



## Editorial

*Paul Useless*



Some nonsense I saw on the Interweb

There's a lot contained in this month's newsletter. We have an account of the club's activities this month in the Creek Chronicle on page 12. Other regular features include nature notes on page 3. There is advanced warning of

the forthcoming AGM (30th October) on page 2 which also contains an extremely brief report of the recent club Barbecue. I remember reading a sign on a bus in Glasgow transport museum once which read "Gentlemen do not spit, others may not" so I've never been entirely sure what the word "Gentle" means. Anyway, there's an account of a 'Gentle' paddle on page 4

Very much in Plymouth, there is some blurb on the "View from a Kayak" series on page 8 and very much away from Plymouth there is a report on a paddling holiday in Pembrokeshire in Wales on page 9.

If you've wondered about the giants on the Hoe, you can read more on page 7. Finally, at the very end we have appended some information about the Mount Batten works.

As always, comments, questions, material to include in future editions: [newsletter@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk).



# Up the Creek August 2025

## Rapid reads

### Annual General Meeting Notice

#### Annual General Meeting

Port of Plymouth Canoe Association

# SAVE THE DATE

30  
Oct  
2025

The George Inn, Plympton.  
All members welcome.

### Club Barbecue

Well, on the third time of trying, I'm very happy to report that the Barbecue finally happened. On Saturday 9th September, 13 members met up to spend a bit of time sharing stories and food.



From Sarah Carlson's Facebook



### Plymouth Sound Wildlife 5#

Terry Calcott

#### The Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*)

I have included this amazing bird because during the past few paddles I have done Sandwich Terns have made an appearance. A pair were sat on the Sharks Teeth near Drakes Island, and several were on the Breakwater.



Sandwich Terns on the Breakwater

Sandwich terns are mostly white with a black cap on its head, a black bill with a yellow tip. Short black legs with a forked tail. Although frequent summer visitors to Plymouth Sound they are likely to be in small numbers and on their way to breeding grounds further north or along the coast. They nest exclusively in coastal locations, such as shingle and sandy beaches and islands close to the shore. Once the breeding season starts, the adults will make a scrape on the ground with little or no lining for the eggs. They are camouflaged to blend in with the shingle.



They are built for speed and are masters of plunge diving at speed from height. They rarely hover, but you will often see them diving into the sea with a large splash, submerging themselves under for longer than other terns. You might hear a loud 'smack' as they enter the water. They hunt for species such as sand eels, sprats and whiting.



During the winter most leave for the coast of west Africa. Named after Sandwich Bay in Kent, the Sandwich tern is one of three birds to be named after places in Kent. The others are the Kentish plover and the Dartford warbler.



# Up the Creek August 2025

## Suitably gentle

*Clive Ashford*

Wed 11 June was the night of a full moon. (Strawberry don't you know?) A small group of us were walking the 24-mile Yorkshire 3 Peaks route as a moon-lit night hike, and I can tell you that at 02:30 on the 12 June the moon was well on its way to setting, and that the eastern sky was starting to pale. We had already scaled the mountains of Ingleborough and Pen-Y-Ghent and we had completed the rather dull stretch of the route that led us to the remarkable Ribbleshead viaduct. All that was left to do now was to scale Wharfedale, the highest of the 3 peaks, and to get back to the car that we had left at 18:00 the previous evening. We ascended Wharfedale and as we started our descent we witnessed a truly beautiful sunrise. We happily finished off our little adventure at 05:30. We had taken 11hrs 30 mins and my feet hurt far more than I would have liked, thank you for your sympathy.



Sunrise on Wharfedale

I tell you all this because I was down to lead the Saturday rec paddle on 14 June. I put up a post that included the paragraph, "I did a very long walk last night, resulting in aches in places that I didn't know could ache. I am expecting Saturday's paddle to be suitably gentle."

Unfortunately, the weather gods' definition of "suitably gentle" didn't altogether match mine because, although bright and dry, the day brought with it a force 3 – 4 SW wind. Hiding from a SW wind in Plymouth Sound is a bit of a challenge, so I decided that I had very little choice but to grin and bear it and to amend my definition of "suitable gentle" to match those of the weather gods.

