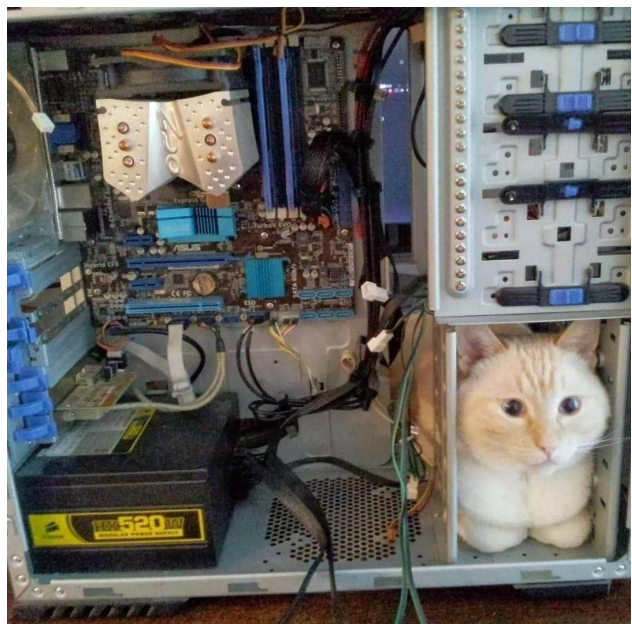




Editorial

Paul Huntson

What can I say? I do plan to grow up one day. In the meantime, whilst I take full responsibility for the April Fool's Gag in last month's newsletter (PPCA is not being asked to change it's name), I had a little help. A french colleague has developed an AI tool called ChatGPT which seems both evil and capable of generating a bunch of words indistinguishable from a millenial marketing-motivated middle manager.



Anyway, more sensible things now. If I say so

myself, I'm really pleased to present this month's newsletter, thank you to everyone for their contributions. I'm delighted to report we have a real new member to introduce on page 8; actually two new members. Thanks for reading and responding to the newsletter, and please anyone else do consider sending a few words about yourself (ideally with a photo): newsletter@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk if you have joined recently, for some vague definition of "recently".

Now, there is an article on Dolphin's on page 9. The closest I've ever come to an "overview effect"¹ was on seeing dolphins close up by the sewage outlet buoy off Teignmouth. And as well as talking about dolphins we have articles on looking after our kit on pages 2 and 3 which includes a reminder about trying to reduce the amount of scraped plastic we leave in the environment.

There is a detailed trip report on the early March sea kayak paddle on page 4 and a great report of all the club's activities this month in the chronicle on page 11

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

¹Most recently reported by William Shatner (who played Captain Kirk) after he returned to Earth from a real space trip





Reminder of the importance of looking after club equipment

The Committee

Pete, our Equipment Officer was recently asked to check the footrests on one of the Club's Seakayaks. Upon inspection he found that the release lever had snapped off, probably due to sand and grit jamming the hinge. Sadly, this was not surprising considering the poor state that the kayak had been returned to the Club Shed in. As the pictures show, both cockpit and one of the storage hatches were full of grit and sand. Please can members ensure that if they borrow a Kayak it is important to ensure that it is fully hosed off both on the outside especially around the hatches, and inside especially around the footrests. Hatches should also be double checked to make sure that nothing has been left inside and that they are clean and ready for the next user.



Boat left with sand in hatches and cockpit



How to save money on equipment

(Or, looking after Kit, makes it last longer!)

Joy Ashford

Whether you own your own kit or use club equipment, there are a few things you can do to keep the kit in good order. Especially, if paddling in salt water, as it can be quite corrosive. I will try and divide up the equipment, to make life easier.

Kayak / canoe

When launching and landing your boat, try to make sure it is floating. If it isn't floating before you get in, it certainly won't be once you've sat down! If the boat is not on the water, then you will end up leaving some of your boat behind on land! Most plastic boat are damaged beyond repair because they have worn a hole through the bottom, either under the seat or at the bow or stern, especially around the skeg box.

Fibreglass kayaks can have keel strips added, so these are worn down first, but we can't add these to the club fleet. Scratching and wearing away the bottom of the boats also leaves plastic in the environment, which we should all be trying to prevent.

Before you put your boat away, rinse it inside and out with fresh water, especially around the foot plates and skeg to make sure there are no small stones preventing them from working properly. Remove all sand, grit and water, from the cockpit and hatches. (It's surprising

how much kit is found in the hatches and behind seats back in the shed!) If storing a general purpose kayak up right in the shed, make sure that if it has a bung, and that the bung is open and near the ground, to aid drainage.

