

# Drumchapel & Clydebank Kayak Club

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## Newsletter

**July/August 2011**

### Newsletter Deadline

Any information such as trip reports or items for sale that is due for the next Newsletter must either be sent to Rab or Phil by the 22<sup>th</sup> of August for the September/October issue.

### Foundation Safety and Rescue Training

The club has successfully applied for a couple of grants to help pay the costs of doing the "Foundation Safety and Rescue Training" course, which is the introductory course from the Scottish Canoe Association that trains the key skills to rescue yourselves and others. The 2 dates we have booked are the Sunday 7th August and Sunday 14th August, with 6 members on each day. The normal price for the day is £40 but we have funding for over half the cost. This is a course that is really recommended and we would love to see everyone getting along who hasn't done it before.

To book your place call or email graham, 07968 057 934 or [grahamswanson@gmail.com](mailto:grahamswanson@gmail.com)

### VHF Course

David Voss is trying to put together a VHF Course, if anyone is interested in doing this course or even just to find out what is involved in the course, please contact David by the 30<sup>th</sup> of July.

### First Aid Course

Rab Burns is looking to put together a First Aid Course, if anyone is interested in doing this course or even just to find out what is involved in the course, please contact Rab by the 30<sup>th</sup> of July.

### Container Painting

The Club would like to thank everyone who was involved with the painting of the Club's Container.

## Tuesday Evenings

Please remember that there will be several alternative venues to Loch Lomond over the next few months. On the 12th of July there is a trip to Loch Ard, which is excellent for Sea Kayaks, Open Canoes and River Boats. (Especially for practicing your Seal Launching – See the Findhorn Weekend.)

On the 26<sup>th</sup> we have another Gorge Walk, the last one there were 9 people in the Gorge, and there quite a few changes in the Gorge since last year!! Remember you need full white water gear plus a helmet and boots.

Into August we have an Open Canoe trip Down the River Endrick which is a Grade 1 River.

## Trips

**Findhorn Weekend:** The adventure started at 2pm on a dreich Friday in Glasgow. The boats loaded we headed north on the A9. A mandatory stop at Brookbank Canoes in Perth followed by some antics in Tiso's when James, Graham and David decided to demonstrate the use of a group shelter in the middle of the showroom. The big question was will the shelter fit back in the tiny bag?

After Tiso's the next stop was Aviemore. On arriving we sought out Highland Canoes for our last retail fix; as we drew into the car park the shop staff saw us coming and the shutters were pulled down. (David's reputation for window shopping and buying off the web must have preceded him). We phoned Shona to meet us at the Tesco car park and the 4 of us headed for a fine dinner at the 'skiindoo'. First a visit to an outdoor shop where graham had to atone for his weekend away by purchasing his beloved a Weird Fish hooded top from the sale rail.

After dinner a quick food shop for breakfast and lunch for the next 2 days then off to the hostel (slochd [www.slochd.co.uk](http://www.slochd.co.uk)), unbelievably we had to take our shoes off and use the provided slippers and crocs - it really was a top notch luxury 4 star bunkhouse. Andrew, Bernie and Grant arrived soon afterwards in time for cocktails and the after eight mint game. Yes really cocktails... long island iced tea in this case! We did our for international relations by entertaining the 2 aussies in the bunkhouse, the 4 iranian students and the fisherman from deepest darkest Ayrshire (Fenwick).

Next morning very early we rose, breakfasted, made packed lunches and were away by 8.45! The bunkhouse owners have chickens and even provided free free range eggs for breakfast. The days river was the middle Findhorn (Arclach churchyard to Randolphs leap) which we had paddled at very, very low levels the previous year in a mix of candadians and

kayaks. This year a bit more water was a huge improvement. Trip highlights included...

- Practicing gorge wall paddling techniques
- Seal launch training, included David spearing James from a four metre slide, Andy doing a reverse seal launch - a backwards theme to be continued throughout the weekend.
- Bernie and Grant did fantastically well, especially given this was their second river trip - the first being the mighty Teith! A couple of rapids reached grade 3 and even upset experts like Shona - who didn't swim but paddled her flooded boat to the side, when her "spraydeck came off".
- Grant and James's high level cliff jumping leap into the deep water above Randolphs leap.

