



Editorial

Paul Hewson

I've heard a rumour that a recent paddle (possibly led by Andy Kittle) featured a surprise appearance by the Mount Batten squid. The resulting deep-water rescue apparently demonstrated the value of our Tuesday-night skills sessions. It also proves that, when the going gets tough, the tough get paddling **and** the squid gets a starring role.

I'm delighted to include a news item about Christian's belated Inspiration Award on page 5. Belated, perhaps, but better late than never: the trophy has finally caught up with its rightful owner, proving that even awards occasionally need a little tidal assistance.

I can also personally vouch for the quality of Adam Coulson's Sea Kayak Safety and Rescue sessions. However, the article on page 2 does reveal one slight omission from the syllabus: towing cars out of muddy estuaries. There's no end to where paddlesport training may take you. Although, if your next trip involves a car, you may want to check whether it has a suitable grab handle.

As usual, the Creek Chronicle on page 7 provides a round-up of who has been paddling

where. It contains tales of caves, beaches, yacht races, diving birds, tidal planning and the occasional flying saucer. We may not be able to guarantee extraterrestrial sightings on every trip, but we do seem to be making excellent progress with the terrestrial ones.

And finally, because it's the silly season (and because we were looking a little short of content until recently) you'll also find a slightly dubious poem about a buoy near Drake's Island on page 6. It features Melampus, the nautical cat, a high-vis coat, a phosphorescent purr and, quite possibly, more literary buoyancy than the poem strictly deserves.

As always, comments, questions and material for future editions can be sent to newsletter@ppca.org.uk. We've had a couple of new-member introductions recently, so perhaps a few more people will be encouraged to say a few words about themselves.

After all, every good newsletter needs fresh input; and every good paddle needs a little output. Just preferably not from the bottom of your kayak.





Adam didn't teach us this.

Clive Ashford



Because I believe that I am so much hipper and trendier than you are, I feel the need to inform you that us cool kids refer to Aveton Gifford as AG. Now you can consider yourself to be almost as with it as I am.

As a bit of an education, there is a tidal road that runs beside the estuary between AG and Bigbury. This road crosses the entrance of two creeks on causeways that get covered at high tide. On Sat 8 August the causeway was covered to just below my knees, or about the depth of half a cricket stump. The causeway is marked by a series of wooden posts. These posts are set a surprising distance from the

edge of the causeway, about a third of an Olympic steeplechase water jump, to be precise. (Precise?) These facts will become relevant. (I am aware that using recognised units of measurement would have made life easier, but I'm here as an entertainer, not as a public service announcer.)

The weather forecast for 8 & 9 August indicated that Joy and I could take our sea kayaks on a stress-free, low-octane camp. And believe me, at our age, there is a great deal of appeal in phrases like "stress-free" and "low-octane." The tide times would also suggest that we had an opportunity of



Up the Creek August 2026

launching at AG, and paddling to camp at Keaton Cove, our favourite camping beach. So, we had a plan.

We arrived at AG in plenty of time to load all our gear into our boats, and still be able to sit on a grassy bank to consume some lunch whilst waiting for the tide to come in. Suitably refreshed and rested, we eventually floated our boats into the murky waters of the Avon estuary and set off on our watery adventure. We were not alone, also on the water were a selection of paddleboards. Some were stand up paddleboards, some kneel up paddleboards, and some had seats attached, thus making them sit up paddleboards. We were a carefree bunch of paddlers, experiencing Devon's glorious scenery in a most peaceful fashion.

Peaceful, that is, until we heard a bang and a graunching sound that was not unlike a large, hollow, metal box landing on concrete and grinding to a halt. Looking around I saw the source of this sound. A little old lady had tried to cross the last covered causeway before AG in her car, but had driven off the edge of the road. I can report that a stretch of water a third the size of an Olympic steeplechase water jump is plenty large enough to drop two wheels of a car into. The left-hand side of the car was now being supported by its subframe, hence the hollow metal box landing on concrete noise. If the situation wasn't a little bit concerning, I would describe the angle at which the car was sitting as jaunty. Along with a couple of southern hemisphere sounding paddleboarders Joy and I landed to see what assistance we could offer. We assessed the situation and decided that that no-one was in any danger. The tide was just 30 minutes short of high water and there was no chance of

the car being swept off the causeway, and our little old lady had safely proceeded to dry land. (And yes, I do appreciate the irony of me referring to someone as old.)

We tried moving the car using a bit of gentle persuasion, then we tried moving the car using a bit of brute force, and then we tried a bit of head scratching. We weren't making any appreciable progress until a farm hand turned up in one of those glorified golf buggies that farmers use these days. This particular golf buggy was defective in that it didn't come with the ubiquitous collie dog attached, but it did offer a bit of some options. Here is what happened next.

