



PPCA Newsletter September 2024

Editorial

Many thanks indeed to Ivor Jones for assembling this newsletter for the last *eight* years. Page 3 welcomes some new club members; I sincerely apologise to the many we have missed. If you have joined recently please, please, please consider sending a few words about yourself (ideally with a photo): newsletter@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk.

Kevin Tole has written a pub and pie guide to the Tamar Valley on page 8 (more seriously, it's a fascinating guide to some of the industrial archaeology of that part of the world). I'm as keen as anyone to be inspired by all the experience club members have in any form of paddling, so please, if you do something interesting, think about sharing it

via this newsletter. Terry Calcott has written a short piece advertising winter recreational paddles on page 1, and Clive Ashford has written a summary of the away day sea kayak paddles held so far this year on page 4

On page 14 is a first attempt at a PPCA paddle activity log based on the official club calendar and Facebook (so it's detail light). Next month, we'll add some more information from the session sheets; if anyone wants to drop me a one or two sentence summary, then please do.

Comments, questions, material to include in future editions:
newsletter@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

Winter Recreational Paddles

Terry Calcott

For those club members who don't know or are new to the club. The Saturday recreational paddles continue throughout the year and will be running as detailed in the club calendar.

The winter months, although a bit cooler, are a lot quieter out on the water with most of the SUP, Yachts, Jet Skis etc off the water for the

winter. Yes, at times it can also be very cold with wind and rough seas. But a lot of the time the sun shines and with a blue sky, low sun and long shadows makes for some fantastic paddling with dramatic and stunning scenery. If you are thinking of hanging up your paddling kit now summer has nearly ended;





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have a think and come along and join in over the autumn and winter and become a year-round paddler. It is an amazing feeling being out on the water, enjoying the camaraderie with your fellow paddlers and the stunning scenery we have on our doorstep. The recreational paddlers are a social group and the coach leading will plan the trip around the ability of the group. The first of the month

is still a dedicated sea kayak trip, and there will usually be a short recreational paddle on the same day. If you fancy coming along, make sure you have the appropriate clothing for the conditions and cooler months. Plenty of warming layers and a woolly hat and gloves. If you require any advice or info, please ask any of the club coaches. As usual, club equipment is available for all the recreational paddles.



Exchange and Mart

Some retailers offer a discount to our members: details are on the PPCA website





Welcome new members



Hi I am Sonia. Many of you would have known and paddled with my late husband Colin. I always intended to kayak with Col however circumstances prevented us from doing so. I joined the club in order to be close to paddlers who knew Colin but also for myself. Kayaking provided me with a lifeline at a time when I questioned the point of my existence. I have met wonderful new people and have been reacquainted with old friends. I have learned new skills and faced some challenges in the waves. I have surprised myself. The

kayaking community has supported and cared for me. I feel like kayaking will now remain a part of my life. I look forward to challenging myself further on the river. Kayaking is helping me to move gently forward into another part of my life, whilst keeping the connection to my best friend; my late husband. It has enabled me to experience small pockets of joy. I look forward to challenging myself further in October and to becoming a competent paddler. Most of all though, I look forward to getting to know people and enjoying the water. I would also like to express my gratitude here to everyone who has helped and supported me on my kayaking journey so far.



I'm Anita. Sonia encouraged me to do the intro day with her, and I loved it, so here I am! I live in Okehampton, where I work as a counsellor. It's so nice to immerse myself in a physical challenge out in nature after a day in the therapy room. Hopefully I'll see seals at some point too 😊



Source: Pexels. Photo of Seals by Diana Light

(Editor's Comment: Hi Anita, here is a photo of some seals to look at while you are waiting to see real ones)



Sea kayak away days, 2024

Clive Ashford

So, a new newsletter editor, how very exciting. I, of course, see it as my duty to keep the journalistic standards of any PPCA publication as low as possible, hence this contribution.