Back to the bunkhouse to freshen up and then off to dinner at the Bridge Inn at Carrbridge. Entertaining chat and Shona's ultracompetitive size fixation came to fore (she really really wanted the largest pudding) . By the size of the smile on her face when the desserts were served she was satisfied. Quite an early night ready for the next day, just a wee bit of teuchter music on the stereo, youtube footage of the next days river, and then off to bed.

Sunday morning, Shona announced she was packed and ready to go, however by the time she had finished her beauty regime we had tied on the boats, packed the cars and were twiddling thumbs. Then off to the river, Findyhorn gorge: Randolphs leap -mains of sluie (Plan A), however due to Graham missing the turn we did plan B the "2 miles" longer Randolphs leap to A940 Forres roadbridge.

A debate ensued as to who wanted to run the rapids at Randolphs leap (Grade 4 to 5 depending on water level), who would provide safety cover, what the best camera angles were etc. James and David decided to go first. Randolphs leap is a very narrow gorge with a turn just above the narrowing to about 6 foot, and about 5 meters of gorge wall with some undercut area, quite an intimidating place! James demonstrated how to do it with style, David manged fine with one high brace off the rock wall. Next Ian and Shona both did brilliantly in the lead-in part of the rapid and through the drop, however the enclosed confines of the gorge meant when they capsized they weren't able to roll. The rescue team did their job and paddler and canoes were reunited. Andrew went next and provided fine entertainment, as he clipped a rock just above the gorge entrance which spun him around and he went down the gorge backwards, however showed great skill to control the boat and remain upright. The river began to move his boat back upstream towards the drop at the top and Ian (attached to a rope) jumped into the water in a "live bait" rescue to grab the tail of Andrew's boat and both were pulled to safety by David. Shona, determined to do it upright, carried her boat to the top and did it again, staying upright and in control! Bernie and Grant carried their boats past this one, probably a bit too hard for their third river!

After Randolph's leap the Findhorn Gorge was a succession on Grade 3 to 4 rapids with the action coming thick and fast. Some of the key moments included.

- Triple step , a long grade 4 rapid with some tricky lines. Unfortunately Ian after completing the second step, caught an edge, capsized and came of his boat quickly before the narrow section and the third drop. A quick rescue by rope by David and the boat saved by Andrew. However as Ian was being pulled to the bank, it was clear he had sustained an injury as his face was half covered in blood. Bank side first aid ensued and after rinsing the area with drinking water, it became clear a deep laceration to Ian's forehead was the cause of blood. Applying pressure allowed the bleeding to stop and the wound was closed with steri strips. Ian said he thought that it was his paddle that had caused the injury. A few minutes to make sure there was no concussion or ill effects and Ian was ready to carry on.
- At one Grade 4 rapid David and James showed Graham how to take the main chute through the stopper wave with speed and a boof. (Graham having taken the chicken chute).
- Bernie and Grant had a fair amount of difficult portaging over tricky rocky banks to get around the rapids beyond their current skills, however they did run some really good enjoyable stretches.
- It turned out plan B ( to go past the Mains of Sluie get out to the Forres roadbridge getout) was not a simple 2 miles of flat water. We reckon it was close to 4 miles and in many places was shallow, meaning pushing off rocks, dragging boats and a lot of paddling. The scenery on this stretch was stunning with sandstone gorge walls 150 feet high, maybe a great touring section with a bit more water. This meant a 7pm finish off the river.

A drive home via 4 closed fish and chip shops and one open MacDonald's where a quick phone call to Ian confirmed he was okay after treatment at Dr Grays hospital in Elgin, meant 7 tired but happy paddlers could head on back to Glasgow.

All in all a great weekend.

David, James and Graham

P.S. Video and photos to follow.

P.P.S. Thoughts for everyone... carry a first aid kit, take plenty lunch and extra snacks, if it's a new river (or sea trip) for you then read the guidebook and look at the maps, its great experience to learn about how guidebooks are written and it's best not to just rely on the trip leader.

# St Kilda

## 2011

As members of the Club you may have heard by now about the attempt by several Club members to paddle across to St Kilda earlier this year. In fact first serious suggestion to do this trip was by Ron Downie when the Club was located at Drumchapel High School at that time, in the late 1990's. As St Kilda was a place that he always wanted to go to, but also fancied the idea to paddle there as well! I must admit I dismissed the Idea quite quickly for all the obvious reasons of distance and getting a good weather window to achieve such a paddle as this.

