Easter Bank Holiday. It was still that part of the pandemic when one was not officially allowed any visitors. Generally, I am quite obedient to follow rules however I live on my own and after the surgery I was not able to drive for 4 weeks which made me less mobile. So, I appreciated every little visit (mostly in my garden) or invitation for a short walk.

Thank you to **Linda and Paul** again who visited during that icy Easter Sunday with some flowers, chocolate and even some treats for my cats. Thanks for offering to help with the food shopping and joining me on other walks and meeting up for lunch on the Hoe.

Thank you to **Helga** for visiting and dropping off some carrot cake and some Easter eggs and offering to help with the food shopping.

Thank you to **Jackie and Joy** for joining me on a walk in Southway Nature Reserve. It felt almost like a normal day when we had a cup of tea with Helga (in her garden) on our walk back.

Thanks, **Joy**, for all your WhatsApp messages and another walk through Saltram Park. We are really blessed with green spaces in Plymouth.

Thank you to **Jane** for visiting and the cooking book and comparing scars. I must admit I still have not made any dishes from the book because I cook with whatever I find in my kitchen. However, your help and advice are much valued and appreciated.

Thank you to **Karen** for your visit and the plants. I am afraid the snails and slugs in my garden ate all the little bedding flowers.

Thank you to **Merryll, Terry and Mary** for thinking of me and sending me a get well soon card. Terry, I suppose I will never quite understand the British sense of humour.

Thank you to **Brim** for supporting me on my first paddle after the operation. It was a Friday evening 5 weeks after my operation. It was a bit chilly, and we had a very gentle paddle. I was so full of joy being back on the water although initially I was not quite sure whether I will manage but I did. Debbie captured a big smile on my face in one of her photos.

Thanks to **Andy** for supporting me on my first Saturday paddle after the operation. I was very pleased that I made it to Penlee Point and back in a sea boat, although the distance was maybe slightly beyond of what I should have paddled at that point. But I felt fine the next day apart from being a bit more tired.

Thanks to **Will** for keeping in touch. We all hope to see you soon on the water before the winter.

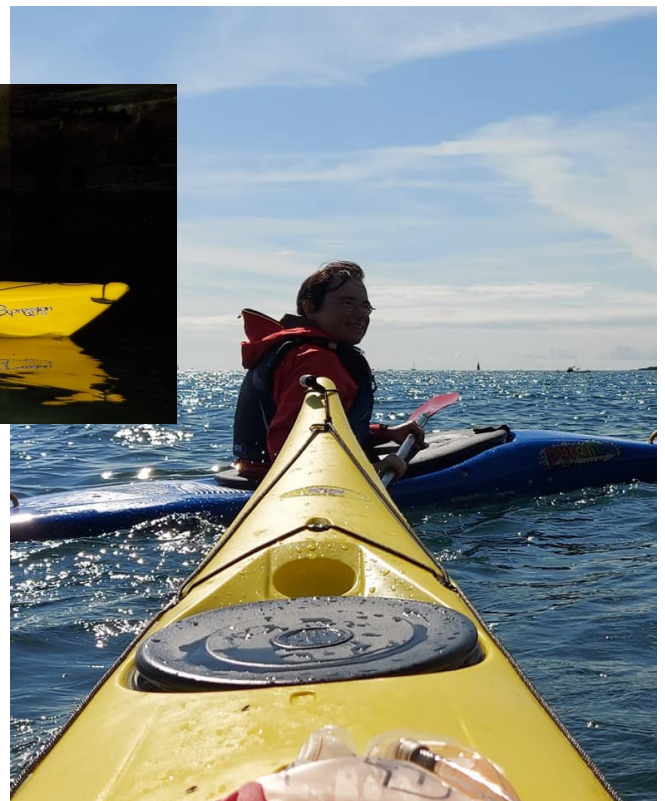
Thanks to **Gillian** for joining me on a few swims. Maybe the water is getting too cold now for me to swim during our lunch breaks.

Thanks to **Paula** for explaining why the clocks in theatre are not always changed and listening to my story during a Saturday paddle.

Thank you to **Dave and Baby-Jane** for visiting on my doorstep with some flowers. I hope that both will re-join the club, but Dave's new hobby is cycling, I believe.

I appreciate all your friendship, help, thoughts and support and it made me really want to get back on the water.

(Photos were taken by Debbie Rowlands and Gillian Mann)

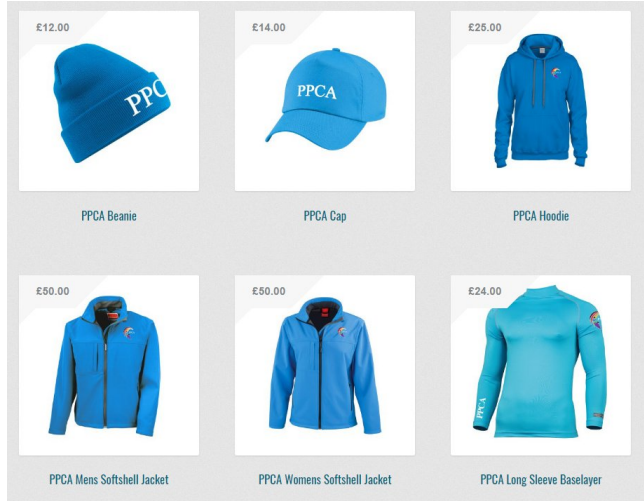
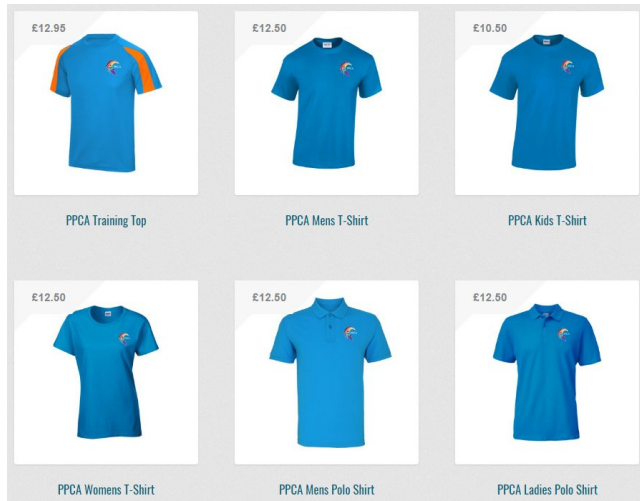


Exchange and Mart

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/>



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

One of our members 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.



Raise free donations for us every time you shop online with easyfundraising!



<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ppca/>

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