- Joy suggested where we could find the cars towing bracket and securing point.
- We found the aforementioned towing bracket and fitted it to the car.
- I attached my tow line to the towing bracket.
- Our southern hemisphere friend passed the rope outside one of the wooden posts and attached it to the golf buggy's tow hitch. (The rope was passed outside the wooden post in order to create a better towing angle.)
- I sat in the car with the engine running and gently engaged the clutch, while the farm hand applied tension to the tow line. There was some graunching but very soon the front left wheel was back on the causeway. We re-positioned the tow line and in very short order the car was sitting with all four wheels on the causeway. There was much cheering and



Up the Creek August 2026

back slapping.

- We unattached the towline from both ends and drove the car to dry land.
- We put the towing bracket away and re-packed my tow line.
- The grateful little old lady was reunited with her car and we all shook hands and parted company to continue with our adventures.



I have in the past attended Adam's most excellent sea kayak safety and rescue sessions. Adam does a marvellous job of making these as comprehensive as possible, but I don't think he has ever covered towing cars out of a muddy estuary. Obviously, an oversight.

I am amazed that my sea kayak tow line was

strong enough to withstand the stains involved, but strong enough it proved to be.

The rest of our adventure was completed in the stress-free, low-octane manner that we had wanted all along. I shan't bore you with the details other than to describe my favourite part of camping on the beach, which is the part when you are sat around the camp fire with a beer in hand. The light is gradually draining out of the sky and the world goes quiet and seems to be letting out a contented sigh. The fire crackles and the first stars twinkle into sight. How lovely.

But our stress-free, low-octane camp hadn't quite finished playing games with us yet. At 4am Joy heard some strange squeaking noises emanating from somewhere on the beach. She wasn't brave enough to investigate and Clive remained soundly asleep, so these particular sounds remain a mystery.

Then, in the morning, our loo roll dropped off side of the boat where it had been placed and landed somewhere damp. Another incident that Adam's training sessions had completely failed to prepare us for.

Never the less, we returned to AG and declared the camp to have been a success.



Up the Creek August 2026

Rapid Reads

Better late than never

Mark Perry (Club Chairman)

Better late than never ... according to Geoffrey Chaucer!

At my 5th or 6th attempt (the 1st being at the AGM) I managed to catch up with the 2025 winner of our club's Inspiration Award. Your Committee awarded this to Christian Walker as reported in last November's newsletter and we finally managed to get

Christian, myself, the Cup and a group of paddlers all in the same place on Saturday 27th June – only 6 months late.

Christian received this award for his unending cheerfulness on all of the paddles he attends, keeping everyone's spirits up – even though he makes us all feel hungry as he describes what he's going to get to eat on his way home!





Melampus

Tim Mice

In ancient Greek mythology, Melampus was a legendary soothsayer and healer, originally from Pylos, who ruled at Argos. I don't know if they had moved into Sainsbury's back then. I just really love the way there is a buoy in Plymouth sound named Melampus. There is a video of the Buoy on The Mike Fairman Channel YouTube. It's a better name Bull Sands in the Humber (there's a Bull Sand and a Bull Float and all anyone ever wants to know is where the Bull **** buoy is). Now, I could have distracted myself looking at all the animals that are named after Melampus, for example, the Impala is known in Latin as

Aepyceros melampu and there are small air-breathing salt marsh snails called *Melampus* something-or-another (there are a lot of them). But no, I got fascinated trying to work out why it has to be within 15 metres of its charted position when there is only 5-ish metres of tidal range in Plymouth Sound which might involve something by Pythagopus. However, that frazzled my brain so instead I tried to write a silly poem about the buoy. Any buoy called Melampus deserves more than a mark on a chart. The trouble is, it probably deserves something better than this nonsense. Anyway.

In Plymouth Sound he's waiting, Melampus bold and bright,
A watcher in the water, through the fog and fading light,
He hums to sleepless sailors, as the tide goes rushing by,
A lonely painted sentinel who sings to sea and sky.

Oh Melampus the Buoy is a Nautical Cat,
He bobs with the billows and that is that;
He's a Jellicle Buoy in a high-vis coat,
With a phosphorescent purr and a blinking red throat

There's a tale the tides still whisper, when the west wind starts to moan,
Of the Brittany ferry Armorique near Melampus' throne;
She brushed the hidden shallows where the charts grew vague and thin,
While the buoy kept calmly blinking, 'Mind the Sound you're sailing in.'



Up the Creek August 2026

Creek Chronicle

Adam Coulson

Wet Training Events



- Tuesday 7th July: Jane added to the experience of her introductions
- Tuesday 7th July: Clive explored
- Tuesday 7th July: Adam encouraged folks to get out of the water and back in their boats



- Tuesday 14th July: On Adam's SKS&R session, 7 paddlers cooled more than just their feet!
- Tuesday 14th July: Damean kindly stepped in and took 6 out on a Disco/Explore evening.



