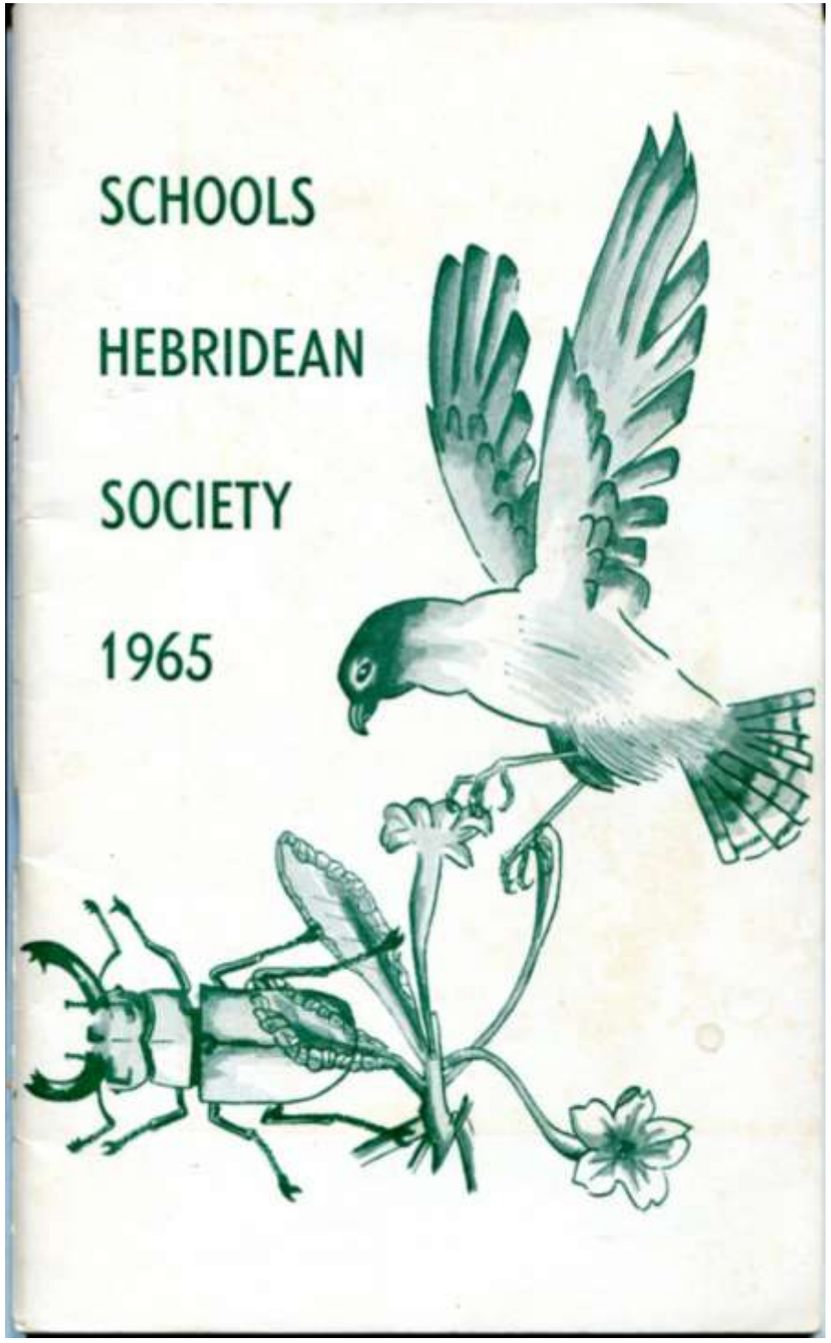


www.schools-hebridean-society.co.uk

**THE 1965 REPORT OF**

# THE SCHOOLS HEBRIDEAN SOCIETY

(Founded in 1960)

*Proprietor* THE SCHOOLS HEBRIDEAN COMPANY LIMITED
*(Registered as a Charity)*

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Headmaster of St. John's School, Leatherhead

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The Editor of the Report is C. M. Child

## FOREWORD

**By Sir Charles Maclean, Bart.,**
Chief Scout

I am delighted to have been given the opportunity and privilege of writing the Foreword to the 1965 Schools Hebridean Society's Report.

Some years ago several boys from an English school decided to visit the Hebrides. They had never before been to Scotland, and their selection of the Island of Rhum was indeed a good one. With imagination as their only guide, they made all the arrangements for a month's expedition; miscellaneous stores and equipment were acquired, and a boat chartered.

During the course of this they learnt very valuable lessons in the art of understanding and helping each other, while living in a confined, remote, but very beautiful place. They found new interests —not only in watching the wild life of the island and in the sea around —but in climbing and working in boats. Not least did they benefit from an atmosphere extremely conducive to discussion and thought. The expedition may not have achieved any of the specific scientific objectives on which it embarked, but it was a real success in giving birth to the idea of the Schools Hebridean Society.

The expeditions of the Society have retained a great deal of the spirit of the first expedition. Although, for reason of economy and safety, the initial planning is made by the Board, each expedition is essentially different from any other. The vagaries of Hebridean weather defeat too much prior preparation of activities! The spirit of interdependence is necessarily very strong, when you are separated in a small group from the normal trimmings of civilization. Boys and officers alike must be constantly stimulated by the exciting environment—both physical and spiritual—in which they find themselves.

In this 1965 Report of the Society, you will read accounts of the four expeditions of this year. It conveys something of the value and excitement experienced by those who participated—for a greater understanding of the Society you will have to talk to someone who has actually been on an expedition or, if you are young enough, go yourself another year!

CHARLES MACLEAN



## S.H.S. NEWS

**Conference**. As a natural corollary from the increase in expedition members, the annual Reunion has grown into a weekend Conference, the first of which was held at Derby from January 8th to 11th, 1965. Over fifty members attended, and all would probably agree that it was a thoroughly enjoyable and successful meeting. Our choice of venue proved fortunate; the Derby Diocesan Training College was ideal for our purposes, and the Staff there were most courteous and helpful. During the weekend many interesting discussions were held and films and slides shown (nor was the social side neglected!); at the Board Meeting immediately afterwards the Directors agreed that much of value had been learned. Our thanks go to David Vigar for organising the Conference so efficiently.

**Newsletter**. Robin Lord produced another interesting Newsletter during the Easter holidays, keeping us up to date with the latest news of members and forthcoming expeditions.

**"Vinga"**—A Boat of Our Own! Tim Willcocks writes: "Hiring a boat in the Hebrides is the very devil of a business, and we have too often been unlucky; so let no-one bemoan the fact that we now own "Vinga"; and let them also remember that it is unlucky to change a boat's name. She is a sixteen foot half-decked sailing dinghy with terylene sails and a Bermudan rig; her overall condition seems to be pretty good, though a little re-varnishing on the deck is needed. The necessary money was very kindly donated by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths and the Augustine Courtauld Dogood Trust; with the balance of this we hope to purchase an outboard motor. She is now in a boatyard at Oban, and will be used for Inner Hebridean expeditions. A boat of our own at last!"

**Congratulations**: To Paul Malpass and Chris Bazley on their recent marriages.

To the following on their exam successes: Roger Wilkinson (1st Class B.A., Cambridge); George Walker (B.A., Oxford); Richard Fountaine (B.A., Dublin); Bill Clow (M.B., Ch.B., Edinburgh); and "Daz" Underhill (Grad. I.E.R.E.).

To Dan Hearn, who toured the Argentine and Brazil with the Combined Oxford and Cambridge Universities' Rugger team and is now playing with much success for Bedford; and to David Evans who was awarded his Half-Blue for shooting at Cambridge.

**Two of our members** are at present doing a year's Voluntary Service Overseas—Kenneth Huxham in Labrador and Clifford Fountaine in—believe it or not—the New Hebrides! We are very fortunate that in Clifford's absence, the duties of Secretary to the Company have been undertaken by Roger Dennien.

**The S.H.S.Tie**, designed by Martin Child, is now available. It is hoped that ALL members will buy one and wear it as often as possible! They may be obtained from Gavin Macpherson; details are enclosed with this Report,

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

Many members will have realised that this issue of the Report has appeared somewhat later than usual. No excuse is offered for this; it has simply proved impossible to publish it any earlier!

The past year has seen a large increase in the number of expedition members; it has risen from a mere 33 in 1962 to the present total of 235, drawn from just over 100 different schools and colleges. Consequently, the volume of paperwork involved in the running of the Society has increased very considerably. Nevertheless, it is still run on an entirely voluntary basis, and nobody connected with the administration of the Society, or the Company, receives any payment.

I should like to thank the following for their help with the publication of this Report: David Carter, Robin Lord, Clifford Fountaine, Steven Harris, Alan Bateman and Mr. Leslie James and the Southwold Press Limited.

This year's cover is by Keith Brattle, who is a pupil at Kent College, Canterbury. The illustrations and maps are by Peter Broad (page 57), Martin Child (pages 43, 48, 51), Chris Gascoine-Hart (page 40), Ronald Lewandowski (pages 32, 66), Peter Parks (centre pages), Graham Turner (page 21) and Tim Willcocks (page 6).

Finally, may I thank all those who sent me contributions for this year's Report. I am sorry that there was not enough room to include all of them.

Editor

## HARRIS EXPEDITION 1965

*Leader* John Abbott

*Officers*

Alan Bateman, David Carter, Roger Dennien, Peter Peace, Michael Underbill and Tim Willcocks.

*Boys*

Martin Ashton, Thomas Bragg, Peter Broad, John Brooks, David Cullingford, John Cullingford, William Davidson, Colin Haines, John Houghton, Chris Hyde, John Lace, Patrick Mossop, James Norman, Robert Pennell, John Proctor, Simon Rogers, Beekkerk van Ruth, Terry Samuel, Barry Smith, Graham Turner, Bob Warrack, Richard Wilson, David Wrigley and Nick Yates.

### LEADER'S REPORT

This was the first full-sized expedition the Society has sent to the Outer Hebrides and the site chosen on the west coast of North Harris was ideal. In comparison with South Rona (in 1964) we were not so conscious of our insularity, but the site was remote, very beautiful, and offered unlimited scope for a wide variety of activities. Camp was pitched on well-drained ground above a fine expanse of sandy beach. Behind us the ground rose steeply, with some very fine climbs, to over a thousand feet, providing protection from the south and south-west. A little to the east Loch a'Ghlinne cut a deep gash in the mountains down which the south-east winds blew with disconcerting ferocity. Beyond this another steep climb led to Cearteval and Tirga Mor.

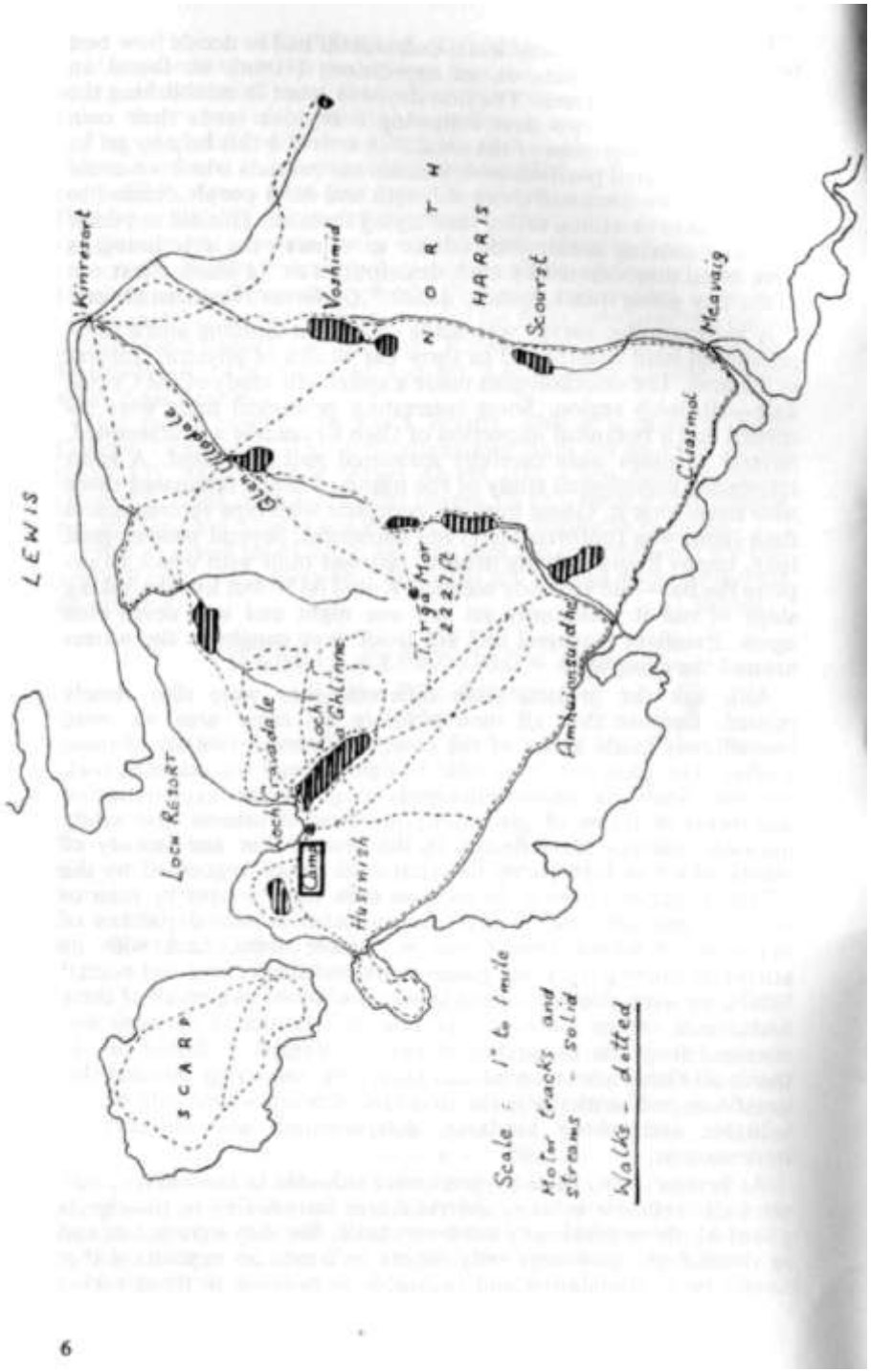


Last year I said of South Rona that we still had to decide how best to organise the projects on an expedition; I think we found an answer to this on Harris. The first day was spent in establishing the camp and on the two days following every one made their own preliminary exploration of the area. Not only did this help to get us fit but it indicated possibilities for numerous projects which we could undertake. We discussed these at length and most people decided to follow one or two lines, rather than trying them all. This did not deter us from offering amateurish advice to others—the ornithologists were often disconcerted by such descriptions as "a black effort out in the bay going quack, quack, quack," (A Great Northern Diver)!

A hydrographic survey was made of Loch a'Ghlinne and a morphological map constructed to show the wealth of physical features in the area. The ornithologists made a systematic study of the Cravadale—Husinish region. Some interesting geological finds were recorded and a botanical inspection of Glen Cravadale was attempted. Several shielings were carefully measured and excavated. A most interesting sociological study of the island of Scarp fascinated those who undertook it. Ghost hunting, complete with tape recorders and flash lights was (unfortunately) not successful. Several people spent long, happy hours stalking deer. A raft was built with which to explore the bay—did anybody mention Kon-Tiki ?—but like the Viking ships of old it voluntarily set sail one night and was never seen again. Excellent mackerel and sea trout were caught in the waters around the camp site.

Although the projects were different, they were also closely related. Because they all took place in the same area we were immediately made aware of the complex inter-relation all of these studies. The geologists were able to demonstrate the essential rock structure whilst the geomorphologists sought further explanation of landforms in terms of glaciation; morainic structures and sandy outwash features are reflected in the distribution and density of plants which in turn partly determine the areas frequented by the different species of birds. In such an area the attempts by man to interfere and colonise seemed almost futile. Scattered patches of improved grassland were found in remote areas, each with its attendant shieling (very bad places to try and shelter on a wet night)! Whilst we were able to arrive at some conclusions as a result of these finds, most of our knowledge of human activities in the area was obtained from the researches of our sociologists. I should like to thank all those who assisted this survey by answering innumerable questions, and particularly the islanders of Scarp whose help was so valuable and whose kindness, determination and sincerity so impressed us.

As results show, these projects were valuable in themselves; they were also valuable to us as individuals in introducing us to subjects about which we previously knew very little. But they were not an end in themselves; they were only means to create an expedition that would be as stimulating and enjoyable as possible to those taking






part. It was not just the success of the projects that made Harris such a memorable experience—it was the happy and united spirit of the expedition which inspired us all and will be something we shall never forget. This spirit found expression in many ways—something 1 will always remember is the events of the last evening; rarely has "Rock of Ages" been sung with so much feeling.

As the expedition ended there was much discussion about the Society itself and many suggestions were put forward for its future development. We were all conscious that Harris 1965 marks an important milestone in the history of the Society. It is good to know that so many people are determined to make the Society a success in the future.

It was a privilege we all shared to have been on such an expedition.

John Abbott

## A LOCAL SURVEY OF SCARP

The island of Scarp is separated from Harris by a strait, £ mile wide at its narrowest, which is often coursed by strong tidal currents. It is roughly circular in shape, with a maximum diameter of 3 miles. Topographically rugged, cliffed on all sides, the island achieves a maximum altitude of nearly 1,000 ft. The only settlement is situated on a narrow flattening of the eastern flank, which has all the appearance of a raised coastal beach. This is roughly one third of a mile long, and contains many deserted crofts. In 1900 there was a total population of 200, but this has now dwindled to 29. The object of our social investigation was to discover the reason(s) for this decrease and assess the implications arising from it.