(Assuming that our new editor hasn't shown excellent editorial qualities and has consigned this to the bin, where surely it belongs.) Huge thanks and apologies to Paul in equal measure. All we need now is a few readers.

We are all very aware that Plymouth Sound is a fine place in which to dip one's paddle, but we live in the south west of England. Dotted around our coast are a huge variety of salty paddling locations just waiting to be explored. I have run a series of sea kayak away days over the summer (?) months, here is a resume.

back to shore, eventually stopping for lunch on Scabbacombe Sands.



Where's this. The mystery of sea kayaking.
Photo by Joy Ashford

Brixham, 28 April

The cost of car parking at Brixham's Breakwater Car Park is enough to make a grown man cry, as witnessed by my tear-stained handkerchief. (The "grown man" bit may be a somewhat far-fetched, but the "tear-stained handkerchief" bit is entirely accurate.) On top of that, using the public loo at Brixham will see your purse grow even lighter. However, paddling out of Brixham is well worth the angst. We paddled to Berry Head and then out to sea in a vaguely SE direction. On other occasions, this course of action has resulted in the sighting of dolphins, but sadly not today. After a while we turned

Suitably refreshed, we paddled back along the coast, allowing people to play in the rocks and to explore the caves. At Sharkham Point there is a narrow gap that is just wide enough for a sea kayak. We all squeezed through this gap, but somehow Adam managed to capsize.

There wasn't enough room for a roll, so Adam swam out of the gap, towing his boat. Adam being Adam simply got back into his boat unassisted, so no-one can claim to have rescued him. Because the nesting season was in full flight, pardon the pun, we kept out of the bay to the south of Berry Head. That didn't stop us from seeing flocks of guillemots and other seabirds on the water and flying to



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and from their nesting sites perched precariously along narrow cliff ledges. We also saw a couple of seals, so the day wasn't totally devoid of wildlife.

Total distance 13 miles. Total paddlers 7.



Fishing boat race bear Mevagissey.
Photo by Joy Ashford

Teignmouth, 26 May

The plan for this trip was to launch at South Milton Sands and paddle around Bolt Tail and then on to Salcombe. This was the advertised trip until the evening of the 25th. The weather forecast indicated a force 4 – 5 SW wind, which would have made for somewhat exposed and uncomfortable paddling. Not for me, thank you very much, so at short notice I changed the plan to launch from Teignmouth instead. Whilst paddling, I became aware of two pan-pan calls to the coastguards. One was for a missing diver and the other was for a yacht with engine trouble. A timely reminder that our chosen playground is a dangerous place, and vindicating my last-minute change of plan. We paddled around the coast playing where we could (there are limited opportunities along this stretch of coast) eventually landing in Brandy Cove for lunch. Brandy Cove is a privately owned beach with steps leading down the cliffs. I have no doubt that there are "Strictly Private" signs at the top of the cliff, but as we came in from the sea such signs have little relevance.

Not everyone got the message about the change of start point for this trip. Pete Anderson sat in the car park at South Milton looking out over what he describes as "an interesting" sea, feeling rather lonely. Pete's "interesting" probably translates to "terrifying" in my brain, so once again I experienced the somewhat smug feeling of getting something right. Whilst we were having lunch, Pete Anderson joined us. (Having first driven to Teignmouth, if I really have to explain that bit to you.)

We paddled back to Teignmouth in a direct line, which gave us a bit more in the way of exposure to the wind, which I have recorded as force 3 – 4 WSW. After we had changed, Julian suggested that we retire to a pub for refreshments. As Julian had been my chauffeur for the day I was all for this, and I can inform you gentle readers that the Ship Inn in Teignmouth serves splendid beer, has a pretty barmaid and boasts a very pleasant seating area outside.

Total distance 11 miles. Total paddlers 5.



