Up the Creek November 2025

Editorial

Paul Hugeton

Sorry this is late. I thought it was about time I approached this newsletter in a professional manner and hence have been wasting far too much time searching the web for examples of good practice. I did find The Onion ("America's Finest News Source") had one article on canoeing in its archive theonion.com/no-canoe-can-hold-me-1819584294/. Pity it wasn't funny, and so, without any professional enhancement I'm back to editing the Creek.

The good news is that this newsletter is pretty packed, more packed than that basket at the bottom of Sebago Lake. First, we have great news of two newly qualified white water leaders on page 2. Secondly, we have a very brief report of the AGM. Actually, it's so short it's pretty much non-existent but it does mention the club's award winners for this year, that's on page 4. Mark Perry (Chair) then enlarges on one point raised in his AGM presentation with a note about Marguarite Pike on page 6. As usual, Adam Coulson has again provided a summary of club activity in the Chronicle on page 9. A lack of rain and an excess of wind means it's relatively quiet, but you can see despite a few misses the club has still been pretty busy. Looking forward, there is an article on the club Christmas paddle on page 3 as well as an advertisement for the club social somewhere. Finally, Nature Notes returns with an article on Sunfish on page 8

Therefore, if

(a) You have anything to say that might be of interest to other paddlers (I know people in the club have been paddling in Greece as well as the Arctic) please send an article and some photos. We'd love to hear more

(b) If you are relatively new member please send us a sentence or two to say hello. You could also consider sending a photograph.

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

New White Water Leaders

Adam Coulson

As many of you will have heard, two of our members have recently passed their White Water Leader assessments. Many congratulations go to Jack Moore and Julian Miles for this great achievement. According to their assessor, Ian Dovey, the awards were well deserved. A lot of hard graft, some training courses and practice go into the gaining of a leadership award. This level of award qualifies Jack and Julian to lead trips on Class 2 (3) sections of river, for example locally, the Dart up to the Loop, the Walkham, lower parts of the Tavy and the Tamar. The Upper Dart and the Erme are Class 4.

Candidates must demonstrate their paddling skills to the assessor as well as their ability to carry out rescues and ensure the safety of the group. They are required to have a good background knowledge of white water paddling and river conditions, as sometimes the decision may have to be made not to paddle at all.

Add to that the responsibility of leadership of mixed ability groups so that as well as being safe, everybody has a chance to stretch their skills and enjoy themselves and you can see that this is not at all easy.

Julian and Jack's names will be appearing on the club calendar leading trips for the PPCA this winter. Indeed, Julian has already done so under somewhat tricky conditions, an account of which will be found in the November club journal. They will lighten the load on existing leaders Clive, Pete and Phil. If you wish to know more have a look at britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/white-water-kayak-leader-moderate-water/ Julian has promised to write an article for this fine publication shortly, about his personal experience of the award. In the meantime please join with me in saluting their achievements.

Christmas Paddle Saturday 20th December 2025

Terry Calcott

Brush off those festive hats and Santa costumes and come join your fellow club members for a festive paddle, feast and make merry. The Xmas paddle will start and finish from Mount Batten. The minimum dress requirement for this paddle (in addition to your normal paddling and safety gear) is a festive hat. But please feel free to indulge however you wish with fancy dress above the spraydeck. Please let me know if you are intending to come along on the PPCA forum or PPCA Facebook page (I will start these posts nearer the date). We have had a communal buffet in previous years. I will post details nearer the time when numbers are known. We need a decent sized group to make a buffet feasible.

Rapid reads

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was well attended this year with the club leader claiming that the attendant membership looked like this:

while the treasurer claimed that committee meetings looked like this

Full minutes of the AGM will be circulated in due course, suffice to say a lot of people were thanked for all the work that goes into making such an extensive paddling programme available.

The club made four awards, one of these, the Inspirational Award was made in absentia to Christian Walker. Otherwise, we have photos of the club chairm Mark Perry presenting awards to the other three recipients.

Leadership Award - Nigel Hingston

Whitewater Award -Julian Miles

Outstanding Services to the Club - Phil Dickens

Annual General Meeting Footnote

Mark Perry

At this years AGM I mentioned that the club has been bequeathed £1,000 from the estate of Marguarite Pike.

She is fondly remembered by some of our senior members, and I include an extract from the British Long Distance Swimming Association's tribute to Marguarite:-

> "She first experienced regular sea swimming in the war year (yes, even during the Plymouth Blitz!!), building her ability to cope with cold temperatures. In 1951 she won the Plymouth Breakwater Race and repeated that achievement in 1952 and 1953 resulting in the award of a commemorative Silver Rosebowl. In October 1953 she became the first (and now maybe still the only) woman to swim from Saltash Bridge on the River Tamar to the Laira Bridge which spans the River Plym"

Further details can be found on their website.

