



Editorial

Paul HughDown

I'm sorry the newsletter is so late this month. Please pick an excuse from the list below:

1. Whilst the dog has finally given up trying to eat draft versions of the newsletter, he has unfortunately figured out how to press delete.
2. My employer decided that I should actually do some work this month (this happened in June as well, and November is looking like an excuse to avoid Christmas shopping duties)
3. I went on holiday to the Lizard for a week
4. I have a major snake phobia, sufficiently large that my reaction to opening one of the submitted articles in this newsletter caused a fellow train passenger to wonder if I was having a medical episode, with the overall result that I didn't look all things newsletter for a little while

Anyway, it's here and it has some great contributions. The Creek Chronicle attempts to report club activity in August on page 11. There are articles advertising winter activities, specifically the ongoing Saturday recreational

paddles (page 10) and whitewater paddling (page 9). I'm very excited to report we have had success in Paddle UK Explore Awards. Plenty of people can say a lot about Paddle UK, but there is no doubting that a lot of work from Coaches, Helpers and the Paddlers themselves have made this happen; definitely something to celebrate. Andy Kittle has written a report on page 3. Finally, just to remind us very much about relaxation and enjoyment, we have a report on a summer meander on page 5.

One question we get asked a lot at Creek Towers is "What is the difference between a canoe and a kayak". I thought it might help if I gave the definitions from the Uxbridge English Dictionary. A canoe is a light, narrow boat with pointed ends and no keel, propelled with a paddle or paddles where the paddler is usually kneeling (or occasionally sitting) facing the direction of travel. A kayak on the other hand is a small personal vehicle manufactured by Ford adapted for carrying a particular breed of Himalayan cattle.

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



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Rapid reads

Annual General Meeting Notice

Annual General Meeting

Port of Plymouth Canoe Association

SAVE THE DATE

The George Inn, Plympton.
All members welcome.

30
Oct
2025



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Paddlesport Explore Success

Andy Kittle

Congratulations are in order to three club members, Rob Willcocks, Vicki Blackmore and Caroline Collings, who all recently passed the Paddle UK Explore certification. To those that remember, this is the equivalent to the old Two Star award. These people have worked extremely hard in training, practice and learning theory. It is not an easy award to achieve, so well done to you all. This was measured by them having various skills and knowledge signed off by all the coaches who helped them through it. The club, this year has adopted a 'Passport' system (paper log copy), that coaches sign off as and when these people achieved the required standards. For anyone else who aspires to getting this award, there are Passports in the club shed. Please take one and start your journey. The required measurements on the passports are:

Paddling Skills	Coach Initials		Safety Leadership & Group Skills	Coach Initials
Launching			Plan and lead a paddle trip for you, a coach, and up to 3 others. Cover the following with planning:	
Efficient forward paddle (250m)				
Stopping				
Reverse paddle			Weather	
Stem rudder through narrow gap			Equipment – kit list	
Low Recovery			Access permissions	
Turning - static			Anticipated timings	
Turning - moving			Anticipated hazards	
Move kayak sideways 5m (draw strokes)			Safety procedures	
Manoeuvre in & out of a confined space			Emergency procedures	
Return secure & stow boat			Transport arrangements	
Safety & rescue			Other (at coach discretion)	
Capsize with spraydeck and swim to shore				
Help & be helped back into boat				
Eskimo Rescue (rescuer and victim)				
Lifting (safe handling)				

Many thanks to all of the coaches who spent their time passing on their skills and knowledge to all of the people in this club, who want to improve.