- Tuesday 21st July: Clive had 6 sign up for Disco/Explore
- Tuesday 21st July: Adam just 5 for the last of the SKS&R



- Tuesday 28th July: A choice of 3 events this evening as Nigel started his Tides & Navigation sessions
- Tuesday 28th July: Andy put on a class for Intro Plus, Discover and Explore

learners.

Wet Recreational Events



- Friday 3rd July Brim took five went to Cable Beach and explored a cave.
- Saturday 4th July Joy writes: Just over 14 miles paddled. From MB, to the breakwater light. Then on to the Mew stone and a crowded Cellar beach for lunch. Return via Wembury Point, Renney Rocks and Bovisand harbour. Thanks Brim for a great day on the water.
- Saturday 4th July. Meantime on the short rec paddle Clive informs us that 7 paddlers celebrated Independence Day by seeing a giant flying saucer near Cable Beach. We didn't really, Clive just wrote that to see if anyone notices.

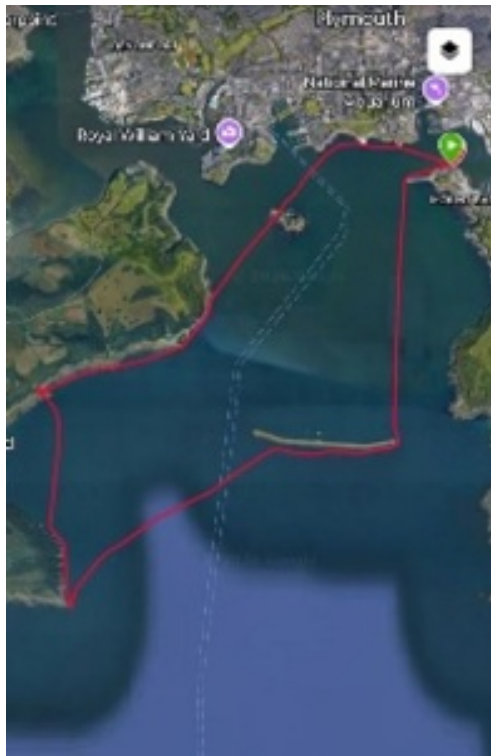


- Tuesday 7th July Terry "recced"
- Friday 10th July: Nigel led a large Friday group on a "cool down" evening trip n a very hot day.
- Saturday 11th July A group of 8 went here: After lunch some did some playing in the warm waters of Cawsand Bay. Others stopped on the beach and caught



Up the Creek August 2026

up with former member John Mitchell who happened to be enjoying the attractions of Sandway Beach.



with no guarantee that your kayak would remain on the beach waiting for you! Unperturbed we returned to Kingsand Beach for lunch instead where there is a better class of WC.



- Tuesday 21st July: Andy led a group of 13 paddlers around Jennycliffe Bay on this sunny, warm evening. The number did not appear to be unlucky as 13 returned.



- Tuesday 14th July Gavin took 7 to Cornwall via Drake's Island. It was a beautiful still sunny evening and some found it necessary to cool their feet.
- Friday 17th July: Pete led 5 on a "wind down" paddle. I hope nobody became totally unwound!
- Saturday 18th July: Brim led 10 out on a mission to lunch on Penlee Beach and demonstrated the immense value of careful tidal planning. Parking would have required a multi-storey approach

- Friday 24th July: Damean carefully registered his timber calculations instead of list of paddlers for the evening.
- Saturday 25th July It was a still and cloudy morning but forecast for more sun and wind. We got both, slightly earlier than expected. We grouped up to avoid being run down by the Plym Yacht Club Eddystone race fleet, between Drake's Island and the Breakwater Lighthouse. It was quite a spectacle watching them go by. After paddling along the outside of the Breakwater we paddled out to the Shag Stone before lunching on a beach in Westlake Bay. After playing in a bit



Up the Creek August 2026

more swell amongst Andurn Rocks we took a break in Bovisand Harbour where we were treated to our second spectacle of the day – a flock of turns diving for their lunch. We headed for home with the following wind providing a little assistance, tired but content (unless the other 10 were just being polite).



- Tuesday 28th July: Terry led a rec paddle
- Friday 31st July: Brim led 7 on another warm dry sunny evening in The Sound





Up the Creek August 2026

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	Anita Maidment	vchair@ppca.org.uk
Club Leader	Adam Coulson	leader@ppca.org.uk
Assistant Club Leader	Vacant	acleader@ppca.org.uk
Club Secretary	Jackie Perry	secretary@ppca.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Helga Pinn	membership@ppca.org.uk
Welfare Officer	Alan Ede	welfare@ppca.org.uk
Intro Course Coordinator	Lesley Hitchen	intro@ppca.org.uk
Treasurer	Julian Miles	treasurer@ppca.org.uk
Equipment Officer	Pete Anderson	equipment@ppca.org.uk
Publicity Officer	Sarah Carlson	publicity@ppca.org.uk
Youth Development Officer	Jane Hitchings	youth@ppca.org.uk
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.

PPCA © 2025