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Porthpean, 23 June

I have had an expensive experience with the car park in Porthpean so it was with a little trepidation that I organised this trip. To date, I have had no nasty letters through the post, so I am assuming that I got the car parking right this time. Porthpean is where I attended what was then called, "Sea Kayak Senior Instructor Training Course." I have many stories of that occasion but this isn't one of them. My log records, "Force 1 variable wind. Smooth sea. Grey and a bit misty." So not particularly challenging conditions but very gentle paddling. As we approached Mevagissey Harbour, we were treated to the sight of a fishing boat race. All a bit exciting and a bit of a spectacle. On a more peaceful note, we saw many jellyfish, 8 or so seals and a pair of peregrines. We have photos of the fishing boat race but none of the jellyfish. The biggest downside of launching at Porthpean is that the café / ice cream shop has been closed for a couple of years. Very sad.

Total distance 14 miles. Total paddlers 6.

Port Quin, 28 July

A trip to the mighty north coast. The north coast is more exposed than the south and as such is always a bit more lively. We launched under blue skies into a pleasantly gentle sea and paddled past Port Isaac, Port Gaverne and then on to land on a little beach just before Trerubies Cove. This was further than I had planned, so much so that we fell off the end of my map. Luckily for me, Adam's map covered a larger area, otherwise we would have had a massive waterfall to contend with. I say that the sea was pleasantly gentle, but in fact there

was approx. 1m swell, a swell that entertained the hooligans amongst us and a swell that provided a surf landing at lunchtime. I can report that not everyone landed with their boats under control, and that some of the boats arrived at the beach without their former occupants. There is a shack selling snacks and ice cream at Port Quin, so having changed, we rounded off a lovely day in a suitably decadent fashion. I claim this to have been a most excellent adventure.

Total distance 12 miles. Total paddlers 6.



Somewhere near Port Quin. Photo by Lisa Curtis.

West Looe, 18 August

In this rather cool and breezy summer, I was delighted to see that we had a calm weather window for this date. Many years ago, Brim led a trip from West Looe back to Mount Batten and I thought that it would be a good idea to repeat this trip, so that's exactly what we did. The problem with a one-way trip is that somehow the drivers have to get back to the start point to recover their cars. I was



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aware that Karen Coulson was recovering from a knee operation and that while she probably wouldn't be fit enough to paddle, she would be able to drive. It's all very unseemly, but I snivelled and grovelled to the very lovely Mrs Coulson, who seemed quite pleased to be able to help. So, shuttle organised, we launched at West Looe. Julian had never launched from West Looe before, so he underwent quite an education. Firstly, he was impressed by the ramp down from the road to the beach, and then by the causeway leading out to the water. The final piece in Julians educational jigsaw was just how useful wheels are when transporting a sea kayak. All this at no extra charge. The day went exactly as predicted. We passed Millendreath, Seaton and Portwrinkle before embarking on the rather dull bash along Whitsand Bay. We were quite pleased to land on West Gear beach for lunch,

which proved to be another classroom moment for Julian. (He'd never before landed on West Gear beach.) The tide was coming in. We tarried over lunch, perhaps just a tad too long because Adam's boat floated off the beach unassisted. I stepped into the water to recover said boat and as such claim to have rescued Adam. I know that's a huge stretch of the imagination, but it's as close to rescuing Adam as I am ever likely to get! When I did this trip with Brim all those years ago, we paddled through a thunderstorm that lasted all the way from Cawsand to Mount Batten. I'm not sorry to tell you that this trip had no such excitement and that we landed at Mount Batten tired but happy. In the end, Adam transported the drivers back to Looe, so I was cheated out of the company of the very lovely Mrs Coulson.

Total distance 19 miles. Total paddlers 3.

So that's a summary of our 2024 away days. There is just one more chance to take part in a sea kayak away day this year, that is on Sunday 22 September. Details will appear on the club forum nearer the date, and I have no doubt that someone will scrape the information over to Faceache. You will be very welcome to join me.