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Successful Explore Award paddlers with their certificates (with a bit of help from Photoshop)



Completely different

Clive Ashford



Photo: Joy Ashford

"I never get bored of paddling around Plymouth Sound, it's just a little bit different every time." That's a mantra that you will have heard if you've been a member of the PPCA for any length of time, longer than 5 minutes, say. Whatever you think of your fellow club members they are an honest bunch, so this mantra must be true, but if you paddle away from Plymouth Sound then you will experience something that is completely different. A couple of months ago Adam told us about his excursion to Morbihan in France,

where he describes some of his antics as "interesting," then last month, Terry told us about paddling in short kayaks in Pembrokeshire. No doubt Terry's trip was just as interesting as Adam's, but in a slightly less white-knuckled sort of a way. Whatever, both trips would have been completely different from paddling around dear old Plymouth Sound. (I know that you already know this, but I mention it here just to prove to you that I also read the most excellent "Up the Creek" newsletter.)



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On Saturday 23 August, Joy and I embarked on an even less white knuckled version of an interesting and completely different paddle, but one that was far closer to home. Our day started with the alarm going off at 06:30 and saw us launch into the Avon Estuary at AG not long after 08:00. (AG. That's Aveton Gifford to those of you that aren't as streetwise and down with the kids as I am.) We launched an hour after (an almost spring) high tide and paddled downstream, so there was not a lot of paddling required. The Avon estuary is well worth a visit; the banks are tree lined and there are larger areas of woodland flanking each side, so even in this dry summer we were treated to some greenery. Where there were no woods there were straw-coloured fields. The whole scene felt very rural and surprisingly remote. There were also plenty of birds to look at, including flights of Canada Geese passing overhead and the infamous AG Swans, whose temper seems to have mellowed over the years.

Joy was paddling her Expression 11 and I was in my GTX. I remarked, "On a Saturday paddle I can keep up with the sea kayaks with no problem, but I'm finding it a bit hard keeping up with you today." Joy replied that she wasn't paddling fast on purpose but did have the grace to slow down a bit. My arms and shoulders were very grateful.



Photo: Joy Ashford

There was not a cloud in the sky and hardly any wind. Suncream and hats were very much the order of the day and we were paddling without a care in the world. However, as we rounded the final bend in the estuary our carefree world was disturbed by the sight of surf. I'm no expert in gauging the height of surf waves but I would say that there was about a foot of whiteness, which isn't very much but was probably about a foot more than we were expecting. When you are expecting a millpond a foot of surf could be described as a tsunami, so we paddled through these tsunamis (without incident) and carried on to Burgh Island. (I don't think there is anyone reading this who is young enough not to know what a foot is, so I'm not going to do the metric conversion.)

The sandbar that connects Burgh Island to the mainland was already exposed so we paddled around the island in a clockwise direction. We explored a myriad of nooks and crannies and were swished through many little gaps aided by a pleasantly gentle swell. (Or hindered by the swell when we got the timing wrong.) We even



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paddled under a very skinny rock arch that I had never seen before. The scene was peaceful but not silent. We were accompanied by various whooshing's, gurgling's and booms as water was forced into hidden chambers and, on more than one occasion, I'm convinced that we heard dragons breathing deep under the island. I'm yet to hear dragons in Plymouth Sound.

As we completed our circumnavigation of Burgh Island we saw a seal.

Now, gentle readers, by the very fact that you are reading this you have proved yourselves to be an intelligent, perceptive and probably a very small bunch of people. You will have worked out that Joy and I had launched into the Avon Estuary at AG an hour after high tide, and that we had spent a fair bit of time playing around Burgh Island. "How are you going to get back to AG?" I hear you ask. Well, we had come well prepared for exactly this situation. We had packed lunch, towels, books and sun cream (Joy had even packed her sketch pad) so we were quite looking forward to a day relaxing on a beach, and that is exactly what we had, but not before we had encountered more wildlife.



Photo: Joy Ashford

As we paddled away from Burgh Island we passed what at first glance looked like a stick in the water but, in my experience, sticks don't wriggle and propel themselves along. On closer inspection the stick we were looking at turned out to be an adder. I have no idea where it had come from but it was making its way to Burgh Island. (Tea with Agatha Christy perhaps?) I had a good look around and was very relieved to find that I couldn't see any apple trees, so we weren't subjected to that particular temptation. The outcome of this encounter is that I now claim to have paddled with a sea serpent. Dispute this if you wish. Joy spent the next 10 minutes trying to get a photo, which didn't seem to please the adder very much.