Meticulous planning with great attention to detail is the key to a successful trip, so as Joy and I approached Mount Batten my thoughts were, "Let's go to Cable Beach and make up a plan as we go along." This meticulous plan was executed to a tee, and very successful it was too, may I say. On the way to Cable Beach I kept wondering where to go. We were paddling 1hr 30 mins after quite a small high tide, but looking across the Sound I could see that there were waves breaking over the Breakwater. I could also see that conditions in the Sound looked 'manageable.' (Or, "suitably gentle" as the to the weather gods might say.) I also noticed that the Sound was almost devoid of any other traffic and it dawned on me that I hadn't crossed the middle



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of the Sound for quite some time. I pondered and procrastinated, and then I deliberated and demonstrated my undoubted expertise in dithering, but by the time that we reached Cable Beach I had decided that we would visit Duke Rock Buoy, the northern most yellow MOD mooring buoy, Drakes Island, and then continue to Barn Pool for a lunch stop. The journey to Duke Rock Buoy was well inside people's comfort zone but as we approached

the yellow mooring buoy is became apparent that we were losing the protection afforded by the Breakwater, and that the sea was becoming a little lively. We embarked onto the Drakes Island leg. There were choppy waves and white horses on the sea and white knuckles on some of our paddlers. Character building stuff I'm sure but I quite pleased to see that our more experienced paddlers were keeping a close eye on our white knuckled colleagues.



Bob Sherston on the Bridge

What I haven't told you so far is that our local area was subject to heavy rain on the Friday night. (I'm sure I read a report from a certain Noah saying that it was, indeed, a bit damp.)

Anyway, we were crossing The Bridge some 2hrs 30 mins after high tide. The outgoing tide was being augmented by the water in a swollen River Tamar and the whole lot was



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being affected by the force 3 – 4 SW wind. Some of those paddlers that were earlier sporting white knuckles we now also sporting eyes like organ stops, and I'm not sure that I didn't hear some whimpering. From Drakes Island to Barn Pool is about a kilometre but today it seemed a lot further, every inch of the way was hard gained as we battled a current of maybe a couple of knots. (Imperial, metric and knots all in one sentence. Yep, that completes that particular bingo card.)



A suitably gentle lunch stop

After what appeared to be a lifetime we eventually paddled into the shelter of Barn Pool, where there was hardly a ripple on the water. Organ stops and white knuckles were swapped for happy smiles and thoughts of the inside of our lunch boxes. The first properly "suitably gentle" paddling of the day.

Lunch was a relaxed affair as was the journey home. With a following wind we fairly zipped along the front of the Hoe and arrived back at Mount Batten in quite possibly record time. We clambered onto the slipway in that dignified way that paddlers do, and got ourselves sorted out. There were happy smiling faces and some people remarked that they had enjoyed themselves. Had our daughter, Jane, witnessed these events she would have quite possibly described the day as "type two fun." Feel free to ask.

Anyway, next time you read a post suggesting that a paddle will be suitably gentle . . .





# The Giants on Plymouth Hoe

*Joy Ashford*

The observant of you may have seen a couple of chalked figures on the grass, below the Citadel, on the Hoe. They are the mythical Giants, Gogmagog and the Trojan warrior Corineus. These figures are a part of Plymouth's mythical history. The Giants hark back to the Bronze Age tin trade from Dartmoor via Mount Batten, around 1500 to 2000BC.



Photo Bt Joy Ashford

The story goes that Brutus with his Trojan army sailed into England, landing at Totnes. They then made their way to Plymouth, where they encountered an army of Giants. A fight

erupted on the Hoe, ending with Corineus hurling Gogmagog into the sea, staining the sea with blood.

Historical accounts suggest that a 'portraiture' of the Giants was cut into the ground in the 15th Century and was maintained regularly, until it was destroyed when the Citadel was constructed. These Giants, would have been the first thing the Mayflower Pilgrims would have seen entering Plymouth Sound in 1620, and the last thing they would have seen on leaving, heading for America.

Seth Lakeman, was commissioned to write a song to commemorate the Giants called, "The Giants on Plymouth Hoe" and sang it live on 28th June, beneath the Giant figures. See this link for Seth's first performance of the song, <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1XxLB7a51G/>. It is hoped that the Giants will be on the Hoe for the rest of the summer. The last time the Giants were depicted on the Hoe was in 2021 to help celebrate Plymouth's 4,000-year role as one of the country's greatest trading ports.