A Short Cosy Paddle up the Tamar – Industrial Archaeology from the river

Kevin Tole

I've done this trip several times, and it's an interesting afternoon out. Quick word on the tides. The Tamar is still tidal between Calstock and Weir Head – and quite a fierce tide, too. You need to get the tide right, launching at Calstock – 2 hours before high tide is optimum. That way you don't have to slide down a load of fetid mud, and you catch the rising tide heading up river, and the falling tide coming back but still high enough to get out easily.



Figure 5: Map of the Tamar from Calstock to Weir Head



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Starting point is the slip in front of the Tamar Inn in Calstock. You can park and drop your boat off at the top of the slip, then head round to the local free car park. You can change in the public toilets beside the carpark before heading back to the slip. Now, depending on the state of the tide you've an easy slip into the water – or a part muddy slide. This slip is steep. The Muscovy ducks will keep you company. OK – so you're on the water and paddling with the tide upstream (I'll admit I've never tried the downstream variant – tidal considerations make this a less desirable trip). The first point of note is the newly constructed entrance to the Calstock water meadows and wetland. This was completed after a thorough survey and the agreement of Calstock parishioners in November 2021. The entrance is marked with a warning sign and a 'No Entry' – so stay out unless you want grief from a water bailiff and parishioners. The area was established as part of a flood defence for Calstock, as well as a new wetland habitat.



Figure 6: Calstock Wetlands and Flood Management scheme

As you paddle on around the bend, the first old chimney stack you notice is that of the

engine house of Okel Tor Mine. (On the LHS as you come round the bend you will notice a set of very well-preserved lime kilns).



Figure 7: The stack of Okel Tor mine, immediately east of Calstock

As you get closer, you will be able to see the extensive dumps and remains of the mine. These are well-preserved and worth exploring on land later. Most of the buildings have been converted into holiday accommodation, but there is still a Right of Access to the dumps and old stamp's engine house. Okel Tor mined copper and arsenic with some tin and lead between 1840 and 1887. There was an adit level which not only headed out to this side of the Tamar but also northwards, cutting



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through the Harewood bend of the river. At its height it employed 70 men working veins which ran east-west. I've never found the open adit but there is an ochre-stained seep on the east trending river section in the woods below the dumps. On the RHS is the dilapidated stack of Rumleigh Brickworks on the Devon side of the river. This worked an isolated pocket of alluvial clay and sand for bricks and tiles from a pit still accessible in low wet boggy ground. There were wharves on either side of the river here and if you look carefully on the Devon side there is a small landing spots which you can explore the extensive remains of the brickworks. The brickworks were active up to the 1930s. Paddling on this straight eastward section, you face the steep slope on the Devon side of Morwell and Gawton woods. The crooked stack at the top of the hill is the stack at the top of Gawton mine arsenic flues.



Figure 8: Coming up to Gawton mine and the crooked stack at the top of the arsenic flue

Paddling a little further brings you opposite the mine itself and the extensive overgrown dumps. Gawton, along with Devon Great Consols above Gunnislake produced between them in the 1880s enough raw arsenic to kill the world's population twice over. It operated between 1820 and as late as 1902 as a mine and 1925 as a processing centre, working two east-west trending copper and arsenic seams through 4 shafts and 3 adit levels. Most of this raw product of arsenic oxide went to combat boll weevil damage in the cotton fields of the southern states of the USA. The arsenic ore (arsenopyrite) was calcined, and the fumes crystallized in extensive fume chambers and flues, the powder being caustic and highly toxic. Gawton had a well-developed arsenic works, with a set of arched flues, with a huge walled flue heading straight up the hill to the stack. Sadly, Most of these have been allowed to collapse and decay, but there are a lot of old mine buildings and relicts on this site. You will notice that the stack is noticeably bent at the top, and the story goes that this was due to the mortar drying out quicker on the sunny side when the chimney was built. Heading around the leftward bend brings you onto another excellent piece of industrial archaeology. These are the remains of New Quay (or Newquay). This was an old quay from the 18th century used by the Duke of Bedford's farm tenants for taking out their produce. It was extensively enlarged in the 1850s when Morwellham further upstream could not handle all the copper ore from Devon Great Consols. In its time this quay was as important as Morwellham with its own facilities.



