



PPCA Newsletter  
October 2022

## Introduction

Welcome to October's Newsletter. This month, Debbie extols the virtues of calm water and Terry takes us to the home of curling stones. As it's October, we also have news of the AGM and vacant Committee posts.

## Editorial

This month, Debbie makes a pretty convincing case for calm water paddling. For those who prefer to do their paddling upside down, however, this is the start of the white water season. Please remember that details of these trips tend to be on the forum rather than Facebook so please check there for details.

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](mailto: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](mailto:newsletter@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk)

## Acknowledgements

As ever, I have plundered Facebook for the cover photos - my thanks to all concerned.

## The AGM by Jackie Perry, Secretary

The PPCA Annual General Meeting will take place on Friday 28th October at 7pm at the Plymstock Albion Oaks Rugby Football Club, Wembury Road, Plymstock PL9 0DF

### Committee Nominations

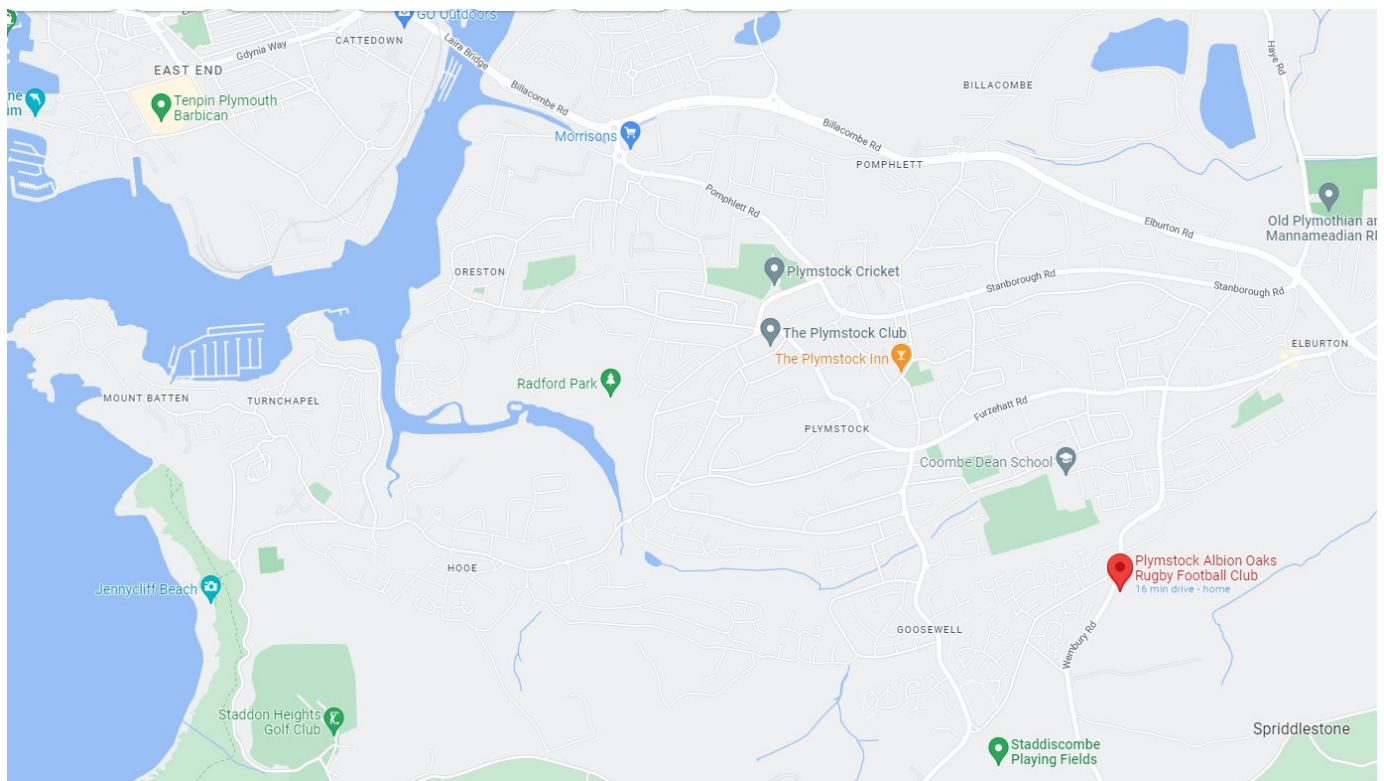
Any members who would be interested in putting themselves forward for a position on the Committee can find a description of each role under the PPCA Club Committee Roles & Responsibilities Tab in the Members section of the Website. You can also ask current Committee members about their role. If you are willing to step up would just need to find a proposer and seconder to recommend you for the position and also email: [secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk), advising of the post you would like to volunteer for, prior to the AGM. If you do have any difficulty regarding finding a proposer and seconder this could be organised on the night of the AGM.

