



PPCA Newsletter February 2023

Introduction

Welcome to February's Newsletter. This month we have news of some external coaching for sea paddlers, leadership awards for two of our coaches, a proposal from Clive, advance notice of a race and Terry concludes his examination of the Breakwater. I've also put the latest Mount Batten opening times in but, given how frequently these change, they may well be out of date by the time you read this.

Editorial

It's good to see Adam's piece on external coaching in this issue. I'm not knocking the PPCA coaches in any way but, having had the odd session with other coaches (in an open boat obviously) I can vouch for the fact that it's always good to get another point of view and to have things explained in a different way. Quite apart from improving your skill level, it can sometimes mean that things that have been a mystery for years suddenly become miraculously clear and straightforward.

The best news of the month has to be Bekky and Jane qualifying as White Water Leaders. A glance at the syllabus on the BC website shows how much work is involved in gaining this award and one can only marvel at how anyone ever manages to achieve it. What it does not mention, however, is the basic qualification of being completely and utterly mad.

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

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

Congratulations To Our New White Water Leaders by Colin Wilding, Club Leader

I would like to ensure that everyone in the club knows that not only do we have two new White Water Leaders but we have two new female White Water Leaders in Jane Hitchings and Bekky Stiasny. This is no small feat as both of them work full-time, one as a GP, the other as a Vet. They have had to undertake compulsory leadership training and gain credentials such as White Water Safety and Rescue (WWSR) Training, first aid and Safeguarding Training to ensure vulnerable adults as well as children are protected.

Jane has stepped up from L1 coach and led a WW paddle already, Bekky has agreed to lead on Introductory Courses as well as lead on White Water trips. Thanks again, the club both needs and appreciates you and the time you've put in.

British Canoeing are always encouraging clubs to increase their percentage of female paddlers and particularly leaders under their ShePaddles umbrella and Jane and Bekky have now tripled our number of female leaders. I believe the club is also approaching a 50/50 ratio of male and female paddlers.

Well done Jane and Bekky, we are really proud of you and of course our existing female leader Joy Ashford.

Editor's Note: I bullied Colin into writing this while he was away in order to get this edition out in time for people to read Adam's piece, hence his vagueness on numbers.

Jane and Bekky by Clive Ashford

Huge congratulations to Jane Hitchings and Bekky Stiasny on becoming British Canoeing white-water leaders. Jane and Bekky have worked hard to gain this award and as a reward they can now expect to be called upon to lead our river trips. As someone who leads river trips I am very grateful to find that we have 2 extra very capable leaders to ease some of my workload. I'm sure that our white-water paddlers are equally grateful. Well done and thank you to both of you.



Associate Membership by Clive Ashford

There are an ever-growing number of people who were valued club members but that no longer paddle with us. There are many reasons for this including moving away, ill health and the dreaded aging process. These lovely people have just fallen off our radar, which I think is a wee bit sad. I would like to see the club create a new associate membership category to help us keep in contact with these people. Associate membership would be free. An associate member would receive the club newsletter and an invite to any social / milestone events. (Attendance at such events would, of course, be charged at the going rate.) An associate member would not paddle with us and would have no voting rights.

In no particular order and for no particular reason here are 3 names. David Pedlow, Bob Frost and Jane Williamson / Forder. Most of you won't have heard of these people which is why we need an associate membership.

In order to create an associate member category the club constitution would need to be changed. To change the club constitution there needs to be a proposal supported by at least 10 members. This proposal would then be publicised and voted on at an AGM / EGM. I am going to start the process rolling. In the next few weeks I will be circulating among you asking for your signature supporting the creation of associate membership so that a vote can be taken at our next AGM.

Mount Batten Centre Opening Hours

Please note the Centre's opening hours are changing.

Commencing 27th February, the Centre will now be open 9am till 6pm.

As always, we will be keeping opening hours under review and will update all member and affiliate groups as and when this happens.

Axe Vale Canoe Club River Axe Race

The Axe Vale Canoe Club (AVCC) runs an annual River Axe Race from Whitford Bridge down to the club (Grade 1 & estuary) which is open to all members and all paddlers in the South West (i.e.. other clubs). The race can be treated however you wish from a fast run to a fun run. There are typically about 100 boats on the river, competing in several groups to make the race fair. There are classes for GP boats, sea kayaks, open boats and juniors, veterans etc.

The Race will be held on Sunday 12th March 2023 (26th March backup date) and you are invited to join in.

Further information can be found on the website: <https://www.axevalecc.co.uk/Events/River-Axe-Race/river-axe-race.htm>

Booking is via WebCollect (<https://webcollect.org.uk/avcc>).