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Figure 9: Some of the remains on the Devon side at the once extensive Newquay

Just beyond the remains of Newquay and into the next leftward curve, on the Devon side are the remains of the George and Charlotte Mine, pretty much hidden in the extensive trees of Maddacleave Plantation. Again, this was mainly a copper mine. It was re-opened by the proprietors of Morwellham Quay not as a mine but a tourist attraction with a tramway from the Quay along the bank at about 20 ft up and into the mine through an adit level. This is a quite remarkable trip underground into an old copper mine. If you ferret around in the overhanging trees on the river you can find the older Deep Adit level which accessed the mine through a sump (which I was mad enough to dive as a teenager – but what it gave access to was a half mile trip underground with a 200ft ladder climb out through a shaft near Orestocks!) Further on, just before Morwellham proper you come to the old Morwellham Hydro Electric plant. This still operates, providing 640kW through two turbines to the National Grid. It was built in 1934 and harnesses water from the Tavy via the Tavistock Canal and Canal tunnel to a reservoir above the village and a 250 ft long

3ft diameter chute to the station itself before exiting into the Tamar. And so onto Morwellham Quay itself. This is a very old quay but came into its own to export ores from the surrounding mines.



Figure 10: Morwellham Quay

When the tide is high, you can paddle right into the quay. The place came into its own when the Tavistock Canal was built in 1817 (including a 1 ½ mile long tunnel under Morwell Down – an amazing illegal inflated tyre trip in its own right!). This was connected by an incline plane which dropped down from the tunnel exit to the dressing floors, and its line can still be traced uphill. What gave Morwellham its boom was the discovery in 1844 of Devon Great Consols above Gunnislake with a copper seam up to 40ft wide and 2 ½ miles long. The ore was transported to Morwellham then shipped out to Swansea. Coming the other way was coal and Baltic timber, plus all the other needs of a mining community. In its later years, the mine turned over to arsenic production. The hoped for tin at depth was never discovered, and the mine effectively ceased working in 1903 and the whole valley fell into depression. Further on from the main wharf lies the now rotting hulk of Garlandstone built in 1909 at Goss' Yard on the Devon side opposite Calstock and typical



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of a Tamar ketch. She was brought back to Morwellham in 1990, restored, but has since fallen into an unseaworthy wreck. Two other Tamar barges have been restored, the Lynher in 1991 at Morwellham, and the Shamrock at Cotehele Quay in 1974.



Figure 11: The rotten planks of Garlandstone

Morwellham had its Devon funding withdrawn in 2009, despite being part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Tamar Valley Mining District, and promptly went bust. It is now run by a private firm, the owners of Bickton Gardens. There is a decent pub in the village. The river now takes a short east-west turn past a shoal and the very steep Cornish bank, before turning sharply northwards and steady stretch with low-lying ground on either side before the steepening section on the Devon side turns into the rocky bluffs of Morwell Rocks. These actually harbour decent rock climbs, first ascended by the famous alpinist Tom Patey, then based at Bickleigh, pioneer on the Old Man of Hoy. I have climbed a couple of routes here in the past and found them bold, loose and overgrown. Subsequently, some friends put up 2 new extreme routes and named them 'Palace of Skulls' and 'Love is like Anthrax' – a jolly place!