The major cause of the exodus was over-population; from what we were able to piece together of the recent history, it appears that the island was originally settled in 1810. It may have been affected by the potato-famine of the mid-1840's, as there was some emigration to Harris at mid-century. Lazy beds, now deserted, occupy both relatively protected and thoroughly exposed sites beyond the modern settlement; the former are straight-forward evidence for a denser population, the latter strongly suggest actual over-population. We can certainly say that Scarp has been slowly drained of its human resources from about the turn of the present century: there are still some surviving members of earlier emigrations in the "mainland" settlements of Harris.

The population-carrying capacity of the island is severely limited by the small amounts of land available for tillage; out of a total of 7 square miles, only ½ square mile can thus be used. Climatic condition and soil type also restrict the range and quality of crops that can be grown. Depopulation can be traced to other factors as well—the better employment opportunities and social attractions on Harris and Lewis; the lack of scope for other forms of work other than subsistence; and the decline of Harris Tweed spinning as the industry has become more organised on the main island. Relative isolation from the mills meant that a steady income could not be assured, especially when the island was cut off by heavy seas for

periods during the winter. The mill-masters in any case were not particularly interested in such a precarious source of supply.

Today, there are seven families on Scarp, owning between them 1,000 sheep and 12 cows (a bull is supplied by The Ministry of Agriculture from June to October every year). There has already been some intermarriage between first cousins, carrying the usual genetic risks. The youngest married couple are over 40 years old, and the rising generation consists of 5 bachelors between 23 and 32 and two young primary schoolchildren. The island, of course, relies upon the virility of its younger men to man-handle the boat and' hump the peat supplies. (The latter now come principally from Cravadale; that each family needs about 400 bags per year is an indication of the bulk that has to be dug, sacked, and transported.)

In view of the island's reliance upon the physical vigour of its inhabitants, it is significant that the young men do not rate highly their chances of staying on the island for the rest of their lives. Apart from being sorely tempted by the "lure" of Tarbert, Stornoway, and even Glasgow, they recognise that it would be the exceptional girl who would adjust to the tough conditions of life on Scarp. Some of them thought the island might as a consequence be deserted within ten years, perhaps as a result of forceful persuasion from the authorities; others were prepared to contemplate some sort of future there, possibly involving further intermarriage. There is, of course, the background consideration that any move would be least upsetting if it involved a population not consisting entirely of middle- and old-age people.

The son of the postmaster recently married and moved to Glasgow; he was on holiday in Scarp at the time of our visit and from conversation with him it became obvious to us that perhaps he alone might be able to persuade the islanders to move to places when they can get satisfactory full-time employment.

After a break of some years, lobster fishing has been recently reinstated; so far, it has not been really profitable as the waters around Scarp are already extensively fished by trawlers from Mallaig. The local economy is therefore essentially a subsistence one, with self-sufficiency in such products as potatoes, turnips, cabbages, oats, milk and fish. Not surprisingly, modern conveniences are few: no electricity, no gas, and only a few taps for running water—the only form of lighting is by means of tilly lamps. The rough track running through the settlement carries "traffic" to the extent of an ancient Ford lorry, a jeep, a motor-bike and a bicycle. (The last two are something of a luxury). The single shop carries a basic stock of meat (mostly mutton from the Stornoway slaughterhouse) tea, biscuits, soap, cigarettes, etc: there is no choice of brands.

The islanders are very religious, and the Church is an important ingredient in their lives. They are all members of the Church of Scotland and have a resident missionary to administer to their spiritual needs. He officiates at Sunday services and funerals, but all baptisms and marriages have to be performed by a minister from



Tarbert. The whole population attends two services every Sunday and a prayer-meeting on Thursday. The Sabbath they interpret literally and refrain from any form of manual labour—even domestic cooking.

This is a community of men and women of remarkable hardiness and courage, and enormous kindness. They and their habitat impressed us immensely, and no one on the Harris Expedition who went to the island is likely to forget the strange feeling of having suddenly been washed up on the shores of a Tristan da Chuna.

John Lace

Tim Willcocks has produced an eight-page report entitled, "Sociological Survey made by the S.H.S. Expedition, to Cravadale in August 1965", which incorporates further information for the approximately triangular area, Scarp—Meavaig—Kinlochresort. It is available for private circulation.

## BOTANY

Owing to the lack of suitably detailed botanical expertise and textbooks, only a limited amount of plant collecting and analysis was possible. Nevertheless, some microscope work was useful experience to those concerned, even if it was not original project investigation.

In view of the limitations, a biogeographical survey of the slopes of Loch a'Ghlinne seemed feasible, especially as the geomorphologists were also "working over" the area. The results are presented below.
Biogeographical Survey of Loch a'Ghlinne

The loch is contained within a well-developed glaciated valley; the slopes surrounding it are generally steep, although modified in parts by a plastering of morainic material. The latter supports, in parts, a layer of peat 3-4 feet deep. In other parts bare rock surfaces are exposed. The habitat is therefore a limited one, reflected by the small variety of plant species.

On the south-western shore, there is an approximate correlation between plant communities and drainage texture. In waterlogged areas, sphagnum moss and Juncus rush species predominated; where the water table appeared to fluctuate just below the ground surface, according to the seasons, scattered clumps of heather species were interspersed with "Molinia" grass. The well drained outwash sands, at the seaward end of the loch supported mixed Fescue and Molinia grass, whilst an "improved" Fescue grass community occupied an area of about 1,000 square yards at the head of the loch. This obviously bears a relationship to the now abandoned "lazy" beds of the area and to the presence of peaty-alluvial infill. (In passing, it is interesting to note here the tiny loch-head beach displaying in miniature all the usual morphological features: the finer shell-sand is almost certainly winnowed out by the wind to contribute towards this particular, if restricted, soil and vegetation type.)

On the north-eastern shore there is a crude zoning coincident with a change in the degree of dissection of the morainic fan-like spreads. Below a level roughly 10 feet above loch level, rushes and sphagnum

an area of quite deeply entrenched gullies. Above that (and up to the toe of the crags and screes) species of heather and moorland grasses (especially Molinia) are the chief colonizers of an area of rather shallow drainage lines. Mosses only occur in small-scale and occasional depressions. Here "Ling" and "Bell heather" seemed to share their dominance more or less equally, although a statistical count was impossible. In this zone there are also certain interesting minority plants, such as Orchids, Ranunculus spp., and the occasional patch of White Heather.

Roughly at the height of 250 feet above loch level—on all sides-one can say that heather spp., dominate the vegetation complex-cotton grass is a further minority plant to occur within this zonation, and its distribution appeared to reflect an interesting correlation with occasional flats and platforms. The soil at these heights tends to be stony peat but the slope gradient is sufficiently steep to permit rapid and effective drainage.

In the area of crag and scree, vegetation itself is a minority element • some clumps of heather and grasses manage to secure precarious footholds in rock crevices.

Overall, one might conclude that there is a fairly close relationship between vegetation types and topography in terms of slope, aspect and drainage; but the very species involved suggest that Man's past interest in the area has influenced the pattern, and that it is still in the long-term process of adjustment back to "natural" environmental conditions.

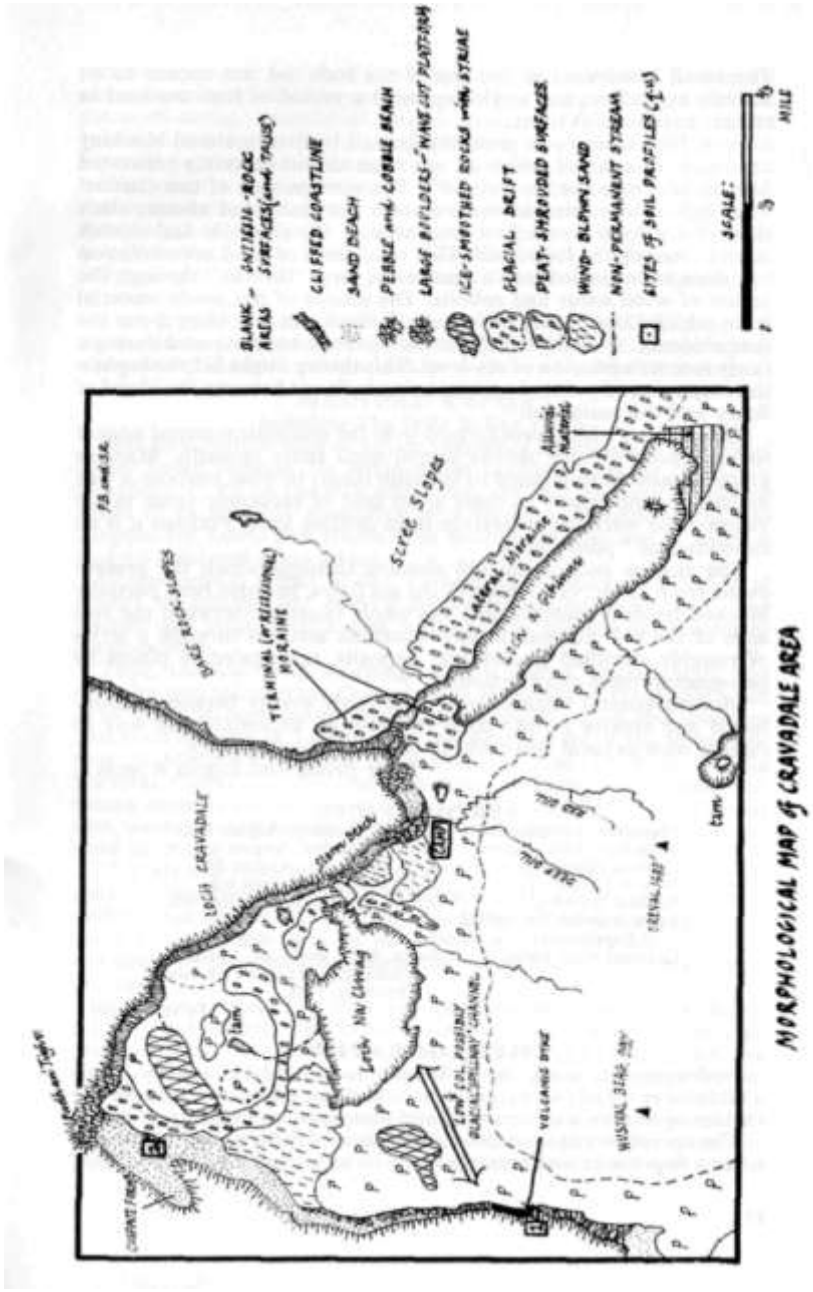
James Norman and David Wrigley

## GEOMORPHOLOGY

The first intention of the geomorphologists was to study an area between Kinloch Resort, Amhuinnsuidhe and Husinish Point However, preliminary study of the features near the camp site disclosed so many difficulties in examining the development of the landforms that it was decided to modify the original intention and examine the country around Loch a'Ghlinne, Loch Na Cleavag and Husinish Point. The approach was purely morphological in that we did not approach this piece of country with minds already stuffed with knowledge of the development of other Scottish landscapes.

At first glance Loch a'Ghlinne appeared to be a perfect example of a overdeepened glaciated valley. However, when it came to mapping is associated features it was discovered that the drift material deposited at the foot of the Corrie in Loch a'Ghlinne faced in the opposite direction to what was at first presumed to be the direction of flow of the ice. It also became apparent that what we had thought might be a Terminal Moraine at the seaward end of the Loch was fact more probably a Recessional Moraine. It was these problem that forced us to speculate whether the area had been influenced by more than one glaciation.

The changes in base-level (sea-level) associated with the melting of ice during Interglacial periods were possibly part-cause of the remarkable amount of alluvial material at the head of Loch a'Ghlinne.



The small beachhead at the top of the loch did not appear to be actively aggrading, and might represent a period of high sea-level in recent, post-Glacial times.

Loch Na Cleavag was probably formed by drift material blocking up a narrow channel which at one time almost certainly separated Meulin hill from the "mainland". The western part of this channel was choked by morainic material and outwash sand sheets; since then dunes have formed on and around the deposits and stretch inland towards the loch itself. This small area of sand accumulation has since been eroded into a number of large "blocks" through the action of wind scour and rabbits. The source of the sandy material from which these dunes have been formed was not clear from the field evidence. It could have been derived from sand exposed during a fairly recent depression of sea-level. This theory might help to explain the cuspate sand point at present being built out between the island of Scarp and the mainland.

Those dunes which have formed over the morainic material appear to have been moving slowly inland until fairly recently. Marram grass has now been planted to stabilize them; to what purpose it was difficult to appreciate, as there is no land of economic value in the vicinity that warrants protection from drifting sand. Perhaps it is an experimental "pilot" area.

The eastern end of the old channel through which the present outlet from Loch Na Cleavag to the sea flows, has also been partially blocked by drift material and the whole coastline between the two ends of the old channel displays excellent sections through a series of roughly stratified glacial drift deposits, corrugated in places by peri-glacial freeze-thaw action.

Modern coastal features were split fairly evenly between depositional and erosive forms; these relate in an uncomplicated way to factors such as local bed-rock, fetch and wave frequency.

Peter Broad and Simon Rogers

WEATHER FACTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Maximum Temperature: | 68.5°*F* Tuesday, August 10th. |
| Minimum Temperature: | 41.0°*F*., Sunday, August 1st. |
| Highest Humidity: | 73%, Thursday, August 5th. |
| Lowest Humidity: | 25% Monday, August 9th. |
| Highest Rainfall: | 0.725', Wednesday, August 4th |
| Total Rainfall for period of Expedition: | 2.1". |
| Greatest wind force: | Force 6-7, gusts of Force 8, Wednesday, August 11th, and Thursday, 12th. |

Terry Samuel

## HYDROGRAPHY

Hydrographic work was limited to sounding nearby Loch a'Ghlinne in detail; we naturally assumed that the basic survey of the Ordnance Survey was accurate, and attempted to build upon it.

The operation required the co-operation of eight people at any one time: a flag-waver and bearings-taker on either bank and in the boat,



plus two oarsmen to propel the latter. This is a minimum number to ensure accuracy. The equipment used was simple but reliable: a piece of string, knotted at fathom intervals for depth-finding, a board with two pins for aligning the relative positions of the three separate parties, and a notebook for recording depth measurements.

The chart's accomplishment was not without certain human problems, foremost of which was the blood-sucking capacity of the local breed of "midge". Certain personnel, who shall remain nameless (but which were, in fact, A. J. Abbott and R. Dennien) successfully delayed operations as a result of their excessive preparations against this insect.

One copy of the chart will be deposited with the Admiralty, and we would recommend the loch as a very safe place for the refuge of redundant "Polaris" submarines. Martin Ashton

## MEDICAL REPORT
### including The Wild X-Ray Chase

The only medical case of any consequence happened as a result of Barry Smith twisting his ankle whilst carrying peat for the Scarp Islanders. To be on the safe side, I thought that an x-ray should be taken to exclude the possibility of a fracture. Inconveniently, the hospital for Lewis and Harris is in Stornoway, and our expedition had no transport of its own.

Consequently, whilst at the Tarbert Fair I contacted the local doctor to arrange for Barry's transportation to Stornoway. The doctor was most helpful and was swift in making the necessary arrangements.

Thus, the following morning, after a rather belated start, the casualty was taken from Cravadale to Husinish by the Scarp boat. (The lack of punctuality was understandable since the boatmen had been dancing in Tarbert until the early hours of the morning)! One of MacBrayne's taxis was waiting at Husinish Jetty to take Barry and myself to meet the ambulance in Tarbert. The latter was taking patients to Stornoway from Scalpay island and, being rather late, we were fortunate to meet it before it had passed the Husinish road junction.

The Morris "Dormobile" ambulance was already carrying six patients, but Barry and I climbed in regardless; a little later we had to make space for yet another; by this time rain was pouring down. After about fifteen minutes on arrival at the hospital, Barry was examined by the Casualty Officer and x-ray films of the ankle were ordered.

In the meantime, I made a few enquiries and was briefly shown round the hospital. The present hospital was developed from an army barracks of the last war and accommodates 85 beds. There are 10 physicians and surgeons attached to the hospital who will treat any but the most unusual cases.

Having heard that Barry's x-rays were normal we went in the ambulance to the town for a meal. The trip back to Tarbert was more comfortable since three of the Scalpay patients had been admitted to

hospital. We left those returning on the pier at Tarbert and after several "domestic" stops we finally returned to Husinish through a violent rain-storm. The remaining problem was that, by then, the sea was too rough to return to Cravadale by boat. However, the Scarp boatman did agree to ferry us over to the island for the night. In fact, we eventually joined a party of the expedition who were also staying on Scarp overnight.

Barry's ankle improved rapidly and did not seriously impair him for the remainder of the expedition. Peter Peace

## WALKING

Well, during the fortnight we must have covered about 2,000 miles between us all; and at that rate, it would take twelve similar expeditions to walk once around the equator! At least, this assumes a statistical average of 65 miles each which is probably not too far from the truth, considering that the walker of the year covered over 100 miles. Lowest mileage has several claimants, but it would be invidious to mention names.

As the map shows we walked practically everywhere; we walked to Husinish to collect post; to Amhuinnsuidhe (mostly pronounced "Amanswee" or "Am-hueysda)" to pedestrian aids in the form of walking sticks; to Scourst to share an old croft with a ghost for the night; to Kinlochresort to talk to Buchanan, and to spend a very wet night in two corbelled houses; we walked round Scarp and we scrambled up Tirga Mor . . . at least, some of us did!

There were some of us who "cracked off" with 50 miles in the first few days—followed by relative immobility. Of course, this bred rivalry, and the deer-stalkers in particular went on enormous moorland tramps, even in the last few days. Eventually, we called it quits at 96 miles. Then David Cullingford calmly announced that he had topped the 100 mark (incidentally where were the pedometers?-Ed.).

