



PPCA Newsletter  
June 2023

## Introduction

Welcome to June's Newsletter. This month Adam acknowledges success, Nigel does things with a cow's tail and Terry explains why the Hoe has that funny sticky-outy bit on it.

## Editorial

The City of Plymouth and its elected representatives have come in for a lot of stick recently, some of it no doubt justified. It is, therefore, nice to redress the balance a bit. Terry's article shows how far-sighted the city was in the late nineteenth century. They must almost have had a crystal ball to allow them to model the design of their new pier on one of the club's favourite 21st Century paddlers, occasionally given to wearing a chicken suit.

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.

## Sea Kayak Awards by Adam Coulson

Congratulations to 6 PPCA Members for gaining their British Canoeing Sea Kayak Awards on Sunday 4th June. This is a modern-day rough equivalent of the old 3-star award that most members would work towards.

The BC Personal Performance Awards are something that anybody can work towards after the basic level Paddle Awards (Start, Discover and Explore). The Sea Kayak Award is designed to develop your skills and ability to apply appropriate decision making for an enjoyable and safe day out on the sea. In more detail, the Sea Kayak Award endorses your skill, judgment and the decision making required for a successful day on the sea. You will be confident in planning and undertaking journeys on the sea, in winds up to and including force 3 and/or tides up to 1 Knot, using sea kayaks or sit on tops, in tidal or non-tidal environments, with proficient skills to be in control throughout. Your award should be seen as a sound basis for building the experience and knowledge associated with Coastal Sea Kayak Award holders.



This was followed by 4 sessions on the water with Rick Cooper who put them through their paces, covering everything from maneuvering in confined spaces to rescues, and weather forecasts to use of marine charts. The group members changed slightly as the course progressed. Karen and I hosted the Zoom sessions and helped on the water as well as with some extra coaching and practice for the group. It has been most rewarding seeing each paddler develop their skills and build confidence. We are very proud of everybody's progress. Ali, Gill, Jackie, Julian, Lisa and Mark went for assessment and I am delighted to say all passed. We celebrated with a cream tea at home and one of our number was so confident that they arrived with a bottle of fizz!



The group started out with 4 sessions on Zoom covering theory including.

- Weather
- Sea Conditions
- Tides - streams, levels for launch
- Kit – everything!
- Access & Egress - location
- Finding Your Way – plan for the day
- Emergency Contact & procedures & plan
- Team – levels of ability; size of group
- Reflection – after!



Further details of the Personal Performance Awards can be found on the BC Awarding Body website. I would encourage anybody who wishes to develop beyond the very basics to consider at least the Sea Kayak Award. I can guarantee that you will learn lots and may even be inspired to progress on to the Coastal Sea Kayak Award or beyond. The club would like to offer further courses to members so please come and speak with Adam ([president@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk](mailto:president@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk) 07834 286461) if you would like to know more.

## Features

### Plymouth Sound Snippets #16, Plymouth Promenade Pier by Terry Calcott

With the nice weather set firm over the past few weeks. I thought I would write a short snippet with a seaside theme, Plymouth Pier.

For those that didn't know Plymouth once had a magnificent 'banjo' shaped promenade pier. The idea of a pier was promoted as long ago as 1865, but it was not until the late 1870s that a Mr Edward Lancaster took on the cause and despite many setbacks, carried it through to completion.

It was constructed on 140 iron columns embedded in the solid rock. The pier was 420 feet long. Initially it was designed to have a covered pavilion, but this was abandoned due to cost and complaints about spoiling the view over to Drake's Island.



The Impressive Entrance to the Pier

The pier was one of the first public places in Plymouth to be lit by electricity and every other lamp post had a lifebuoy fitted to it for use in an emergency. The company then decided to put a roof over the bandstand and in 1891 the new Pavilion capable of seating 2000 people, was completed. There were now many different forms of entertainment ranging from dancing, boxing, wrestling matches and roller skating in the winter months. There were also concert bands and many musical stars of the day performing.