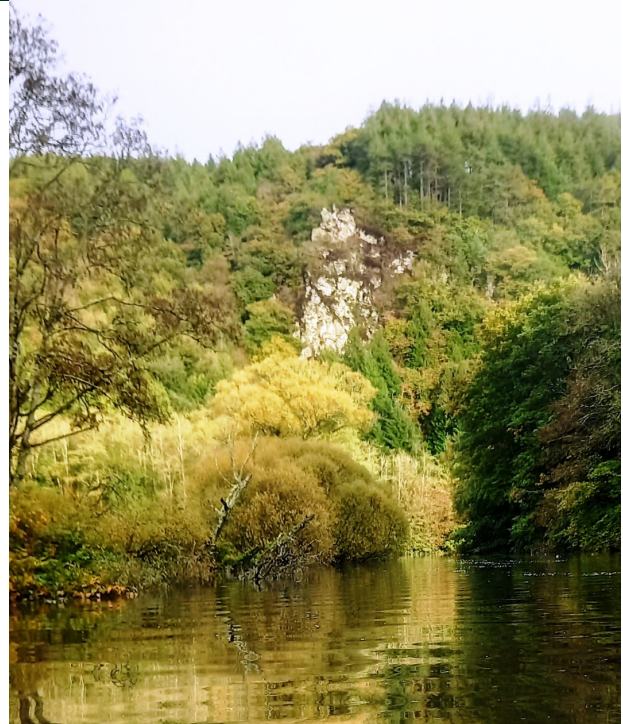


Figure 12: Looking downriver to Morwell Rocks

Another turn westwards and the steep slopes on the Devon side retreat, whilst the Cornish side rears up. Just before jinking northwards again there is a small gravel beach on the Devon side littered with signs saying 'No Access'. This becomes a steady feature on both sides of the river from here to Weir Head. A final jink northward brings you into the stretch to Weir Head. Depending on how high the river and tide is now determines how close you will get. There is an island immediately below the weir, but before that there is a small fall which needs to be got over – this has not been a barrier in the past. However, the left side of the island has another 'fall' which has stopped me in the past. The right side of the island has several falls in a short section. Providing all is good, you end up below the



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weir, which marks the tidal extent of the Tamar. There is a fish ladder on the Devon side which makes for good fun. Generally it's only about 1 metre drop to the weir, but it carries all the Tamar water, so is quite powerful. I've never succeeded in getting to the top of the fish ladder, so good luck for the short boats!

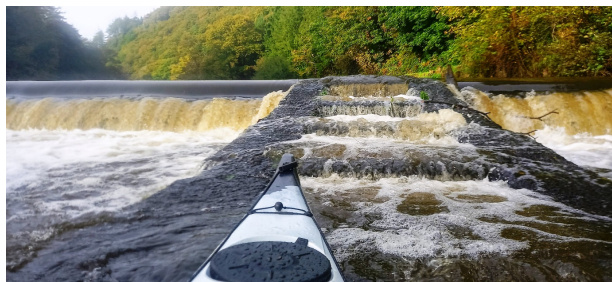


Figure 13: The Fish Ladder on the weir at Weir Head on the Tamar below Gunnislake

The steady trip back after you've had your fill of the weir is.... steady. If you are going to stop at the pub in Morwellham just remember that the tide is probably dropping, and you don't want to get caught out on the mud exit back at Calstock. Get down the river, get the boat out ... THEN go for a pint in either the Tamar (decent pies) or the Calstock Community Club (never been turned away as a non-Totnesian Calstock dweller).

This is a decent trip, but you need to get the tides right so as not to have grief on the Calstock slip. It's particularly beautiful in the autumn. Get it right on one of those special autumn days and it's a magic little trip. I've seen otters, kingfishers, peregrines and a huge barn owl. Enjoy. I prefer the Queen's Head in Albiston which did do meals but...whatever.



Figure 14: Almost back. View down the final leg to Calstock Viaduct - shoulda taken the train!