BA's, jackets, wetsuits, paddles, spray decks, tow lines and helmets

Rinse in fresh water, inside and out. Leave to dry out of direct sunlight if possible as UV light can reduce the life of the fabric. For more details, look up this link:

<https://www.wetsuitoutlet.co.uk> If using club equipment, please return to their correct location.

Zips

If you're zips haven't been used for a while, they can get stuck and corroded. Soak the zipper in vinegar for a while and you should be able to work it free.

This isn't a comprehensive list of all paddle equipment, but, hopefully, it will help jog your memory about some of the simple steps you can carry out to extend the life of your paddling equipment.

Enjoy your paddling and hopefully I'll see you on the water before too long!



From Terry Calcott's Facebook

A Perfect Calm.

Clive Ashford

To set the scene.

- 1st March fell on a Saturday this year and, as you all very well know, the first Saturday paddle in any PPCA month is set aside for a dedicated sea kayak paddle.
- The forecast leading up to the 1st March was for high pressure to build, bright blue skies to dominate and for the winds to fall light. Saturday was promising to be a pleasantly calm day.
- The mighty Plymouth Argyle were playing Manchester City in the FA cup on the same day. (That's football in case you didn't know.) The match was to be televised with a kick off time of 17:45.

- I could feel a plan forming.

To add a few other details.

- The predicted low tide time at Devonport for the 1st March was approx. 13:00, and as we know (don't we?) a 13:00 low tide at Devonport means a spring tide. If you need confirmation the predicted low tide was 0.3-metres.
- As if further proof about spring tides were needed the useful but (in my opinion) rather quirky tidal co- efficient for 1st March was 109.
- Adam was down to lead the sea kayak trip on 1st March. You don't need to be a mind reader to work out that Adam would probably take us to the tide race



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in the Narrows. (You know, the fast flowing, sometime lumpy bit between Devils Point and Cremyll.)

- Fate intervened. Earlier in the week Adam and Karen went on what Karen describes as “a paddle in advanced conditions.” Karen then goes on to mention paddling from Wembury in a force 6 wind. The thought of paddling in a force 6 wind would have most of us curling up in an arm chair, nursing a good book, but not Adam. Adam was out there, failing to avoid a surf wave that was either very near to his paddling limits, or was beyond them. Adam’s shoulder thought that enough was enough, resulting in him taking to the coaches/leaders WhatsApp group asking for someone else to stand in for him on 1st March.

- I have only recently acquired (what is termed as) a smart phone. I have signed up to WhatsApp and have been included in the PPCA coaches/leaders group. I was studiously ignoring the incessant beeping of said phone, saving the wonders and delights of the messages so that I could read them all in one sitting, so by the time I took an interest in proceedings I found that Terry had already volunteered to lead the sea kayak paddle on 1st March. The lesson here is that there is great merit in not rushing to read/respond to posts.



From Terry Calcott's Facebook

So, on 1st March (St David's Day) 10 intrepid explorers gathered around Terry on a beautiful spring morning to listen to his briefing. (There was not a daffodil in sight, although someone did inform me that there were a few dragons. I wouldn't like to comment.) If Adam going to play on the tide race in the Narrows is a bit predictable, then so was Terry's plan, which was to take advantage of the equinox spring tide and visit the Yealm sandbar. (There's nothing wrong with predictable.)

We launched into what would be described as calm (rippled) waters and proceeded along to the end of the Mount Batten breakwater. The 50-metre exclusion zone around the old water taxi pontoon was observed/mentioned/noted (delete as necessary) en route.

Calm (rippled) waters in the Cattewater can be deceptive. I have paddled alongside the Mount Batten Breakwater in such conditions on many occasions but, observing water cascading over the rocks in front of the Hoe, I have realised that “more interesting” conditions would be experienced later. Today was not one of those



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days. Looking across to the Hoe revealed absolutely no whiteness. Suitably encouraged, we rounded the Mount Batten Breakwater and headed off towards Bovisand Harbour in conditions that may have increased from calm (rippled) to smooth. This wasn't going to be a challenging day's paddling.

We were paddling in bright sunshine and were effortlessly zipping along. A look at the tidal flow around any of the buoys that we passed explained the reason for our speediness. Oh, how we like an outgoing spring tide!

The tide remained our friend as we passed Bovisand Harbour and threaded our way through Renny Rocks. Sea conditions gradually deteriorated from smooth to slight, but no-one seemed to be bothered, or even notice.