At the beach we swam, read and generally relaxed. The one of us that needs his/her beauty sleep more than the other had a snooze, but other than pointing out that Joy is a princess I'm going to let you guess which one of us that was.

Suitably relaxed we paddled back to AG with the incoming tide. By now the surf had all but disappeared and the current was being more than helpful. We arrived at AG a little bit too early, finding that the final 100 yards was a bit shallow, but we coped. It was a happy pair of paddlers who journeyed home after what was definitely a completely different day out.



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Photo: Joy Ashford



Whitewater anyone?

Clive Ashford

Whitewater paddling is exciting and gives the participant new and interesting ways in which to entertain their coaches. The PPCA river season starts on the first Sunday in Oct and finishes on the last Sunday in March. All trips being dependent on water levels. We are not talking rocket science here. October to March means that we are paddling through the winter and whitewater means that we are paddling on the rivers. Gentle readers, by using the words “winter” and “river” in the same sentence you should be able to make the connection to the word “cold” without any prompting. Dress accordingly.

Whitewater paddlers need to have a few skills in their arsenal, in particular low brace and edging. If in doubt have a chat with one of our marvellous coaches. Be warned, paddling rivers is challenging and rewarding and the whitewater paddler will experience high levels of excitement and adrenalin. The question is, can you cope?

The PPCA categorise trips into two classes, beginners and intermediate, which sort of define themselves really. Again, if in doubt talk

to someone. In order to participate in whitewater paddling you will need a boat, paddle, spray deck, buoyancy aid and helmet. Failure to comply with this list will result in you not paddling. And whilst we are talking about equipment, it goes without saying (but I’m saying it anyway) that river paddling is a small boat activity.

River trips generally meet at the car park near the Co-op in the Ridgeway, Plympton. (What3words give this location as crazy.stir.body) We do not go to Mount Batten first to collect equipment but club equipment is available to hire for the season for a small charge. If you wish to use club equipment please contact the club equipment officer, Pete Anderson, on 07958 694434 or equipment@ppca-canoe-club.org.uk Trip details, including where and when to meet, will appear on the club forum. They may also get posted on facebook, it’s worth looking in both places.

See you all somewhere cold and wet.

Have fun. Clive



Winter Recreational Paddles

Terry Calcott



I have been a regular rec paddler with the club for many years now. Summer paddling is great but my favourite time out on the water is over the autumn, winter and spring months. For those club members who do not 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 make for some fantastic paddling with dramatic and stunning scenery. If you are thinking of hanging up your paddling kit now summer has nearly ended. 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 and wildlife we have on our doorstep. The rec 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 rec 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 rec paddles.



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Creek Chronicle

Adam Coulson

Wet Training Events

- Tuesday 5th August: The wind proved a bit of a hindrance to the Sea Kayak Safety and Rescue group as well as the recreational paddle (see below). We tried to find some shelter from the NW wind around Mountbatten beach and practised contact tows, demonstrating that turning 2 kayaks into the wind is proper hard! The group demonstrated their balance skills on (rather than in) their kayaks resulting in an opportunity for further practice of Deep Water Rescues (who'd have thought it!) Finally, we introduced the self rescue, which everybody concluded is not easy. Much practice of the elements of a successful self rescue is required for those who are determined to acquire this skill. We shall try it with paddle floats another time.

- Tuesday 1st July: Four paddlers joined the Discover/Explore session run by Andy.



- Tuesday 12th August. Eight sea kayakers joined with Adam and Karen for the next safety and rescue session. The group did well with contact and short tows and then some Eskimo Rescues. Finally, we returned to self rescues and this time the deployment of

a paddle float improved the success rate considerably. I'm really not too sure what was going on in the photo.



- Tuesday 12th August Andy put on another Discover/Explore session and was joined by ten paddlers including some helpers.