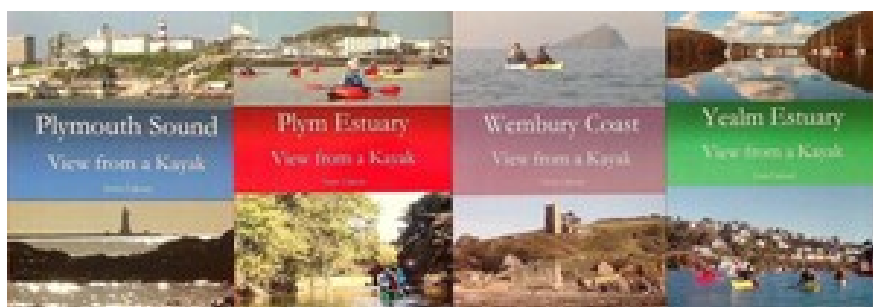


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### **‘View from a Kayak’ Books**

*Terry Calcott*

I have had several enquiries recently from club members asking if the View from a Kayak books are still available to purchase. The good news is YES.



They are £6 each or a bargain 4 for £20.

If anyone wishes to purchase the books please contact me at [terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:terryc1@blueyonder.co.uk)

I will also bring along some books on Tuesday evenings and also on the Saturday Rec paddles.

All profits will be going to St Lukes Hospice.

### **Exchange and Mart**

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





## Short kayaks to Pembrokeshire

*Terry Calcott*

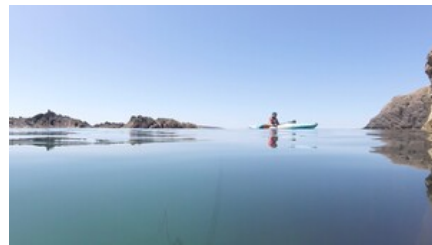
I know some of you will be thinking what is this all about. Why would you take a short kayak all that way? Is it for a white-water trip, no. Surely you would take your sea kayak there, yes but not this time. A few other club paddlers joined me on our annual week of paddling up country. This year we had opted for Pembrokeshire having been there paddling several times over the years. We were based very close to Dinas Island east of Fishguard. The plan was to take our sea kayaks but as the weather firmed up it was apparent the start of the week was going to be very windy. We were intending to do day trips between 6 to 10 miles exploring the local coastline so no long trips crossing bays and between headlands. What the short kayaks gave us was the means to get into every nook and cranny very close to the shore.



This coast is full of small coves, gullies and more caves than you can shake a paddle at. With the decision made on short kayaks, packing was nice and easy with less kit required.



Pembrokeshire is an amazing place in the far southwest of Wales and if you go in early July before the school holidays it is quite idyllic. Plus, most launch spots have free or cheap parking and free toilets.



The first paddle was quite a short one launching from Cwm-yr-Eglwys only a 10-minute drive from our cottage. This set the scene for the week ahead with a leisurely pace. The first thing we noticed on launching were the jellyfish, they were everywhere. We headed north, sheltered from the stiff breeze and explored the small coves and caves. The caves are magnificent some go on for quite a



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distance and with virtually no swell we could safely explore the labyrinths. This stretch has a formation called Needle Rock, home to Guillemots and Razorbills. Heading towards Dinas Head an imposing feature with no escape routes we were watchful of not drifting into the tide race which forms at certain states of the tidal stream. It was evident from our position that it was in full flow.

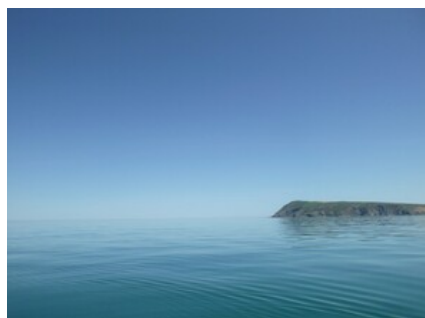


The rest of the week's paddles followed much the same format with the weather improving each day. We launched from Pwllgwaelod a couple of times. Free car park, toilets and a pub selling local cider for after the paddling. This stretch heading west towards Fishguard has plenty of hidden beaches and is fantastic for rock hopping with numerous gullies. Not as many caves but a few rock arches and another stunning Needle Rock which looked like a needle.



One of my favourite paddles is from the village of Newport, again only 10 minutes from the cottage. Launching at The Parrog slipway, free car park and toilets. There is also a cafe / fish and chip shop selling local beer and cider. It is an easy launch at high water crossing the sandbar and hugging the coast in a northerly direction. The return was on low

water and flat calm. We have done this trip several times, with a large swell the surf breaks over the sand bar and along the beach. The small estuary had dried out and the fishermen were lining the banks catching numerous Sea Bass.