Our next objective was the Mew Stone. On the way we lost the tidal push and our speed slowed. Terry then confirmed that we were in plenty of time to visit (what he describes as) the Yealm Bar cricket pitch, so off we set. We were now heading into the tidal stream and into a cooling easterly breeze. It suddenly felt like we were paddling through treacle. Looking at the water it appeared that we were moving at a reasonable speed but, looking at the land told a different story. It seemed to take forever (and maybe even longer) before we passed Wembury and by the time we exited our kayaks on the Yealm Sandbar we were all very glad for the rest.



From Terry Calcott's Facebook

On the way Mark spotted a seal. Grey or Harbour? I hear you ask. Well, neither. This one somewhat resembled a buoy.

The sandbar was bathed in sunshine but the wind had an edge to it. No-one seemed very keen on dining by the cricket pitch so, instead, we huddled among the rocks seeking shelter from the wind. However, huddling in the nooks and crannies was a pleasant enough experience so lunch was consumed in a suitably social environment.

Once lunch had been consumed Terry took the opportunity of visiting the cricket pitch. (His verdict was that the outfield was too lumpy for cricket.) Others took the opportunity of playing a little game of hide and seek among the rocks, although there was much more hiding than seeking going on, if you understand what I mean.

With curiosity/needs suitably sated we re-launched. Terry told us that we would hug the coast for a bit, so some rocky exploration took place. The tidal flow was still going in a westerly direction so progress was good, (No



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more paddling in treacle, thankfully.) but with a 0.3-metre low tide we did have to go a fair way out to get around Blackstone Rocks, Wembury Point and Renny Rocks. Being the PPCA we coped with much aplomb.

Having rounded Renny Rocks we gained the benefit of the tide flooding back into Plymouth Sound, which acted like a conveyor belt to carry us back to Mount Batten. The sea state gradually changed from slight to smooth, then to calm (rippled) until, by the time we got back to Mount Batten, we landed in calm (glassy) conditions in warm spring sunshine. This is exactly the sort of paddle that I joined for, and hope that this is an omen for the long summer months ahead.

Walking up the slipway Helen informed us that

we had paddled 12.9 miles. It was a real pleasure hearing someone as young as Helen speaking in proper units of measurement rather than those newfangled Kilometre things that tend to be the vogue in modern speak. How lovely. For the benefit of any proper sea farers reading this, we paddled 11.2 Nautical Miles.

And the football? Well, if you are the slightest bit interested you will already know the result, and if you aren't, then there's really no point in telling you, is there? But it was a good game and I watched it accompanied by some most excellent beer.

Thanks to Terry for leading the trip and to all our paddling companions for their company. Here's to next time.



From Terry Calcott's Facebook

Footnote. This is a public service announcement. By definition no-one can be an April Fool in March. I mention this for clarity.



Welcome new members



Figure 6: Claire and Ida

Hi, we are Claire and Ida (pronounced Eeda), we are a mum and daughter team and joined in September 2024. Ida is 13 and loves to read about Greek Gods and play her bass guitar. I (Claire) am a doctor at Derriford and love to swim (just about anywhere) as well as read (just about anything). We love being out on the water with you all and are overwhelmed at just how incredibly friendly and accommodating the club is. We are both looking forward to more frequent paddles over the Spring/ Summer.

Hopefully any one else who has joined recently (like, in the last 12 months) might be inspired to follow Claire and Ida's lead and send a few words about yourself and (ideally, but entirely optionally) a photo to: newsletter@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk

Exchange and Mart

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



Plymouth Sound Wildlife 2#

The Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*)



This short article is about another of my favourites, the Common Dolphin. The other dolphin species we may encounter is the Bottlenose, larger than the Common but more about the Bottlenose in another later article.

Seeing a dolphin always make people smile and lifts the spirits. Although I have had many sightings inside the Sound over the years it is an uncommon visitor. Also, a lot of luck is needed to be in the right place at the right time to see them. A few years ago, we were fortunate to have a small pod stay around for 2 to 3 weeks and every time we paddled, we managed to get a glimpse in the distance and on many occasions close up.



The Common Dolphin is highly social and usually seen in small family groups or large pods. When sighted inside the Sound they are usually chasing their food source of small fish. Outside of the Sound when seen at a distance they are usually travelling at speed traversing feeding grounds. They can achieve speeds of around 30 mph when underwater.



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The Common Dolphin has a dark grey lower body with a lighter coloured upper with a distinctive hourglass pattern on their sides. They grow up to 2.5m in length and weigh 150kg. Babies are born live and stay with their mothers for 6 months. They can live up to 35 years.

