

Drumchapel & Clydebank Kayak Club

Newsletter

July/August 2010

Committee Meeting

The Club at the moment holds six committee meetings every year, and although they are called Committee Meetings, any member can attend or bring up points that they wish to raise. At the Moment the Committee Meetings are held in the Play Drome, and start at 7.30pm. Remember this is your Club and it is your input that will help to make it better, so we hope to see you at one of the meetings. The next meeting is on **Monday the 23rd of August** and you are more than welcome to raise any point that you wish to raise.

Newsletter Deadline

Any information for the next Newsletter must either be sent to Ron or Rab by the 22th of August for the September/October Issue.

Photos for the Website

David has now upgraded the picture storage on the website. If you have any good photos send them to David and he will include them.

Informal Trip Network

Some members share contact detail and arrange trips at short notice. These paddles are in addition to the formal club trip list. If you want to join this network and have not already added your name then let Ron know.

Painting the Container

The container was painted with undercoat but rain prevented the second coat being applied. A new date will be decided soon. It's about ½ days work.

New Coaches

The club needs more Coaches. Grants are available to cover some of the cost. If you are interested speak to one of the Coaches.

Trips

Edge of the World: The Club trip to Barra as you may be aware of was truly a paddle to the "Edge of the World". The weather forecasts were looking a bit disappointing to the point that everyone was told the plan "B" trip to Skye was on, and that was on the Wednesday night and that the trip to Barra was cancelled. The following morning there looked that there might just be a small weather window for Barra. On Friday the day of the trip, well all met up at the "Green Welly Shop" to discuss the latest weather forecast than there was a weather window opening for us to go to Barra or continue to Skye. The Barra trip was on.

At Oban the Cal-Mac personnel were absolutely fantastic in helping us to the point that they made sure that picked us out of the normal Ferry traffic and placed us in a spot that was so easy to both load and carry on the Sea Kayaks to the Ferry, a truly excellent and very helpful service. From Oban there was an excellent five hour crossing to Barra where there was plenty of future paddling ideas to be seen around various Islands on the crossing.

Once on Barra, again the crew on the Ferry were giving us Royal treatment in getting the Kayaks of the Ferry. The Kayaks were just left next to the Ferry terminal right beside a slipway. How handy! As planned the Friday night was spent in the Hostel which was just a five minute walk from the Ferry terminal. That evening all six of us had an excellent meal in a small cafe by the harbour before heading back to the Hostel. As a point to note there was very little mobile phone reception to be had in Castlebay, therefore the chance of mobile coverage where we were going was zero!

Saturday: As planned we were on the water for 7.30 am at Castlebay, in glass calm waters, and most of us were just in light thermal tops! We then headed South East and around the Island "Maol Domhnaich". From this Island, we paddled west to the South side of Vatersay and had landed at a bay called "Bagh a Deas" which had the most stunning white sandy beach, near by was a small deserted village beside it where we had a quick bite to eat. We then were back on the water and headed South East around Sandray and landed at an even whiter sandy beach on the south side of the Island.

From Sandray you really start feel the exposure to the open sea's as we paddled to the Island of Pabbay. We landed on a beach called "Bagh Ban"- The White Bay. Yes, you've guessed it the beach had yet another brilliant white sandy beach. From Pabbay we then continued over to the final Island for the day, Mingulay. By now everyone had their Cags on as the swell was getting a bit bigger in the Sound of Mingulay. We landed on "Village Bay" on the East side of Mingulay to set up camp for the night. Although we had covered some 40km on the first day, due to the amount of breaks we had, it felt a very relaxing paddle.

We had plenty of time to set up camp and we also had ample time to explore the surrounding village and even managed to walk up to some of the nearby cliff tops. The views that they offered were super and certainly enticed you to paddle the west coast of Mingulay. That was the plan for tomorrow, Sunday.

Sunday: This is the most weather critical part of the trip, and we did manage to get a VHF forecast from a hilltop. With forecast of a Northerly Force 3-4 we opted to get on the water around 8am

when the sea state was a bit calmer to allow us maximum opportunity to explore the cliffs around Barra Head on Berneray and the West Coast of Mingulay. We crossed very quickly over to the small pier on the North side of the Island, also thinking that there might be a beach to land on! Wrong! With no beach to land on and the very small pier that would have only accepted one kayak at a time to land on in flat clam conditions, the problem was that it was not flat calm! The northerly windy over the last few days had produced a small swell that could have damaged a Fibre Glass Kayak on landing; we therefore opted not to land.

So we continued around the island clock wise and once on the south side of the island, the most exposed side, the sea was like a mirror and we could get right up against some of the cliffs and into the caves. The sheer scale of the cliffs were difficult to comprehend until we were looking at one set of cliffs with a large cave below it, Ron started to paddle towards it. Ron was completely dwarfed by the large vertical wall that was above him, so much so that he appeared only as a dot, and yet my camera was struggling to get the height of the cliffs in the view finder!