We have been advised that the current postholders will definitely be stepping down this year:

- Club Leader
- Membership Secretary
- Treasurer
- Youth Development Officer

There is also a continuing vacancy for an Assistant Club Leader.

We would encourage all members to attend the AGM as this is your opportunity to find out what has been happening over the past year, raise questions, help elect next year's Committee and meet up with other club members. All members are welcome to attend and apologies can be sent by email to: [secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk)



## Mount Batten Centre Opening Times by Leon Dorking, Centre Manager

Dear Members & affiliates

We hope you have had a successful and rather hot summer and season; we'd like to thank you for all your support over this time.

Unfortunately, it has come to the time of year where our hours will be reducing for opening and closing of the main building of the centre.

As of Monday 26th September, we will be opening at 9am and closing at 6pm. We currently have accommodation booked in until the last weekend being the 14th and 15th of October (unless weather decides differently to affect the group staying), so weekends we will still be open from 8am until 10pm.

Times out of these hours affiliate clubs with keys to the yard or know the code to the metal gate at the back entrance of the yard can still enter. People with access cards can use the changing rooms and the pontoon. If you are unsure of your card, please come to the centre where we can check this for you.

Please can we remind everyone that access from the changing room corridor into the main part of the building is not permitted out of hours. When the Centre is closed and intruder alarm is active and will go off if the building is entered. As always, the glass bolt will be on the door so access can be made in the event of an emergency.

Please can we also ask everyone to be conscious of lights being turned off, doors being locked to sheds and if you are the last group/club around please ensure both wooden and metal access gates to the yard are locked and secure, including the smaller wooden access walk through gate.

If affiliates require meeting rooms out of these hours, please enquire as we can offer the classrooms again as previous years. There will be certain times applicable for collecting and returning keys but will be explained upon enquiry.

Car parking out of hours, please either collect a registration sheet from reception before closing hours or e-mail a list into [enquiries@mount-batten-centre.com](mailto:enquiries@mount-batten-centre.com) so we can enter them the day after. We only get a couple of days extra to do this so please send them as soon as you can.

As always, any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## Features

### Plymouth Sound Snippets #8, Plymouth Breakwater by Terry Calcott

On club paddles we often head out to the Breakwater and paddle around it, along it, inside or outside, and a few paddlers have even been over it. This is the first of a few snippets about the Breakwater. Over the coming months there will be snippets about the Lighthouse, Survivors Cage and Fort. But to start, a short snippet about the Breakwater.

Before the Breakwater was built Plymouth Sound was exposed to storms from the prevailing SW, which made it a dangerous anchorage for ships.



The Breakwater



Aerial View of the Breakwater

Civil Engineer John Rennie was tasked with designing the breakwater with Joseph Widbey being the onsite engineer in charge. The foundation stone was laid on Shovel Rock on August 8, 1812. It followed a line over Panther Rock, Shovel and St Carlos Rocks. It took around 30 years to complete and required around 4 million tonnes of stone. The cost was around £1.5 million. The Breakwater is 13 metres wide at the top and 65 metres wide at the base.

In 1812 a twenty-five-acre site at Oreston was purchased from the Duke of Bedford for £10,000 and opened as the Breakwater Quarry for the supply of limestone. The Breakwater as constructed comprises a central portion of 1,000 yards in length and two arms each 350ft long and formed at an angle of 120 degrees to the main section.

In 1815 it was decided to raise the structure to 20 feet above low water instead of 10 feet as planned. In 1817 a storm displaced much of the work and altered the designed seaward slope from 1 in 3 to 1 in 5. A still more violent storm during 1824 removed upwards of 200,000 tons of stone and reduced the slope once again to 1 in 5. For added protection, the top of the Breakwater is paved in granite. The project to build the Breakwater was known at the time as 'The great national undertaking'.