Just in case there are members who are unsure where St Kilda is exactly, well it lies just over 66km from the nearest point land on North Uist out into the Atlantic Ocean. The first recorded Sea Kayak trip to St Kilda was in 1965 by a couple in a double Sea Kayak, It took them some 20 hours, but they did make a slight navigational error in reaching the Boreray sea stack some 6km from St Kilda before they noticed their error! The couple did most of their paddling in mist, which is not bad navigation, bearing in mind it was 1965, and they had no GPS in those days! The first successful return trip was not completed until 1991 by a group of paddlers including Ron Mather. As of 2010 there have been only around 16 successful crossings and around 8 recorded successful round trips. So we all knew that this was a pretty serious trip and certainly not to be taken lightly, and we all knew the chances of us realistically achieving this trip was slight. However if you don't plan a trip and train for a trip like this; you will never be able to achieve it.

This trip was entirely Julia's brainchild and she had kept this planning close to her chest until she had most of the basic outline and contingences planned that were necessary for a trip of this magnitude. It was only then did she inform me of her intentions, and if I could have a look over the basic plan of the trip. Everything looked basically sound and very well thought out. The group was going to be just five including Julia. Shortly after one of the girls dropped out of the training, so the planned group was now down to three and a possible Ron. We met up several times to have informal training trips and basically to see if everyone gelled together and to iron out any slight problems, but mainly just to get out on the water. At this point Ron could only commit to the training and not the actual trip at this stage. By this time Julia had all the plans, plus the various contingences were in place for this trip like this.

In the autumn of 2010 we had a meeting at Morva's house (One of the girls planning to do the trip.); this was to decide what all our options were going to be for the trip. The first thing was the date; we opted for one single two week shot at the attempt, the end of April and beginning of May 2011. The next thing was the planned route to take, either via the more southerly Monach Isles or the more northerly route via Haskeir Island. The Monach Isles option gave a total paddle of 81 km, broken down into an 18km paddle out to the islands and camp for the night, and then followed by a slightly shorter 63 km paddle to reach St Kilda! The disadvantage with this option is that it involves two days, which gives the chance for the weather to change! The other option was to go via the Haskeir Islands this involved a 12 km paddle out to some precarious rocks and "bivie" for the night, followed by a really short 54 km paddle to St Kilda! This option also involved a two day trip in which the weather could also change!

The Haskeir option was far more appealing until you find out that the only landing spot is a 45 degree sloped rock in which in all probability involved someone going for a swim to get ashore on the rock, and then to haul a fully laden Sea kayaks up above the high water mark! We estimated that the time involved doing this exercise for 3 or 4 sea kayaks and then to launch them the following morning, coupled with the risk of a possible injury to some one ruled this option out. We were therefore left in all reality to bypass Haskeir and just keep on paddling until we reached St Kilda, at total of 66km in just one non stop paddle. Simple!

The next thing was to book the campsite on St Kilda! The campsite only takes a maximum of just 5 people and you are only allowed to stay for a maximum of just 5 days. The ferry was also booked to get us to North Uist and that just left the equipment to be sorted out, which could be done nearer the time. There was just one other minor thing that had to be sorted out, and that was our fitness. As all of us could quite easily paddle 30km in a day, we at least had a head start, but we had to paddle more than double that! We therefore opted to start our real paddle training in December 2010! For Christmas, Santa had given me a G.P.S., and this was a real benefit to our training, as it would display our paddling speed and thus we could work out roughly our time to do the paddle.

December to start paddle training, and what a really stupid idea that was! This meant paddling 30km per day, in which was our coldest winter for decades! On some of the paddles; Loch Lomond froze over while we were paddling! We had ice all over the paddles and icicles' from our poggies, the deck lines were frozen to the hull! We also had plenty of snow to contend with, but soon the distances were up to 40km. We did have a few minor setbacks however, on one trip Julia car broke down which set us back several hours on one occasion. On another, the tide was so far out at Port Edger, near Edinburgh it would have meant walking through knee deep mud to get to the water. The cafe won that day or at least for several hours until the tide came in, and we managed a much reduced paddle. The good news was that Ron was now defiantly on the trip.