An amazing creature which has few predators

around our coast. The main hazards are from entanglement in fishing nets and boat collisions. If you come across a trapped or injured dolphin (or any marine animal) please contact the British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) 24-hour hotline 01825 765546. They are the experts and have response teams covering Devon and Cornwall.





Kayaking Chronicle

Adam Coulson

Warm Wet events

- 5th March Pool Session



- 19th March Pool Session (Sea Kayaks)



From Christopher Cope's Facebook

Wet events

- 1st March Nigel writes about the short recreational paddle: An early morning frost gives way to a bright sunny day, temperatures are low, but with a light wind it has to be the best day for suggesting Spring is just around the corner. The winds are variable, but predominantly from the east and one of the highest spring tides of this month will be worked to our advantage. A small group consisting of Rosie, Dave, Bob and Merryll, we leave Mount Batten and jump on a tide stream that takes us

on a conveyer belt toward the Breakwater. The tidal stream is noticeable off a large yellow mooring buoy. Onward to Bovisand Harbour and then lunch at Crownhill Beach. Home, the reverse route, but with a little bit of rock hopping and a visit to an exposed wreck off Mount Batten beach. We land at the Green Pole slipway, at low water the slope is exposed and a sandy muddy beach is our exit point. A good day, with the hint of warmer things to come.

- 1st March. Terry lead the monthly sea kayak paddle A lovely trip out from MB to the Mewstone then over to the mouth of the Yealm for lunch on the sandbar. With a very low spring tide plenty of sand showing today. The return was closer to shore. A leisurely 13 miles under a blue sky. There is a fuller report on page 4
- 2nd March Thanks to Phil for this account: With little rain throughout the week the levels held in there with just enough water to run the Loop. Although low there was still an appetite for some cold white water. Minus 2 degrees registered on the car dashboard. Four paddlers joined me. As an experienced group we dismissed a peer paddle on the Upper as this was just below a suitable level. However, we walked up on the left bank from Newbridge and did the last three drops. The team found every last



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drop of water. Julian and Jack found waves where I couldn't and honed their skills in preparation for the forthcoming WWL assessment. I really wish them luck and don't see a problem. A great time was had at Washing Machine and we even found time on our three-hour trip to scout and run the Webburn. Glorious sunshine by 09:30am. Sunny paddling would appear to be the way forward.



- 8th March A bit windy today so Terry led a group of 13 up the Plym estuary to beyond Coypool with lunch on Saltram Beach. It being International Women's Day the group was dominated by 8 International Women!
- 9th March Still windy but no rain and therefore very little water in the rivers. White water warriors partook of other activities today.



- 15th March Nigel writes: it was a good paddle on the 15th, 14 paddlers, 10 to 20 knot NW wind. Jennycliff, Bovisands and Crownhill Bay for lunch and return. Plymouth lifeboat close in off Bovisands Beach on exercise. A good day on the water.
- 16th March Pete cancelled in advance due to lack of water in rivers
- 22nd March Gavin led a group of about 10 to the eastern end of Plymouth Sound in some conditions that shortened the paddle due to a stiff easterly wind



From Terry Calcott's Facebook

- 22nd March. Clive led an extra short paddle to Cable Beach. We started off with 7, but Gill joined us from Gavin's group, so we ended up with 8. We enjoyed paddling with a potential new member, who greatly reducing our average age!
- 23rd March Phil cancelled WW trip due to lack of rain
- 29th March Clive writes: There were 7 of us today. We paddled to the Hoe, Firestone Bay, Barn Pool, Picklecombe, and had lunch at Cawsand in warm sunshine. We then retraced our route to Picklecombe, then over to Drakes Island and back to Mount Batten aided by the wind and tide.
- 29th March. In addition Terry gave an opportunity for those who had recently completed the 2 day first aid course to practice some of their skills in a realistic wet and cold environment!





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- ~~30th March~~ The last planned WW trip of the season. Oh dear, a bit of a pattern developing here – cancelled due to lack of rain ☹️

Dry Events

- 9th & 16th March 12 club members attended a 2 day first aid course. We should all feel well looked after!
- 12th March: Committee Meeting



From Terry Calcott's Facebook



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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
Vice-Chair	Vacant	vchair@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk
Club Leader	Adam Coulson	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	Lesley Hitchen	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	Sarah Carlson	publicity@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk
Youth Development Officer	Jane Hitchings	youth@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk
Health and Safety Officer	Damean Miller	safety@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk
Club President	Clive Ashford	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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