Photo from the Late 1800s



Family Picnic on the Breakwater

At around a mile long and 2 ½ miles from the Hoe it is a massive structure. As paddlers we are fortunate to be able to see this amazing piece of engineering up close.

## White Water or Flat Water (Karma Kayaking) by Debbie Rowlands

The White Water season is about to start. Rain dances have commenced. The excitement is building.

While I wish the brave and adventurous a wonderful and safe season, I will be heading to calmer waters. That is my comfort zone.

The quieter rivers and estuaries provide time to slow down, relax and enjoy seeing flora and fauna up close, as long as you paddle slowly and quietly.

**Scientists have found that spending two hours a week in nature is linked to better health and wellbeing.** GPs are prescribing gardening to patients with anxiety and depression. Perhaps they should consider adding kayaking to their list too?

Flowing up river with the tide enables you to take in the sounds of nature without disturbing it. The sight of a kingfisher is always a highlight on any river trip (although they have been seen along the coast too). As you float along the river you can feel any worries just drift away.

Along our rivers various historical items and disused buildings can be seen. Sometimes you come across the unexpected too. I didn't realise bras grew on trees.

Whatever your choice of paddling, enjoy it.

To quote James Taylor, *"The secret of life is enjoying the passage of time"*.

It's really up to you how fast or slow you want to travel.



## Ailsa Craig by Terry Calcott

Ailsa Craig sits around 10 miles offshore from Girvan in the Outer Firth of Clyde. Paddling out to the rocky island has been high up on my paddling bucket list for many years. The opportunity came this summer when we had the chance to stay locally in Ayrshire and use it as a base for some exploring and paddling. Although most sea kayakers bypass the southern west coast of Scotland on their way further north. The paddle is listed in the Scottish Sea Kayaking handbook of 50 great sea kayak voyages. It is listed as a 'C' paddle which means it likely to be challenging and a committing paddle, Ailsa Craig is a long way offshore with no escape routes.

Our launch spot was from the nearest mainland point to Ailsa Craig, the beach at Carleton Bay just south of Lendalfoot. There is a large free carpark but like a lot of Scotland seems to be frequented by camper vans who think parking lengthways to get a good view is acceptable! Unperturbed we knew we would soon have a much better view. We unloaded and carried boats and kit down onto the beach. The worrying thing was that we couldn't see Ailsa Craig. Had I got the right beach? Were we in Scotland? Definitely in the right place just the early morning cloud cover was sitting quite low and hopefully would clear soon. The early planning involved working out the tidal stream and compass bearing for the paddle out. The other slight worry was the wind strength and direction. The wind was blowing down the Firth of Clyde between a F3 to 4 with the tidal stream in the opposing direction.

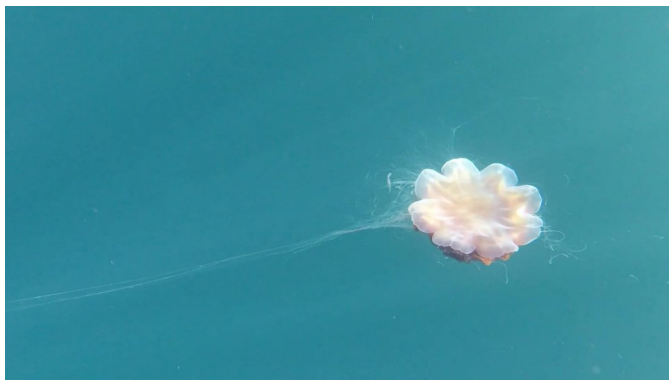
We were expecting some lumpy sea to start and soon after launching we weren't disappointed! I was confident that later in the day the sea state would be calmer once the tide had turned. Although the tidal



The Paddle Out

stream is not huge, we were on springs, and it was noticeable. It was only after a few minutes of paddling we saw our first Lion's Mane jellyfish. These were then seen at almost every paddle stroke for the rest of the day.

It was a warm summers day in mid-August, and I had shorts and a couple of thin layers on. The paddle out should take around 3 hours of leisurely paddling. After following the compass bearing for around a mile we



Lion's Mane Jellyfish

started to pick out the rough outline of the island. I forgot to mention the wind against tide had produced an interesting sea swell which was hitting us on the starboard forward quarter. The swell was quite rhythmic, and my fellow paddlers were relishing the conditions as much as me. Every so often a larger wave would come through and break with certain descriptive words being uttered. At the halfway point the island was starting to loom large, its 1,109 feet summit clear to see. We carried on and settled back into the paddling. Looking into the distance we could see that the sea state was much the same, so we carried on with excitement and anticipation at what lay ahead.