We had one sprained ankle, surprisingly few blisters, and Luuk kept getting "futsac" which apparently means "wet feet". Not too bad a casualty list really.

Anyone for croquet next year? Tim Willcocks

## DEER STALKING

After the start had been delayed by a certain member of the party (who was shaving), we eventually set off to try and find some deer. Funnily enough the same member of the party thought the wind would change, so we attempted to get upwind of them. Eventually, a group was located, and—as the wind had *not* changed we climbed around them and split into two parties, one of two and another of three. The smaller group went ahead to make sure no deer were disturbed; suddenly, the party behind were told to "lie low" and keep quiet. Very slowly and quietly we in the second party edged up to the others, who were squatting behind a very convenient ridge. On reaching it, we very carefully peered over the top and saw a herd of deer no more than thirty yards away. Soon, however, we heard "barking" and rather to our surprise saw above and to the right of



us several more deer on the hillside. Their barking had warned the others, so they gradually moved off—but not before we had had a good look at them, with the aid of binoculars.

When they had gone we decided to try and stalk another herd we had seen on a small plateau not far away; so we went further down the valley, keeping below the plateau edge so as not to be seen by the deer. Again two of us went ahead, with the rest following on some distance behind. We shortly encountered our quarry and settled down behind a rock to watch them. This time they were slightly farther away and so did not hear or smell us; one of us suggested an individual stalk and we drew lots to see who it should be. Our old procrastinating friend "won", and the remainder of us sat quietly, and jealously watching him go. After some time he was seen creeping—and even running—between rocks. In fact, he was very lucky as he saw two fighting stags, antlers interlocked and forelegs waving.

Although by this time we were pretty wet and uncomfortable from crawling through bog, this was but a small price to pay for the privilege of seeing these magnificent creatures. Colin Haines

## SOJOURN ON SCARP

The boat from Scarp arrived late; the invalid was carried aboard while others waded out. The boat set out to the wheeze of pipes from Terry's tape recorder, much to the obvious pleasure of the two boatmen.

On the way to Husinish the presence of great northern divers was confirmed by a close view of one which revealed the striped band around the neck. An impressive scene followed with over twenty gannets and a flock of terns diving after sand eels. A lone seal then honoured us with its presence; furthermore, a nesting site of shag was observed beneath the track on the cliffs with a few black guillemots and herring gulls nearby.

The invalid disembarked at Husinish and we crossed over to Scarp. The hostel—maintained by the S.Y.H.A.—we were to stay at was found, and the sight of the exterior of the croft somewhat dampened our spirits; but after the key had been obtained we discovered the comforts it offered. Peats were brought by the warden, and a fire lit. Camp rations were supplemented with food from the shop in readiness for two guests and the rest of the afternoon was occupied with Egyptian P.E. due to pouring rain. Pete and Barry arrived back from Stornoway after supper and a general discussion went on until two in the morning.

The friendliness of the islanders was touching, with milk and scones given to us for having earlier loaded some peat at Cravadale. We rose at 9 the next morning ("Bot" time); Luuk and Big John set off clockwise around the island on an ornithological expedition whilst the other six remained in the village to undertake some sociological work. This consisted of extended conversations with the post-master and missionary (reported elsewhere).

Starlings and blackbirds nested quite near the village and house-sparrows were common. Around the coast the familiar gulls and meadow pipits were abundant. Several wheatears were observed and arctic terns distinguished themselves by their hostilities. A flock of about forty oyster catchers suddenly announced their departure from the shingle on the west coast, where they had been feeding amongst the sea-weed.

Further north a golden eagle was being mobbed by herring gulls away from a nest. Driven inland, it joined its mate above Strone Romul in search of other sources of food. Farther out to sea an adult gannet was teaching two juveniles to fish. On the coast a lone hooded crow was foraging. No bird life was seen at the north-west point, but we did observe a rock cut off from the main island upon which shag had nested, and thirty birds were counted. Apart from two ravens circling high above the island no other birds were seen until at Slettinish we were forced to climb eight hundred feet to bypass sheer cliffs. From here we looked down into a cove upon herring gulls circling their nests. Passing the islands of Osten and Kearstay we were disappointed not to see any seals on their alleged breeding grounds. All over the island there was plenty of evidence of thrushes, with snail shells around large stones.

On arriving back at the post office we were offered tea, hot pancakes and jam before rejoining the sociologists on the beach. We left Scarp just after five, and were escorted back by a seal swimming beneath the boat. Arriving at Cravadale, we were carried ashore by a gallant Bottom clad in swimming trunks. John Brooks

## THE BIGGEST PROJECT EVER

The first essential for the achievement of success in this project was utmost secrecy. In this case, this was maintained by keeping the main participants in complete ignorance of the nature of the project.

In another way, of course, this was a different sort of activity in that the subject of the project was a very rare animal which, though it is often seen in the Inner Hebrides, does not often venture across the Minch to the Outer Isles. The animal in question, dux Fladdae, appeared on the island of Lewis at the same time as the expedition. The aim of the project was to see if the animal could be photographed at work. This particular type, coming as it does at the *bottom* of the development scale of its evolutionary period, has never before been persuaded to work. Hence the fact that we *were* able to report a success should go down in the annals of the Society.

The method involved the kidnapping of the camp doctor before he arrived at the campsite. Thus the leader of the expedition found himself in the position of having to act as section leader in the place of the doctor. Even this, of course, was not enough to ensure that he would get any manual work done over and above stuffing more food than usual into his beak. (In this example, the mouth is very well developed). The device employed was simple enough in concept and brilliantly executed. We bet him that he couldn't peel 60 potatoes in twenty minutes with one hand tied behind his back. Again, since he



was trying at the time to read the latest missive from his post-mistress and also had to keep on brushing his hair out of his eyes, it was such a challenge that he could not resist it (nor the post-mistress). (N.B. the hair on this specimen is rather sparse but in places exceeds two feet in length). So, in the middle of peeling, reading and brushing he did not notice the forty two and a half people who lined up to take his picture. Unfortunately, the light intensity was not all that it might have been and only one picture came out. This has been sent to the Hydrographic Department of the Admiralty where they are deciding whether the specimen, dux fladdae bottomiensis, is eligible for a doctorate. Roger Dennien

## STRANGE

The fish expired with a feeble flap;
No mourners on the beach;
No fisherman nodded, none touched his cap,
No comrade made a speech.

"Not an hour ago
that lump of flesh
was throbbing with blood"
one mocking spoke.
Glazed eyes wide mouth replied,
Though no one spoke. John Cullingford

## DAVID OF THE WHITE ROCK

The geological foundations of the Hebrides are extremely ancient and complex; the islands have not been mapped in detail, and so the surprise discovery of an unexpected mineral or rock occurrence is always possible.

Nevertheless, David Carter—a geomorphologist—was intrigued and excited to learn from a returning Scarp party that the inhabitants had talked of a peculiar soft, soapy, rock outcrop in the south-western part of the island. He immediately jumped to the highly unlikely conclusion that it could be a last remaining patch of chalk, theoretically assumed to have covered the whole of Scotland (and much of the north-west Atlantic) fifty million years ago. Could it prove to be so, his academic future was apparently assured! The rest of the Expedition thought of the fame and fortune that would be theirs if the outcrop turned out to be something altogether more valuable.

The day of reckoning involved David and six other members of the expedition; the postmaster had approximately located the position of the rock on the 1 inch to 1 mile map, and the trek across the craggy slopes and lazy bed corrugations of the island was aided by directions from one of the Scarp wives encountered milking her cows in the upland pastures. A long, smooth, slope flattening gradually towards the steeply-cliffed coastline dominated the horizon and appeared to be the objective. On reaching the assumed location, nothing prevailed but the usual wilderness of hard, roughly glaciated,

gneissic rocks. The party spread out in order to cover the whole area and eventually flagging hopes were revived by the cry of "Eureka!" from David Cullingford, sitting upon a mushroom-shaped mass of slightly upstanding, glistening rock. After a short diagnosis it was pronounced as asbestos and appeared to be significant enough for David Carter to retain considerable interest in it. Samples were collected and the outcrop measured and approximately mapped. The party then retraced its steps back to the settlement. Certain members found the returning journey hard going as they had stuffed themselves to capacity with specimens in the presumed hope of "getting rich quick"!

The anti-climax had set in even before camp was struck; on the last night, mention of the rock was made to a Scarpman who had emigrated to the Scottish Lowlands some years previously, and was at the time on holiday in his birthplace. He confirmed that geologists had been to see the vein and that a thesis had in fact been written on it. We were not, then, treading on virginal ground. . . .

On return to England, David searched all the literature on British (and particularly, Hebridean) geology and mineralogy, in places as far apart as Portsmouth, Newcastle and Cambridge. Not a single reference to the Scarp asbestos came to light. Correspondence with the London headquarters of the Geological Survey was equally unproductive. Just when it appeared that perhaps there was something in it after all, a letter arrived from the Edinburgh office of the Geological Survey to whom the original communication had been passed. It cited a reference in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh describing and analysing the Scarp asbestos in detail; it also stated that it was not, and would never be, of any commercial value. The only consolation is that it is apparently unique in some of its detailed geological characteristics.

It was good exercise, any rate! David Carter

## THE CORBLES

The party going to Kinlochresort consisted of: John Abbott, John Houghton, Nick Yates, Martin Ashton, John Cullingford, Bob Pennell and John Proctor. The object of this expedition was to study briefly the basic ornithology, morphology and archaeology of the area.

We decided, on Bot's advice, to walk up one of the valleys, leading inland from Kinlochresort, to two corbelled houses, which are almost unique in Scotland, instead of sleeping in a barn in Kinloch, as we had previously planned.

Corbelled houses are circular, bee-hive shaped buildings, about 8 feet in diameter, made from flat stones. They have a hole in the roof ostensibly to let out the smoke, and are made comfortably water and windproof by an outer covering of turf, which had mostly been eroded away when we arrived. In the side there is a hole, representing the only door, possibly fit for the smallest troglodyte, but certainly not for us.



A minor repair operation had now to be undertaken to make these rather permeable structures, which had not been lived in for 300 years, habitable again. Loads of turf were removed from the bank of the nearby stream and crammed into the gaping holes in the walls, and stones and a cape were used to cover the smoke holes. Heather was cut and piled on to the rather damp carpet of moss. This was then covered with all manner of waterproof articles.

After two frustrating attempts to cook a hot meal, on one and a half stoves, and in a swarm of midges, we eventually satisfied ourselves. Then we all piled ourselves into one of the corbelled houses for a sing-song. Having refused any ghost stores from Bot, we bedded down in comparative comfort.

Having no radio and hence no knowledge of the impending gale, we next awoke at 1 a.m. with rain dripping in from every stone in the building. By now our sleeping bags and most of our clothing were sodden. Somebody whispered urgently "Will I get Pneumonia?" The leader replied "NO" with a grunt, promptly turning over and feigning sleep. Twenty minutes later, we could kid ourselves no longer, so, squirming out of our sopping sleeping-bags, we separated ourselves from our clammy clothing and huddled together in desperation under a mere ground sheet and blanket for six miserable hours. The three next door had no such ideas and remained decidedly wet until morning.

Kendal mint cake was served for breakfast and after hurried packing of soaking clothing, we set off for Kinlochresort to try and get some sympathy from the locals. We had to wade across the stream which was by now in roaring spate—Bot got wet up to his pants.

Relief followed soon, when we were invited into a crofter's cottage where we cooked breakfast and then in a good drying breeze festooned our sleeping bags and all our clothing along the fences. For the rest of the morning members of the expedition were to be seen wandering about in a miscellaneous collection of old sweaters and pyjamas. After an excellent lunch we set off for Cravadale in drizzling rain. John Houghton and Nick Yates

## THE HAUNTED COTTAGE

They would show them; they weren't scared by any of the tales. Anyway, there aren't any such things as ghosts. . . . Well, even, if there are, they wouldn't be worried by them. Not a bit of it, in fact, it would make an interesting study with maybe a photograph or a tape recording.

So the six set out for the renowned cottage near Loch Scourst. It was a long walk (by any route) and the cottage was a welcome sight despite the reputation it might have. Now used as a boathouse, the cottage must once have consisted of at least four rooms; much of the inside walling is now absent or in process of decay, A rough concrete floor (not too conducive to sleeping bag comfort as it proved) had replaced former boarding. Still, it was shelter and it

didn't take long to concoct an unorthodox but nevertheless nourishing meal of soup, cheese, bread, rice pudding and raisins.

"What was that?" Six faces fell silent as ears strained expectantly to the darkness outside. On the table a candle threw eerie animated shadows to the four walls. There appeared to be something in these stories. . . .

"I heard nothing," someone replied without much conviction. Irrational fears, until now repressed, began to show.

"There was this hand at the window—Mart was dragged across the floor in his sleeping bag"—"I felt someone watching me"—" I heard a door slam although no one had moved ". The tales of that other time three years back could not be repressed. Had there been a murder there? A shepherd killed for his hidden hoard? Black Magic maybe? They speculated. . . .

Although nothing more was heard, strangely all interest in the card game had waned and so matches were counted and pontoon concluded. Five filed outside to wash at the lochside edge. . . .

"Hey, wait for me!" cried a worried sixth, not wanting to tackle the supernatural single-handed.

So they settled down in sleeping bags for the night, positioned so as to cover all windows and the door. Cameras with flash bulb were at the ready; a string device was rigged so that the sound recordist could be roused at any moment. No spook would escape them! They'd get him taped, any rate!

The night passed without incident—well, almost. One member of the group who was forced to sample the early morning air was nearly given the "works" when he inadvertently woke one of the cameramen.

So that was that. Morning dawned and the six (Tim. Daz, Terry, Tom, Wriggles and Pseud) arose and prepared for the journey back to camp. Perhaps they had been too much for the ghost and had driven him away by their inimical auras. But who's for the next time?

Michael Underhill

## SPENT FORCE

We had bitten off more than we could chew; spare wood lay strewn about the camp site and no more furniture was necessary. Great logs, planks, and blocks of sea-sodden wood were of no more use to the simple minded; but to three they were invaluable.

A raft was suggested and work commenced on a boat to beat all boats—or so they hoped. Hammers, nails and saws were hurled on to the beach; the rush was on—and without any demarcation disputes!

The logs were lashed together to form a basic structure that would have to withstand a great deal of buffeting from strong waves and wind. The bows were slightly tapered to give a streamlined effect and proved quite an advantage later. A seat and decking were added and our vessel looked quite sea-worthy—although several individuals expressed reservations.



Many hands made light work when it came to the launching ceremony and our raft, which up to now had been anonymous, was christened "TIRPITZ".

SPLASH! in she went, and (quite miraculously) floated! Five minutes later, after we had recovered from the shock of success, we dared to sit on the "TIRPITZ". Quite happily she bore the weight of one, but wet feet were inevitable when two came aboard.

Our next problem was a means of propulsion. A sail came immediately to mind and so the search was on to find one. a ground-sheet was hastily requisitioned and fixed on to the mast. A rudder, and lee loards were also built and fixed.

"Gonna try sailing her tonight," we said—and sure enough at about 10 p.m. we assembled on the beach. After 15 minutes "TIRPITZ" slid into the sea and a crew member clambered aboard. 10 minutes later he was back on shore: no wind! Certain onlookers, mentioning no names, almost died with laughter.

The next day it worked! A fine wind blew the raft out into the bay, and for the first time she sailed. We had achieved our aim.

Alas, "TIRPITZ" is no more. She was left in the sand after a rough trip under sail and next day we found that a high tide and a strong wind had combined to move her far out to sea. Gone and lost forever, in fact.

Graham Turner

## THE HARRIS PARTY

The Harris party made a fitting end to what is said to have been the most successful S.H.S. Expedition yet. Invitations went out to the various Tarbert, Loch Resort, Scarp and Husinish personalities we had had contact with.

A fire was lit on the beach to time with the rounding of the Cravadale headland by the now familiar Scarp boat, plunging through the waves with its customary "hood" of gannets and terns. Hysteria affected some of those on shore when it was learnt that there were cigarettes on board; these were distributed before the boat had even beached!

A S.H.S., tug-o'-war team that had successfully eliminated others in preliminary rounds took on the mighty men of Scarp. At first the two teams held, but the recent exertions of the S.H.S. team plus the

predictable toughness of the islanders soon weighted the balance in favour of the visitors; they dug in and won rather easily two-love! They could probably have held on for a fortnight had it been necessary.

It wasn't, as supper was served immediately after the game's conclusion: soup, beefburgers and potatoes, fruit, coffee and a pint of "Redcap", all made available via waiters of remarkable discretion: the "every man-for-himself/those who don't get don't want" dispensation was relaxed for this special occasion. Conversation flared energetically, especially in the vicinity of our female company. Our esteemed chairman, at the head of the proceedings, consumed an unrecorded number of "second" helpings and worried many of the company by emitting certain canine noises.

David and John Cullingford provided the music and the lead in the singing: this included their own composition "Harris . . . Gay as Paris", which the ladies were able to convert into a live can-can. Bob Warrack, Terry Samuel, and Graham Turner also contributed their various individual talents, and there was a memorable "piece de resistance" from "Pseud" (James Norman): he emerged from the ground melee, alighted onto a table-top, and rendered " Little Town in ole' County Down" with the polished technique of the Music Hall artist.

The highlight of the evening was—for us—a rendering of some Gaelic songs by one of the Scarpmen. They were taped and played back immediately afterwards, to the obvious delight of the islanders. "Auld Lange Syne" was the inevitable climax to the evening.

We remained on the beach whilst the Scarp boat slowly drifted out to sea, putting everything we had into "We shall overcome. . . ." Prayers were held around the still raging fire and we reluctantly dispersed from an occasion that was literally to prove the "lull before the storm'*.