By the beginning of March we were now paddling over 50km a day and averaging around 7.5km per hour. Allowing for fatigue and a head wind we were still planning to maintain a respectable 6km per hour. With allowances for food breaks we estimated that our crossing should take no more than 13-14 hours. It was also during this time that Morva dropped a bomb on the plan by pulling out of the trip as she could no longer commit to the training that was involved. This meant that the proposed trip was now down to just three people Julia, Ron and Rab.

Mid-March also saw the start of the first glimmers of warmer weather and we started on more open crossings. A 25km open crossing was now the minimum we were looking at, and in one four week period in March we paddled three various ways to Arran!

By April to say the training programme was getting very committing with regards to the amount of time involved, which was most Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. This placed a fair bit of strain on those left behind at home while we were out playing on the water. So we need to thank those left behind for being very understanding in what we were trying to achieve in this trip. The final details were all now in place and our training was all but complete; we were now ready to go.

**Friday 22 of April:** The start of the big trip. We left around 9am to travel up to North Uist despite the holidays, the road traffic was very light, but the various road works helped to slow us down a little. We arrived in North Uist just before 8pm and opted to stay in the Bunk House in Lochmaddy until we got ourselves sorted out and have a look at all the various weather forecasts in more detail.

**Saturday 23:** As the wind was forecasting at a Westerly F5-7 and we could see waves **breaking over** the 39meter high Haskeir islands 12km away, we opted not to paddle that day! This group of island and stacks was one of the options to land on and spend the night on it during the

crossing! This was a very sobering sight to see. So we then had to physically check out all the various sticky bun shops that we could find, oh, and to physically check out the various launch spots.

**Sunday 24:** Winds forecasted at a Force 4-5 today so we paddled around Lochmaddy and up to Berneray and took some small channels that tested our navigational skills back to the hostel at Lochmaddy. This paddle involved a portage as well over a minor road that was flanked by sandy beaches, or at least sandy beaches were indicated on the map! In reality it was thick mud! Not all Western Isle beaches are beautiful and sandy!

**Monday 25:** The "Inshore Water Forecast" for the Minch and Ardnamurchan to Cape Wrath described the sea state as HIGH, (This is very rare for this time of year as the swell was over 5 meters high!) The winds were again Force 5-7, so we walked along some of the more spectacular beaches.

**Tuesday 25:** We were up early again and the Forecast was good with no wind today and only a little swell on the East side, the sea state on the west side was still over the 5 meter mark! We paddled from the South East side of Benbecula up to Lochmaddy.

**Wednesday 26:** Force 7-8, no paddling today. We walked around the island called "Valley", which is located in the North West corner of North Uist. First clouds and light rain in the afternoon, this was the only clouds and rain we saw for the whole fortnight we were there. Weather was looking as if it was due to improve over the next few days.

**Thursday 27:** Good forecasts for Friday to do the crossing, today is a rest day, sorting out gear and generally relaxing.

**Friday 28:** Forecast for stronger winds in the afternoon, thus the attempt is scrubbed to paddle out to St Kilda today. As a consolation paddle, we paddled out to the Monach Island, as we reached the Lighthouse at the West end of the Islands a juvenile Baskin Shark swam right under Julia Kayak. Julia's voice went up several octaves! Over the past few days Ron was coughing quite a bit and on the return journey Ron fell well behind Julia and me, he was obviously unwell. And at that point the wind started to pick up as forecasted, as did the sea state! This is not what we wanted; we eventually got of the water in some pretty big sea conditions in the early evening. We were all thankful that we opted not to do the St Kilda crossing that day. If we did, we would have been just over half way, over 30 km from the nearest point of land, not good thing to happen when Ron started to feel ill!

**Saturday 29:** An enforced rest day for Ron, as the sweating was literally pouring out of him while we were eating dinner the previous night and also at breakfast in the morning. We are now camped at the "Moorcroft" Campsite located at the southern end of North Uist. To say this is a fantastic campsite is an understatement, what a find! Many campsites should look at the quality of the facilities here. They even have a "Bunk House" at just £16.00 per night; and the quality that most hotels would be envious of. I know where I'll be staying the next time I'm back in the Uists.

Julia and I had a short paddle on the East side of Benbecula and South Uist that day.

**Sunday 30:** The weather forecast was looking very good for the following day. This was also going to be our last chance at an attempt at the crossing. Again this was a rest day, with plenty of weather watching. Once all the weather forecasts were updated that afternoon, the paddle was basically on for the following day. One Weather Website proved to be very accurate, accurate almost to the hour when we were there and that was "Magic Seaweed". To say the least there was a lot of nervous "peeing" going on was an understatement while we got all our gear sorted out again. From the campsite we travelled north to our launch spot at Balranald Bird Reserve where we all got our boats packed that evening, and it was at this point Ron notice that his wallet was missing.

