



**SHS
REPORT 1977**

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Schools Hebridean Society

ANNUAL REPORT

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Report Editor

Nick Deeley

72 Oak Tree Lane, Birmingham B29

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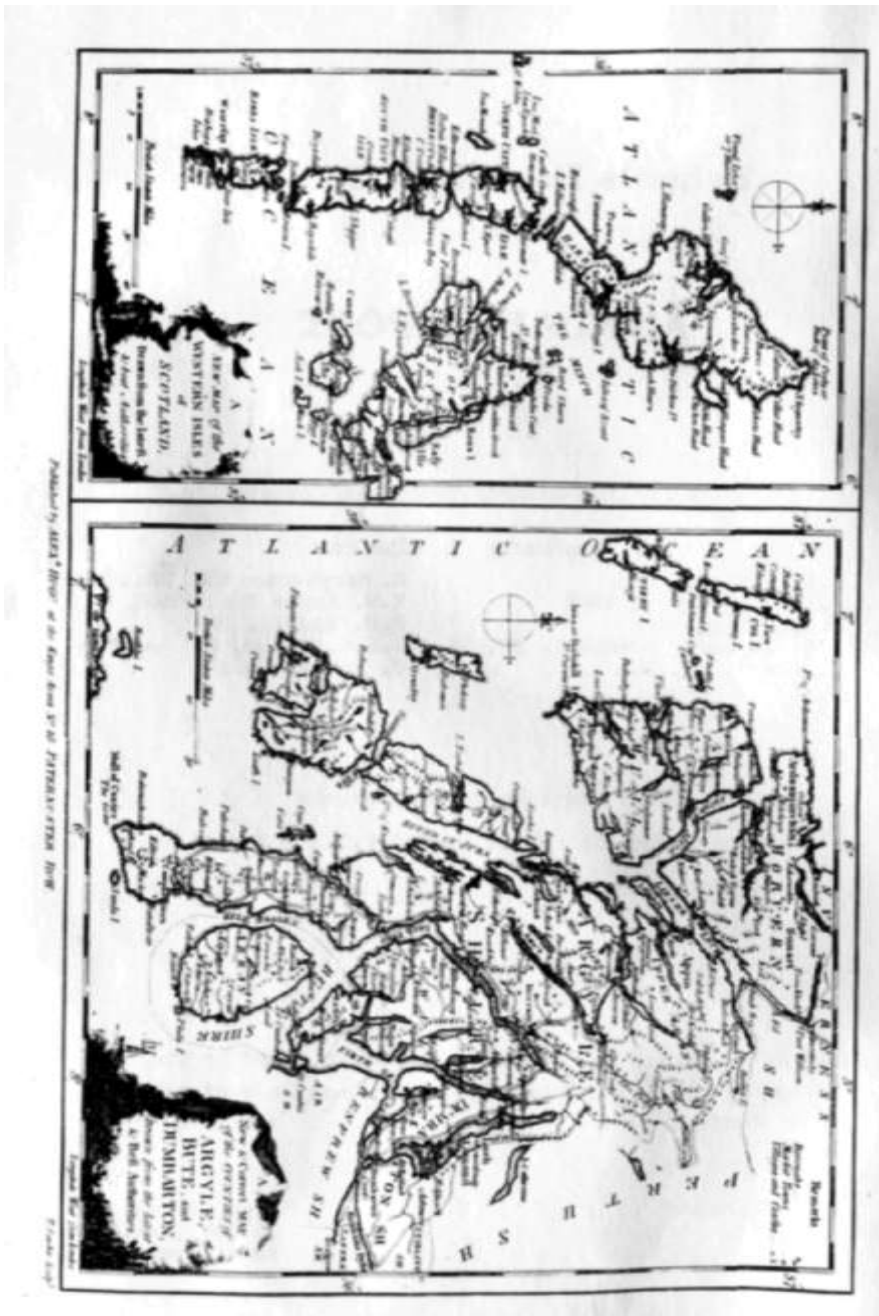
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EXPEDITION T/R4DERS 1978

Raasay	Roger Weatherly
North Uist	Simon Atkinson
South Rona	Mike Hayward
South Uist	Dave and Angela Crawford
Rhum	Humphrey Southall
Knoydart	Jim Turner



“Western Isles” published by Alexander Hogg in the 18th century. The map was presented to John Abbott on his retirement as a Director of the Society.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every year the Society receives help from very many firms and individuals. So many in fact that it is not possible to mention them all here. We would, however, like to express our very sincere thanks to all those people without whose help our activities would not be possible.

The Editor would also like to record his personal thanks to Jock the printer, at Birmingham University Guild of Students, for his skill and advice in producing this report.

EDITORIAL

Although I must apologise for the delay in producing the Report this year, I am pleased to say that this Edition contains more pictures and articles than ever before. Whether this makes it a better Report is of course, for you to decide. Personally I feel the standard is very high and much of the Project Work (especially articles on Dragonflies, Butterflies, Bird Population Studies, Ornithological and Botanical Surveys) is very much better than anything else the SHS files have seen in the last few years.

This is especially encouraging as the status of Project Work has been seriously questioned over the last few years. It is not true that SHS projects cannot attain a standard and respectability equal to that of professional research projects, providing the area of investigation is carefully chosen. Further in a part of the world so under-investigated as the Hebrides, many Research workers would be only too happy to co-operate in the collection of data, with subsequent benefits to both parties. In addition to the wealth of excellent material from which I have had the almost impossible task of selecting what is to be printed; the Report contains material from the 1976 Lewis Expedition which missed the boat last year.

Thank you then, to everyone who has sent me material for the Report; some of it has had to be left out or shortened, but the originals are all contained in the SHS files, which are available to anyone who wants to look up any of the material from this or any previous year.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is splendid to look back on another rewarding set of expeditions, which proved once again, that the society is strongest where the crisis is most intense. The rearrangement of some of the sites was a nightmare, but thanks to the Leaders and backup staff in the society, I think everyone enjoyed themselves. Looking back on my first year in office, it amazes me that so many people give so much time and energy to make the expeditions successful: I suppose in some ways we come to expect this, but we shouldn't.

We have continued to make the most careful attempts to save money. Once again equipment and food purchasing was strictly monitored, and the programme of replacing tentage and other equipment has continued. We have benefited enormously from the kindness of Mr Andrews of Islay in repairing our outboard, and more canoes than ever were sent on expeditions in 1977.

Now we have a serviceable store, near Leeds, and enough space to properly service our equipment. Many thanks go to Gavin Macpherson for seeing this long project through to its successful conclusion. And then there has been the mixed expedition -we knew it would be alright!

Phil Renold, my predecessor, far from taking a back seat on the Board, has taken on the essential and taxing task of recruitment organiser and appeal director. Looking to the future, we must consolidate our already satisfactory financial position, and fill every single place on the expeditions in 1978. Phil will be asking for every member's help in this aim*

Board members come and go, but two have submitted their resignations in the last few months to whom we should pay especial tribute. One is John Hutchison, whose deep knowledge of the Highlands and Islands over many years has assisted us beyond measure, and who has filled many of the central jobs within the society. John will not loose contact with us; I imagine that he and Christine will see something of us each year as we pass through Fort William! Thank you John, for all your work for us.

The other resignation (coinciding with his marriage) is that of John Abbott. It is difficult to write anything of John other than that he founded the SHS, carried it through its first twelve years coping with the most severe financial and manpower problems, and can look back on something like 2,000 expeditioners who have passed through our ranks.

We sent him a telegram on his wedding day as follows:

"Delighted you took advice re Mixed Expedition.

Kindest wishes for your future from

Bot's 2000 Hebridean children."

Many thanks John, from all of us. Your enthusiasm and (in the words of the 1970 Report) 'your ability to instil enthusiasm into others' has been an inspiration to us. John .has recently assumed the Chair of the Management Committee of the Young Explorers' Trust - keep up the instillation.

We have much to look forward to in 1978. The six sites are among the best we have every used - and a return to South Rona is especially welcome.

This year, some of our members will also be Trident Trust members, and we welcome them warmly.

Do apply now for the 1978 expeditions, if you haven't already done so. For a prospectus, write to: Mrs Mary, Jones, 'Altona' Station Road, Totnes, Devon

Roger Weatherly.

PART ONE

LEWIS UIG SANDS 1976

Leader: Paul Caffery.

Officers: Gerald Smith, Iain Colquhoun, Graham Brierley, Alan Brindley, David Davies, Gareth Firth, Jamie O'Brien, John Taylor and Jarrod Garreldothed.

Boys: Alastair Anderson, Johnathan Banks, Timothy Bennett, Nicholas Berbiers, John Berry, Toby Broom, Martin Cook, Guy Cullom, Christopher Dalton, Robert Greenwood, Martin Harvey, Steven Hockin, Timothy Hutchinson, Ian Marshall, Michael Parffrey, Alasdair Saunders, Alan Schoffield, Louis Simon, Nigel Stanton, Andrew Stockton, Martin Sykes, Michael Taylor, Johnathan Virgo, Nicholas Wagstaffe, Ranald Warburton, Douglas Warburton, Anthony Ward, David Wilkinson, Jason Williams and Paul Wright.

LEADER'S REPORT

How Balmy: - I used to remember the Hebrides as a place where, when and if it stopped raining, and should the cloud lift high enough for a few precious moments, the real islands would reveal themselves. When we arrived this year, the sky was blue and the ground was dry. Under the circumstances the natural position to adopt seemed to be prostrate. As a result: wide expanses of white flesh were converted to a deep and golden brown.

Well the weather stayed like this for the whole of the expedition, and Egyptian P.T. became a most popular inactivity. That is not to say that the camp was an orgy of inactivity; far from it. Canoeing under the instruction of Graham Brierley was most successful, culminating in a grand slalom competition down the river. Even the officers were bullied into performing a capsiz drill and poor Liz nay Just as well have done after Graham had tested the floating properties of her canoe in simulated rough water.

Miles and miles were walked; hills and mountains were climbed, and on one notable occasion a party of 19 set out to climb Suainaval, reputed to have one of the finest views on the island. On a clear day it is possible to look over to the mainland 80 miles away and in the other direction to the mysterious island group of St. Kilda.

We managed to live in considerable luxury in camp. Accommodation was spacious and despite the lack of driftwood furniture it was comfortable - ish. Gerald looked after our dietary needs most ably, that is when he wasn't leaping around on the sands hurling his frisby into the air like a demented frog, or studying his postal body - beautiful course.

Jamie demonstrated how to stalk a hole and the correct way to fall into it, earning himself the camp gold medal for un-coordination. But on a more serious side, Jamie produced some great sketches and with Dave and Gareth, he took out parties on daily bird watching forays armed with 'nockers and notebooks, pens and packed lunches; ever in search of new species and their remote sanctuaries.

It is believed that we have an SHS first this year - the first Confirmed Sighting of the now very rare and elusive Arctic Urnu.

Every now and again we would troop across the sands to the river to partake in a compulsory medicinal wash. Not that this was really necessary I suppose, as the hot weather enforced several swims a day Just in order to cool off. The lads were extremely thoughtful on these occasions splashing down the officers with showers of water from all sides. Many happy hours were spent chasing a shoal of about thirteen trout up and down the river, although they always returned to the same spot.

We had a group of very keen fishermen, who in my terms had a great measure of success. Ian Marshall could be seen at almost anytime wading waist deep in the river, rod in hand. Ian along with Dave, Chris, Ali, Robert, Martin, Michael and Tony caught several trout and three eels which made welcome meal supplements. On meal supplements, John the Bunny Basher treated us to rabbit, and some of us tried a great delicacy - roasted Cranefly, done three minutes each side on top of a Tilley lamp.

Martin collected butterflies and moths, David rocks while Doc Iain, the only Scotsman on the expedition, could often be seen on all fours, bottom up in the air, studying his beloved Machair. At least he could usually be found there when not attending patients with tent peg toe or with attacks of gripe.

Many bivvis went out and because of the glorious weather; we took only polly bags instead of the usual tents. This enabled us to walk much further than the usually heavily equipped bivvy and discover new peaks and valleys.

A party of six completed the Uig Horseshoe - a series of eight peaks in 14 hours, being on top of the first Mealisval in time for sunrise.

Perhaps the most important part of the expedition was that we were there as visitors and not as tourists. Alan our PR man arranged trips to see local skills. We made friends with local crofters, helped them cut, turn and bring in the hay, stack and collect peats, and in return they fed us Real Food and showed us some of the local skills:- from spinning and weaving, pottery and butter making.

We made some real friends while on Lewis and of these the Sutherland family at Breanish were the Greatest. Vast armies of us would descend upon them in order to help them complete some of their tasks before the weather broke. Often their return seemed much greater than the help we gave them! And before moving on I must thank Liz for the many cups of coffee, and Mrs Sutherland for sharing her knowledge of local folk lore.

All expeditions owe any success they might enjoy to the work done by the backroom boys of the society, and special thanks must go to Jin, Lawrence and Nick, plus all the other members of the SHS board and executive.

A great thank you to George and Sheila Newhall for collecting our equipment at Stornoway, and arranging our night at the Scout hut. I only hope that the Journey they made out to the campsite on the evening of their Wedding anniversary, for a ceilidh; was to them an insight into what happens on SHS expeditions: - especially after helping us for so many years.

Finally thank you to the boys and officers.

Paul E Caffery.

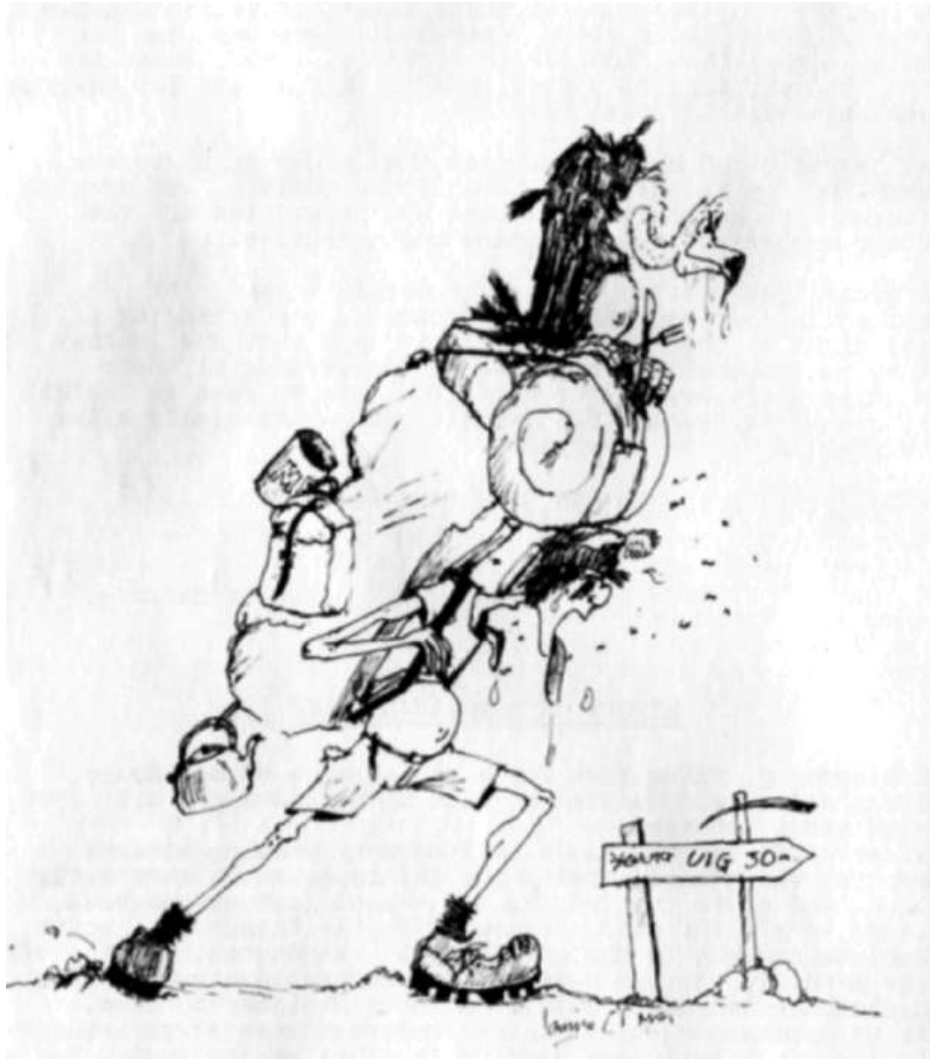
REPORT ON FORSNAVAL WALK

One morning, being lost for anything else to do, Louis, Simon and myself decided to walk up Forsnaval, a hill 250m high about 5km away.

We set off over the sands to Timsgarry passing several crofts, which incidentally had 28" looms which were still used, and on to the Church. The school just up the road looks very futuristic compared with the Church and crofts, and stands next to the shell of the Old Church. Turning off the Aird Uig road we made our way across country and came across the many deep ditches made by the peat cutters. As we approached the top, we discovered some steps leading to two small buildings used in the last war to spot U Boats. We climbed the last few feet and sat at the summit to admire the magnificent view. To the north you could see Gallen Head, a small headland with Aird Uig itself behind it. To the west was the open Atlantic. To the south was the town of Crowlista, and Uig Sands and the Camp site and further still Loch Suaineval, and the mountains which run down to its shores in a horseshoe. To the east we saw Great Bernera, with its many smaller islands surrounding it.

After savouring the view for some time we took the path down to Aird Uig and returned to camp.

Steven Hockin

THE TALE OF BREDRUN - A HORSE SAGA

Hear! It is told by many poets of the terrible prophecy uttered by Ranald the Soothsayer to the people of Esaich Ess. Thus spake Ranald the All-knowing "Before many moons have died two mighty warriors must travel over the hill and through the misty mountains to the Sun Temple of Callanish and there do trade with the people of Bay Cavan." Only in this way could the people be saved.

At these words the great chieftain known as Paul the Prostrate uttered three mighty blasts which echoed around the farthest crofts, and in answer to his call came the greatest warriors of Esaich Ess and gathered thay in the moot hall of Mah-Kee. Here was assembled: Gram the Ogre-like, Gareth of the Hundred Dams, Gerard-Garrod King of Frisby, Jamie the Unco-ordinate, John Slayer of Rabbits, Ian of Healing Spells, David seeker of Urnus, and Alan of Hellth-Fud. When all were present Paul told them of the strange prophecy, asking of them which would undertake the great burden and save the people. At this two of the warriors stepped forth, by name Alan of Hellth-Fud and John Slayer of Rabbits.

To these spake the oracle Ranald, revealing to them many secrets culled from tomes of Druid lore. He told them especially of the tribes of people known as Tu-Rists, who seal themselves within boxes of iron and travel along black rivers of stone, never ceasing in their journey except in those places called Caa Paac. By means of these people would the community find its salvation.

Accordingly the two warriors strode forth from their familiar Icelandic home to many wails and gnashing of teeth.

They crossed the hill and came across the stone river, littered with the strange droppings of the Tu-Rist Caa people; but of the people themselves they saw no sign. For many leagues they journeyed borne on by great boots wrought of magic Vy-Bram, and deep within the land of mountains were they. Often saw they the strange totem poles erected by the men of the Geepyoh, a tribe of nomads hating all wealth save the huge treasures which they guard.

When many hours were passed, they heard the roar of the Caa people as they approach, and they formed their hands into mystic rune signs taught them by Ranald, which is the only way of halting the Tu-Rist on their great Journeys. At this they entered the iron box wrought with great cunning, and exchanged ritual greetings with the Tu-Rist concerning the great Gods of Sun and Rain. Then they travelled many leagues at great speed to the temple of Callanish, where the Tu-Rist worship the great god of the Chamera of Chodak. Hear this place they came across the people of Bay Chavan and were given three score loaves in exchange for small metal discs known as nupih.

The two warriors placed the bread within large sacks and again received hospitality from the Caa-people. But now great hardship and woe was come upon the travellers, for the Tu Rist was bound for a different destination and left the bread heroes to languish among desolate moor lands where roam the mighty herds of HiJ. Both carried charms of Flypel, but their help was as nought against the terrible power of the MiJ. Many hours sat they in the drear and lonely place, and much renting of hair and weeping was there.

At last they broke their fast with Cen Dahl (which Erik the Red had taken for his Vinland Expedition in 854 and invoked the god of bread; Sko-Fah. Soon after this time a member of the Tu-Rist came near and the warriors proffered loaves as offerings of peace.

Accepting these gifts, they Journeyed in the ship of iron along the black rivers of stone, far across the misty mountains and home to the land of Esaich Ess.

And so the warriors returned home with their mighty burden of bread, and many were the cries of Joy from the people that they were saved, and many were the welcoming yet odourless blasts from their noble Chieftain*

Thus is told the saga of Bredrun.

BIVVY TO THE REEF

On 16th August we set off for Reef. The sun was shining, and as we came through Glen Valtos we paused (like all intrepid explorers) to sit and nibble our Kendal Mint Cake. Our only complaint was that we didn't have enough of it*

We made our way into Miavig, after a couple of telephone calls to our parents, and pushed on over the hills to the beach called Traigh naberie. On the way we passed a lake, and on islands in its centre was an old Dun. Eventually we came to the camp site we were aiming for and were very impressed with it. The beach looked like a picture postcard of the French Riviera - deep blue sea and dazzling white sands. After a very cold swim we had lunch and tackled the nearest peak - all 86 m of it. From the top we could see Great Bernera, Callanish and East Loch Roag*

John Taylor elected to sleep out in a bivvy bag, while the rest of us shared tents. After a midge infested night, we faced the prospect of a cold breakfast as we had forgotten the cooker.

We left at 11 and went back a different way and arrived at 5 In time for supper. Thanks to John Taylor 'without whom this would not have been possible'.

Nick Berbiers, John Virgo,
Jon Banks and Toby Broom.

A VISIT TO THE BRENISH POTTERY SHOP

On Tuesday 17th August, a party of five of us set off to Brenish, 7 miles away. The party consisted of 4 boys and our Leader.

We set off through Ardrol, and stopped at Islivig Post Office for some stamps - the Post Office looked about six feet square! We then walked on to the far end of Brenish to reach the Pottery. We were met there by Mr. Sutherland and Angus MacLean who farms the croft next door. We went inside and looked at the pottery and met Mrs. Sutherland and Elizabeth Sutherland. There were stands displaying many different types of pots, and after having a look around, some of us bought some items.

We were offered tea which we gratefully accepted, and then helped turning the hay in the fields to dry it. After lunch, we continued haymaking and pulled weeds out of the un-mown hay as these were poisonous to the cattle. When we had finished, Mrs Sutherland kindly offered to take us back to camp in the School minibus, and passed some birdwatchers, coming back from Camas Islivig.

Alasdair Saunders & John Berry.

PRODUCTION OF NEGATIVES AT CAMP

The purpose of this exercise was to demonstrate the exposure and development of black and white 35mm film on site. A length of PAN F film was exposed around Uig Bay, using a Zenith B camera.

The equipment required is fairly simply: a developing tank, a measuring cylinder, thermometer, bucket and pegs. Acutol developer and Acutol fixative were used to process the film, but as there was no acetic acid (vinegar) we had to do without this. Squeeze was used as a wetting agent and sand as the emulsion abrasive.

Nearly all the members of the expedition had a go at loading the tank spiral, inside a black polythene bag, ensuring that the film was covered with fingerprints. Lewis peat water was used to dilute the developer concentrate, and this was poured into the tank and left for the appropriate time, before being tipped away, and replaced with fixer until the emulsion cleared. After washing in fresh water, the film was dipped in very slightly soapy water to facilitate drying before hanging up to dry in a cloud of midges.

The result was a row of 33 black and white negatives of reasonable quality, which demonstrates the ease of producing your own negatives - even on a beach in the Western Isles.

Alan Brindley.

AT LAST !! THE ARCTIC URNU

The following is a brief field guide to the identification of the Arctic Urnu, and should serve to distinguish it from the other members of the Oxcretia genus of which it is of course, a member. The accompanying drawing should be consulted in conjunction with the notes in the field.

There are several easily recognisable features which enable a positive identification. Perhaps the most prominent of which is the Roman nose beak. In addition the wings are a dark golden brown, tending to black towards the tips. The back is also brown the head white as is the neck and under side.

A rather startling feature is that the male has a prominent black and white eye stripe which highlights the evil-looking reptilian yellow iris. The body is quoted as being similar to that of the Canada goose, although it is thought that the evolutionary connection is tenuous.

Perhaps the most unusual and prominent trait of the Urnu is it's call. It has been described as a deep throated 'Kuh', repeated several times. This is followed by a curious hollow resonant rap caused as the bird apparently bangs its rather solid sandraking claw-webbed foot against its beak. The two sounds follow each other in rapid succession and the two together make a very distinctive sound.

Once more populous, the Urnu is now a rare visitor to these islands, and sightings are not common. The bird spends most of its life in the northern arctic wastes, where it selects a mate and the birds remain paired for life. It is said that should the mate die, the lone bird looses the will to live and hardly eating for months on end, it wanders off aimlessly into the white oblivion to meet its fate.

Once hunted almost to the point of extinction by mariners for its meat and the colourful beak reputed to be an aphrodisiac, the bird is now protected vigorously by law; there are however only a few pairs left now and its recovery will depend on continued protection.



LEWIS UIG SANDS 1977

Leader: Nick Deeley

Officers: Steve Southworth (CA), Dave Deeley, Dave Ellis, Calum Mackenzie, Steve Paynter, Chris Price, John Taylor and Pat Thompson.
Boys: Keith Baldock, David Bentley, Richard Bissell, Paul Bloomfield, Chris Brett, Arthur Butler, Quentin Elvidge, James Golding, David Hayward, Alex Hill, Hark Jacombs, Charles Keck, Ian Marshall, Tim Orme, Luc Osstyn, Thomas Sanctuary, Simon Thompson, Douglas Warburton, Benjamin Webb, Nigel Williams, Timothy Williams, Gareth Woolmington, and Nicholas Young.

LEADER'S REPORT

As the sleeper-train clattered across the points outside Euston Station, the barmaid in the Rising Sun was washing the empty beer glasses left there. Any dutch courage the Leader and his Officers gained was quickly dispelled in the foyer of Euston Station, a short while later.

A rotund perspiring figure clutched a newish looking clipboard, and demanded to know who was present, in a tone which attracted disapproving half glances from those in ear shot. Unfortunately the pitch of his voice went up as he raised his voice above the din in the station, and he was not making much progress. Time ticked by and the panic rose. Ignoring a worried mother who enquires if there would still be enough time to buy Sebastable a second anorak, he pushes through the sardined crowd and attempts to collect together his party. The ticket barrier acts as a parent-filter and imagining he can hear worried comments from mothers and sighs of relief from fathers, the collection of rucksacks, cameras and fishing rods battle their way through the barrier onto the station.

" I'll post it to you Sebastable Darling....." but the words are lost in the rumble of locos and station announcements. "Now let me get this clear," I say, "You were sleeper C14, but you've swapped with Quentin in C2; but that's only as far as Preston. Right? And after that Tim moves in here. No, Oh; Well if you're saving this one for Benny, where will Tim go? I see. He's moving into the one that the greasy posh kid had (yes I do know the one) down the other end of the train. What did he have to say about this? Oh well never mind. I'm sure you'll sort things out...."

Aroused from an uncomfortable sleep, the train pulls into Preston station and disperses a thick cloud of cigarette smoke which is hanging over the heads of the Oldham party.

04.47 and Perth. Handshakes, nods, polite conversation about the role of Birch trees in highland afforestation policy, and a quick dash back to the comparative luxury of my British Rail shelf.

A curious fact about travelling to the Hebrides is that each stage of your journey is slower than the preceding one. This means that each journey from the 90mph Intercity Overnight Sleeper train to the pre-war decrepit Blue Bus which finally rattles onto the Site; is carefully timed with the result that the closer you get to your destination, the slower you actually travel. This process is said to be beneficial - a bit like jetlag in reverse - as it enables the traveller to acclimatise to what is euphemistically called the Island's "Slower Pace of Life".

When the decrepit Blue Bus did finally rattle onto the broad flat expanse of turf at Uig Sands, and out tumbled officers and boys, it was clear that the process was severely defective. For infectious excitement was everywhere.

With camp quickly set up, we set about exploring our surroundings. Each in his own way, whether through fishing or walking, climbing or sketching, bivvying or bird watching, or just soaking up Lewis. Four major bivvies were planned and many more could have gone out if only we had more tents and camping equipment. Only one significant piece of project work was completed - that of a Graveyard Survey of the old gravestones in Timsgarry, but the canoes were used often and a lot of climbing was done.

It is easy enough for me to sit here and say 'canoeing and climbing were done', but in reality, all these things happened solely because of the enormous amounts of hard work and unflagging enthusiasm which my officers contributed. Faced with a Leader whose inability to make decisions and sheer sloth were unparalleled in the SHS's long history, they largely created a successful expedition and should be given the credit for doing that. No single one deserves more praise than another but I must record special thanks to Steve Southworth, who CAed splendidly, and the other Steve, who seemed to climb every cliff face on Lewis (including a few which I suspect he wished he hadn't).

Necessity being the mother of invention, the 'dryers' in the marquee quickly found a new purpose in life as toasters, and hot toast at every meal became a habit. Our home brewed beer (yes the rot has even set in on junior expedition) was the best expedition beer I have tasted, although fortunately for the officers, none of the boys were too keen on it. Finally what is there left to say? not a lot really but to those people who gave help so willingly. Thanks a lot

MEALISTA BIVVY

This bivvy was the Camp Administrator, Steve Southworth's, which meant that it had certain advantages as will become clear later....

We set out on a bright and sunny afternoon, walking to Ardrol - Steve Southworth, Calum Mackenzie, and Chris Price were closely followed by myself. Not so close were Dougie Warburton, Tim Williams and Mick Taylor, staggering 20 yards behind under the weight of a 10lb rucksack. We were heading for Mealista, where the expedition after ours was to camp, and at 3:30 we arrived at the magnificent sands at Mangersta. Here we stopped to admire the view and let the others catch up.

At 5 we reached Islivig and popped into the Post Office, asking where we could find a good camp site. The Postmistress described a place that sounded ideal, and after a while we realised she was describing Mealista, where we were heading.

So with promises to Mick, Doug and the rapidly fading Tim, about cups of tea and cakes at the Breanish Tea Shop, we set off again with a new spring in our step. After all the Tea Shop was only a mile further on.

Oh Dear! The owners of the Pottery and Tea Shop were away and it was shut. Steve went off ahead on a reconnaissance and left us despondently gazing at the pots through the windows of the shop. He returned in 15 mins, with news of a terrific camp site further on. 'How far?' came the obvious question from Dougie. 'Oh, only about a mile.....' The rest of his words were drowned by a miscellany of groans.

We arrived at about 6 and pitched the tents on a large grass covered cliff. While Steve and Chris made the evening meal, the rest of us went off to collect driftwood for a fire.

The next day dawned cold and grey, and despite the fine drizzle, the fire was still burning. Steve cooked breakfast and we discussed plans. The steadily worsening weather and low cloud put paid to plans to climb Mealisval, and we decided instead on a 5 or 6 mile coastal walk, including a couple of mountains; Steinisval and Griomaval. The view from the top of Griomaval was amazing and we could see right down into Harris. By this time we were pretty hungry, and instead of fruit, the CA had brought enough chocolate for twice the usual amount, and a Bar Six each.

Back at the tents, we waited around in the rain while the meal was being cooked, and decided that the next day we would set off very early, without breakfast, and get back to camp early. As it turned out walking back the 7 or so miles to camp on empty stomachs wasn't such a good idea, but we did it in 2½ hours, and devoured an enormous breakfast of fried eggs, fried bread and of course, Wiltshire Sausages.

Gareth Woolmington.

LEWIS UIG SANDS 1977 CLIMBING REPORT

Being the SHS's most junior expedition, not surprisingly, none of the members had had experience of climbing before. Hence we started with a small beach cliff, to the west of the camp site. Although not very high, it proved a good introduction to climbing and we got a fair amount of abseiling done.

Later on in the expedition, I was bullied by a small group of enthusiasts into organising a climbing bivvy; as most of the boys concerned were in my duty section they won by organising a go-slow until I agreed. A heavy recruiting campaign provided me with two other officers, Dave Ellis and John Taylor, but on the day of departure John had to drop out as it was his turn to get gut-rot that week. That left the enthusiasts! Alex Hill, Charley Keck, Ben Webb, Jimmy Golding, Richard Bissel, Jock, Dave Ellis and myself.

The site we chose was on the shores of Loch Suainaval, with the climbing crags right above us. It took two hours to get there and five minutes to discover that the last bivvy had omitted to include the pegs with one of the tents they handed on to us. I always did enjoy walking!

Climbing started the next morning, but strong wind prevented a safe belay being set up. Even the most strenuous bellowing failed to reach our belay man Dave Ellis and soon he came down complaining of imminent frostbite. The climbing in the afternoon is easily summed up. The instructor got stuck. Hours of amusement were provided at my personal cost, during the incident, however I did climb off the face safely, and it became obvious that there were going to be no pitches for the boys to climb. Instead we set off in search of a good place to watch the sunset from Suainaval's summit.

Arriving there at six we waited until nine for what promised to be a good sunset, until a cloud finally managed to out manoeuvre us. During the three hour wait, the time was passed singing 500 Green Bottles Hanging on the Wall; unfortunately I think we only got as far as the 462nd.

In the morning we made our way back to camp, and although it was true that no actual climbing was done by the boys, I was left with the impression that they had enjoyed themselves.

Steven Paynter.

THE MASS 'SLINGING-IN' AT UIG SANDS

One of the most eventful things that happened on Lewis this year, was the mass slinging-in of boys into the shallow river which runs close to the camp site. Boys were thrown in by the officers when ever they did anything wrong or got on the officers' nerves. Myself and some friends were thrown in because we were found raiding the stores tent. But one Sunday was exceptional, and almost no one stayed dry.

After supper that day, the officers had thrown in a couple of boys, not without a struggle, but some of the others got buckets of water to throw at the officers in retaliation. Dave Deeley and Paddy Thompson chased the offenders and using the left overs of their dinner (there were always leftovers and it was Irish stew and mash that day) started pelting the lads.

Despite the fact that we were on duty section, my friend Alex Hill and myself were chased all over the field by officers on the rampage. I have never seen Alex run so fast in all my life - he must have broken a World Record! However he got away and escaped to a small hill over the other side of the stream, where he remained until it was all over.

Steve Paynter got hold of me and dragged me to the stream's edge, where I gave him a fair struggle before being hurled in. The mass slinging-in had started.

Boys scattered in all directions looking for somewhere to hide, but were chased by officers searching for them, and most were thrown in after a good fight. Ben Webb and Charlie Keck however escaped to the sand dunes and hid, however they surrendered eventually but were thrown in nevertheless. Eggs started flying next and the whole thing got out of control. Jock unfortunately was hit on the nose by a paddle and was taken to the local nurse, and by this time, everyone was rather cold and bored with the idea - most people had hardly any dry clothes left at all!

Jimmy Golding.

GRAVEYARD SURVEY

A survey of gravestones in Tinsgarry Graveyard, West Lewis, Outer Hebrides (Grid Reference NB 046899) carried out from 2nd - 8th August 1977 by Keith Baldock, Paul Bloomfield, Nick Deeley, Sue Ingley, John Jones, John Taylor and Gareth Woolmington.

If you look at the new 1:50,000 map covering Uig Sands, you will see there are two burial grounds marked. One is at Ardmoil (Grid Reference 043323) and is large and rectangular; the other is at Timgarry (048399) and is small and round. The Timgarry yard is much older and apparently no longer in use, and it is probable that this burial ground is situated on an original Mesolithic burial site, as it is typical of such a situation. No direct evidence of this was found however.