Early Photo of the Pier

The pier was finally opened with much celebration in 1884. With a crowd of 30,000 people enjoying both the sunshine and a concert by the Band of the Royal Marines. The pier opened daily between 7am and 10pm. A toll of one old penny was charged per person to promenade on the pier.



Aerial View of the Pier and Hoe

In 1941 the pier was destroyed by German bombs. The derelict remains stood until 1952 when the City Council took the decision to demolish the twisted remains of the pier. The work took six months and was completed in September 1953. The War Damage Commission paid the bill of £4754.

Such a shame that Plymouths iconic pier had such a sad end. Imagine the fun we could have had as kayakers on a Saturday paddle exploring under the pier. There is little evidence that a pier ever stood there. Except for the shape of the walkway in front of the Belvedere and some stone supports which are still in place.



The Wrecked Remains of the Pier

## Top Tips - Skeg Maintenance by Nigel Hingston

One of our best assets (not including the paddler!) in a sea kayak, is its skeg. Seldom thought of and in some cases taken for granted by those of us lucky enough having one fitted we each use this little device to help achieve direction stability\*

For some it's just a case dropping at the start of a journey and lifting just before landfall. The more astute paddler will be constantly adjusting the skeg's trim as the wind and associated swell direction changes with each new leg of our journey.

We encounter our biggest enemy (usually after a lunch stop) in the form of sand and small pebbles. Ground down from the largest of cliff faces, nature's smallest detritus defeats our best laid plans of an uneventful return trip with the skeg well and truly jammed in place. I recently returned from Cawsand having forgotten the Golden Rule of skegs; when leaving a beach – check it works. I cursed inwardly off The Breakwater as despite my best attempt the skeg remained in place with the tenacity of a limpet sticking to a rock. Upon my return to Mount Batten, I promised myself adherence to the Golden Rule and that a cow's tail (small cord loop) would be fitted before the next trip.

So how can we ensure no repeat performance of the stuck skeg?

- Firstly, check it lowers after leaving the beach.
- Fit a cow's tail – simple job, drill a small hole at the skeg's end section and thread a small diameter cord and knot with sufficient size that you can place a finger within the loop. This will give one of your fellow paddlers a fighting chance of pulling the skeg out of its slot when you're off The Breakwater. And talking of agricultural things, don't use baler twine! Made from polypropylene, sun (UV) light degrades this material in a very short time.
- Maintain the skeg at least once a year, check the slot for any debris and the skeg for damage. Clean where necessary and please feel free to discuss with me how to drop the skeg and disassemble the mechanism if unsure.
- Consider modifying the skeg's shape. Most are made of plastic with a square profile form which result in a very small gap between the skeg and housing. Sand just loves getting in this gap – the smaller the better, it will jam perfectly!

Create about a 30-degree chamfer along either side of the keel-line section. This has the advantage of increasing the gap at the lowest point of the skeg and as the profile returns to its normal thickness higher up (about 30mm) sand entrapment risk is reduced.

The fluid dynamic boffins amongst us would argue that laminar flow is improved since we are replicating a foil profile similar to a rudder. How much this increases our paddling efficiency - I will leave that debate open.

The following photographs are from a skeg which was well and truly stuck for the last 3 years. Now modified and working correctly.

\*paddling in a straight line



Plastic skeg before commencing work, note sand in gap and cow tail (beyond repair).

Skeg finally released, thin blunt dining knives works wonders. Skeg face is scratched and damaged. Use fine sand paper (how's that for irony) to clean.

The stainless-steel wire is in good order.



Bevelled edge on both sides formed along the skeg's leading edge. I used a Surform and finished off with sandpaper to generate the profile.

End profile of the skeg.



The cow tail with sufficient sized loop. This will eventually require replacing.

Fitted in place, now clean the skeg lowers in one smooth easy operation.





## 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/>

## The Committee

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