By the end of the week the sea state was flat calm and no wind. So, the final paddle was on a mirror sea. We launched again from Pwllgwaelod and made our way to Dinas Head. Exploring yet more caves and gullies. The jellyfish this week have been abundant in such large numbers. Particularly the Compass variety in every stage of growth. Once at the headland and with the weather set fair, we decided to head straight out to sea to look for wildlife. Not to be disappointed a pair of Porpoises kept us entertained surfacing every couple of minutes and passing very close. Time for lunch so we headed for a beach a few miles away. Nearly at the beach a pod of

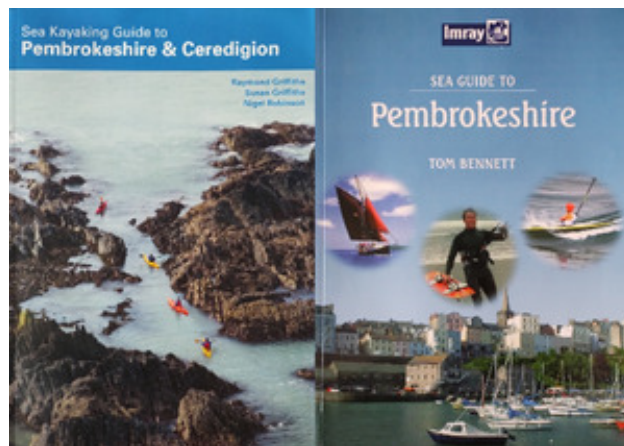


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Common Dolphins passed close by at speed close to our kayaks.



I haven't described the paddle trips in any detail but if anyone is interested in exploring the area or planning a trip to Pembrokeshire the following publications are a great resource on top of the usual charts and O/S map for the area.





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## Creek Chronicle

*Adam Coulson*

### Wet Training Events

- Tuesday 1st July: Ten people attended the tides and weather session run by Nigel
- Tuesday 1st July: Four paddlers joined the Discover/Explore session run by Andy.



- Tuesday 8th July: Andy ran a Discover/Explore skills group and had seven folks out taking part
- Tuesday 8th July: Nigel and nine others had the second session on tides weather and navigation which must have been successful because they all found their way back.



- Tuesday 15th July: All groups were grounded by the wind; however Nigel's weather and trip planning group met at Mountbatten for a land based session, looking at the sea!
- Saturday 19th July: Alan and his helpers introduced 5 candidates to the world of kayaking
- Tuesday 22nd July: Nigel had a group of 8 on the last of his Tuesday sessions,



this evening focusing on kayak and canoe design

- Tuesday 22nd July: Clive reports that last night, 5 of us made up the Intro Plus group. We did a bit of work at Mount Batten whilst waiting for a late comer to get ready, and then we paddled to the Barbican. We played around the pillars at Phoenix Wharf and then practised stern rudders. We also talked about shipping channels and buoys. We finished off the evening with a nice little capsized and swim ashore, just to cool off.



- Tuesday 29th July: Another busy Tuesday evening in spite of being a little windy with 3 options for our members. The "ordinary" skills group hid away from the wind by paddling over to the Hoe. In total 6 people practiced various skills before returning to Mount Batten where some of us cooled down in the traditional fashion under the supervision of Clive.
- Tuesday 29th July By elimination, what must have been the "extraordinary" skills group sought a little bit of shelter from the north westerly wind in Batten Bay in order to learn, brush up and practice some sea kayak safety and rescue skills. 15 boats and there sometimes occupants took part and we



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covered approach to a rescue and then deep water rescues. Adam was struck by the enthusiasm with which the group threw themselves into the exercises.

## Wet Recreational Events



- Tuesday 1st July: The recreational paddle was led by Terry along the Hoe to Devils Point then over to Cornwall. Across to Drakes island and back to MB.
- Friday 4th July Friday night with Pete leading 5 paddlers
- Saturday 5th July: Brim's sea kayak paddle cancelled
- Saturday 5th July: Andy's short paddle cancelled due to wind



- Tuesday 8th July: Clive writes: 15 of us paddled to Cable Beach in glorious sunshine. The plan was to have a swim, but 9 paddlers chose to visit the cave near Bovisand Harbour instead, and in the end, just a handful of paddlers took advantage of the swimming opportunity.
- Friday 11th July: Brim lead a group of 11 over to Mount Edgecombe on this warm sunny evening, where some went swimming off the beach. The joys of summer.
- Saturday 12th July: Adam, lead fourteen of us hugging the east side of the Sound to Bovisand. We ventured around and some played amongst the rocks outside

the harbour as there was a low swell and just a gentle wind on this hot (27°C) and sunny day. Similarly we paddled amongst the blocks on the seawards side to the lighthouse before crossing to Sandways Beach. A leisurely lunch was taken so that some could swim and others practice some kayak skills before returning to MB, a sun kissed and happy bunch of paddlers.