As we approached the west side of the island we could see the wind had got up to the force 3-4 as forecasted with an associated increase sea state with the winds. For some of the group, this was the first time they were paddling in such big seas, around 4-5 ft high. You just do not get that size of sea state with those winds in the Firth of Clyde! As a result we had to stay several hundred meters off shore due to the size of the clapotis. Despite the head wind we made good progress up the west coast of Berneray. We then had an option of either landing back at Village Bay on Mingulay for a very quick toilet stop and then possibly risk not getting around Mingulay due to the sea state. Or do we just go for it and head north along the exposed side of Mingulay and then land back at the Campsite! Guess which one we opted to do? Yes, a 28km paddle without a pee stop. The west coast of Mingulay looked spectacular from a distance, and would have been even better if it was a bit calmer. Remember this was only a Force 3-4! The most "sporting" part of the paddle, although I don't know if everyone else would agree with the word sporting, was the north side of Mingulay. The Northerly swell combined with an opposing tide and sheer cliffs brought the swell up several feet and combined with the clapotis produced some "interesting" paddling along this stretch of coastline. Once on the East coast the sea state dropped and we were only a short distance from village Bay.

We were off the water very early in the afternoon which allowed us plenty of time to rest and explore this Island. We managed to get another forecast which was not looking good for the following day. (The long range forecasts also suggested that Monday would be a storm bound day.) That evening Ron managed to conjure up a fire from the scant recourses of wood that were around the Island. We were also feeling quite dehydrated and had to drink some medicinal fluids to keep hydrated by the fire that night!

Monday: We had a very well deserved long lie in bed that morning. Once up some opted to walk around and explore more of this Island while other decided to do some fishing or try to scrounge up some more wood. On the hills there were truly spectacular view surrounding you. You could see from Tiree in the South East to Skye in the North East, plus an unrivalled view along the chain of Islands that make up the Western Isles. One other thing that was of particular note was the temperature; it was not that much above freezing! Just a few days ago we were paddling in just thermal tops! That night we managed to get another forecast

that would allow us to get back up to Barra the following day, the weather was then set to deteriorate following that. Ron had truly excelled himself with another fire that far surpassed the previous night's one. Ron was truly an Alpha Male. Yet there has to be a down side to Ron, earlier that day he produced a large family sized bag of Marshmallows to share around the fire. Unfortunately when we were out on the hill exploring the island, Ron had a severe attack of the munchies and ate the large bag Marshmallows himself! Ron was immediately demoted from Alpha Male status! Let that be a lesson to him!

Tuesday: With calmer weather in the morning we opted to get on the water early, at 7am, which meant we were up for just after 5am. Once on the water we opted to paddle straight back the way we came from Castlebay. This would allow us with as many options as possible with regards to the weather. On the way towards Pabbay we were hit with a very strong Force 6 squall right on our bow, which made for very hard work for around 30 minutes. Then we were hit with large hailstones on the crossing to Sandray, which was sore to say the least.

On Sandray the temperature was dropping even further, poggies were on as were hats and hoods. Despite the clear blue sky's this was definitely feeling much more like a winter paddle, such was the cold. On landing on a beach on Vatersay which looked as if could have been from a tropical island with pure white sand and with water so clear. But, you were fooled with such a biting raw wind; it was almost comical the way we huddled around a sand dune to shelter from the wind which was now a steady Force 5. We were now very glad we got on the water so early as that paddle now would have been very uncomfortable in those conditions. We only had a short distance to go into Castlebay, which was hard work into the wind. Once there we quickly set up tents and tried to keep warm. That is all except one person, Alf; he opted to be a big Jessie and booked himself into the nice warm hostel with a hot shower, what a wimp!

That evening we managed to get up dated weather forecasts which were not looking good, so we opted to cancel the remainder of the trip and catch the following mornings ferry home. However that meant being at the ferry terminal for 6.30am! So we were up at 4.30am to pack tents and we were shocked to find that our tents were covered in ICE, as were our kayaks. This was May, in the western isles; it's not supposed to get that cold here even in mid-winter! So we paddle the short distance to the terminal and again the Cal-Mac crew were very helpful. Once on board we all had a very well earned breakfast followed by some much earned sleep.

So how did the trip fair, to plan a trip like this and just to turn up and do what we said we were going to do is highly unusual. Normally you have to wait around for several days or even weeks to get the right weather window. So what we achieved was extremely lucky. Even though we never managed to paddle around Barra, which might have been a bit over optimist given our limited time there! We still managed the "Jewels" of Mingulay and Berneray.

What were the best bits of the trip? Well for some it was the fantastic beaches, and for others it was the excellent sea conditions or it could have been Mingulay it's self! The only way you are going to find out what it is truly like is to do it for yourself!

Bass Rock: Twelve members turned up for this paddle. In what can only be described as perfect conditions, flat calm seas and a blistering hot sunshine. The debate if you can paddle through the “big” cave on the Bass Rock I thing was firmly put to rest on this trip. Apparently, according to some sources, if the conditions are right you can paddle through the Rock from one side to another! It has been mentioned in several books, and some people have claimed to have done it, I think not! Unless you get out your boat and manhandle it over some pretty large boulders.

Anyway, this was an excellent trip to one of my all time favourite paddle destinations. And we should say a very big well done to Donald, who after six years of attempts at this paddle, he eventually managed it.

Bute: On the 12/13 of June there was a planned trip out to Ailsa Craig and Pladda. This was cancelled due to the forecasted high winds that would have made the paddle out to these islands very hard work. So we opted to do something a bit gentler, so we had two days of paddling around Bute. We had six members on this trip, and all of us spent some time trying to find the girl in the “Glass Coffin” on Inchmarnock only to find out when we returned home she was removed and reburied many years ago at an undisclosed site on the island!

Paddles to look forward to.

The first planned Tuesday evening event is a Race night at Loch Lomond. The following Tuesday has been changed to another Gorge Walk, due to the popularity of the last one, with repeated requests to do it again. The timings are the same as for normal Tuesday evenings.

The next trip is a BIG trip out to the Shaint Islands. This is most defiantly a Grade C trip. Please make sure that you are aware of the conditions that apply for a Grade C trip.

Departing Glasgow at 9am and travelling to Uig on Skye and arriving late afternoon. We then have two options. Option one is getting on the water and paddling out to Fladda-Chuain and staying the night there, giving us a short paddle the following day, or getting on the water at 8am the following day and then paddle out to the Shaints. From the Shaints we paddle over to Tarbert. The return will be via a ferry from Tarbert on Harris departing at 7.30am on Monday morning. We therefore should be back in Glasgow around 5pm.

On Tuesday the 20th if the weather is fine, we plan to have a BBQ at Drumkinnon Bay. This is planned as a family and social evening, with some paddling around the bay.

Another big trip is to take place over the weekend of the 31st of July and 1st of August in the Helmsdale area of the North East Coast. We will be departing Glasgow on the Friday night for this trip.

Due to the lack of interest all further 1 & 2* assessments have been cancelled these were to have taken place on several Tuesday evenings. If anyone does wish to do this assessment, please see Rab.

The next trip as such is for 3* Training (sea) and this will take place on the 8th of August and this course is open to any member, but the maximum number for the Assessment is just six, however more members can attend and do some training. This will be the only 3* (Sea) course this year. **PLEASE ENSURE THE YOU ARE MORE THAN FAMILIAR WITH THE SYLLABUS AND SKILLS INVOLVED!** Meeting time for the course is 9.00am at Port Edger Sailing School. **Remember, if you have any questions please ask.**

The Assessment will take place on Saturday the 28th of August. We will be meeting at 08.30 at the Playdrome for the Assessment.

On Saturday the 14th there is a mystery planned paddle to somewhere; this will be a grade B/C trip. Times are still to be confirmed, as we may leave on the Friday night to one of several "planned areas"?

On Tuesday the 17 the meeting place for the evening trip will be at Luss. From here we intend to go Wallaby Hunting!

On the 21-22 of August we have a trip to one of my favourite areas, the Sound of Luing. Leaving Glasgow at 6am and travelling to the bottom end of Loch Craignish We need to be on the water for 9am for slack water for where we intend to go, or we could be on the water a bit later for something a bit more interesting! We plan to return on Sunday Afternoon. This is a grade C trip! You have been warned!

On Monday the 23rd we have a committee meeting at the Playdrome. This is the last one prior to the AGM. So if any member has any points to bring up, please come along or pass their point to one of the committee members.

The following night, if the weather is calm we plan to have a gentle sea trip out to the Sugar Boat. Meeting times are as per normal.

The 3* Sea Assessment will take place on Saturday the 28th of August. We will be meeting at 08.30 at the Playdrome for the Assessment.

The last Tuesday on the month is a race night, this also happens to be the last night at Loch Lomond before returning to the Pool the week after. At the moment there is no planned trips taking part in September, so if anyone wishes to plan a trip or two for the September please let me know and I can put it into the next newsletter.

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

There will be other 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 Loch Lomond 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

Diary

Date	Location	Grade	Contact
July			
6 Tuesday	Race Night		
13 Tuesday	Gorge Walk		Rab
16-19	Shaint Islands	C	Rab
20 Tuesday	BBQ		
27 Tuesday	Navigation Evening/ Compass Course		
31/1	Helmsdale area	B/C	Rab
August			
3 Tuesday			
8	3* Training (sea)		Rab
10 Tuesday			
14 Sat	Mystery Paddle	B/C	Rab
17 Tuesday	Wallaby Hunt		
21/22	Sound of Luing	C	Rab
23 Monday	committee meeting		All
24 Tuesday	Sugar Boat	A	Rab
28	3* Assessment (Sea)		Rab
31 Tuesday	Race Night		

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 into your Diary.

Thanks Rab Burns