Ailsa Craig



Ailsa Craig at around 240 acres is a large volcanic plug of an extinct volcano, a Palaeogene pluton, formed of microgranite which is extremely hard and erosion resistant. The granite is particularly fine and used for making curling stones. We could now clearly make out the cream and white colours of the Northern Lighthouse boards Ailsa Craig lighthouse. Our planned landing site was just below the lighthouse on the renowned storm beach. Scanning the shore for any signs of breaking waves, it looked calm but not much of a beach just large granite boulders. We soon negotiated the hazard and had our sea kayaks safe. Time to explore.



Ailsa Craig Lighthouse



Disused Fog Station

while to get everyone safely back in the kayaks, especially as some kayaks had increased vastly in weight with mini curling stones packed onboard!

With no wind, under a cloudless blue sky, the sun warming us we paddled clockwise around the island. Everyone was smiling from ear to ear. Leaving the granite beach behind the cliffs start to climb high overhead. We pass one of the old fog stations and the rusting compressed air containers, looking like a giant pizza oven. The Grey Seals came over to say hello.

We wouldn't have time to climb to the summit but wanted to paddle around the island after lunch and see the Gannet colony and cliffs. We had a good leg stretch and leisurely lunch sat in the sunshine against the lighthouse walls. The lighthouse complex has a mix of unmanned modern buildings and the old quarters and rooms when it was manned station. These still had furniture and fittings in and felt quite eerie.

Lunch over and time to get afloat again. The first thing we noticed apart from our boats being high up the beach was that the sea had gone nice and flat. It took a



Disused Fog Station

We were mesmerised by the columnar cliffs and the majesty of the scenery. The Gannets start filling the sky overhead, as the noise builds, we see the main colony set high on the cliffs. Numbering many thousand, they are one of the largest Northern Gannet colonies in the world. Most sea kayakers love wildlife and the environment. This was one of those places where we could have sat for hours taking in the spectacle. Paddling slowly the cliffs continued, we passed a few caves but stayed clear as they were being used by roosting Kittiwakes. I was aware that we would need to start our paddle back soon.

It was nearing 4:00 and with a 3-hour paddle back we wanted to land in daylight. It felt like Velcro was holding the paddlers back as no one wanted to leave. Eventually we turned and headed on a compass bearing back to the mainland. We were followed by Gannets and Grey Seals for a few miles. Did I mention the jellyfish. With the late afternoon sun warming the sea surface the Lions Mane were even more prolific. The sea was becoming mirror calm and what was supposed to be a 3-hour paddle back soon become 4 hours. But we were enjoying it so much we kept losing our focal point on the mainland and with the tidal stream pushing us south we ended up paddling a large banana shape track on the way. We kept looking back at Ailsa Craig it was looking magnificent in the warm glow of the setting sun. Landing back at Carleton Bay just as the sunset at around 8:00. We were exhausted but euphoric and very happy. It was an amazing paddle. Many thanks to my paddling friends Mark, Mary and Merryl for making it possible and so special.

This was just the first paddle of our paddling holiday. Next month's article will be about Bass Rock.



Sunset Looking Towards Ailsa Craig

## Exchange and Mart

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 10%. 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/>

## The Committee

### Chair

Mark Perry  
chair@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk  
07801 310 993

### Vice-Chair

Kevin Jones  
vchair@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Club Leader

Ken Hamblin  
leader@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk  
07790 293 952

### Assistant Club Leader

Vacant  
acleader@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Club Secretary

Jackie Perry  
secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk  
07523 965 748

### Membership Secretary

James Hubbard  
membership@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk  
07752 125 012

### Welfare Officer

Alan Ede  
welfare@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk  
07799 556 876

### Intro Course Coordinator

Colin Wilding  
intro@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk  
07928 578 144

### Treasurer

Sharne Dodds  
treasurer@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk  
07964 912 837

### Equipment Officer

Pete Anderson  
equipment@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk  
07958 694 434

### Publicity Officer

Gillian Mann  
publicity@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Youth Development Officer

George Hamblin  
youth@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk  
07805 085 499

### Health and Safety Officer

Damean Miller  
safety@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Club President

Adam Coulson  
president@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk  
07834 286 461