

# SCHOOLS HEBRIDEAN SOCIETY



## PLANS FOR 1971

### EXPEDITIONS

GROUP J (12 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> -14 years)	COLONSAY	(Dates inclusive 17th August-3rd Sept.
GROUP I (14-15 years)	JURA RHUM	of travel) 27th July-13th August
GROUP H (15-16 years)	SOUTH RONA	15th August-3rd Sept.
GROUP G (16-17 years)	MINGULAY	26th July-15th August
GROUP F (17 and over)		15th August-4th Sept.

These dates are subject to revision on publication of timetables. For further details see overleaf.

### CONFERENCE

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The Seventh Annual S.H.S. Conference will be held in Lincoln Hall, Nottingham University from Friday, 1st January to Sunday, 3rd January, 1971. There will be the customary slide shows, discussions, lectures and social activities. Details may be obtained from John Lace, 15 Julian Road, Sneyd Park Bristol BS1 2JZ.

### BUILDING A STORE

Since the last conference an appeal has been carried out to raise funds for a permanent base for the Society, and for a scheme to equip expeditions with more adequate boats for sailing instruction. When built the store will act as:

1. A store where equipment could be checked and prepared for the following season.
2. A valuable starting point for each expedition, uniting its members before they reach camp, and making possible a debriefing session when the expedition is over and before the members return home.
3. A library-cum-office where material amassed on expeditions could be systematically and efficiently collected and provided to new expeditions.
4. A centre in Scotland for the use of members during the remainder of the year.

The following summary shows the value of the Appeal as at 4th October, 1970.

Deeds of Covenant worth	.....	£2040*
Single Donations..	..	332
Seven Year Bankers Order	„ ,	.15
<i>Total</i>		£2387

\* This figure anticipates that the deeds will run for the full seven years and that income tax standard rate remains at 8s. 3d. in the pound.

## ABOUT THE SOCIETY

In August 1959, ten people, university students and schoolboys, spent four invigorating weeks organising themselves into an expedition on the island of Rhum. Although entirely spontaneous and not intended to create a precedent, out of this experience rose the Society which, since then, has organised a further thirty-eight expeditions to twenty-one different sites and enrolled over six hundred members. It is run on an entirely voluntary basis; nobody in the administration of the Society or the company receives any payment.

Each expedition is self-contained after departure from port—usually Oban or Mallaig—taking with it all stores and equipment needed for at least a fortnight on a remote and often uninhabited island, provision being made for all emergencies and Hebridean weather conditions, which can be somewhat variable! Travel is frequently by chartered boat to the nearest point to the camp site; air travel to Benbecula and Stornoway has proved a great success in the last two years.

Once on the island, specialist officers give guidance in the study of subjects including ornithology, botany, entomology, geology, surveying, sketching, hydrography and archaeology. The extent of the projects undertaken is governed by conditions on the island and the age of the boys. Orienteering has been pursued on a number of expeditions and in addition instruction is given in hill-craft, rock-climbing, the handling of boats and canoes, and where possible sailing.

Perhaps the most rewarding part of the whole expedition is actually keeping the camp going and learning to make oneself comfortable, sometimes under adverse conditions, and to be self-reliant. Constructing furniture out of driftwood; cooking for up to forty large appetites at a time; keeping all-night watches during a gale; creating golf courses, football pitches, bowling greens and croquet lawns out of nothing; revealing hitherto unappreciated musical talent at a ceilidh or barbecue round the camp fire; these are all part of any S.H.S. expedition.

The setting of the expedition is essential to its aim, which is to bring together a variety of people from all over Britain into a situation different from anything they have met before. The officers have a breadth of interest and experience which they are able to share with the rest of the members, so that people are brought into contact with ideas and knowledge that they would not normally encounter. The projects and instruction are not ends in themselves, but means towards making every expedition as stimulating and worthwhile as possible. Prospective applicants should not regard an expedition merely as a 'holiday' in the strict sense of the word. Experience has repeatedly shown that the boy who puts most into an expedition is the one that gains most from it.