- ~~Tuesday 15th July:~~ Cancelled due to wind
- Friday 18th July Brim led a group of 12 out and across Jennycliffe Bay
- Saturday 19th July From Facebook it appears that helmets, sunglasses, a mixture of kayaks and jellyfish were a feature of this paddle. Andy's paddle saw fourteen amongst the rocks to around Andurn Point and back.



- Tuesday 22nd July: On Adam's recreational paddle a group of twenty crossed the Plym and followed the waterfront around to Devil's Point. A ferry glide across the ebbing spring tide at The Narrows to The Battery at Mount Edgecombe and we wandered across Barne Pool to Lady Emma's cottage (marking PPCA's small part in celebrating the 250 years since Jane Austen's birth!) A mixture of emotions was in evidence as we crossed The Bridge to Drake's Island on a bumpy sea before ferry gliding back across to





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Mountbatten.



- Friday 25th July Pete took thirteen paddlers to visit Millbay docks prior to a circumnavigation of Drake's Island under blue skies
- Saturday 26th July Terry got 19 paddlers on the water for a drizzly start so heading over to the Bridge and onto Picklecombe. With a clearer sky we made our way direct to Penlee Point and then some rock hopping to Pier Cellars. Lunch at Sandway beach and the sun appeared then along to Picklecombe and across to Drakes Island via the Sharks teeth and back to MB. Well done to Jo and Roger on their first full club rec paddle. A little over 10 miles



- Tuesday 29th July: Andy led a group of 14 on a tour of the Cattewater and Hooe Lake where they spotted this rather smartly painted boat. Shame we can't paint our kayaks!

Andy led a group of 14 on a tour of the Cattewater and Hooe Lake where they spotted this rather smartly painted boat. Shame we can't paint our kayaks!



## Dry Events

- Wednesday 9th July: Committee Meeting



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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](mailto:intro@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk)

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Vice-Chair	Vacant	<a href="mailto:vchair@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk">vchair@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk</a>
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Treasurer	Julian Miles	<a href="mailto:treasurer@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk">treasurer@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk</a>
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Health and Safety Officer	Damean Miller	<a href="mailto:safety@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk">safety@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk</a>
Club President	Clive Ashford	<a href="mailto:president@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk">president@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk</a>

**If you send an email and don't receive a reply, please could you try sending it again, but type the email address in manually.** <sup>1</sup>. Please type in

<ROLENAME> [at] ppca [minus] canoe [minus] club [dot] org [dot] uk

for example, for the newsletter, type

newsletter [at] ppca [minus] canoe [minus] club [dot] org [dot] uk

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

PPCA © 2025

<sup>1</sup>The pdf viewers on some devices mangle the text of our domain name, swapping the minus signs for an emdash which can't be read by an emailer





**Site Manager Wayne from Classic Builders has shared the latest updates on the centre's progress and upcoming work.**

Work continues to make excellent progress at Mount Batten. Recent efforts have focused on cutting out and installing new drainage, along with ongoing excavation work for the upcoming tiered seating and steps. The installation of blockwork is underway to create a new two-tier area, while fencing works are advancing on the tower top, and the first fix for mechanical and electrical systems has commenced.

Looking ahead, further key activities will take place. Fireproofing will be carried out, as well as temporary works and demolition to the changing places wall. Work will also begin on compound C. The next phase includes installing pre-cast seating and steps, along with the completion of white lining to support the newly developed spaces.

## SITE SET-UP

The Plymouth City Council (PCC) slipways are open for public use – please follow slipway etiquette for everyone's safety & access. Respect others, prepare your vessel away from the slipway, launch & recover promptly, and never leave vehicles unattended. Remove all equipment and debris after use and avoid blocking the path. Thank you for your cooperation.

## SLIP WAYS

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July**, line painting will be taking place on the Eastern slipway. There may be short periods when access is temporarily restricted whilst the work is being completed.

## SITE SET UP

**Speed Limit Reminder** – As a gentle reminder to all our visitors, please ensure you adhere to the 5 MPH speed limit when driving in and around the centre. To ensure we are making full use of the space in the car park please ensure you are parking in the marked bays.

## UPCOMING DATE TO NOTE – INCREASED LOCAL ACTIVITY

Upcoming events near Mount Batten may bring more visitors—plan ahead, use public transport or car share, and try to visit outside busy times.

**The British Firework Championship** - 13 - 14 August 2025