- Intro Course - Jane Saturday, August 23



- Tuesday 19th August Fourteen of us went out for the last Sea Kayak Safety and Rescue session. We revisited Batten Bay and also the Eskimo Rescue, Deep Water Rescue and Self Rescue the latter involving a paddle float and also the possibility of a re-entry roll. I am delighted to report that **EVERYBODY** succeeded in getting back in their kayaks unassisted. We ended the sessions with a little competition between 2 teams of 6 recovering from an all in disaster. There was a clear winning team but you'll have to ask one of the competitors about that! The improvement in these



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techniques through the weeks has been most impressive – well done everybody for taking part. Adam

- Tuesday 19th August Andy took a group out for a Discover/Explore session.



- Tuesday, August 26 Terry provided an introduction to Sea Kayaks
- Tuesday August 26th Clive writes: “On a breezy Tuesday 26 Aug 8 paddlers joined the intro plus session. We hid from the wind at Turnchapel and gainfully spent the evening trying our hand at edging, turning, stern rudders and backwards paddling. All topped off with a cooling little capsized at the end. Most refreshing.”

Wet Recreational Events



- ~~Friday 1st August~~ The evening's paddle was cancelled due to gusting winds
- Saturday 2nd August. The wind blew out on Friday leaving a calm Saturday for Adam to lead a group of 11 out to Rame Head via Drake's Island, Picklecombe and Penlee Point. Some enjoyed a swim and all enjoyed a lunch on East Gear beach. As nobody was too bothered about rock gardening on the return we paddled a little way off shore to the Draystone Buoy where we turned left to enjoy a following sea to the breakwater lighthouse and Mountbatten.

- Saturday 2nd August. With a 10:30 launch Pete took a group of 9 out on a short trip but I know not where.



- Tuesday 5th August. Clive writes of the recreational paddle: “17 paddlers battled against wind and tide under blue skies to Drakes Island. We then crossed over to Firestone Bay before hugging the coast to what used to be the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club. The evening was completed by a wind assisted bob back to Mount Batten.”
- Friday 8th August. Six folks went out with Brim
- Saturday 9th August. The weather forecast was spot on today, sunny and breezy. Seventeen club paddlers, led by Terry, headed out to the breakwater survivors cage and then a sheltered paddle along to the lighthouse. A flock of Sandwich terns made an appearance along with a grey seal. With the breeze picking up from the west we had a bit of a bouncier paddle over to Mount Edgcumbe and lunch at the beach. The



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return was via the Bridge and Drakes Island with the breeze continuing to increase and the sea state picking up.



- Tuesday 12th August Nigel led the rec paddle
- Friday 15th August Gillian reports that this was one of those nights when everything is lovely, with thanks to Brim for leading
- Saturday 16th August Seven intrepid paddlers ventured out into a force 5 easterly wind. We were blown around the end of the Mount Batten breakwater and then battled the conditions to Jenny cliff. Once there, we had a pleasant paddle around to Bovisand Harbour. We then poked our noses around the corner into Bovisand Bay before deciding that Cable Beach would be an ideal place for lunch. 2 members decided that a leisurely swim was in order. Then, after a relaxed lunch, we retraced our paddle strokes back to Mount Batten. I can report that the wind hadn't changed either in strength or direction. The day was deemed to have been a success, Clive reports.



- Tuesday 19th August. The rec paddle was led by Pete
- Friday August 22nd Evening Recreational Paddle lead by Nigel
- Saturday August 23rd Recreational paddle lead by Brim



- Tuesday August 26th Recreational Paddle lead by Terry
- Friday August 29th Recreational Paddle lead by Gavin
- ~~Saturday August 30th~~ Recreational Paddle lead by Nigel cancelled by wind

Dry Events

- Saturday 9th August The twice postponed BBQ finally happened on MB Beach after the recreational paddle. Registration was not required for this but from the photos I see that a good group of paddlers enjoyed cooking up on the beach in the afternoon. The photos seem to have disappeared from 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
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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. ¹. 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.

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¹The 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