Kayaking Chronicle

What the club did last month

Skills Training

- Tuesday 6th August
 - Sea Kayak Skills led by Adam (week 3 of 4)



- Tuesday 13th August
 - Sea Kayak Skills led by Adam (week 4 of 4)



- Tuesday 20 August
 - 3*+ lead by Clive
 - Skills lead by Jane
 - Towing skills led by Terry
- Saturday 24 August
 - Introductory course led by Clive



- Tuesday 27 August
 - Introductory+ training led by Jane
 - Towing skills led by Terry

Recreational paddles

- Saturday 3rd August: Recreational paddle led by Joy 09 am 09 pm



From Debbie Rowlands' Facebook



- Saturday 3rd August: Sea kayak paddle led by Adam. 09 am 09 pm



From Nigel Hingston's Facebook



- Tuesday 6th August Recreational paddle led by Andy 09



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From Joy Ashford's Facebook



- Friday 9th August All-boat recreational paddle led by Pete 🚣
- Saturday 10 August Recreational paddle led by Clive which involved a loop of Plymouth Sound inside the Breakwater

🌅 am 🌅 pm



Figure 18: From Joy Ashford's Facebook



- Tuesday 13 August Recreational paddle led by Andy 🌅
- Friday 16 August All-boat recreational paddle led by Joy 🚣 ☀️



From Sarah Carlson's Facebook



- Saturday 17 August 14 Recreational paddlers led by Terry visiting Penlee Point with lunch at Sandway Beach

🌅 am 🌅 pm



From Terry Calcott's Facebook



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- Sunday 18 August Away day paddle (returning from Looe) led by Clive; more details on page 6 ☀️ am 🌧️ pm



- Tuesday 20 August Recreational paddle led by Andy ☀️



- Friday 23 August All-boat recreational paddle led by Joy ☁️ 🌧️



From Sarah Carlson's Facebook



- Saturday 31 August Recreational paddle led by Nigel around the east of the Sound and featuring more views of the Waverley. ☀️



From Sarah Carlson's Facebook



- Saturday 24 August Recreational paddle led by Pete ☀️ ☁️ am 🌧️ pm



- Tuesday 27 August Recreational paddle led by Nigel



- Friday 30 August All-boat recreational paddle led by Brim featuring 18 paddlers and a view of the Waverley ☀️ ☀️



From Nigel Hingston's Facebook

In total, that looks like 23 different paddling events offered for the month of August.



Fun and Diversions

The following wordsearch is courtesy of Charles Lohr. The good news is, there is only one word to find. The even better news is that it's a lovely, magical word. The bad news is, well, ...

Kayak word search.

A A Y K A K A Y K A Y Y K K A A K A Y A A A Y K Y K Y A Y K
K Y Y A K Y A A A Y K A A K K Y A K K K A A A K A A Y K A A
K K K Y A K A K A Y K K Y K K Y K K A K Y A A A A K A A K K
Y K A A K Y A A K K K K K A Y A Y Y Y Y A A K A A K K K K
K K A Y Y A A K K Y Y A Y A A K A A K K A A Y K A K K A A K
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K A K K Y Y K K A Y A Y K K A K K Y Y K Y K Y K K A A A K A

Words to find:
KAYAK



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The PPCA Committee

PPCA is a friendly Club, and we'd love to hear from you!

The Club is run by a committee of unpaid volunteers, most of which work full-time. Contact details are listed below. For non-urgent enquiries, please email the person you require rather than telephoning.

If you are new to paddlesport or thinking of taking it up then please contact our Intro Coordinator who can point you in the right direction. Our Intro Coordinator can also answer any questions you may have about our Club, courses on offer etc, drop them an email at intro@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

Chair	Mark Perry	chair@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk
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Assistant Club Leader	Vacant	acleader@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk
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Intro Course Coordinator	Linda Brady	intro@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk
Treasurer	Julian Miles	treasurer@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk
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Publicity Officer	Sarah Carlson	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

Thank you to everyone who contributed material, especially the material we just stole from Facebook.

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