Each major expedition consists of twenty to thirty boys, all within an age-range of from one year to eighteen months, staffed by between six to ten officers—depending on the age of the boys. Usually the expedition is under canvas, though on some of the islands it uses deserted crofts. A large marquee for general living, a smaller one for stores, and a ridge tent for each section of five or six boys comprise the tentage. Cooking is by Calor gas; and Calor gas clothes driers are standard equipment in all camps. Each boy need take only his personal gear as listed on page 6, though some leaders may ask for additional equipment to be obtained. The Society owns its own climbing equipment, and is buying its own boats. So far these include *Vinga*, a 16 ft. sailing dinghy, *Rock Bottom* and *The May*, two 18 ft. dinghies for general use, and four double canoes; and it is hoped shortly to add to these. Life jackets are provided by the Society.

In addition to the Leader, there is a Camp Administrator who, together with his deputy, is responsible for the general running of the camp. The expedition medical officer has a complete medical kit with him, and a smaller one is issued to every party leaving camp. Even on the remotest islands it is possible to obtain the services of a doctor in cases of emergency. Each section has a Section Officer who is also an instructor. Project results, however trivial, are collected by co-ordinators at the end of the season and correlated. A new departure in this field was the Archaeological Expedition to South Uist in 1970. Much useful work has been, and is being done.

Past expeditions: Colonsay (1966, 1967, 1968, 1969); Dingle (S. Ireland (1966); Fladda (1970); Gometra (1962, 1963, 1964); Harris (1965, 1966, 1967); Jura (1965, 1966); Lewis (1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970); Mingulay (1964, 1967); Morvern (1965); North Uist (1970); Raasay (1960, 1964, 1965); Rhum (1959, 1963, 1967, 1969); Shetlands (1969, 1970); South Rona (1964, 1968); South Uist (1968, 1969, 1970); Ulva (1970); Watersay (1968).

## **COLONSAY EXPEDITION 1971**

## **GROUP J**

(Age 12<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-14 years in August 1971)

The island of Colonsay is perhaps the most beautiful of all Hebridean islands. Situated within the Southern Inner Hebridean group which includes Mull, Islay and Jura it is yet quite distinct from its larger neighbours. Lying seven miles west of Jura it has to face the full force of the open Atlantic and yet within its small area, eleven miles long (including the half-tide island of Oronsay) by between one and three miles wide are contained a bewildering variety of different scenes. Although of no great height a large part of the island consists of moor, rock and bog. Despite this there is placid farmland at the 'capital', Scalasaig, and shelter enough for palm trees and orchids to grow in the famous gardens of Colonsay House. The most notable features of the west coast are a number of sandy beaches interspersing the lofty sea cliffs which are the haunt of many seabirds and which contain a number of large caves.

Past expeditions have found Colonsay ideal for rock-climbing, walking, lightweight camping, orienteering, canoeing and sailing as well as for the study of the local flora and fauna (including the resident eagles) and ancient monuments like Oronsay Priory and two massive standing stones known as 'Fingal's Goalposts'.

The people of the island have always welcomed us warmly and football matches against the Colonsay XI (on a pitch full of rabbit holes) as well as active participation in concerts have proved very popular. In the past we have had storms and droughts but the islanders have always rallied round with both advice and practical help and it is with great pleasure that we look forward to renewing our acquaintance with what W. H. Murray has called 'One of the best of all Hebridean islands'.

## **JURA EXPEDITION 1971**

## **GROUP I**

(Age 14-15 years in August 1971)

The island of Jura is situated to the south of the Inner Hebrides group. It is a fairly large island and since the present population is less than two hundred there are large tracts of unpopulated areas which provide plenty of scope for outdoor activities. The north and west areas, now entirely deserted, are particularly beautiful and they afford many excellent sites for an expedition.

Possible projects will include ornithology, sailing, geomorphology, shore ecology and climbing. Also, the geology of the island is extremely interesting, mainly due to the sheer complexity of the whole rock-structure.

Transport, yet to be finalised, will probably be by MacBrayne's steamer from Gourock to Craignure, which is Jura's main centre of population, and thence by lorry to the north of the island where the camp site will be situated.

The Society has had two previous expeditions to Jura. Both were extremely enjoyable and this year's visit provides a welcome opportunity for the Society to renew all the friendships it made on those two former occasions.