There is a small entry fee to cover costs and provision of refreshments (£8 pre-booked, £10 on the day - half price for U12s).

Anybody who has attended this before will know that it is well organised and great fun. Anybody going might want to share transport with other club members?

Develop Your Sea Kayaking by Adam Coulson

With snowdrops in the woods and the early daffodils blooming, it is time to think about the summer season of club activity.

Since the restrictions of Covid and changes made by British Canoeing, the previous system of club coaching has not been re-established and this is something that we plan to do this summer. You may have seen a few dates appearing on the club calendar already. Many newer club paddlers have not had the opportunity within the club to develop beyond the BC Paddle Awards Discover and Explore level (what we used to call 2 star).

As a direct result of the preferences expressed in last year's questionnaire, we plan to address this by offering higher level coaching by bringing in a well qualified external coach able to take people to Sea Kayak Award (previously 3 star) and Coastal Sea Kayak Award (previously 4 star) level.



This external coaching will be done by Rick Cooper, a highly qualified and experienced local coach, on a series of weekend days over the spring and summer. We will start with 4 sessions available for up to 6 people working to SK Award level. The award content can be found here ([scroll down to sea kayak content](#)), and there is further detail below. Following the 4 sessions we have a weekend in September available for anybody wishing to develop further towards the Coastal SK award. Please note that the SK award sessions are also appropriate for the Coastal SK award as there is a great deal of overlap. The major difference is that the coastal award skills are performed in slightly more challenging conditions.

Paddlers will benefit the most from this opportunity if able to practice some of the skills taught, between sessions. An investment of time and effort in honing and refining your skills, like most endeavours, will result in better results. Clearly the opportunity to do this will vary over the season and if a significant number of participants need the summer to practice further we may be able to use the September sessions to consolidate and make awards. In addition we plan to offer further training and the opportunity to practice the same skills for a couple of hours on some Tuesday club nights. To gain awards paddlers need to be able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, consistently during days out.



Curriculum:

It is not possible to specify which area will be covered on each date as this will depend upon weather and sea conditions. The intention of the club is that where possible, a member books the initial course of 4 sessions. This will achieve good continuity and a course of development for attendees. If there are spaces still available we may be able to offer individual sessions.

- Trip planning and preparation. Some of this will be done in advance of the course starting and on dry land – possibly either in person or using Zoom.
- Effective forward paddling
- Negotiating confined spaces
- Maintaining and changing direction
- Working as a group, dealing with mishaps
- Towing
- Launching and landing in surf

Who is this for?

- Anybody who is at least reached Paddle Explore level (holding the award is not necessary).
- Existing paddlers who wish to improve or develop their skills
- Existing paddlers who would like a refresher course – we all develop bad habits and those can be diagnosed and addressed.
- Kayakers who want to paddle with greater confidence on the sea and be a stronger team player.
- Kayakers who have not previously but would like to feel able to paddle in groups independent of the PPCA.
- Any paddler wishing to understand more about the role of wind, tidal levels, tidal flows, swell, surf, launch and landing sites in planning trips on the sea.
- Sea Kayakers wishing to reach the British Canoeing Personal Performance Awards. Please note that there is no longer a specific tick box type test. It is awarded by continuous assessment - much less nerve wracking! However there is no pressure for participants to collect the “ticket”.
- Kayakers wanting to develop according to the syllabus and the list above and have some fun in a friendly and safe learning group. Some of these skills are transferrable to White Water also.
- Club kayakers who wish to improve technique so that distances become much easier and sea conditions less intimidating. For example, if you hate landing and launching in surf you will be better able to cope.
- Those who would like to progress to BC leader or coach awards

Dates:

- Sunday 23rd April
- Sunday 7th May
- Sunday 21st May
- Sunday 4th June
- Saturday 2nd September (Coastal SK Award level provisional)
- Sunday 3rd September (Coastal SK Award level provisional)

Where?

Most sessions will run from Mountbatten but some travel may be required in order to find the right conditions.

Equipment

- Club equipment and sea kayaks are available for this course. If away from Mountbatten we will work out logistics at the time.
- We will look at availability tow lines for the relevant session.

Cost

The club is keeping the cost as low as possible so as not to exclude any member. For comparison, coaching at a local symposium is being charged at just under £200 for a weekend.

- Individual session £45 per day
- Three or four sessions (excluding September) paid in advance £40 per day



Booking

Booking will be available via the club website, but in order to avoid too much complexity on the site you should contact Adam in the first instance.