Robert Pennell

## SEAL MOURNING?

In the British Isles we are fortunate enough to have two resident types of seal, the large Grey Seal, mostly confined to our rocky Western coasts (top left), and the smaller Common Seal of the Sandier North Sea coastline (bottom right). Some people would contest our good fortune in sharing our Islands with these fin-footed torpedoes, but to this we shall refer later.

The appealing look of seals, upon which, perhaps, most people bare their sentiment towards these animals, stems partly from the rather large black eyes of the adults, but more particularly the pups, and also from the appearance that most seals have of crying. The close fur beneath the eyes is often moist when the rest of the pelt is quite dry. The reason for this is not, as some believe, caused by irritation of the eye by wind, but simply that seals lack an overflow tear duct that we and many animals possess, to carry away the continual flow of tears essential for cleaning the eye's surface.



Whereas the black of most animals' eyes is the pupil area, in seals it is the iris that is black or dark brown. (In humans, the iris is that part of the eye that is blue, green, brown or grey.) The pupil in normal daylight is only a small pin prick at the centre. During deep dives, to dimly lit depths, this pupil is almost certainly opened wide. One more unusual feature of the eye of both salt and freshwater seals is its flat outer surface. (Freshwater seals are found in the great land-locked Lake Baykial of Siberia). The flatness has a rather horrifying appearance on close inspection, but from the distance at which seals are usually seen it gives the eye the effect of being wide open and only slightly sunken—a feature of young animals and one which adds to their human appeal.

It is generally accepted that seals have good, even excellent sight. That this is used in their feeding dives is not so well established, since many types of seal successfully hunt in very muddy estuarine waters. The sensitive and often large muzzle, seen particularly well developed in the Common Seal, may help enable this "blind" hunting. The Common Seal has a diet which includes shellfish. A relative of seals, the huge Walrus, a rare visitor to Scottish coasts, also feeds on Shellfish, and it too has an enormous muzzle with huge whiskers or vibrissae. It would seem unlikely that this is just coincidental. Perhaps then, seals hunt as successfully by vibration detection and touch as by sight. The ear of these animals also may assist in their feeding. Though by external appearance small, the ear is well developed. The ear of whales is also very well developed and these we know hunt by echo-location, as do bats in air. The Californian sea-lion has indeed been shown to use such a means for locating fish. Hydrophones, or underwater microphones have been used to record the loud clicks and grunts of these animals.

The apparently effortless mobility of seals in water has possibly been noticed by most people. Buoyancy is provided by the seals' fat laden blubber. Streamlined contours and tight pelt reduce resistance and turbulence. Their manoeuvrability is further enhanced by having three or four years of locomotion. The hind limbs held together and flipped from side to side is in principal the same as a fish swimming with its tail. The back feet alternately flexed together gives rapid acceleration, but cannot long be sustained. All four limbs or just the fronts provide slow swimming at the surface or rapid turns beneath it.

The sight of a fluffy white seal pup, gorged to the point of bursting, its large black eyes all wet with "crying", awakens sentiment in the most hardened cynic. Common seals give birth to their young in June and July. Grey Seals pup later in the year, in September and October. Birth is rapid and the afterbirth is not eaten by the cow as it is in nearly all mammals, both herbivores and carnivores alike. (Man and the Lowland Sheep of Scotland are two notable exceptions. Both are naturally bad mothers by most mammals' standards!) The Grey Seal pup is born with its white coat and this it retains for about three weeks. Then, in its fat bloated state it is deserted by its

mother. The coat is moulted and replaced by the darker mottled adult pelt, and at about this time hunger forces the young seal to take to the sea for the first time. The Common Seal pup, on the other hand, has shed much, if not all, of its white puppy fluff within its mother, prior to birth. This pup moreover has to be prepared to take its first bath within an hour or so of birth—at the next high tide. Its mother remains with it, though, for the next week or two, while still providing milk.

As in all mammals, while still within the mother, the pups of both species are bathed in a sac of fluid. The fluid is in part drunk and in part exchanged for excretory waste. In the Common Seal then, the prenatal moult of the pup's white coat explains why the stomachs, of these newborn animals, are lined with a thick felt of shed hairs. The fouled nature of the fluid has its consequences too. The so-called white coat of the young Grey Seals is only white after a good ducking in a pool or downpour of rain, for at birth it is yellow—simply stained yellow by its owner's excretory matter.

Annually, several hundred three-week old female pups of the Grey Seal, on the Fame and Orkney Islands, are shot. It is claimed they are killed humanely with veterinary pistols. This culling, as it is called, is deemed necessary to prevent undue damage to salmon nets and salmon catches around the Scottish coasts. And yet, all the specialists on seals that have been consulted have pointed out that no-one really knows how much damage is done or what effect the culling is going to have in the long run. It could even lead to eventual overcrowding at the Salmon spawning grounds with a spread of fungus and disease and then a marked decrease in the succeeding years' population of salmon fry. The main food of seals seems to be governed by what is available, and this varies from season to season and place to place. Conger eels, squids and octopuses are often taken by Grey Seals. In turn each of these predates other marketable fish, Crustaceans and shellfish. Also taken are the knobbly lumpsucker, a fish with no commercial value. Mackerel and Salmon, (the salmon here is an adult hook-jawed male) it must be admitted are sometimes taken in numbers by Grey Seals. Both these fish have high market value. Common Seals, off the Dutch coast, eat flatfish. More normally, as off our coasts, they feed on Whellus and Cochules and occasionally on the Cod's cousin, the Whiting.

Seals have few enemies. In Arctic waters the Polar Bear is responsible for killing Ringed and Harp Seals. In the Antarctic the Leopard Seal lives up to its name and kills both penguins and seals. The chief enemy to all salt water seals is the black and white and well named Killer Whale. This thirty foot leviathan inhabits all oceans and is commonly seen off the Scottish coasts. One such beast was found to contain thirteen porpoises and fourteen seals—all eaten whole! A predator of seals in the Northern and Western Atlantic, and one which occurs in sufficient numbers to warrant an industry based upon its catching and subsequent extraction of liver oils, is the Greenland Shark. In spite of this animal's small mouth and lazy



reactions when caught, one has been known to attack and swallow whole a swimming reindeer, and the usual stomach contents is whole seals, both Grey and Common among them.

I give here no dramatic decision on the Fame and Orkney Isles' culling of Grey Seal pups, but rather present, what is perhaps, a somewhat less biased review, than often presented, of some relevant Natural History upon which sentimentalists, fishermen and slaughterers alike, may decide for themselves. Is Gavin Maxwell's %4Seal Morning" soon to become "Seal Mourning"?

Peter Parks

(Previously published in the May 1965 edition of' Scotland's Magazine')

## JURA EXPEDITION 1965

July 28th-August 13th

*Leader* Jonny Ker

*Officers*

Brian Dale, Robert Frost, Robin Lord, Tony Pickering, John Sandison, David Vigar.

*Boys*

Willan Abel, Alistair Babbington, Martin Bedwell, Richard Bluer, David Buchanan, David Crews, Stuart Cullum, Michael Cunliffe-Lister, James Forshaw, Peter Hannam, Michael Milliard, Andrew Jones, Brian Lett, Ronald Lewandowski, Peter Liver, Archie McKellar, Anthony Milton, Robert Morton, James Osmond, Simon Peck, Dick Perks, Philip Renold, Alistair Stevenson, Paul Thompson, Simon Young and Brian Watson.

### LEADER'S REPORT

When I first saw Jura at Easter on a cool, showery day, and realised for the first time how large an island it is, I had distinct misgivings as to its suitability for an expedition. When I saw it again on an even worse day in July, I was prepared to spend a fortnight trying to boost morale and dry out wet clothes!

A fortnight later, nobody seeing a group of healthily tanned people would have believed that we had been to the same place. A cold wind and rain had greeted us, yet by the time we had reached our site at Inverlussa (17 miles from Craighouse) the sun was vainly trying to appear; and despite three days' torrential rain, the camp site had the marquee and store tent in position, and a meal was ready for the last group which arrived at 10 p.m. An encouraging start—and one which was developed even more on the second day by good-hearted industry. Tents were pitched, trenches dug, scavenger hunts organised and by evening tables and benches had been hammered together.

Jura, a large island some 30 miles long and 8-12 miles wide, has not been used before by the S.H.S. The first few days after settling in were therefore spent in trying to cover a good deal of the northern half, with a view to working on certain projects. This done, it was

realised that, because of the island's size, bivouacing would be one of the most worthwhile activities; and so it proved, with everybody in camp going on one scheme and almost half the camp doing two. These ranged from the luxury of camp beds at Glengarrisdale to a three-day attack on Craighouse, during which a group of ten made the S.H.S. well known to certain locals!

The sociologists flourished, paying frequent calls in various settlements and returning with some amazing stories mainly about ghosts and witches, which even produced a ghost-watching party regularly visited throughout the night!

Jura has a rugged charm, enhanced by high peaks and many lochs. The west coast raised beaches and caves, whilst the east has bays and woods. Between the two are acres and acres of bogs (which one person crossed with monotonous regularity). The whole area, however, provided many opportunities for ornithology, fishing and climbing; but above all gave us the wonderful sight of the red deer—some six thousand of them—magnificent stags silhouetted against the skyline, or herds of hind trotting nervously away before eyeing the strangers imperiously.

A strong gale brought down the marquee and store tent, but with the help of the N.A.Y.C. group (camping with us because they were storm-bound) order was soon restored, and from then on the weather was very reasonable, with two or three outstanding days. Trips in the canoe and boat (memories of abortive fishing trips!) and even the odd hardy type who managed to swim increased noticeably, and time passed all too quickly.

Other highlights included the Ardlussa games, where two of the slower officers fought a great battle for last place in the 220 yards; a soccer match against Jura where endeavour was more apparent than skill; and nightly "sevens" matches which went on until the ball and the various hazards could hardly be seen.

A fortnight soon passes, and this report can never do more than touch the edges of the many happenings. Memories are individual, but the overriding one of pleasure from leading a group of willing and cheerful people is the one I shall retain. Singling out individuals is invidious, but I should like to thank all the officers for their hard work and for making my job so much easier and more pleasant. In this respect, too, I must mention the co-operation and helpfulness of the islanders themselves, particularly Mrs. Nelson for permission to use the site and Mr. Templeton for all his help with transport and supplies. To many others who contributed to our stay in so many ways, may I say: Thank you. Jonny Ker

## JURA

Jura is 30 miles long and 12 miles wide. There is a lot of controversy about how the island got its name. The most popular view is that when the Norsemen arrived on the Island they named it from the Viking word Jura which means Red Deer. There are many Red Deer on the island.



Most of the names of the villages are Gaelic. For example, Inverlussa means "Foot of River Lussa".

Long ago there were many feuds between the Macleans from Mull and the Campbells from Jura. The skull of a Maclean is still to be seen at Glengaristle. There is a sword mark on it showing where the owner was killed.

A few of the islanders were rather unwilling to talk about Legends and Ghosts.

The first school was at Lussgiven but the children go to school in Craighouse now, and when they graduate they go to Oban high school.

The islanders are Church of Scotland and have conservative tastes but the island used to be Liberal.

The Electricity was installed about 3 years ago, although some places had private generators.

Many of the people on the island in the summer are sons and daughters who regularly return home for their holidays from working on the mainland; those who have returned do not appear to change the living conditions on the island and in fact seem quite happy to preserve the current mode of existence. Living conditions are on a different scale on Jura from those on the mainland.

The chief language (English) was only spoken communally from about 50 years ago.

Some houses have T.V. but the majority rely for their mainland news on the "Oban Times" (delivered every 2 days) and on the radio.

There is a man on the island who acts as postman, delivery man, taxi driver, ambulance man (for the remoter parts of the island). He is known to all as "Charlie". The post is collected one day and delivered the next.

This survey was compiled due to the kindness and hospitality of the islanders, and we wish to thank all concerned.

Brian Watson, Stuart Cullum, Paul Thompson, Dick Perks

## JURA CLIMBING REPORT

Climbing started badly, unfortunately, as most of the ropes had "disappeared" from the store and the only one left was a nylon rope found tied up in a butchers shop. Despite this bad start and the fact that the rocks round the camp looked crumbly, climbing flourished.

First climbing was done one evening on a slab which was pretty steep, and soon after the rest of the slabs but one were finished off by Brian Dale and David Crews. The remaining slab, suitably named "Robin's Paunch", which was greatly overhanging and on which footholds and handholds petered out (severe in parts?), was eventually mastered on a dry day.

The best climbs were found on Janet's Crag. Climbs varied from difficult to severe, and suitable ones were found for everyone from beginners to the most experienced climbers. Of all these climbs the

easiest were the two small practice climbs, on which Brian Dale taught seven beginners, amongst whom some showed considerable promise.

The Paps (graded "difficult") was first climbed by Dick Perks and was subsequently useful ground for moderate climbers. Next was the "Crack", first climbed by David Crews and graded very difficult; it took him 12½ minutes as the actual V shaped cleft was a bit desperate. Finally "Don't Think Twice" (the Overhang) which nobody climbed at the first time (just about "Severe" grade) was an interesting climb.

"The B . ..", a climb on a buttress on the other side of Lussgiven gave David Crews and myself something to think about. It was a severe climb and was loose at the top. We hope to climb it one day!

John Sandison

## THOUGHTS ON A CLIMB

It looks easy enough.
—Take in!
Hurry up; I want to get started before prayers and this cold wind is getting annoying.
—That's me!
—Climb when you're ready!
—Climbing!
We're off and the only way back to camp and a Penguin is upwards.
—Take it slowly, don't hurry,
—O.K., Brian.
That ought to do, but still, it doesn't feel safe enough for complete confidence. Ted can hold me, sitting up there in the bracken, belayed to a tent peg; at least I hope he can, provided, of course, he isn't scanning the bay for the seal. Anyway, what docs it matter even if I do slip, 'cause it isn't as if I'm climbing a 1,000 feet cliff. Right, now if I could get my left foot up to that shelf and up you go. There's still the crack to get through yet, and it's getting smaller and smaller! Funny, I thought. Wait for the rope to tighten up again—good old Ted; on his toes, at least, I hope he isn't .There's an appetising jug over there—can't quite reach. Try again, Bond. Ah! a thin ledge just big enough for my finger tips. Scrape the moss out.
—Below!
That's my left hand fixed up, now for my right. That crack over there looks O.K. Let's go.
—You should have shoved up with your legs and not your arms.
Let's try humming something from the Stones:

"You can make it if you try,
Sometimes you have to fall"

Dammit! Thank goodness a Rock can feel no pain. Whatever the Stones say I'm still thoroughly enjoying this climb. Conquering Nature. Good, I can get hold of that jug now, and up follows the foot with the idea of finding some sort of hold. Hope Ted's awake 'cause he's going to take the strain unless I'm careful. Fancy falling into the Witches lap.



The crack at last. If I was to get my left foot there, I could get hold of that clump of bracken—no use, dangerous. That wind is fairly plastering my shirt to my back and it's getting uncomfortable. That clump of bracken seems to be the only handhold, except that pressure-hold to my right. That's the answer, because I can then get my right toe onto that ledge, "sometimes you have to fall". I wonder if I would gather no moss. I can squeeze through the crack by gripping that rock as hard as I can with my fingers. Heave. Keep that toe right in. All my weight on that ledge. —Tighten up, Ted . . . That's enough! Done it and I guess I need a rest. —Slack!
So much for the Stones—can't I ever stop thinking of the track? You might even call it single-track mindedness, except it's from an L.P.
—O.K., Ted, take in! … that's me … climbing. Off again and it's straight up from here. Thank goodness it isn't so slippery up here. Should be easy enough for the last few feet ... got there.
—Hi Ted! Good fun, this climb isn't it? —
Yah. Worth thinking about.
—I don't think I thought much about it really. Can't remember.
—It's ridiculous! The seal's out there.

James Osmond

## THE PAPS

On the Sunday before we were due to leave, three of us, John Sandison, Dave Crews and I set out to climb the nearest of the three Paps, Bein Siantaidh, 2,477 feet (Consecrated Hill). After leaving our bivi site at Craighouse we went four miles along the road and then across two miles of very boggy moorland. We had dinner of mint cake and chocolate and set out to climb the peak. All three paps are very steep and arc covered with scree. This made climbing difficult but eventually we reached the top of the scree slopes and followed a very fine ridge round to the summit cairn. We had a very good view from the summit, but mist in the far distance prevented us from seeing Ireland which the locals say can be seen on a clear day. We descended by some very fast scree runs and were soon at the bottom. Future expeditions will probably find it profitable to establish a bivi site at the foot of the Paps so all three can be climbed in one day.

Tony Milton

## THE JURA WEAVERS

The Jura Weavers, Mr. and Mrs. Mercer, live in Lealt, on Nelson land. They buy all their wool from them, and it is sheared only half a mile down the road. The Highland wool which they use is hard wool, much harder than the southern wools. The weaving does not benefit Jura in any way; the Mercers sell little locally. They sell mostly through the Scottish Crafts Association.

The Mercers use their own dyes, and their own dyeing process. They use lichens, ferns, dock leaves, some grasses, bark, rotten wood and Iris roots. For making green dye, lichen is added to dock leaves to give a golden tinge. All dyes turn black when their components are left to rot, but some blacks are more potent than others. A good red dye can be obtained from lichen by soaking it for three weeks in urine, and then boiling. The colours in general, however, arc limited to browns and greens. Some wools are used in their natural colours—black and brown flecks. They are at present experimenting with moss and seaweed. They often have to go to the other side of the island to collect material.

In their process, the dyeing is done before spinning, because the wool in the fleece is more alive nearer the sheep, and therefore resists the dye more; and the wool on the outside is dead and takes the dye readily. If the dyeing is done before spinning, the various shades can be selected but afterwards the colours would be uneven, and no control of colour could be achieved in the finished article. After dyeing, the wool has to be washed to remove the remains of the dyeing matter (e.g. bark etc.). During washing Scottish wool loses only one fifth of its weight, whereas Spanish wool loses half. All their equipment is made out of driftwood. Mr. Mercer does his dyeing in a massive cauldron which takes four hours solid stoking to boil. When dyeing, all the wool required must go into the cauldron at once, so that all the dyed wool is exactly the same shade.

They work very irregular hours, and, having no lighting except paraffin, are subject to daylight. The workroom, which is a converted cowshed, window is opposite the setting sun, so they gain all the daylight possible.

A 22 sq. ft. carpet will take 32 lbs. of dock leaves and 12 lbs. of wool. At a rate of 3 in. an hour (their normal working rate) a smaller square mat would take 19 hours solid work plus 5 hours finishing. They put wool edges to all their mats and carpets, and weave the string back into the product, whereas most weavers leave the string edges out.

The Jura weavers spend their winters weaving in Spain; they used to live there, and came to Jura three summers ago. Mr. Mercer is an author of children's books, and wrote an article on the Canaries for the Royal Geographical magazine, and is at present writing a book on island life with a weaving theme. During the winter when they are abroad he and his wife give English lessons. They love the islands and always have lived on an island.

Brian Lett and Peter Hannam

## THE INDUSTRIES OF JURA

Jura has or had three industries. The first of these is the whisky distillery. The distillery was originally owned by the Campbells, but it closed down and was reopened in the 1940's. It employs five full-time men, and almost all the whisky it distils goes out of the island. In fact the distillery benefits the islanders in virtually no way at all. All the workers come from elsewhere. They use 80 tons of barley a



fortnight, and this arrives all in one day. The five men work overtime to unload it all the same day (the barley comes in one ½ cwt. sacks). The whisky is restricted to having a maximum malt content of 3%. They use sherry casks from Spain for the whisky, which hold over 100 gallons each. The waste husks are either used as cattle food or compressed as a component of hardboard. There used to be a further illicit distillery at the north end of the island; and one story we gained from the manager of the distillery, tells of a man who cut the centre out of a peat stack near his house and established a still inside. He joined the drain of his still to his own drains, and piped off the smoke to his own chimney. The excise knew there was a still working, but it took them years to find it.

The second is lobster fishing. Over the last few years this industry has degenerated because of the arrival of bigger ships which take an area and overfish it until they have utterly exhausted the waters. It is thanks to this that Jura is now short of lobsters.

Finally the land and animals; it is really too wet for cattle (the land that is) so most of the big estates are turning to black-faced sheep for their wool and meat. The deer provide no real income, but of recent years they have begun to be sent to the mainland as venison. The owners cannot control them, and they are free to wander from estate to estate. If all the deer have wandered off one estate at the time of the shooting season, the estate owner can claim none. A certain amount of prosperity lies in agriculture. There are farms around Craighouse, and the large estates such as the Nelsons which also farm. Every bit of land which could be possibly used is used. However the Forestry Commission is buying up all the land it can in the islands, and unfortunately it always takes the best land for farming.

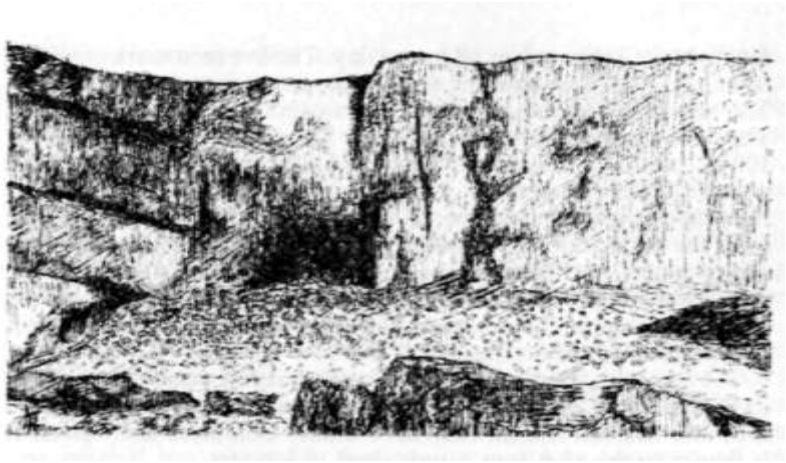
Brian Lett and Peter Hannam

## THE CAVES

Along the west coast of Jura there are some very fine examples of the famous 25 ft. and 50 ft. raised beaches, which are well marked along the west coast of Scotland. These features are associated with a change of sea level, with the result that old beaches are stranded, or raised above the present sea level. We decided to explore some of these raised beaches and if possible find the "King's Cave", where we would spend the night.

Many of these caves had been used at various times as shelters by fishermen and shepherds, and one near Loch Tarbert was used by pilgrims on their way north to Iona. The one we were looking for was used by burial parties taking the bodies of kings and chieftains across to the sacred burial ground on Colonsay. We had heard that this cave was so large that it could be used to accommodate a battalion of soldiers, or park twenty coaches.

We set off on a hot, sunny morning and met Charles Nelson, who acted as guide at Ardlussa. We saw many deer (one large herd of perhaps a hundred just south of Corpach Bay), at least two adders and a herd of about thirty wild goats which followed us for a short



distance along the other side of a valley. The scenery was magnificent; the 1000 ft cliffs along the south coast of Mull were clearly visible, and Ben More could also be seen, some 28 miles away.

Eventually we found the first cave, in which were two dead deer. By this time we were walking along the raised beaches, over large lichen-covered pebbles, which were about the size of an orange or grapefruit, and had the typical shape of a beach pebble. The greatest visible extent of one of these beaches was some 350 yd. long, by 200 yd. wide and 50 ft. above sea level. As well as caves, we also saw arches and stacks now well above the present sea level.

When we found our cave its size certainly agreed with all we had heard about it. The mouth was about 40 ft. across and 30 ft. high and opened into a vast chasm. Fortunately, the air inside was good, and pleasantly warm. The floor was covered with a thick layer of soft, dry dung. In one of the recesses was a dead goat.

A very welcome brew-up put new life in us and we set about collecting driftwood, which was in great abundance, for our cooking fire. Some of us who did not have groundsheets used driftwood planks to sleep on. Our water supply was a small waterfall, cascading down the cliff outside the cave. This water presumably came from a loch about a quarter of a mile away, and although there were no surface streams leading to the cliff, the water percolated through the raised beach material to the cliff edge.

We sat on the beach and ate our reconstituted supper, watching the sun set over Colonsay. Later on we lit an enormous fire in the cave, which kept us warm during the night.

The next day was cool and overcast. After breakfast we set off back to camp at a fairly brisk pace, taking a shorter and more direct route up the Shian valley and cutting over the top to meet the road by Loch Shiffen. On the way we paused briefly to admire a young eagle in flight, kill an adder, stalk a stag, retrieve a pair of binoculars and have lunch. We planned to arrive in camp as early as possible so that we would be in good time for the football match that evening. In all we had covered about 25 miles.



The caves on the west coast of Jura are unforgettable. Their remoteness and their geographical and historical significance make them all the more mysterious and intriguing. I think that when the caves are next visited, a great deal of useful work could be done; looking for shells on the raised beaches, carrying out a levelling exercise, digging in the caves for remains. The cliffs in this area would also provide a wealth of excellent climbing of all grades. Perhaps the best way to explore this part of Jura would be to send a small specialist expedition there, along the lines of one sent last year to Mingulay.

Robin Lord

## AN CARN

An Carn is a deserted village on the east coast of Jura, about 4 miles from the north end of the island, the inhabitants of which left the village about a century ago.

This village is situated on top of a cliff on very uneven ground, about 100 ft. above sea level and covers an area of roughly 100yd. by 50 yd. In this space there is evidence of five or six dwellings and as many outhouses for the animals. All that remains now are piles of loose stones about 2 ft. in height, where the walls used to be. Most of the dwellings consisted of one or two rooms and the outhouses of one only. It is one of these outhouses which is best preserved, having all four walls still standing to a height of about 5 ft., with a doorway and lintel over it in one of them. In this building is evidence that it was occupied by animals, since in one corner there is a quarter circle of stones (radius 3 ft.) and into this was put a ewe and a lamb. This was done if the ewe had for some reason lost its only lamb, and another had had twins. In such a case the lamb less ewe was put into this tiny enclosure with one of the twins, and was left with no choice but to mother it.

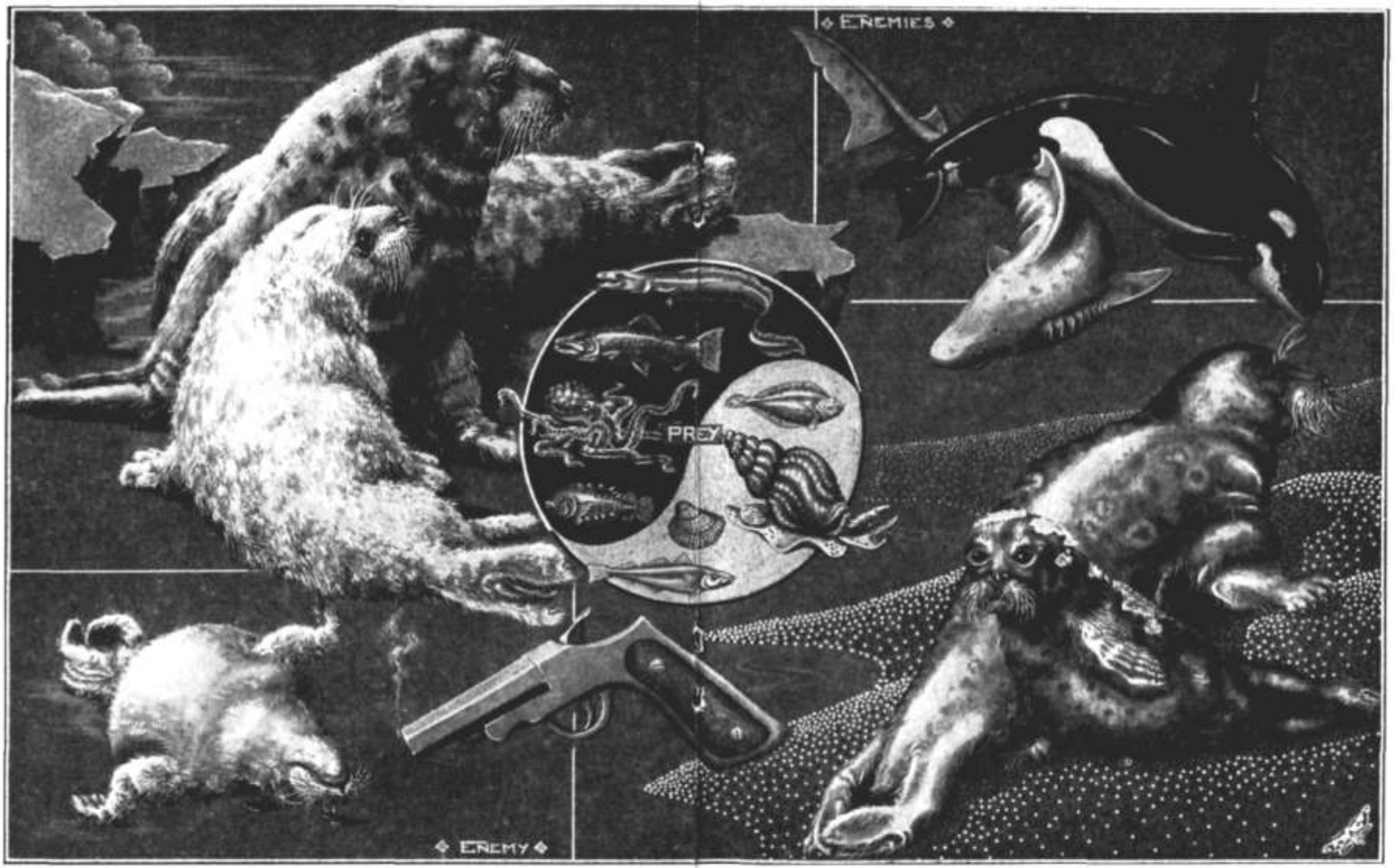
In one of the dwellings there is what must have once a small shelf. It consists of a hollow in the wall of about I ft., with a flat piece of slat on the bottom.

It appears that the village was completely cut off from the rest of the island, since there is no evidence of a path or track to any other habitation. Thus these crofters were probably entirely dependent on what they could produce. Consequently they must have relied very largely on agriculture for their subsistence—one can still see furrows in the plot of land which they cultivated, a little to the south of the village. For clothes and meat they probably relied on their sheep the evidence for which I have provided already. The secondary industry was almost certainly fishing. A quarter of a mile north of the village one can see a small bay which they must have used as their base. It has one of the very few raised beaches on the east side of the island, and it is here that the villagers kept their boats.

200 years ago, distilling was carried out in the village. In a nearby wood there are the remains of a still.

There are two possible reasons for the desertion of this village:

1. The Lairds of the last century wanted the lands for themselves and so made impossible demands on the poor crofters, which may well




"SEAL MOURNING?" by PETER PARKS

have forced them to leave the village and seek other means of earning their living.

2. There was at that time a great desire to branch out and gain wider experience abroad.

Of these two reasons the first appears more probable.

Ronald Lewandowski

## THE WEATHER

The weather was, on the whole, very good. The total rainfall was 2.3 in. The greatest rainfall was on Wednesday the fourth, when 0.87 in. was recorded. The only real storm occurred on Thursday the fifth when the tide was held in for 24 hours by the wind, and that night the marquee and store tent were blown down.

The greatest temperature, 73°F in the shade, was recorded on Monday the ninth and the minimum temperature, 40° F, was recorded that night.

Tony Milton

## PROJECT REPORT

We were very fortunate in that we were able to set up and establish the camp quickly, so that soon after the start of the expedition, groups were at work studying various aspects of the island. The hospitality of the islanders encouraged several parties to travel far and wide in their search to learn more about Jura. However, in spite of a great deal of work done, only a patchwork result has been achieved. This is of course inevitable. The size of the island and the short length of time available account for this, and obviously it will take a great deal more time to begin to see anything like an overall picture of the island.

One very useful feature was a book about the island, which enabled us to follow up various ideas and concentrate on certain topics. I think that we managed to start several projects quite successfully, but their completion will depend on the work done by future expeditions.

Ideas for future work might include:

(i) A detailed study of the distribution and movement of deer over the island.

(ii) A special visit to the caves near Loch Tarbert.

(iii) A geographical study of Loch Tarbert.

(iv) A study of the settlement at:

(a) Keills, especially the 11th century chapel.

(b) Lagg.

(c) Craighouse.

(d) Knockrome.

(v) The significance of Jura during the spread of Christianity in Western Scotland.

Robin Lord



## RAASAY EXPEDITION 1965

August 16th-September 2nd

*Leader* Clifford Fountaine

*Officers*

David Evans, Chris Gascoine-Hart, Nigel Hawkins, Robert Metcalfe, Tim Roe and Roger Stalley.

*Boys*

Michael Ackroyd, James Agnew. Philip Ambler, Charles Boyle, Nigel Broughton, David Doyle, Jeremy Duff, James Edwards, Marcus Evans, Alan Evison, Ian Fairclough, Stuart Giggins, Charles Jackson, Andrew Laurie, Andrew Lynall, Oliver Parker, Michael Powell-Brett, William Purcell, Andrew Ralston, Barnaby Renold, Graham Scothern, William Temple, Michael Venn, Gerald Welford, Hugh Williams and Andrew Wilson.

## LEADER'S REPORT

Much of the 1964 Report was taken up with articles on last year's successful Raasay Expedition, and that is one reason why not very much will be included this year. A fairly lengthy Leader's Report should I hope fill many gaps.

Twenty-six boys, seven officers, incredibly bad weather for most of the time but a fine camp spirit were the main ingredients of this year's expedition.

The camp site, as last year, was situated on the small green piece of land gently sloping towards the sea situated under the crumbly remains of Brochel Castle. This site is fine scenically and sheltered on three sides. The fourth side, however, faces the open sea to the East. When the wind blew hard, as it often did, from that direction life could be a little uncomfortable especially when it was accompanied by heavy rain! The site became very muddy with depressing rapidity and it was fortunate indeed that we had access to and therefore used sheets of corrugated iron to cover the more muddy areas. Which was more dangerous to those less sure-footed was a debatable point!

The advent of an advance party in the shape of Messrs. David Evans, Tim Roe, Roger Stalley and wee Willie Temple made the establishing of camp far easier. The hard and endless labour of carrying food and equipment was completed by 8.30 p.m. on Tuesday the day of our arrival and the first meal was eaten in the just-erected marquee at 8 p.m.—in daylight. Two anxious souls then enquired apprehensively whether they could keep n watch on the tide through-out the night! Doubtless the proximity of this force of water was a little perturbing to some but frank dismissal of any soggy tragedy put minds at rest!

The tents used had housed the Harris expedition. That Outer Hebridean tribe had apparently been inflicted with winds so terrible that the guy ropes of many of the ridge (sleeping) tents had been torn from the canvas. Repairs in Mallaig had not proved satisfactory and Roger Stalley and his small sewing party did wonders during the next 36 hours or so—thus enabling seven, out of the required seven,

tents to be erected. Not one tent blew down during the fortnight despite high winds which prevailed much of the time. An all night watch on one occasion to deal with the guy ropes at appropriate intervals, arranged by Oli Parker and others, was not as effective as it might have been due to the continued and apparently blissful slumber of two of the nightwatchmen! There was no further night watch—much to the relief of the officers who did not take as enthusiastically as their younger companions to rising at 3 a.m. to supervise this necessary task.

Rain prevented climbing for much of the time but many boys made a successful trip up the easy route on the rock face next to the site. Gerald (Joe Brown) Welford amazed several by climbing a large overhang and later on during the same climb halted a while most casually, while perched precariously to inform the man belaying that if he pulled the rope tight like that again he (the climber) would pull him off! Regrettably most of the rocks around Arnish were too high for climbing, though there are one or two outcrops which are suitable.

Nigel Hawkins showed remarkable patience and martyrdom in arranging the sailing and canoeing. Many a day he would spend considerable time having his limbs frozen stiff and his lips coloured blue sailing or sitting in the boat with a bunch of expectant but invariably unsuccessful fisherman! Every boy had an opportunity of sailing under his, Oli Parker's or David Evans' guidance. Was it guidance? Providence undoubtedly saved the day on one or two occasions when those of us who were inexperienced had the privilege of holding the tiller!

The use of Clachan Lodge—about 7V miles from the camp and 2 miles from Inverarish Village—made the visiting of the small isle of Scalpay far easier than last year. There were two trips to this island. The first group embarked on Mr. John Nicholson's motor launch fairly early on a cold, wet morning. A brief stop was made to catch a dozen fish and then on again in the driving rain to have lunch on the island before returning. Many who had expressed the wish that the trip should take place despite the weather thought differently some hours later! The remainder of the camp were more fortunate. A fine day and 90 odd mackerel made the walk back to camp almost worthwhile. Forty of the day's catch were quickly gutted by bloodthirsty volunteers and cooked (or uncooked!) and eaten at once by hungry souls (if you follow!). A Kon-tiki raft without oil drums resulted in "Percy" Purcell and others seeking dry clothes within minutes of the craft's maiden voyage!

On the first Sunday of our visit a small group went to the Scottish Free Church at Inverarish in the South. The second Sunday a short service in the morning was held, taken jointly by most of the officers.

In addition to the large amount of walking which was done (particularly by half a dozen or so whose legs carried them well over 100 miles during the fortnight) three or four one-night camps were established. Fladda was a popular spot particularly with Fladdaman



Tim Roe who must surely know very well every part of that tidal island to the North of the camp. Chris Gascoine-Hart gave every encouragement to those showing an interest in geology and a line collection of rocks and fossils was on permanent display on a special table in the marquee.

David (Fred) Doyle's weather recording was kept up to date and most items recorded arc, one hopes, reasonably accurate; but a maximum and minimum thermometer facing the sun should be avoided in future!

A small party visited Portree on the second Saturday, spending the night before and the night after at Clachan Lodge. This same party went to the Church on the day following their visit to Skye.

All of us will remember particular incidents during the expedition. Ones that spring to mind arc the capsizing of a canoe and the exciting and well-executed rescue in rough sea of boy, canoe and paddle by David Evans and Bob Metcalfe. One remembers with sorrow the ceremonial boiling, burning and burying at sea of poor Nellie the mini crab to the out of tune accompaniment of the Wedding March and the National Anthem! Chris Gascoine-Hart's fantastic head stands and yoga leg bending on tables, in tents and on old orange boxes on the sea shore are remembered with delighted awe! The supper on the last night at Brochel was a lavish affair and it was disappointing that no more of the islanders could join us. The weather however had been particularly grim during the day and had daunted the spirits of those who had once intended to come.

One could continue writing about the expedition for several more pages, but space prevents this. Here, however, last but not least I must record my thanks for myself and on behalf of the members of the expedition to all those people who gave their help and encouragement in the running of this successful expedition. In particular I should like to thank the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland for their permission to use the island; to Mr. Graham for the use once again of the site at Brochel; to Mr. Peter Gillies for his great help with the transporting of equipment and for his continual thoughtfulness and help towards our well being; to Mr. Evans for driving us, on short notice and in all weathers, from one end of the island to the other, for the use of Clachan Lodge—particularly on the last night and for his interest, encouragement and cheerful spirits; to Mr. (Postman) MacLeod for again cleaning wells prior to our arrival, for his interest in all we did and for entertaining us with his stories and history of the island; to Major Temple for the use and transport of his dinghy and to those parents and boys concerned for the use of their canoes.

I would like to thank very much indeed the officers who worked so hard and who were so patient and loyal throughout the expedition. It was through their example, enthusiasm and cheerfulness—sometimes under depressing conditions—that much of the expedition's success is owed. To everyone else I would say thank you for your own contribution to a happy and successful expedition. It is I believe

worth remembering that the more one gives the more one receives and those who undertook as much as they could during the camp will I feel have benefited most. I only hope that everyone on the expedition enjoyed themselves as much as I did.

Clifford Fountaine

## CROFTING

There are a great many deserted settlements around Raasay testifying to the depopulation that has taken place during the past two centuries. Just over a hundred years ago the population of North Raasay numbered a thousand people; today there are only two hundred people on the whole island.

Almost everyone in camp visited Fladda and saw the small settlement there. The last remaining four families left that island in March after a severe winter, leaving only three families in Arnish and Torran—the only settlement in the northern part of the island. These six people who remain have felt this blow very keenly. After all, what is there now to keep them living in such an isolated spot? A year ago there was a community feeling with the Church and the school binding the scattered settlements together. No services have been held in the church since March. Only 2 children remain in the school, and before long, when they are eleven, they must go to Portree in Skye for their secondary education.

When talking to the crofters one could feel something of the whole tragedy. When these same crofters had attended school there were over 30 pupils, now there are only two. In the past there seemed some purpose in living here, but today there appears to be none. These remaining crofters through pressure of circumstances are being forced to look for a new job and a new place in which to live. The only thing that holds them back is the natural fear and apprehension of the future, for naturally one would be reluctant to leave one's home and land to decay and build a new life at the age of fifty.

Despair was written over Mr. Macleod's face as he told of the difficulties they have had, and of his efforts to get the road built from Brochel to Arnish. Now the road is promised, but it is 30 years too late. It will do nothing to help the settlements to find a new lease of life. Before it is built they will be deserted. Robert Metcalfe

## FISHING ON RAASAY

Raasay has many rocky, seaweeded bays round her coast, which abound with good pollock. We soon found a good spot on the rocks about four-hundred yards north of the camp. Immediately spinners were cast in all directions and I managed to catch two small pollock of about ^ Ib. The next day brought more pollock, the biggest being 1J Ib. which Roger recorded for posterity on film. The weather hindered us considerably but still smallish pollock fell to the lures. They seemed to have a preference for silver spinners spun at medium speed, fairly deeply. One day, Barney caught two around the 2½ lb. mark and being envious, I spent a whole day after a better



specimen and was rewarded with one of 3¾ lb. Barney replied with a 4 lb. fish. Then near the end, I eventually got the best fish of the holiday, a fine 5¾ lb. Fishing on the rocks was often ruined by the sudden squalls.

The nearby loch only provided one trout of ½ lb. and was packed full of weeds. However, one day a party who were staying at Clachan Lodge attempted to land on Scalpay but the mist made it not worthwhile. So on the return journey, four hand-lines belonging to the skipper of the boat and with feathered traces, we dangled over the side on suitable "marks" and soon the boat was covered in cod, mackerel and haddock. There must have been at least 100 lb. of fish there and after splitting it with the skipper, it was eaten for tea, and even the "fat-rat" doctor had seconds! Nigel Broughton

## SAILING AND CANOEING

Sailing was confined to about seven days in the expedition, owing to the inclement weather. Practically every boy had a chance to sail in the boat, which went out for spells of between three-quarters to an hour at a time. The boat took three comfortably, and a number of the boys had a chance to helm.

The camp site was in rather an exposed position, and therefore when we went sailing we had to keep a wary eye on the weather, for the sea can whip up into a small chop in the space of five minutes.

In view of the general weather conditions we experienced at Brochel on the east side of the island, it would probably have been better to have the sailing at Loch Arnish (a sea loch), which was a little to the north on the east side.

The first few days of the expedition were perhaps our worst for boating. In fact we had to take our canoes up to an island loch above camp to get at least some canoeing done. Canoeing took place on approximately ten days, when boys went out for an hour at a time in two single-seater canoes. Nigel Hawkins

## GEOLOGY SUPER OMNIA

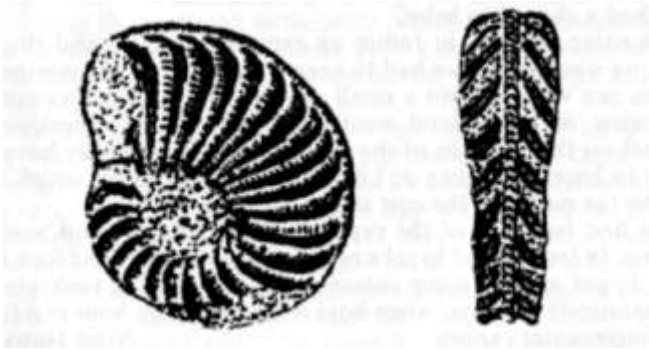
The Geologist on Raasay '65 perceived that his science had produced striking rifts within the S.H.S. camp: there were those who looked upon the camp Geologist, with his hammer, acid bottle and fens as though it was he that was extinct and that his science was strictly fossilized. There were those who believed that "Paramoudras" grow on Rhubarb trees and that Geology is in some way mixed up with "skelingtons" of ancient Spanish mariners, buried under the officers' tent. There were some, however, who really did "dig" them fossils, and their varying degrees of interest in the types of rock and the geomorphological features around them helped the camp to establish Geology as a recognized and important activity. Structural features such as faults and fold were observed and explained. Igneous, extrusive and intrusive, rocks from diorite to basalt were collected, and their landscape forming properties noted. Features of sedimentation such as false bedding, ripple marks and fossils were seen, and these led on to discussions about methods of

deposition. There is little point in listing here, the types and kinds of rocks to be found on the Island, for to gain such information one need only consult the relevant Geological map (Geol. Survey of Scotland—Applecross—sheet 81), the Regional Geol. Handbook entitled "The Tertiary Volvanic Districts of Scotland", or even the 1964 report of the S.H.S.

As an example of the work carried out, behold an extract from the Geologist's note book: Thursday, August 26th, 1965

A stroll from the camp was made southwards by four persons bearing tents etc. . . . Traversing the base of the Jurassic cliff, on the east coast, various fossils were collected from fallen rocks on the shore. . . . Friday, August 27th, 1965

After a night in small tents on the grassed talus below the "mountain lake" Chadha Larnaich, Dun Caen was assaulted. A fault in the strata produced a "rift" in the otherwise sheer cliff line, and this provided a route to the summit.



**Identified fossils**

Only a few specimens were found in situ, the rest were retrieved from boulders and rocks on talus or the beach. All were Jurassic Molluscs:

| | Horizon | Finder |
|---|---|---|
| LAMBELLIBRANCHS | | |
| Pseudolimea | Inferior Oolite | Jeremy Duff |
| Trigonia | Inferior Oolite | C.N.G.H. |
| Modiolis | Inferior polite | David Doyle |
| Pseudopeclen | Middle Lias. | Gerald Welford |
| Graphaea | Middle Lias. | C.N.G.H. |
| Plicatula | Lower Lias. | Michael Powell-Brett |
| Pleuromya | Lower Lias. | James Edwards |
| Astarte | Lower Lias. | Oliver Parker |
| BELEMNITE | | |
| Passaloteuthis | Lower Lias. | David Doyle |
| AMMONITES | | |
| Pleuroceras | Middle Lias. | C.N.G.H. |
| Dactylioceras | Upper Lias. | Oliver Parker |

Minerals found included: Crystaline quartz, Feldspars, a 'Book'of Mica and a drip deposit of Aragonite (floriforme?).

Chris Gascoine-Hart



## NO GAS AT THE LODGE

On the night before we returned to Mallaig on the ferry, we spent the night at Clachan Lodge, which is in the south end of the island. We spent most of the morning at the camp at Brochel, letting down tents and taking equipment up the hill. But, because our section was on cooking, we went up to the Lodge first, and had dinner. Just after this we discovered the calor gas had nearly run out on both cylinders, and we only had one spare. So Bob sent me down the hill to attract the attention of the lorry if it came past, and get another cylinder. If I had been five minutes later, I would have missed it, but I had only walked a short distance down the road when it came, so I stopped it (I have never felt so idiotic ever before), and asked if he had some gas. Of course he had not, but Mr. Evans, who was in the landrover, would be at the Lodge later. So I walked back up the hill, and found Gerald hard at work unblocking the tube, only to find that one gas cylinder was about three-quarters full.

At least I missed the washing up!

Hugh Williams

## RAASAY WEATHER REPORT

The instruments provided for the Expedition were a Maximum and Minimum thermometer, a rain gauge and a Hydrometer (measures Relative Humidity of the air). The other readings were made out with the help of the "Observers Book of Weather". The actual recording did not start until Friday 20th as two of the instruments were discovered only the day before.

**Weather Summary**

On the first day of weather recording, 20th, high winds gave a rough sea and almost complete cloud-coverage gave low temperatures.

But for the next 6½ days (until the afternoon of the 27th) the wind dropped and the sea became very calm. There was complete cloud-coverage for the first four days, but then it diminished, allowing the sun to peep through now and again. Through the whole of this first period, showers were very frequent. The lessening cloud coverage led to higher temperatures during the day, but colder nights.

On the afternoon of the 27th, the S.E. wind became very strong and the sea very rough, although the maximum temperature for the day was still quite high.

For the three remaining days of the camp, 28th-30th, the wind dropped again, but the sea remained rather choppy. Temperatures were low and it rained heavily, despite a lessening of cloud-coverage.

**Weather Facts**

Maximum temperature recorded 20.5°C, minimum temperature 7.0°C.
S.W. was the prevailing wind, changing to S.E. occasionally.
Highest wind speed (Beaufort Scale) 7.
Rain from 20th to the 30th totalled 1.725 in.
Highest and lowest hydrometer readings, 72% and 40%.
Roughest sea, 6.

David Doyle

## MORVERN EXPEDITION 1965

August 17th-September 2nd

*Leader* James Hardy

*Officers*

Donald Campbell, Martin Child, Alan Freeman, Steven Harris, Dr. Austin Isherwood, John Jackson, Richard Jeffrey, Gavin Macpherson and Andrew Wilson.

*Boys*

Vaughan Bithell, Angus Cater, Simon Cockburn, Anthony Conder, Paul Conran, Michael Eden-Smith, Stephen Fleet, Robert Gibbins, Mark Isherwood, Jeremy Jones, Ian Jungius, Philip Lightfoot, John Marchment, Patrick Morley, Oliver Mudford, Frank Parish, Charles Purvis, Martyn Riley, John Rimington, John Round, Murray Sager, Stephen Stoter, David Vale and Tony Welford.

### LEADER'S REPORT

We had our first sight of Morvern from the Macbrayne's steamer on August 18th. Morvern is a remote and sparsely populated mainland peninsula, and it appeared dark and forbidding. Many of us had a last leisurely cup of tea before the steamer berthed at Lochaline and the hard work of loading stores on to Mr. Philip Henderson's lorries began. Our camp-site was ten miles away on the north side of Morvern, close to the edge of Loch Teacuis. The lorries bumped over the narrow road from Lochaline and everyone seemed cheerful. It began to rain.

It rained for most of the next eleven days. Over three and a half inches of rain fell; the longest downpour lasted eight hours and the streams became torrents. Richard Jeffrey, our weatherman, gave ever hopeful weather reports, until it was announced that he was offering all his meteorological books for sale at bargain prices! I feel that the greatest success of the expedition was that no-one became downcast in the appalling conditions.

The Camp soon had an atmosphere of being lived in. The marquee was equipped with a strange assortment of tables, and bread and jam for those in need of a snack. The muddiest path led to the cottage close by. This, with its warm fire and three-legged sofa, was the meeting place for all those who wanted to dry their clothes, see Steven Harris (the Camp Administrator), use my type-writer for letters home, see the injured tern tended by the Doctor—or just chat. Usually the talkers were ejected by Steven, but he never really succeeded!

Each expedition needs an aim. We planned to explore the area round the camp as much as possible and make records of anything worthwhile. Donald Campbell and his men walked miles making lists of birds seen. Everyone, I think, saw the eagles which soared above the loch. Parties trudged across mountains and marsh collecting most of the wild flowers in bloom. Martin Child included in his geographical project a detailed map of a stream near the camp. The canoeists under John Jackson explored the loch and tracked seals and porpoises near the islands of Oronsay and Carna. Donald



MORVERN: VIEW FROM THE MARQUEE

Campbell organised a survey of the sea shore and soon filled the marquee with different species of seaweed and wriggling sea-beasties, Alan Freeman organised bivouacing parties to camp away for one night at Glencripesdale three miles away. Alas, only two could go because of the weather. Gavin Macpherson and Steven Harris surveyed and searched a deserted settlement behind the camp, and amongst other things found a plate with a picture of the Crystal Palace on it! Andrew Wilson and his fishermen had very little luck, though parties did go to Lochaline to fish off the pier there. The Doctor organised the building of a raft which proved stable in all weathers. Some found how difficult it was to stalk deer.

Our achievements were recorded in the various editions of the Morvern Chronicle and News, and many budding journalists recorded their exploits in imaginative prose.

Then the rain stopped. Captain Colville, the owner of the land on which we camped, kindly took the whole expedition sailing in his trimaran. A few were rather seasick, but all said they enjoyed it very much.

Canoe races were organised by John Jackson. The officers raced too. All cheated (except for the Camp Administrator and myself) and the championship is still disputed! There was no doubt about the

winners of the boys' races: Ian Jungius and Oliver Mudford (who had previously set a record walking distance of 32 miles in a day) well deserved their edible prize.

When the packing up was done we left Camp at 8.15 a.m. on September 2nd—in glorious sunshine.

My thanks are due to many people for this excellent expedition. First, I am very grateful to all the boys who with their high-spirited cheerfulness managed everything we asked them to do. J even forgive those who struck the officers' tents on the last morning! Secondly, I thank the officers who worked untiringly and I am sure must have aged considerably! Finally the whole expedition will join me in our grateful thanks to Captain Colville, his family, his shepherds and all the inhabitants of Morvern that we met, for all their kind help.

James Hardy

## FLORA ET FAUNA

For a biologist who calls himself such only by virtue of a zoology degree, a few years' teaching and twenty years' interest in birds, the problems set by a party of 30 in varied highland habitats are formidable. What is this flower called, why do you find different seaweeds at different levels of the shore, how do you hold a crab without getting pinched, which part of a sea-urchin is best for eating and is this large yellow spider new to science are questions indicating the range of knowledge that is expected, but isn't present. Admittedly there is a pretty safe answer to the last (particularly when the same specimen is found again half an hour later) and experience will soon answer the third but problems will always remain, particularly when books and time are short.

The bird problems I could cope with and as there were virtually no signs of migration (redshank over the camp at night and an injured dunlin beneath telegraph wires) one could just enjoy the typical mountain species including golden eagle, twite and ring ouzel and the more mundane but varied life about the camp which is described elsewhere.

Watching an eagle soaring over 50 distant red deer as disturbed Scotch Argus butterflies rise from among the squelching purple moor grass and bog myrtle typified the features of the visit. Despite a fair amount of heather, grouse were virtually absent and the area was certainly typical deer forest, not grouse moor, as any one attempting to negotiate or avoid the deer fences would agree. Rising out of the deer forest were an assortment of crags and screes down which Oliver rolled innumerable objects and up a couple of which I foolishly ventured. The connection between the pastiness of the rock for climbing compared with its splendour as a habitat for alpine and sub-alpine vegetation was readily apparent. The number of interesting plants which I did not care to pursue further by virtue of the rock was formidable and was one of the reasons that none of the varieties of the area were recorded; but yellow mountain saxifrage and Alpine ladies mantle provided interest as did the various orchids, the



identification of which was usually beyond a zoologist who was aware of the possibilities of hybridization.

Near the camp, typical bogs showed the gloriously firm and supple flowers of grass of parnassus, the insectivorous plants butterwort and sundew (the former far more common), bog asphodel and heath milkwort; but a planned survey of a number of representative square metre samples to compare with those quoted in W. H. Peursall's "Mountains and Moorlands" never materialised although a long piece of string did have knots tied in it at intervals of one metre.

Even nearer the camp, the shore was potentially superb, and a couple of afternoons which coincided with really low tides led to a vast supply of varied beasts being ferried to the marquee, as Andrew directed operations among the soft mud and thick weed at the edge of the sea. Andrew himself unearthed a splendid specimen of Priapulus Candatus, which, according to Yonge and Barrett, is rare and not found in the north; and another highly extensible, leathery grey object which I tentatively identified as Golfingia Elongata, because of the suitability of the specific name, and despite the fact that the beast was really too big.

The text book clarity of the seaweed zonation, the delicate beauty of the sea slugs (so much more attractive than their black counterparts of the wetlands above), the exciting spots of the butterfish as it lurked out of water among the weed, the sea cucumbers and acorn worms and endless small amplipods which one could wash oft' the weed, emphasised how splendid it would be to teach biology by a seashore like this, and confirmed my urge to retreat for a couple of years of idleness on the west coast of Ireland.

But for all this variety, for all this beauty I constantly returned to the typical thought of a biologist among the unspoiled hills, to one of the endless unanswerables:

The summit of a mountain,
A vision of the world,
Man's place?

Donald Campbell

## CANOEING

This year's canoeing was unfortunately restricted by a good deal of rough weather; however, this made for exciting and tough canoeing.

The three canoes fared well and got through each time. The two fibre-glass ones, although rather sluggish at times, ploughed through the large waves, while the canvas one, a great deal lighter, bounced over most of them. In rough weather they shipped about two or three inches of water—not enough to upset the canoe but certainly enough to soak the canoeist.

Unfortunately we were only able to have one canoe bivouac, mainly because of the weather, but the group that did go really enjoyed it.

Six of us set off from the camp site at about 11.30 on Friday, August 27th. We canoed up Loch Teacuis with the wind and tide behind us and we did not hurry. We watched about twenty seals basking on the rocks. They were a lazy sight. We went ashore to have lunch on the shore facing Carna and waited for the tide to turn to take us down Loch Sunart to Salen, our destination.

When we started we found that the tide did not make much difference as Loch Sunart is too wide for the tide to flow really fast. Also we had the wind against us. We landed at Salen after about three hours' canoeing.

The forecast said that it would be very windy that night, so we took trouble in finding a good camp. Eventually, after having a cup of tea in the hotel, we pitched camp inside a derelict crofter's cottage. Although it had no roof, the walls gave us very good shelter. It was very wet and windy in the night but we all managed to get about eight or ten hours' sleep.

In the morning, after breakfast, we decided to try to canoe back to the camp which was seven miles away. It was very hard going up the Loch as the wind was ahead. At last, after about an hour's canoeing and only one mile behind us we decided to give up and try either when the wind dropped or the next day, Sunday.

At about midday we realized that the wind would not die down so we pitched camp by the side of the Loch and decided to try the next day, whatever the weather.

Again it rained most of the night and everything was wet. The weather was not much better but we left at 7 o'clock after packing everything into the canoes. The waves seemed very high compared with the canoes and water came over the edge of the boats at nearly every wave. Everything and everybody in the boats were drenched by the time we arrived back at camp. There they had just finished their breakfast!

Even though we had to dry out everything we took, it was well worth while.

Ian Jungius and Oliver Mudford

## EARLY MORNING DISEASE

The Morvern Expedition this year was unfortunate enough to suffer from attacks of this rare complaint, about which the Doctor could do nothing. It was all started by the Camp Administrator (typical!) when he got up with Oliver Mudford and Ian Jungius to take them for a little walk. It spread to Glen Cripesdale where an officer, who, to preserve his anonymity shall pass under the pseudonym of "Me", could have been observed, if you were quick enough, swimming before breakfast in Loch Sunart. This particular branch of the disease soon spread to Charles Purvis and Alan Freeman. There was an attempt on the Beinn Ghormaig record before breakfast once, too, and a section which roused the entire camp at ten past eight. John Jackson was to be observed packing up his section's tent very early on the last morning, whereupon his section obliged by packing up John's tent. They might have waited until we were awake,



though. The Earnew was sighted in the early hours one morning, so John Round and Donald Campbell caught the disease in the hope of another sighting. And to add insult to injury, Donald Campbell, Angus Cater and Murray Sager set off for Lochaline before breakfast on the last morning—and breakfast was at 5.30! We hope this disease will never strike again.

Gavin Macpherson

## SURVEYING

Two fairly successful surveys were made on Morvern this year, the first at the mouth of a nearby burn, and the second at the ruined village by the camp site. We were rather short of equipment, but a "surveyor's chain" was constructed from a piece of string, and using two linen tapes, several pairs of wet feet and a few pieces of stick, the measurements were taken, and Martin Child drew up a most impressive looking plan. Measurements were also taken on the flow of the stream, which varied by an amazing amount depending upon the recent rainfall.

The second main survey was of the ruined village near the campsite, and, owing to the large area to be covered compasses had to be used as a rather unsatisfactory substitute for theodolites. We were also reduced by this time to one tape, so a little more improvisation was called for. Eventually, with Andrew Wilson and Murray Sager squinting through prismatic compasses, and Phil Lightfoot standing up to his neck in bracken holding a tent pole for them to sight on, we managed to get enough readings to draw up a reasonable map of the area.

Gavin Macpherson

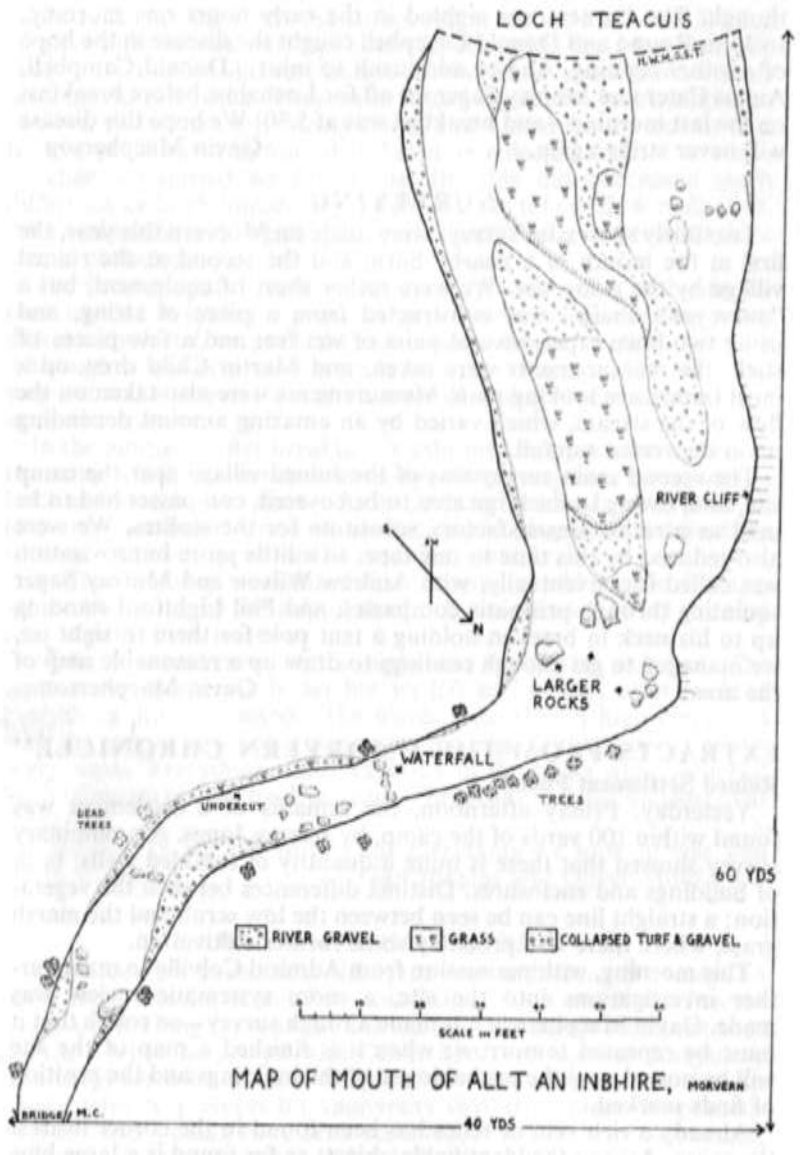
## "EXTRACTS FROM THE "MORVERN CHRONICLE"

Ruined Settlement Found

Yesterday, Friday afternoon, the remains of a settlement was found within 100 yards of the camp, by Jeremy Jones. A preliminary survey showed that there is quite a quantity of tumbled walls, both of buildings and enclosures. Distinct differences between the vegetation; a straight line can be seen between the low scrub and the marsh grass, where there was probably some former cultivation.

This morning, with permission from Admiral Colville to make further investigations into the site, a more systematic review was made. Gavin Macpherson has made a rough survey—so rough that it must be repeated tomorrow; when it is finished a map of the site will be posted, and the probable use of the buildings and the position of finds marked.

Already a rich vein of relics has been found in the corner nearest the camp. Among the identifiable objects so far found is a large blue plate with an illustration of the Crystal Palace—which is our best clue to when the building was occupied; it indicates that the building was lived in up to 100 years ago at least. A pair of children's shoes, still quite recognizable with machine stitching, cannot be dated accurately from the style, but the lack of rotting of the leather may indicate that they were put there even more recently.




Readings taken over a period of five days:

Mean temperature: 12°C (54°F) Mean speed: 2.23 m.p.h. (3.27 feet per sec.) Mean volume: 25.31 cu. ft. per. sec.



But a salt-glazed tea pot (similar to Rockingham?) might be as early as 18th century. Some of the bits of bottle are almost certainly 18th century, and three have a maker's mark on the bottom, and so we may be able to identify them more closely.

The presence of so much glass and china—and children's shoes may indicate that the occupiers were relatively wealthy—though it would be surprising if another big house existed so close to Rahoy Mouse.

At the moment there are several questions to be answered about the whole thing and some interesting work may answer them.

**Walking**

Ian Jungius, Oliver Mudford and Steven Harris on Thursday last set a new walking distance record, verified at 32 miles. This is the longest distance ever walked by boys in a Junior Camp. It was a particularly good effort by Ian who had swum across the Loch and back and gone for a long run on the previous day. Besides sparing their energies for the long walk, they saw a great variety of birds including eagles, hooded crows, sparrows, house martins, hawks, herons, oyster catcher, insulator birds, also were seen a rhubarb tree, two roe doe deer, a boot-lace snake and a fresh water seal.

**Letter to the Editor**

Sir,

Perhaps I may take this opportunity of voicing my opinion on the subject of New Year's Honours. 1 can only suggest that the present, non-existent method of awarding medals for bravery within the society is totally inadequate. You are aware, no doubt, of the incident in which a particularly valiant officer risked his life to rescue the raft recently found on Loch Teacuis. To date, I believe two officers have voluntary entered the sea, one in Loch Teacuis and one in Loch Sunart. Also a particularly brave officer risked both his life and his dignity whilst rescuing a pair of trousers when he was most brutally attacked in Glen Cripesdale.

I am sure, sir, you will agree that these and many other deeds, deserve full recognition; surely the Prime Minister should be asked to consider my name in the next honours list?

I am still, sir, your most humble servant,

Sir Gavin Macpherson
Private, K.O.S.B.

**Bivouac**

We left camp at 1.30 amidst the cheers? of our fellows, and struck out along the road for Beinn Ghormaig, (with frequent rests due to our heavy packs which included a gas stove), and we climbed up the treacherous hillside to the cairn below the steep mountain Beinn Ghormaig, 1,475 ft. high.

We then realised that we had only come half a mile in two hours. So we hurried on, and after many difficulties, which included climbing down a mountain through the undergrowth, we came upon a little deserted hut, where we ate some raspberries. Murray thought that this was a very nice tumbledown shack, and said he was going to

stay there for the night! When we arrived at our large camp site, which was about 9 square feet of grass, we erected our tents and started cooking supper. This was rather a ramshackle meal, as we ate tepid Chicken Supreme out of tins, and cold rice pudding out of the same tins. After this we all went to bed with, due to the food, much singing and laughter—into the same tent, except for Anthony, who most sensibly went to a different one. We went to sleep most tired and uncomfortable.

Angus woke up the next morning with even more fleas biting at him; so he buried himself under his sleeping bag and went back to sleep with Murray's nose in his ear, and Gavin's hair in his mouth. When we all woke up at about 7.30 the next morning, we all complained about two things: fleas and the weather. The fleas were murder, and the weather atrocious. The next shocking thing to happen was to see the brave Gavin, one of our leaders, plunge into the Loch and come out three seconds later. We had quite a nice breakfast of hot porridge and warm hamburgers.

As it had briefly let off raining, we started to pack up our wet sleeping bags and set off for the shack Murray was so keen on. When we got there, we emptied our boots of water, and had a brief rest. We then started off up the near vertical climb through the undergrowth, and after much puffing and panting, we arrived at the top, 1,000 feet above sea level. As we were soaked to the skin, we hurried down past Beinn Ghormaig along a sheep path. We arrived home half an hour later, soaking wet but cheerful. It had been an interesting and worthwhile experience for all of us, and well worth doing.

**Injured Tern Found**

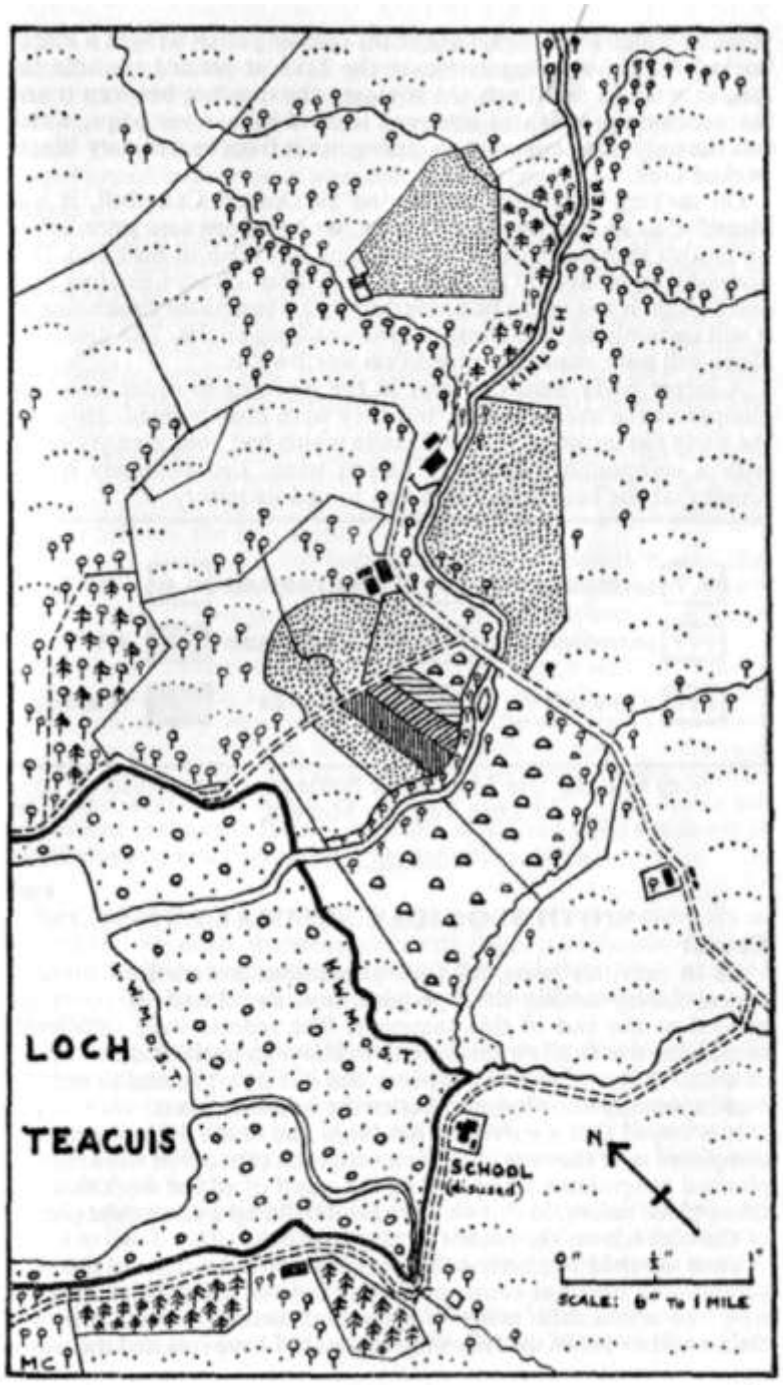
On a canoeing trip with Oliver Mudford, Ian Jungius, Stephen Fleet and a vast band of gallant followers, it was gone by us Loch Teacuis upwardly. Lunch was stopped for at the cottage whence an oar was to be returned. The oar having been returned, a school of porpoise were sighted, also a limited quantity of seals, type grey colour. Thither it was gone to the ultimactic side of Oronsay, where, a red floating jelloid form of life having been seen, a picking up was made of the afore mentioned by me and I got what I deserved on the hands and face (whereat I marvelled at my increase in handsomeness). During the taking of luncheon one of the company made the rest of the company aware of the presence of a colony of red ants in his pants (it is not believed that there is any political implication is to be drawn from this).

On the return journey a bird, by species Tern was optically noted sitting on the sea shore. A careful approach was made, and it was captured when all fears were banished by the fact that it was seen to be injured. This Tern is now in the camp Vetinary Surgeon's hands, where it is said to be "comfortable".

**Great Ornithological Discovery**

Probably the most important find of the expedition was made today when the very rare Earnew was sighted at dawn by Martin Child and Steven Harris. The two officers had risen early, as is their

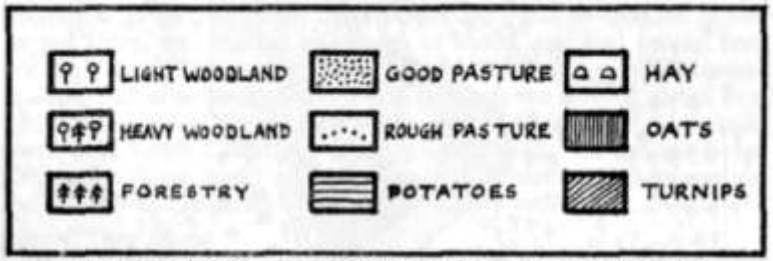




wont, to watch birds. From out of the morning mists winged a Black-backed Gull. Swooping low over the Loch it headed towards the raft, moored in mid-Loch. As it closed the distance between it and the watching pair, it was observed to have mauve wing-tips, which was the only thing apparent to distinguish it from an ordinary Black-backed Gull.

On making a detailed description to Donald Campbell, it was identified as an Earnew. The Earnew has only been seen once before on British shores, and that was back in 1932 also in Scotland. It is normally an inhabitant of New Zealand. This is a very exciting find, and though it has yet to be confirmed by an accredited ornithologist, it will certainly be of interest in bird-watching circles. The discovery alone will have made the expedition worthwhile.

A larger party went out later in the morning in order to take a glimpse at the exciting sight, but they were disappointed. However the party did locate an injured Dunlin which had been seen yesterday with a compound fracture in its left wing. Unfortunately it was found that the best thing to do was to end its misery.




Key to Land Use Map of the Settlement at the head of Loch Teacuis, Morven.

## ORNITHOLOGICAL SUMMARY 1965

### General

As in previous years, all four expeditions included an ornithological survey among their projects, and the classified results are printed at the end of this summary. The reports were sufficiently comprehensive to allow the Society to claim an unrivalled and up-to-date knowledge of the four regions, and it is now planned to put this ever-increasing knowledge to better use in future years.

It is hoped that a survey of the Inner and Outer Hebrides will be completed over the next five years, with each expedition working to a planned programme which will be the result of all the work that has taken place before. In this way, we shall build up a composite picture of the bird life on the islands in all respects.

Thus the field work done this year will form the basis of the total survey—the time has come to advance beyond mere "bird numeration" to a scientific study of migration, nesting habits, territorial claims and so on. In the following summary I have retained the words



of the report of each expedition as far as possible, in the hope that the full individuality of each group will make its presence felt! My thanks go to John Round, Andrew Laurie, and Simon Young, whose presence was responsible for the compiling of this report in the first place. The following order is approximately chronological—no suggestion of inferiority is intended to Morvern!

### Harris

The limits of the region for study were decided after two preliminary days in the field, and it was agreed that a complete survey should be made west of a line running due North from the West shore of Lochan Beag (054078), reaching Loch Resort at the mouth of Abhainn Bearraray (054165). This peninsula of land included considerable sandy and rocky coast, as well as a hilly interior covered in rough grasses—heather was in particularly poor condition.

### Summary

Comment must be made on the lack of nesting gulls, the more so because reports were received of Herring Gulls nesting on Scarp, and it seemed unlikely that there would be any difference in the predators of eggs between the two areas.

The poor quality of the heather (it is never burnt) meant that moorland birds were practically non-existent—unconfirmed reports were received of two grouse (?) and a partridge, although the factor denied that there were any of the latter species in the area.

Despite a number of reasonably high cliffs, there were no signs of common guillemots, razor bills or puffins—the only representatives of the auk family were black guillemots, thereby leading to some surprising omissions from the final list. Only 38 species were confirmed—this is clearly a region of slight bird life by comparison with other areas; it is hoped that the Morsgail area to the North will be covered in the near future, since that is reputed to be the haunt of ornithologists, and presumably, by deduction, birds!

### Jura

Jura, being thirty miles long, is too large to cover successfully in a fortnight. We dealt, therefore, only with the part of the island North of Loch Tarbert, noting 66 species in all, in a habitat that included mudflat, pine forest and an abundance of sea clifls and lochs.

Summary

The storm in the middle of the expedition may be the reason tor the large numbers of razorbills and guillemots seen from the "Shapinsay" on the return journey to Oban. After the breeding season these birds wander far out to sea in search of food, and live there for long periods. The storm may have driven this large number of Auks into the Sound of Jura.

Great tits are missing from the Jura list, and one of the weavers who has lived on the island for some years has not seen any either—this absence may be due to the fact that their populations become localised in such Northerly [attitudes.

Last of all, I would like to mention that the three pairs of Golden eagles on Jura have not bred successfully for the last four years.

failure is almost certainly due to the eagles' diet which includes dead sheep. The sheep are passed through the sheep dips, containing organic chemicals, before shearing, and if a very small amount of these chemicals is ingested by the eagle, infertile eggs are produced.

**Raasay** A comprehensive list has been received, but no remarks of importance!

**Morvern** The camp was situated about half a mile from the bottom of Loch Teacuis, while to the West of the camp was Beinn Ghormaig and Beinn ladain, leading to Glen Cripesdale—a wooded valley opening onto Loch Sunart.

**Classified List** Among the many tasks awaiting re-organising, one of the most urgent is the decision as to the method of classification to be adopted for all expeditions: the one that follows is based on Fitter in Collins' "Guide to British Birds". I regret that I have had to reduce the lists to the simplest common system, thereby omitting the full details regarding status and distribution, but these will be filed by the Society and the British Trust for Ornithology, so effort has not been spurned!

Once again, my thanks to all those who contributed to the ornithology in any way, and I hope that they will feel that their efforts have been appreciated to the full, if not in print.

Alan Bateman (Group Co-ordinator)

## CLASSIFIED LIST—1965

*(Classification based on Fitter in Collins 'Guide to British Birds'.)*

### Land Birds

| Species | Harris | Jura | Raasay | Morvern |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Common Wren | × | × | × | × |
| 2. Stonechat | × | × | × | × |
| 3. Whinchat | | × | × | × |
| 4. House-Sparrow | × | × | × | × |
| 5. Blue Tit | | × | × | × |
| 6. Coal Tit | | × | × | × |
| 7. Robin | | × | × | × |
| 8. Hedge-Sparrow | | × | × | × |
| 9. Goldcrest | | × | | × |
| 10. Wheatear | × | × | | × |
| 11. Meadow-Pipit | × | × | × | × |
| 12. Chaffinch | | × | | × |
| 13. Green Finch | | | | × |
| 14. Bull Finch | | | × | × |
| 15. Willow Warbler | | × | × | × |
| 16. Common Whitethroat | | × | | × |
| 17. Yellowhammer | | × | | × |
| 18. Redstart | | | | × |
| 19. Starling | × | × | | × |
| 20. Song Thrush | × | × | × | × |
| 21. Ring Ouzel | × | | | × |
| 22. Blackbird | × | × | × | × |
| 23. Great Tit | | | × | × |
| 24. Redpoll | | | | × |
| 25. Long Tailed Tit | | | | × |



| Species | Harris | Jura | Raasay | Morvern |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26. Twite | | | | × |
| 27. Mistle Thrush | | × | × | |
| 28. Merlin | | × | × | × |
| 29. Golden Plover | × | | | |
| 30. Lapwing | × | | | |
| 31. Cuckoo | × | | | |
| 32. Swallow | | × | | × |
| 33. Tree-Creeper | | | | × |
| 34. Swift | | × | | |
| 35. Sand Martin | | | | × |
| 36. House Martin | | | | × |
| 37. Dunlin | | | | × |
| 38. Kestrel | × | × | × | × |
| 39. Hooded Crow | × | × | × | × |
| 40. Carrion Crow | | × | × | × |
| 41. Jackdaw | | | | × |
| 42. Rook | | | × | |
| 43. Great Spotted Woodpecker | | | | × |
| 44. Spotted Fly-catcher | | × | | × |
| 45. Wood Pigeon | | × | | × |
| 46. Rock Dove | | × | × | |
| 47. Ring Dove | | | × | |
| 48. Peregrine | | × | | |
| 49. Tawny Owl | | × | | |
| 50. Barn Owl | | × | | |
| 51. Red Grouse | | × | × | × |
| 52. Pheasant (Common) | | × | | |
| 53. Common Buzzard | × | × | × | × |
| 54. Raven | × | × | × | × |
| 55. Capercaillie | | × | | |
| 56. Sparrow-Hawk | | | × | |
| 57. Golden Eagle | × | × | × | × |
| | 17 | 37 | 27 | 43 |

### rside Birds

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 58. Rock Pipit | × | × | × | × |
| 59. Grey Wagtail | × | | × | × |
| | | × | × | × |
| 61. White Wagtail | | × | | |
| 62. Dipper | × | | | × |
| 63. Ring Plover | × | × | | |
| 64. Common Sandpiper | × | × | | |
| 65. Common Snipe | × | | × | × |
| 66. Curlew | | × | × | × |
| 67. Arctic Tern | × | × | | |
| 68. Common Tern | × | × | | × |
| 69. Oystercatcher | × | × | × | × |
| 70. Common Heron | × | × | × | × |
| | 10 | 10 | 7 | 9 |

### Water Birds

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 71. Black Guillemot | × | × | × | |
| 72. Puffin | | × | × | |
| 73. Fulmar Petrel | | | × | |
| 74. Manx Shearwater | | | | × |
| 75. Black-headed Gull | × | × | | × |
| 76. Common Gull | × | × | × | × |
| 77. Lesser Black Back | × | × | × | × |

| Species | Harris | Jura | Raasay | Morvern |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 78. Kittiwake | | | × | × |
| 79. Arctic Skua | | × | | × |
| 80. Great Skua | | × | | |
| 81. Herring Gull | × | × | × | × |
| 82. Mallard | | × | × | × |
| 83. Wigeon | | × | | |
| 84. Eider | × | × | × | × |
| 85. Common Scoter | | × | × | |
| 86. Teal | | × | | |
| 87. Merganser | | | | × |
| 88. Great Black-back | × | × | × | × |
| 89. Black-Throated Diver | | × | | |
| 90. Red-Throated Diver | | × | | |
| 91. Great Northern Diver | × | × | | |
| 92. Shag | × | × | × | × |
| 93. Cormorant | × | | × | × |
| 94. *Razorbill* | | | × | × |
| 95. Common Guillemot | | | × | × |
| 96. Slavonian Grebe | | | | × |
| 97. Gannet | × | | × | × |
| 98. Mute Swan | | × | | × |
| | 11 | 19 | 16 | 18 |
| TOTAL | 38 | 66 | 60 | 70 |

## PLANS FOR 1966

The Directors have arranged provisionally the following Expeditions for this summer (dates subject to alteration):

GROUP B (16 1/2 years and over) — *LEWIS EXPEDITION*
August 23rd—September 9th — Leader: Roger Dennien

GROUP C (15-16 1/2 years) — *HARRIS EXPEDITION*
July 27th—August 11th — Leader: Alan Bateman

GROUP D (14-15 1/2 years) — TEXT MISSING
July 27th—August 11th — Leader: Andrew Wilson

GROUP E (c. 13-14 1/2 years) — TEXT MISSING
August 12th to 27th — Leader: Chris Dawson

Members of GROUP A may apply for Lewis
(Ages refer to August 1966)

**Project Co-ordinators:**

*Ornithology:* Alan Bateman
*Hydrography:* Steven Harris
*Surveying:* Tim Willcocks
(Others to be announced soon)

*Medical Adviser:* Peter Peace
*Conference organiser:* David Vigar
*Compiler of revised Clothes List:* Philip Renold
*Editors of Newsletter:* David & John Cullingford & Robin Lord



Mike Baker's excellent 16 mm colour *Cine Film* of the 1964 Gometra Expedition is available to all members for showing at Schools etc. Please contact John Lace (address page 62) in good time to ensure booking.


## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Society is pleased to take this opportunity of thanking the following for their help during the past year:

The London Parochial Charities.
Courtaulds Trust.
The Rector, Oban High School.
The Station Master, British Railways, Oban.
The Station Master, British Railways, Mallaig.
J. McKerchar, Esq., and the staff of Donald MacCulloch Ltd., Oban.
H. Carmichael, Esq., of Craignure.
The islanders of Scarp, Harris, Jura and Raasay, and the inhabitants of Morvern.
R. H. Hardy, Esq., (for the gift of a canoe).
Field, Roscoe & Co. (London).
J. Black, Esq., Oban High School.
Mr. and Mrs. D. J. Fountaine.
Mrs. W. F. Dyer; Miss Margaret Hughes; H. P. Wrigley, Esq.; George New-hall, Esq., and the Stornoway Scouts; Mr. Dargavel and the Amhuisdhe Estate; Mr. Buchanan.

We also acknowledge with thanks the help received when obtaining supplies and equipment from the following firms:

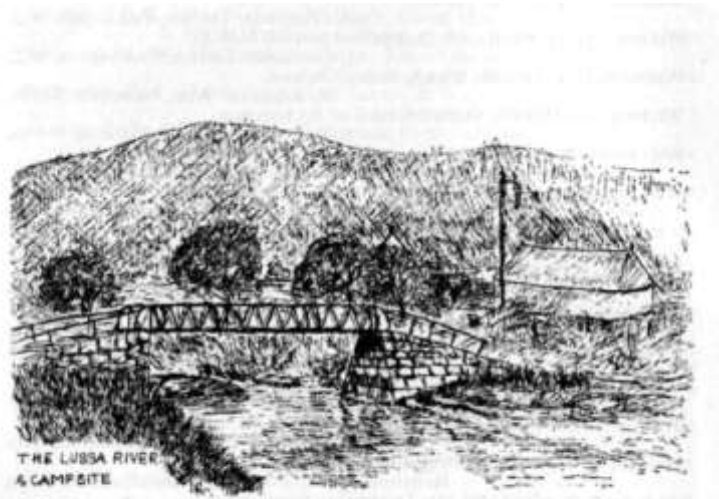
The Nestle Company Ltd., Unigate Ltd., Cadbury-Fry Export Dept., C. & T. Harris (Calne) Ltd., William Macdonald & Sons (Biscuits) Ltd., Van den Berghs Ltd., J. & J. Colman Ltd., J. Lyons & Company Ltd., C. Shippam Ltd., George Romney Ltd., Black's Camp and Canvas Hires, Ltd., The Scottish C.W.S. branches at Raasay, Oban and Tarbert (Isle of Harris), MacDougalls (Ships Chandlers), Oban, Oban Transport & Trading Company Ltd., and Morvern Stores, Lochaline.

The Schools Hebridean Company Limited, proprietor of the Schools Hebridean Society, is registered as a Charity and is recognised by the Department of Education and Science.

The registered office is at Cromer, The Avenue, Claygate, Surrey.

The Secretary is C. D. Fountaine (and in his absence, R. J. Dennien). The Hon. Secretary of the Society is C. M. Child.

Any boy wishing to apply for a County Grant towards the cost of the Expedition should write to C. J. Dawson (address as given above).




Camp Site of the Raasay Expedition

**[Is this actually the Jura campsite with the bridge over the Lussa River? Ed]**

***NOTE – The full report contains the names and addresses of all the members and although now over 40 years out of date I didn't think it appropriate to publish them all here. Nick Smith**