Ron was not having a good few days. So after hunting for his wallet, we reckoned that he left it in a cafe that afternoon, which was now well and truly locked up.

We still had to set up a shuttle to leave one car at Berneray, where we would be dropped off on our return. Once back at the launch spot we decided to get some sleep, it was now around 11.30pm and we were due to be up at 3am! Ron was also still coughing quite badly at this point.

**Monday 1 May:** We were all up nice and early and checked the updated Weather Forecasts again, and the forecast was still looking good. Ron was still not that well and took the very brave option to pull out of the trip at this point rather than while we were out on the water. However this did prove a slight logistical problem as Julia's car was now not in the correct place, and Ron had all the Kayak bars on his car!

It took just over an hour to sort out all the various options, which is not bad given the time in the morning and how little sleep we all had. So at this point we had several options; options one was to cancel the trip; Option two, paddling out to Haskeir Island (Around 12 km away.) and if things looked and felt good and we could see St Kilda we would continue on to St Kilda, if not, we would turn back.

The reason why we would opt to turn back at this point was if we could not see St Kilda from Haskeir, with no horizon to focus on either Julia or myself could become sea sick. Therefore one would have to support the other, and with no one else to do the towing, we would literally be stuck out in the Atlantic Ocean.

So we eventually launched at 6am and left a very despondent Ron on the beach, which was very sad for all, as we all knew how much training and effort that he put into this trip. As we reached the mouth of the small bay and rounded the corner to our great surprise we could see St Kilda and Boreray away in the distance. If the weather was to hold, which was forecasted, we could possibly do this trip.

By the time we reached a point just south of Haskeir Island we had our first break and we knew we were going to paddle out. There is nothing to see out here except sea, which is quite strange when you normally have some form of land mass near by. What I was quite surprised to see was the amount of wildlife out on the water; several times we saw seals, many miles from land, and various sea birds that showed up brilliant white against the clear blue sky. Julia also managed to see a Minky Whale that swam right behind my kayak, and although I missed seeing it I certainly did not miss its breath, what a smell! And we also managed to see a Baskin Shark; this was my first sighting of a Baskin Shark in all the years that I have done Sea Kayaking, so what a fantastic time to see one!

We took several planned breaks during the crossing, as dehydration was one of the problems that we were all guilty of during our regular training sessions, so we made sure that we had plenty fluids for this paddle. By late morning the sun was well up as was the temperatures, so the "Cags" came off. The sea state as exactly as predicted between 3ft and about 8ft with a very large wave length between each peak. So at some points the sea almost looked like glass, and then there points when there was a large head wall of water coming towards you, and it would gently go under your kayak without you really knowing. Put it this way, I can't remember water breaking over our kayaks while we did the entire crossing!

In what appeared to be a short time later we approached Village Bay and noticed the time; we were entering this area at the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour of Spring Tides. Just to the east of Village Bay the Spring Tide is estimated to run at between 3 and 7 knots. So we opted to head further south and then take the stronger North going tide into Village Bay. As we entered Village Bay several yachts and tour boats were there to see us into the Bay as we were spotted. The staff who work in the M.O.D. facility there also came out to see us coming into the harbour. The word was obviously passed around that we were arriving, which was a nice and unexpected welcome. The total crossing took just 10 hours

and 18 minutes from launching to landing and we paddled exactly 67.50km in that time. (Time and distance is courtesy of Santa's GPS.) We could not believe how quick it took us to do the crossing, this was beyond our wildest expectations, and to say we were ecstatic is an understatement. This was however tainted with the fact that Ron was not here with us after all the hard work and training that he put in over the months for this crossing.

Once we were led up to the campsite by the Warden and got the tents put up and had some food. One thing that felt really strange was that you were on the remotest island in Britain, camping next to a large generator purring in the background and a right Bar next to you! Oh I meant to mention that there were also some very nice hot showers right next to the camp site! The M.O.D. buildings looked quite out of place when you saw the hundreds of "Cleats" that surrounded the area. The Cleats were large stone huts that would air dry birds that were to be stored for future consumption. The similar system is use in places such as Norway to air dry fish, but they are dried on large wooden fences. Since there are no trees on St Kilda they developed the Cleat system, the only known system such as this in the world.

After dinner we walked up to the "Gap" and looked over to Boreray and its stacks, the stacks looked as if they were just a short distance away but in fact they were over 5 kilometres from where we were standing. But what was very humbling to us was the fact we were also looking back towards North Uist and Harris, and all we could see was water, and no visible trace of land to be seen any where. We had just paddled double the distance from Dover to Calais! We stood around and took in all the views and watched the sunset over the west side of St Kilda, before heading back down to the tents. We had a small light refreshment that night, just to quench our thirst; after all we did not want to get dehydrated!

**Tuesday 2:** The last forecast we had before we left was for the wind to drop from a Force 4-5 during the night and morning to a Force 2-3 in the afternoon. So we planned to explore the Island during the morning and go for a paddle in the afternoon and evening. So after breakfast we had a quick walk through the main street and then we went back up to the "Gap" and up to Oisebhal "East Hill" the most Easterly peak on St Kilda. From here there was spectacular views across to Dun and down into Village Bay. On the return down the hill the M.O.D. building looked now to be quite insignificant compared to the "Main Street" and all the various Cleats that surrounded the area. After a quick bite to eat we opted to have another quick look at the Main Street, before lunch. We even saw several St Kilda Wrens during our walk! After exploring the street we walked down to the beach, at low tide St Kilda has a large and amazingly beautiful beach. From the beach we walked up to the Heil-port and met Morag, she was the Medical person based on the island. Morag was pretty surprised at us as she was one of the people who were watching us paddle in to Village Bay. She has seen one or two other groups over the years finishing the crossing, and most of them require medical attention once they landed! Apparently last year a group from the Special Force did the crossing and they were in a pretty bad way, Morag had to bandage their hand up as they were bleeding and also badly blistered! I did not disappoint Morag, and pointed out to her that I had sustained a small blister on one of my fingers, just to keep her happy! And she promptly offered a dressing for it. She even offered us some home baking! This was truly a hard core trip. On returning for lunch we found it was now 4pm! So much for a quick walk around the village!

It was at this point that we had two visitors, both bad, one was a mouse, and the infamous St Kilda mouse had gnawed through my milk carton! The other visitor was one of the Wardens who came over to us and informed us that our boat operator that was due to take us back on the Friday had requested that we contact them on the Warden's satellite phone. The upshot of the call was that the weather was now expected to deteriorate and was should get of the Island the following day, if not, then it would not be until the following Tuesday at the earliest before there might be a break in the weather! And even that could not be guaranteed!

So we were not left with any real option but to pack up for the following day. This was a real body blow, we had just arrived and we were now to get off the following day. So after another quick cup of tea we opted to make the most of our time on the island and we walked over all the summits of the island. No matter how many photos you see of this island, they never truly prepare you for the sheer sense of scale of St Kilda. The views were truly breathtaking over to the other various stacks and islands. Regardless of where you walk you can always see the various Cleats that were to store food and some of those Cleats were built in pretty exposed locations. We eventually returned to our tents around 10pm for dinner! After dinner we had several light refreshments, which lasted into the small hours.

**Wednesday 3:** Time to pack up and get all the gear down to the pier. We had to be down at the pier at 3pm ready to go. Everything had to come out of the boats and put into bags, so we opted to do all the basic logistics first and then with what free available time we had left was to explore the remaining parts of the Village we had not been to, and also to visit the shop! At 4pm with the boats and gear all loaded onto the big boat we left Village Bay just 48 hours after entering it. It was pretty sad that all that we managed to do was just to paddle out to St Kilda and not manage to get around any of the stacks or islands. However we were to cheer up when the boat took us over to the sea stacks of Stac Lee and Stac an Armin and around Boreray. The west side of the stacks was sheltered and even the big boat that we were on managed to get into some of the caves, just to tease us! In one of the caves we even saw a rare "Night Heron", which surely must win the award for the ugliest bird ever! The crew of the boat pointed out the landing spots that the St Kildan's used for landing on the sea stacks and Boreray! I don't think I'll ever be landing on any of those landing spots, and we had calm sea conditions!!!!

From the Stacks we headed back to Berneray where the boat dropped us off several hours later. Now we still had a problem left over from Monday morning in that Julia's car was there, but we had to find the keys! Fortunately; Ron left a note in the window to say where the keys were. The next thing to do was to book on to the next available Ferry home which departed at 7.30am. We managed to get a stand by place which meant us having to be there for 6.30am, which meant getting up at 5.30am! This was a relaxing trip right to the end! Next we had to book into the Hostel back in Lochmaddy, and try to get back there for 8.30pm as that was when the last food orders were taken, as we promised to treat ourselves to eat in the hotel once we were back. We just made it in time. It was now time to relax and have a light refreshment or two.....

**Thursday 4:** We were up and out of the hostel early in the morning and down to the Ferry Terminal; soon we were on the Ferry. The first priority was a very large breakfast! Once we were back in Uig and heading down the road we could reflect on the trip and what it had meant to us. Despite the fact that we only managed to paddle over to St Kilda, I think that we could certainly justify the hard work that we put in for it. It was very sad for Ron after all the hard work that he put into this trip, he could not make it due to him being sick, and we all knew that it could have been anyone of us. One other thing it made us realise was just how lucky we were with the weather again last year when we went to Mingulay. For both Julia and me the most remarkable thing that we can take away from this trip is that we managed to do the crossing in just 10 hours 18 minutes. One other thing that was nice about the success of this trip was the fact that this was basically achieved by just club paddlers, where no one was a professional sea paddler. And it shows to everyone in the club that anyone can do a trip like this if they can commit to the training.

## **Paddle's to look forward to.**

**Tain Area:** Over the weekend of the 16/17 of July we have a planned trip up to the Tain area. This area has some fantastic beaches and also some pretty dramatic cliffs along by Tarbet Ness. Dolphins are also pretty common in this location was well. On a slight down side, we will also be paddling through an active aircraft bombing range, just to spice things up a bit! We should hopefully be wild camping on the Saturday Night. (Not in the bombing range!) We will be meeting at the store on Friday night at 1830.

### **Sunday 17th July River Tweed (Grade I/II River Trip)**

This trip is a perfect trip for younger members in kayaks or people in Canadian Canoes to visit one of Scotland's classic touring rivers. ]

6th/7<sup>th</sup> August Macrahanish Sea and Surf Camping Weekend Graham

### **Sunday 7th August Foundation Safety and Rescue Course**

Lochwinnoch (6 Spaces, 14 years and above) see newsletter article for more info.

### **Sunday 14th August Foundation Safety and Rescue Course**

Lochwinnoch (6 spaces, 14 years and above) see newsletter article for more info.

**Aultbea to Torridon:** Over the weekend of the 20/21 of August we have trip up to this very remote and dramatic part of the West Coast. We again intend to leave on Friday night at 1830.

### **Sunday 28th August River Etive Trip (Grade IV)**

A classic trip with nice clean drops to learn how to boof and more. A perfect river for a sunny day.

**Remember, if you have any questions on any aspect of the trips or information given, please ask.**

There may be further trips planned over the period of July and August, but at the moment I do not have any further information on these, so please check at the Poolside for the latest information.

So hopefully the above information is enough to "WET" your appetite for a paddle and we will hopefully see you out on the water.

NOTE: Please look at the grading of the trip, if unsure about the grading system, either ask or check the web site for further details.

**Please remember to phone up the night before a sea trip to check up for the trip status. (Between 7pm-9pm) If you require equipment or a lift, could you please contact the trip organiser at least a week prior to the trip?**

**Remember to print and pin this list up, or mark the dates and times into your Diary.**

# Diary

Date	Location	Meeting time	Grade	Contact
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At Stores

## July

5	Drumkinnon Bay			
12	Loch Ard			Rab
16/17	Tain Area	1830 Friday	B	Rab
17	River Tweed	TBC	1/11	Graham
19	Drumkinnon Bay			
26	Gorge Walk			Rab
29/31	sea/Surf/river weekend	See forum		Sandy
31	Loch Goil	0900	A	Shona

## August

2	River Endrick			Rab
6th/7 <sup>th</sup>	Macrahanish Sea and Surf Camping Weekend			Graham
9	Drumkinnon Bay			
16	Drumkinnon Bay			
20/21	Aultbea to Torridon	1830 on Friday	C	Rab
23	Drumkinnon Bay			
28	River Etive	TBC	III/IV	Graham
30	Drumkinnon Bay			

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