



PPCA Newsletter  
July 2023

## Introduction

Welcome to July's Newsletter. This month we have something of a Terry double - he gives us a history of a local landmark we'll all be familiar with and stages a multi-lingual clean up of the Plym.

## Editorial

The state of our rivers has rarely been a greater concern with what seems like a fresh headline every day decrying their state so well done to Terry for leading the clean-up. I would, however, like to point out that there are uses for an open boat other than being used as a skip.

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.

## Features

### Plymouth Sound Snippets #17, Mount Batten Breakwater Pier by Terry Calcott

This snippet is about the Mount Batten Breakwater, a familiar sight to PPCA kayakers. It is often the first place we group up near when heading out on a paddle and also a welcome sight when returning after a long day on the water.

The construction of the Mount Batten Breakwater was promoted by the Cattewater Harbour Commissioners, who were responsible for managing the shipping in the Cattewater. The area was notorious for ships running aground during storms. Just in front of Queen Annes Battery is Deadman's Bay the site of many shipwrecks.



Late 1880s Map Showing Deadman's Bay

The Breakwater runs due west from the rocks beneath Mount Batten. It is 915 feet in length. By the time it was completed the Breakwater had cost £20,000. A pier keeper was appointed, and the Commissioners could now levy tolls on passing ships.



Seaplanes Parked on the Breakwater



Paddling Alongside the Mount Batten Breakwater

Work started in April 1878 and completed in 1881. The workforce had very strict working regulations with no drinking of alcohol, cursing, swearing, or smoking on the site and any workman found doing so would be sacked. They also had to subscribe 3d a week to a fund that would pay out 12 shillings a week if the worker was ill or suffered an injury. They also subscribed to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital so that any man who was injured could be taken there.



During the early 1900s Mount Batten became an air station and the Breakwater closed to the public. The Breakwater was even used to park seaplanes. The air station was in use up until 1986 when it finally closed. In 1992 the Plymouth Development Corporation took over the area and it was developed into how we know it today and once again opened to the public.

## The Big Paddle Clean Up 2023 by Terry Calcott

A short article to thank the 12 club members who gave up their time and energy to come out on the litter pick on Saturday 10th June. The litter pick was part of the annual Big Paddle Clean Up run during the first part of the month by British Canoeing with litter picks taking part all over the country on inland water, rivers, estuaries, beaches and the coast.

The club had decided that we should target an area which doesn't get cleaned as often as the popular local beaches 'The Plym Estuary'. Gill the inspiration behind the litter pick, had asked me a long time ago if I would lead a club beach clean, which I happily agreed to.

For anyone who has been on any of the previous club litter picks you will know that a variety of craft is essential, especially a few open boats as garbage carriers. Unfortunately, the wind was too brisk to take any on the water. So we launched in a fleet of sea kayaks and a few short kayaks.

After a comprehensive briefing we launched from Mount Batten and headed up across the Cattewater towards Laira Bridge. My initial thoughts and plan was to get as far as Marsh Mills stopping at convenient places along the way.



I used the well-known group control technique of leap frogging, to keep the group moving along the shoreline and was also able to keep a visual check of the group and VHF contact when needed. Birgit and Katherine were happily conversing in German and picking up litter as they paddled along.

We carried on following the Embankment but already time was running away so the target of Marsh Mills was shelved. Our kayaks were already nearing capacity, so we headed to the sandy beach at Saltram for a well deserved lunch.



Jackie Combining a Workout with Litter Picking

Once past the Cattewater wharves a small group detached to clean the area there while the main group headed into the Laira. We then followed the embanked shoreline splitting into smaller cohorts and started litter picking proper. To say the paddlers were enthusiastic would be an understatement. But before long all manner of rubbish was filling the white bags. We landed at suitable areas and targeted these along the way.



Sarah Practicing her Balancing Skills

After lunch we followed the shore up to Pomphlett Creek and landed on 'John's beach' named after an ex-club member. Gill was in her element leaping out of her kayak at any opportunity to pick up discarded rubbish.



Jonathan with Probably the Heaviest Item: An Old Bike Frame

Jonathan with probably the heaviest item an old bike frame.

The afternoon was running away, and it was time to make for home. We landed back at the slipway at Mount Batten and offloaded our haul of rubbish. Gill had kindly volunteered to take it to the tip using her own van.

A fun day was had by all with lots of laughs along the way. We only scratched the surface of the amount of rubbish that is discarded and washed into the Plym. But everyone felt a sense of achievement and playing a small part in reducing waste in our local seas.



Many thanks to Helga, Jonathan, Gill, Jackie, Katherine, Caroline, Nigel Birgit, Alison, Paul and Sarah. I'm sure there will be more opportunity to get involved in litter picks / beach cleans later this year.

## 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

### Chair

Mark Perry  
chair@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Vice-Chair

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

### Club Leader

Colin Wilding  
leader@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Assistant Club Leader

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

### Club Secretary

Jackie Perry  
secretary@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Membership Secretary

Helga Pinn  
membership@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Welfare Officer

Alan Ede  
welfare@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Intro Course Coordinator

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

### Treasurer

Julian Miles  
treasurer@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Equipment Officer

Pete Anderson  
equipment@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Publicity Officer

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

### Youth Development Officer

Rita Ford  
youth@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

### Health and Safety Officer

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

### Club President

Adam Coulson  
president@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk