



Editorial

Paul Hewson

This month's Up the Creek newsletter seems to be positively drifting in a sea of fog. A real pea-souper that's got us all navigating by guesswork and good humour. Terry Calcott steers us through three recent mist-laden voyages on page 2, while Nigel Hingston drops anchor on a particularly fog-heavy June outing on page 4. Meanwhile, Bernadette Bishop proves she's not one to be left high and dry, refusing to let a few choppy complications rock her kayak on page 6. As ever, you'll find a full logbook of the club's recent comings and goings in the chronicle on page 8.

Any new paddlers who've recently climbed aboard are warmly encouraged to send a mini pen-portrait (just a couple of lines will keep things shipshape) so we can all get our bearings and not be paddling among strangers. If you're happy to send a photograph as well, that would be the bung well and truly

tightened before paddling (not that I ever forget).

Finally, I've just uncovered a tale from the open range that's less "smooth sailing" and more "adrift at sea": it turns out "Maverick" was a real person who kept losing his cattle because he never got round to branding them (a bit like setting off on a paddle without putting the bung in and wondering how the water is getting into the cockpit). Whether he was making a principled stand or simply didn't have his compass pointing in the right direction remains lost in the mists of time.

As always, comments, questions, material to include in future editions: newsletter@ppca.org.uk. Now that we've had a couple of new member introductions recently maybe a few more people will be encouraged to send in a couple of sentences about them.





The Fog on the Sound (not the Tyne)

Terry Calcott

I have been paddling around Plymouth Sound for many years and can probably count on a couple of hands the number of times when fog has been the main feature of the trip. This article covers a short period between 16th to 20th June when I managed 3 paddle trips when the fog didn't shift much. These are just a few musings of my recollections from the paddles.

I won't go into the technicalities of how fog forms, but it is basically when warm air meets a cool water surface and condenses forming tiny water particles producing fog. Fog is difficult to predict and forecast but there is usually an indication on the Met Office and other forecasts, but not always accurate in its timescale.

A few things I already knew, were that paddling in fog can be disorientating and play tricks with the senses. It brings challenges when paddling as a group. Should it stop your paddling, definitely not, but extra caution needs to be taken. One of the most frequent techniques is to use handrail navigation and keep sight of the shore. This keeps you orientated and gives you the option of a get out if needed. Always carry a hand compass or some paddlers have deck mounted ones. If an open water crossing is required, you will need to follow a bearing using a compass. Stop every so often and just listen. You will hear

engine noise from a distance. Carry a whistle it is useful for warning other craft of your position in fog. Avoid crossing shipping lanes, large vessels will not see you.

The first fog paddle was Tuesday 16th a regular club evening rec paddle. The leader had decided to head upriver to Hooe Lake. Visibility was already reduced so the group kept close together and handrailed along the coast. The fog drifted around, dense out in the Cattewater but patchy in Hooe Lake.



Paddling near Oreston

The second fog paddle was Thursday 18th June, a peer paddle. The forecast was for fog in the morning clearing by midday. The fog was patchy heading over to Bovisand so we decided to carry onto the Shag Stone rock. We could see the coast so headed direct. After lunch at the Renney Rocks instead of clearing as forecast the fog thickened and visibility was



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severely reduced. We had to handrail slowly along the coast and keep a sensible distance away from the shore, aware of breaking waves and a decent size swell rolling in. For those paddlers that know the area we decided to do an open water crossing from Andurn Point to Fort Bovisand. The crossing is outside any shipping lanes, so we decided to keep our compasses tucked away. We could orientate ourselves with Andurn Point and decided on a direction to paddle. Within seconds we had lost the shore and paddled on. It then becomes disorientating with no visible clues as to where we were. But we knew the direction was correct. It took about 20 minutes before we could hear the distant sound of waves breaking. The only other sound we heard was an unusual high-pitched bell ringing at regular intervals, it wasn't the breakwater lighthouse fog signal, a mystery. Before long the shout of coast came up, and we were within a few hundred yards of Bovisand harbour. Then a blue sky appeared and we could see across the Sound to the Hoe.



The coast near Andurn Point

The third fog paddle was Saturday 20th a regular Saturday rec paddle. The forecast didn't show fog but some early cloud clearing and a day of sunny intervals. The leader had decided to head out to Bovisand and a circular

paddle around the Sound to have lunch at Mount Edgcombe. It became evident once passing Mount Batten breakwater that local conditions were different to the forecast. As we neared Bovisand harbour the fog was getting dense and we lost sight of the Breakwater. It was decided to do a compass bearing crossing over to the survivor's cage. After some adjustment we sighted a few familiar waypoints and then the Breakwater Fort as our destination. Handrailing along the breakwater to the lighthouse. With the fog lifting slightly we could see the high ground above Picklecombe so set off on a bearing towards the Bridge channel. Although the fog was patchy, we could see the Cornish Shrimpers sailing across towards Cawsand. After lunch we headed over to Drakes Island, the fog was thickening again but we soon reached the south side of the island, then it became interesting as to the route back to Mount Batten. There are plenty of buoys to use for waypoints, so we headed off. After a few tweaks to the bearing and sighting some familiar buoys, we soon made our way to the end of Mount Batten breakwater.



The Breakwater Fort

Every day on the water paddling is a learning day, and I certainly took away a few things from paddling in fog during the week.



Sunday 20th June Recreational Paddle

Nigel Hingston

Summer has finally arrived and the forecast is showing bright yellow sun symbols a good day lies ahead, light winds, temperature 18 degrees, lunch stop at Mount Edgecumbe – a perfect day ahead, what could possibly change? It's a good turnout, a group of eleven, all good experienced paddlers, kitted out and ready to go. Mount Batten Breakwater is soon rounded, Jennycliff our next objective and a chance to rockhop. An easy swell, fun exploring numerous inlets, Bovisand Harbour is soon reached.



The Breakwater refuge on its eastern end should be our next objective, but it is shrouded and lost in mist, low clouds are gently rolling in. We now have a different challenge. Some of our sea kayakers are fitted with compasses, their Perspex domes adorn our craft with the compass card spinning at each change in direction. For 99% of the time compasses are not used – today is different, that remain 1% usage is the key to a safe successful trip. We agree a plan, estimate bearing with tidal

allowance. The mist soon envelops our group, the mind questions our eyes, all we can do is watch the compass bearing as we aim for the Breakwater refuge. Duke Rock Cardinal buoy looms out of the mist, which is due north of our objective, it's a good reference and allows further adjustment to our course.



The mist fades and the Breakwater Fort is visible, relief and we can relax. We paddle parallel with the breakwater to the lighthouse, which fades in and out from view. Our next leg: from the lighthouse to The Bridge channel, Mount Edgecumbe and The Hoe is lost in the mist. A fleet of Cornish Shrimpers appear out of the gloom, in the shipping channel on a rally they surround our group like ghostly apparitions, fading all too soon into the mist. Lunch at Barn Pool, it's bright and sunny, a world away from the morning journey.



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The journey home and Drakes Island has disappeared. Confident in the morning's navigation we head for the south side and with spot on precision reach our objective. The final leg to Mount Batten Breakwater - we

elect to use South Winter and South Mallard Cardinal buoys for our route home. Partway along the route NE Winter Port Hand buoy comes into view, we are off course, but it still gives a safe line home. The Starboard hand West Mallard buoy is reached and all too soon the green pole slip is in sight – a perfect, eventful, unusual day. The group has learnt much. The majority of Rec paddles are usually straightforward, uneventful. Misty conditions are rare, but when encountered it allows us to practice navigating and compass reliance. The conditions cause disorientation and confusion between what the head thinks and the eyes see. Ultimately all we can do is trust in the compass, possibly the best advice I was ever given when navigating.



Undeterred

Bernadette Bishop

The drive from Tavistock to Mountbatten isn't the shortest of journeys but I decided I would make it for a weekly fix of coast, water, fresh air and exercise. So the sudden news that on medical grounds I was to stop driving for a few months was – to put it mildly – a bummer!



But having recently decided - with my daughter reaching adulthood – I would prioritise me for the next 18 years, I was not going to let this stop me and thus I hatched a plan. If I could get to MB for the Friday evening outing and stay somewhere overnight, I could also join the Saturday morning paddle. This sounded good, and that day a work colleague offered to drive me to Plymouth and I then sought somewhere to overnight. A late booking was not easy but I managed to find a vintage lorry on Jennycliff, with alpacas and miniature ponies for company!! Despite a night excursion to the ablutions(!), this was quirky but comfortable and just a 20 minute walk to MB along the SW Coastal Path.

Then, thanks to a threatening weather forecast, I enjoyed a fabulous, educational Friday evening paddle alone with Brim. We hugged the coast from Sutton Harbour, along the Hoe to Firestone Bay and back via Drakes Island. The late evening sunshine, shadows and colours were stunning but with tricky conditions in the Sound, my shoulders were glad to get back to Mount Batten!

Told that the next morning's paddle would be another short one of just a couple of hours, I resolved to stick to my plan. However, this "short" paddle actually turned out to be 5 hours, out beyond Penlee Point!! Again, the water conditions were challenging and it was



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hard work but this was my first time beyond Cawsand Bay and I loved the scenery and views to Rame Head.



So I am determined to keep paddling! A dry bag backpack will replace the suitcase(!) and if anyone could assist with transport, that would be hugely appreciated.

Here's to a summer of happy paddling for all and I look forward to seeing you on the water soon. B :)



Creek Chronicle

Adam Coulson

Wet Training Events



- Tuesday 5th May: Andy took 5 people for the skills group on Tuesday.



- Tuesday 12th May: Andy took a happy group of four out for training.



- Tuesday 19th May: Despite the wind which forced the cancellation of the Rec paddle, Andy found somewhere sheltered for some training



- Tuesday 26th May There was an Explore session and a gentle Sea Kayak introduction.
- Sunday 31st May: Clive, Jackie and Mark ran the first introductory course of the season. 8 students came along and got thoroughly introduced. There were smiles.

Wet Recreational Events



- Friday 1st May: Damean led a group of 4 on the first Friday evening session of the summer.

- Saturday 2nd May: Nigel led a group of 8 out on the monthly sea kayak paddle out from Mountbatten and around the Mewstone to lunch at Crownhill Beach. They waved to the German sailors on the "Oldenberg" a German naval Corvette (not to be mistaken with the Lundy ferry!). The rain started after lunch and on the way back – stair rods were seen!



- Saturday 2nd May: Meantime Brim led a group of 11 along the Hoe to Cornwall and back, and returned prior to the aforementioned stair rods.



- Tuesday 5th May: Nigel had 11 for the Rec paddle
- Friday 8th May: The paddle on Friday was under the guidance of Pete.
- Saturday 9th May: Cancelled due to wind



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- Sunday 10th May: Clive lead 11 paddlers who explored the Lynher Estuary. We proved that it is quite possible to paddle on a day that was far too windy for sea paddling.



- Tuesday 12th May: Terry lead a group of 7 paddlers on a recreational trip
- Friday 15th May: Breezy conditions may have reduced the turnout to just 2 on Friday night.
- Saturday 16th May: 14 paddlers in total ventured forth with Pete as per the image. It was some newer paddler's first visit to Penlee Point.



- ~~Tuesday 19th May~~: There was enough wind for Terry to cancel the rec paddle
- Friday 22nd May: Calm conditions for a clam paddle with Damean, and some observation of a different type of "Paddlesport"!



- Saturday 23rd May: Today's trip included a passing tall ship belonging to The Island Trust and a visit to the breakwater. There were shags on The Shag Stone and some fun swell around it with some surfing opportunities around Crownhill Bay as well. The value of helmets was proven on/in the waves. Blue skies and sunshine were appreciated by all 12 in Clive's group, remarkable for a bank holiday weekend.



- Tuesday 26th May: A hot sunny evening attracted a good number for a rec paddle
- Friday 29th May: Still sunny and 5 came out to play with Brim
- Saturday 30th May: Gavin led a group of 9 out to Rame Head (East Gear



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Beech) on this rec paddle. Not all the boats were long and pointy so well done paddlers! It was a first time to here for some.

Dry Events

- Wednesday 13th May: Committee Meeting



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

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|---------------------------|----------------|--|
| Chair | Mark Perry | chair@ppca.org.uk |
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Thank you to everyone who contributed material, especially the material we just stole from Facebook.

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