If you have any questions at all please don't hesitate to get in touch with Adam by email to president@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk or on 07834 286461. As numbers are restricted early booking is advised.

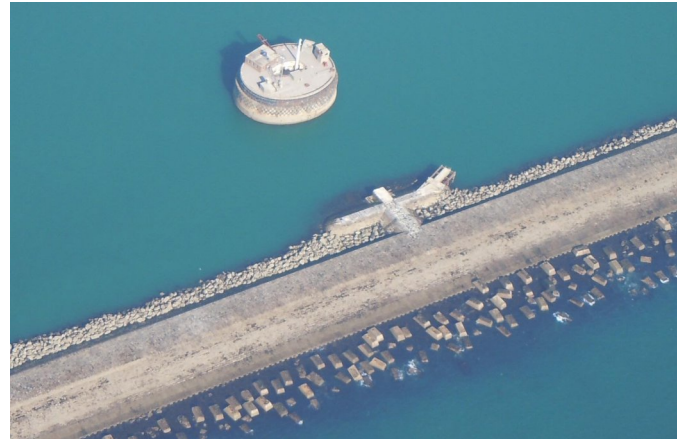
Looking forward to summer? Make your target to improve your paddling and have more fun on the water.

Features

Plymouth Sound Snippets #12, The Breakwater Fort by Terry Calcott

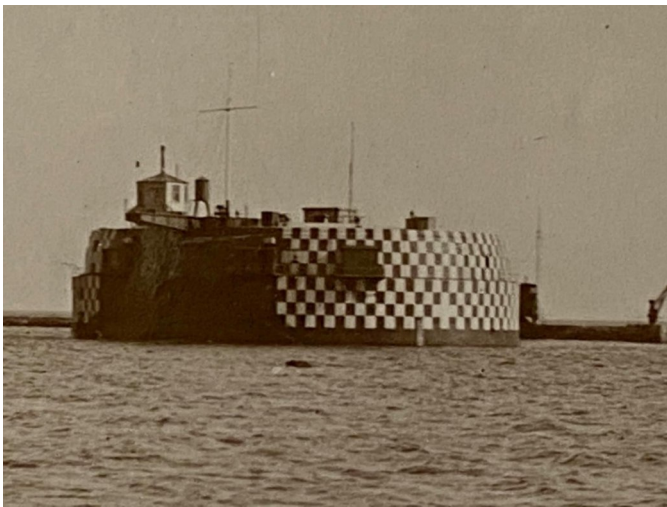
This snippet is the last in the Breakwater series and details a few facts about the Breakwater Fort. Which sits in isolation separate from the Breakwater.

In 1860, a Royal Commission, established by Lord Palmerston, produced a plan for the defence of Plymouth and other Royal Dockyards. The Breakwater Fort was designed to defend the entrances to Plymouth Sound in conjunction with forts and batteries on either shore. Designed by Captain Siborne, work on the oval masonry sea fort started in 1861 and the main structure was completed in 1865. It has its foundations on Shovel Rock and is 35 yards inside the Breakwater.



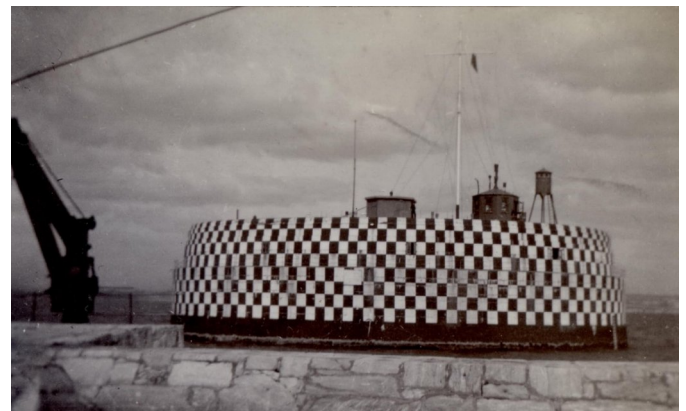
The Breakwater Fort

After several changes in plan, the fort was finally armed in 1879 with fourteen 12.5-inch and four 10-inch rifled muzzle-loading guns in armoured casemates. In the 1890s four 6-inch Quick Firing guns became the main armament. Although the fort had been disarmed before World War I, it served as a signal station, and from 1937, an anti-aircraft training school.



Early 1900s Photo of the Breakwater Fort

Up close you can still make out the original chequerboard pattern used to obscure the position of the gun ports. The Fort is now disused but comes under the care of the MOD and access is restricted.



Early 1900s Photo of the Breakwater Fort



Exchange and Mart

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/>

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