## **RHUM EXPEDITION 1971**

(Age 15-16 years in August 1971)

## **GROUP H**

' Up in Rhum where it's nice to come, and the sun shines ever on the mountain top ... we took a trip on a McBrayne's ship, and when we reached Sham an Insir we had to stop. . . .' These words linger on the lips of the previous Rhum expeditioner. The 1971 expedition to the Island of Rhum will be the fifth time that the Nature Conservancy for Scotland will have allowed S.H.S. members to camp there. A popular spot for an expedition, with mountains to trek over, rocks to climb, fells and bogs to traverse, lost villages to explore, sandhills, bays and beaches to relax by, cliffs and rocky shores to investigate, clear mountain streams trickling down the hillside, herds of deer and wild ponies to photograph, and birds, flowers, ponds, and rocks to study . . . this paradise, this Nature Reserve calls one, and calls one back again.



Caves at Jura

## **SOUTH RONA EXPEDITION 1971**

(Age 16-17 years in August 1971)

## **GROUP G**

Between the mainland coast of the Applecross Fell and the eastern coast of Skye, lies the carefree island of South Rona. Carefree because it has no inhabitants, save the goats and sheep, no clocks save the tides and the sun, no mountains, just sunny green hills. It is remote and cut off from civilisation except for the radio-telephone at the lighthouse, and for the frequent visiting fishermen and haven-seeking yachtsmen. There are two fine natural harbours, ideal for fishing, canoeing, and sailing. The island's small area, approximately five miles long by just over one mile wide, and unimposing altitude, are compensated by a rugged relief of intruded Lewisian Gneiss, a dramatic terrain to the orienteer and most suitable for compass exercises. In fact South Rona throws out a challenge to all those intent on using the opportunity of an expedition to pursue an interesting project: the Geology and marine Geomorphology provide useful and interesting contrasts, the plant life includes many surprising species of tree, and the shores provide diverse environments for ecological studies, all these as well as the usual faunal and floral topics offer themselves to the industrious student. Of interest to the archeologist and surveyor there are lost settlements to be 'rediscovered', and on the east coast a cave-chapel gives the expeditioner an uplifting opportunity to sit quietly and share creation.

## MINGULAY EXPEDITION 1971

## GROUP F

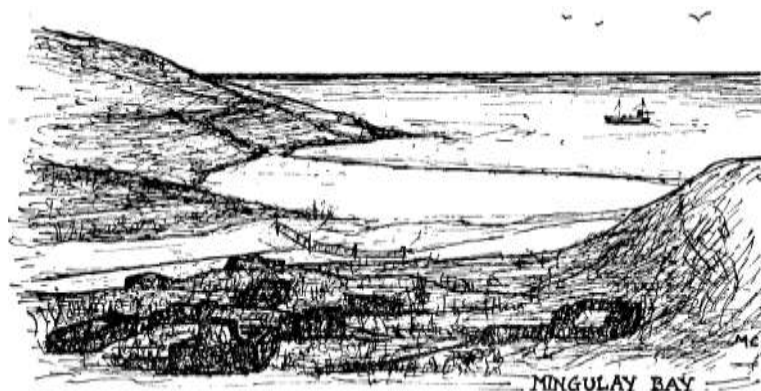
(Age 17 years and over in August 1971)

Mingulay is a genuinely deserted island: its last inhabitants, five in number, left for the bright lights of Vatersay in 1911, thus ending an 'occupation' which had lasted for about one and a half centuries. At its height, the population was about 150; the thirty or so ruined houses, half buried in the sand beside the bay, bear witness to the isolated life the inhabitants must have led.

Mingulay, Eilean mo Chridhe (Isle of my Heart), is a beautiful island, as the S.H.S. expeditions in 1964 and 1967 discovered. Lying roughly 90 miles north of Ulster and the same distance west of Oban, it has an area of 1,508 acres and, in its lovely bay of sheen-white sand, some 48 acres of foreshore. Its maximum length and breadth are, respectively, 2½ and ½ miles. Its coastline measures 1½ miles. Except for the small area of the bay, it is so remarkably cliffy, lofty, precipitous and inaccessible as to be the breeding-place of countless sea-fowl. In Britain, only the cliffs of St. Kilda and Foula excel those of Mingulay as regards altitude, magnitude and thronging bird life. The island is also interesting for its geology (it is made up of a group of highly recrystallised Lewisian rocks representing a small fragment of the deeply eroded roots of a very old mountain chain) and for its botany.

Not many people have visited Mingulay: we in the S.H.S. are privileged to be able to do so. The loveliness of Mingulay Bay on a summer's day has to be seen—has to be experienced—to be believed: it is the only real rival to St. Kilda.

N.B. This expedition can only take place if sufficient applications are received by 28th February. In the event of there being insufficient applications, the Society reserves the right to cancel the expedition.