That gives us the pleasant task of deciding how we spend £1,000. Current thinking is that we should ring fence this money away from our mundane spend (like shed rental costs) and consider something specific. Depending on the outcome we could ask Marguarite's family if they would like to be associated with our choice eg naming it.

I'm therefore asking members for suggestions. These can be made to any Committee member, but should preferably include Pete (Equipment) and Julian (Treasurer).

Thinking caps on over the Christmas break, and if I don't see you on 10th Dec at The George then I hope you have a happy and peaceful Christmas

Mark (Chair)

Celebrate *the festive season!*

Christmas Jumpers and hats welcome

Wednesday 10th December 1900 until late

At George Inn Pub Plympton

Plymouth Sound Wildlife 6#

Terry Calcott

The Sunfish (*Mola mola*)

This wildlife snippet is about the sunfish, one of the less frequent visitors to the Sound. I have only seen one and that was many years ago on a club Saturday paddle. Unfortunately, it was before waterproof cameras became the norm, so I have no photo evidence just my memories.

The sunfish is a large boney fish and can grow to a huge size. A tropical sunfish was recorded as weighing over 2,300kg. They do not have a tail, but a hard frill called a clavus. They have two long fins which they use like paddles to swim and steer. They can be found around the UK coastline during the summer months where they feast mostly on a diet of jellyfish.

It is an odd looking fish, flat and circular. Mola means millstone in latin. They are often spotted on their side basking in the sun. It is thought this is to warm themselves after a long dive to deep depths. They sometimes look like a shark when swimming when the dorsal fin is upright but close up it is easy to see they are something quite unique.

Sadly, the sunfish is a regular bycatch in fishing nets. Also, they often mistake ocean rubbish such as plastic bags for their food source of jellyfish. They are becoming regular visitors now around our coasts as the seas warm up. Fingers crossed for seeing sunfish in or near the Sound next year.

Creek Chronicle

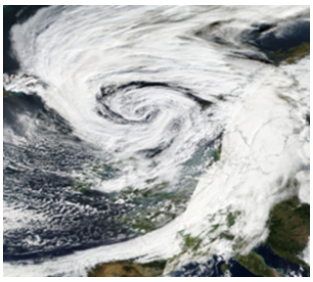
Adam Coulson

Warm Wet Training Events

- Tuesday 14th October Pool Session
- Tuesday 28th October Pool Session

Wet Recreational Events

- ~~Saturday 4th October~~ The first Saturday Rec paddles of the winter season were cancelled due to Storm Amy which can be seen in the image, centred over the Shetland Isles. "Da muckle storm"!



Storm Amy

- Sunday 5th October Clive writes: On Sunday 5th October 5 intrepid White Water heroes attended the first PPCA river trip of the season. It was a beginner's trip on the Lower Dart, although none of the paddlers were beginners. The river level was on the low side but we found many places where we could play. We launched at 09:30, and an hour later we could still see our launch site. At the end of the trip 5 paddlers could be seen doing a Cheshire Cat impersonation. The trip was deemed to have been a success.

- Saturday 11th October Terry led a group of 16 on a short trip around the eastern Sound: Near perfect conditions with a calm sea and no wind. We headed into Jennycliff Bay and onto Bovisand with a coffee and snack break at Cable Beach. A great few hours out on the water.
- ~~Sunday 12th October~~ No water, white or otherwise, in the rivers.

- ~~Saturday 18th October~~ Recreational paddle cancelled due to wind
- ~~Sunday 19th October~~ White water trip cancelled again – you know why!

- Saturday 25th October A small group of 6 paddlers headed out into the Sound in a solid BF 4 NW wind which blew us out to the cage. We had a little shelter along the seaward side of the breakwater before crossing part into the wind to Pier Cellars where a decision was made that Cawsand for lunch was a better idea than Penlee for a slog back! We picked our way around Cawsand Bay after

lunch, taking in a little surf at Picklecombe before ferry gliding across the wind to the lee Drake's Island. From there we had some wind assistance back to MB. Well done Bea on your first Recreational paddle in some challenging conditions.

- Sunday 26th October Clive was in charge of the White Water expedition

Dry Events

- 1st October Committee Meeting
- 30th October AGM

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.org.uk
Vice-Chair	Vacant	vchair@ppca.org.uk
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Health and Safety Officer	Damean Miller	safety@ppca.org.uk
Club President	Clive Ashford	president@ppca.org.uk

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