

Welcome to the SSLKC Newsletter which I hope will provide a useful twice-yearly (or so) update on club activities for members....

CLUB HOLIDAY

The club trip to Harris was the highlight of the summer season for many – the community-owned campsite at Horgabost was right on the beach. Next to it a tidal lagoon formed a fabulous two-ft deep pool for the younger members of the club to paddle in when the tide was in, and when it was out, formed a venue for some very large and sophisticated sandcastles. The constant changes of wind speed and direction during the week made for some interesting paddling all around the coast of Harris, as well as some entertaining moments with the tents back at the campsite! I think the most memorable moment for me, though, was peering out of the tent at midnight to watch shadowy figures dancing a strip-the-willow on the beach, with wonderful live music provided by some of our more multi-talented club members. We also enjoyed meeting some of the Stornoway club paddlers who made the trek down to Harris, and are looking forward to seeing some of them again at the joint North Skye/South Skye/Stornoway weekend planned for late November. Next summer we will return to Fidden Farm in Mull, from the 9th – 16th July 2011.

TRIPS AND EVENTS

Other trips and events over the summer have – we hope – included something for everyone, from a beach barbecue at Ashaig to some wild and wonderful adventures on the West Coast of Skye. At Kylerhea in August we even managed to combine a barbecue with some interesting tidal paddling in the same afternoon... Club members also helped out at a number of events such as the Small Boat Day in Plockton in May and the Kyleakin to Kyle swim in August. The surf weekend in September unfortunately had to be cancelled due to injury, but will be rescheduled as soon as possible. Check the website for updates on forthcoming trips - there are a number of day/weekend trips planned over the winter, as well as another rolling clinic at the pool and a classroom-based navigation/tidal planning course. As ever, we very much welcome any feedback or suggestions for future trips and events from club members.

SESSIONS

This summer the sessions took place at a number of different venues, which meant greatly enhanced opportunities for coaching in different conditions, from tidal rapids to sheltered harbour environments. Because of this, and also to reduce the environmental burden on any single area, we'd like to continue with a variety of venues next season – but please send us your feedback about this or any other aspect of the summer sessions. Pool sessions are planned to start again on November 3rd – check the website for details. This year the adults sessions will feature a slightly more structured approach for those adults who want it, with coaches available to work on particular themes – a schedule for these will be published shortly.

OTHER NEWS

The club acquired five new 'Dagger' river boats, which will double as pool boats this winter, helping to solve the problem of a lack of pool boats suitable for larger paddlers. Junior members especially enjoyed using these boats over the summer, and for the adults they saw some action in tidal rapids on Harris and at Kylerhea, and there were one or two opportunities to try river paddling – which we're hoping to expand on in the future.... Alex Townend undertook a White Water Safety and Rescue training course and some club members completed 4* leadership training courses over the summer. As a club we depend on members giving their time to gain these skills and using them to help others within the club, and we recognize that in addition to the time commitment, coach/leader training and safety kit can be expensive for paddlers. In the light of this the club has decided to offer bursaries to help members undertaking training or assessment for any BCU leadership and coaching awards, or prerequisites – please contact Alex Townend for details.

I may not personally see you on the water for a wee while as the youngest club member is due to be born next week – but I'm hoping to get back into a boat as soon as possible and in the meantime happy paddling!

- Lara Adams, Club Chair