### SUGGESTED CLOTHES LIST

Below is a list of items recommended for an expedition. Remember, above all, that it can be very wet and cold in the Hebrides. Plenty of dry clothes are important.

Frame rucksac	Nylon anorak (not cape)	Toothbrush and toothpaste
Heavy walking boots	Nylon overtrousers	Shaving gear
Gym shoes	Pyjamas	Sleeping bag
3 pairs of thick socks	Bathing trunks	Lilo
3 pairs of pants	1 large towel	O.S. 1 in. map
1 pair of old long trousers	Handkerchiefs	'Silva' compass
1 pair of jeans	Woollen gloves	Whistle
Vest	Woollen balaclava or hat	Torch
3 shirts	Scarf	Spare batteries and bulbs
2 jerseys	Comb	

The following articles are also suggested: notebook, diary, pencils, books, camera, spare film, fishing kit, telescope or binoculars, musical instruments, personal first-aid kit, Wellingtons, small gas or primus stove, mess tins or pans, mending gear (needle, thread, etc.), penknife, anti-insect ointment, dubbin, spare bootlaces. (Some of these items are intended for lightweight camping.)

*All articles must be clearly marked.*

Transistor radios are not permitted on S.H.S. expeditions.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

**How to apply.** Fill in the application form attached to this prospectus and sent it to John Lace, 15 Julian Road, Sneyd Park, Bristol BS1 2JZ. Once the formalities have been completed, successful applicants will be put in touch with leaders.

**Cost.** The cost of each expedition is £27 plus travelling expenses. There is also a £2 fee for three year membership of the Society. Some Local Education Authorities may be able to provide assistance with finance in certain cases. For further information about this contact R. L. B. Marshall, 1 Martin Way, Morden, Surrey.

**Travel.** Wherever possible this is arranged by the Society taking advantage of special party rates offered by British Rail.

**Distance.** It is worth pointing out that the Hebrides are not just around the corner! For instance, most of Denmark and parts of Italy are nearer to London than is Stornoway, the capital of the island of Lewis. Oban, from which some expeditions sail, is nearly five hundred miles by rail from London.

**Administration of Expeditions.** The collection of fees and travel costs is done centrally by the Board's representative. After a boy has been selected for an expedition all other arrangements should be made through the leader.

**Medical Requirements.** Any relevant medical information, about which the expedition medical officer should know, must be stated on the application form in the space provided. We strongly advise anti-tetanus vaccinations for all expedition members.

**Insurance.** The Society arranges comprehensive insurance for itself and its members against claims made for bodily injury or death to persons or damage to property caused during the expedition. In addition to this a member's personal belongings are insured for £100 against loss or damage: but in the event of any claims arising the first £5 must be borne by the claimant. The indemnity section of the application form must be completed so that the insurance is effective for the member concerned.

**Cancellation.** In the event of a member cancelling his place on an expedition less than four weeks before the start of an expedition, his fee will be retained by the Society and returned only if his place can be filled by someone else.

**Report.** Anyone wishing for more detailed information about the Society, or desiring to obtain a copy of the latest Report should write to P. F. Smith, The Little Cottage, Hickling, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

**S.H.S. Ties.** There are still a few Society ties, in navy blue with the Society crest, which may be obtained from Gavin Macpherson, Lampits, Hoddesdon, Herts. The cost is £1, inclusive of postage and packing.

**Officers.** Anyone wishing to be considered as an officer on one of the 1971 expeditions, should write to P. N. Renold, Augustus Road, Coventry, CV1 4BZ.

**Alterations.** The Company reserves the right to alter in whole or in part at any time all plans and arrangements of whatsoever nature contained in this prospectus or in any other Company or Society publication.

**The Policy** of the Society is decided by the Board of Directors.

Signed: A. J. Abbott (Chairman),  
Chasefield Mews,  
Park Road,  
Bowdon,  
Cheshire.

C. D. Fountaine (Secretary),  
Sunnyside,  
Hinton Blewett,  
Temple Cloud,  
Somerset.

*Directors:* A. J. Abbott, M.A., F.R.G.S., C. M. Child, M.A., C. D. Fountaine, A. Fowler, J. E. R. Houghton, B.A., J. C. Hutchison, J. D. Lace, G. Macpherson, R. L. B. Marshall, A.C.A., P. N. Renold, B. J. N. Smith, B.A.