The gravestones in the Timgarry burial ground bear a fragmented record of the past. Many of the stones are old and rotting or have fallen over, and are often very difficult to decipher, but from them we know not only who was living in the area anything up to 250 years ago, but the respect which was accorded to various members of the community, their family groupings, occupations and longevity (or otherwise).

Even assuming however that the gravestones are factually correct, it is most unlikely that the stones constitute a fair sample of the community over the past two centuries. In other words, the records are not representative of the people who lived at that time. This is true for several reasons. Although less affected than some areas of Scotland, West Lewis did have considerable amounts of emigration within this period, and it is likely that young families left in preference to old inhabitants. Secondly it is obvious from reading the legends on the gravestones that to be buried here with a marked grave, was a mark of considerable respect, and it is probable that more members of the landowning classes, ministers and doctors are represented here than crofters or fishermen etc. Associated with this, is the cost of providing an engraved headstone. Many are in foreign stone, and some engraved in Inverness and shipped over. This would have an expensive process, and one which would re-inforce the last factor. Lastly child mortality would have been high and un-christened children would probably have been given no headstone at all. It was common to postpone christening until the child had survived most of the usual perils. All these factors should make us very cautious in interpreting the information gained in reading the stones, and in particular the grave markings cannot be relied on as an accurate indication of the age structure of the population. Having said all this however, the graves remain a remarkable record of the past inhabitants of Timgarry and surrounding districts.

Unfortunately, many of the stones are already unreadable or only readable with considerable difficulty, and the condition of the older stones is very poor indeed. In ten years time it is unlikely that any of the non granite stones will be legible at all. Indeed for this survey, many of the older stones could not be read directly, but an impression of their letters had to be taken by charcoal rubbings on large sheets of paper placed against the stones.

Some of the more interesting stones' inscriptions are reproduced below. The complete list is available in the the SHS files.

'C Mc I aged 4 mos, 30th Novr 1837'

'In loving memory of James McKenzie who died at Linshader 15th May 1892 aged 76 years. His mother Flora MacRae wife of John Mackenzie, who died at Reef aged 80 years. His grandmother Julia McRae who died at Kinloch aged 81 years.'

'To the memory of Janet MacCaskill daughter of John MacCaskill tacksman of Ruedunan Isle of Sky wife of the Revd Hugh Munroe minister of this parish, who departed this life on the 8 of Feb 1794- in the 49th year of her age. This stone is placed over her remains in commemoration of her many virtues by her affectionate daughters.'

'To the memory of the Revd Hugh Munroe who departed this life on the 1st day of May 1823 in the 76th year of his age and 16th year of his ministry in this parish. This stone is placed over his remains in commemoration of his many virtues by his affectionate daughters'

'Sacred to the memory of John Mitchell Mealista, died 19th Nov 1904 aged 100 years. And his wife Helen MacRae died 14th May 1906 aged 73 years. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" Rev 14.13'

'Erected (...) the memory of Angus M(...)Aulay who departed this life at Cliff Uig on 17th Feb 1876 aged 49 years. He was a man of noble charater (sic) and much esteemed & who commanded the respect of all with whom he came in contact. He is very deeply regretted by his sorrowing widow and family also by a wide circle of relations and friends. James Chap III (18?) Verse'.

'Erected to the memory of Alexander Matheson who departed this life in Glasgow 16 Feb 1870 aged 23 years, an industrious young man of a respectable character and muchly regretted & lamented by a great circle of friends and acquaintances (sic)'

Erected by Murdo McIver shoemaker, in loving memory of his parents Malcolm McIver, blacksmith, who died at Dun Carlaway 2nd Jan 1889 aged 69 years. Ann MacKenzie, who died at New Valley, Stornoway, 27th Sept 1905 aged 82 years'.

Nick Deeley

JURA 1977

Leader: David Harding.

Officers: Roger Weatherly, Alan Howard, Mark Hopwood, Graham Brierley, Peter Martin, Tim Gilbert.

Boys: Darren (Daz) Bottomley, Harold Campbell, Andrew Evans, Paul Gadwell, Bryn Griffiths, John Innes, Simon Lord, Douglas Payne, Miles Peters,

Christopher Prentice, Dominic Raban, Mark (T-bar) Samuels, Mark Schofield, Duncan Smith, Graham Sofio, Tony Thompson, Anthony Whiteman, Peter Wood, Christopher Young.

LEADER'S REPORT

"My camera, my sandwiches, my luggage.... ", were the despairing words coming from the leader at the ferry. I pursued the retreating bus towards Glasgow, and nearly missed the ferry. All was not lost though, the expedition was still in one piece. However the leader's vital expedition information, food and camera were winging their way in the opposite direction. These eventually returned by air to Islay.

Gloom set upon me; but the good humour of the officers combined with the good behaviour (!) of the boys soon cheered me up. Luckily this was an isolated disaster, and we arrived safely, if a little exhausted at our camp site.

Roger then performed like a circus strong-arm man in putting up the marquees. The first night was spent huddled together in the large marquee, accompanied by sonorous booms from Roger, and a life history from Graham.

The next morning Jura could be seen in all its glory. The sparkling loch nestling between low hills with the majestic Paps rising behind pointing to the heavens. What a fantastic landscape to be stuck with for two weeks. Before taking on the leadership I thought that I would not be able to cope with an expedition out in the wilds of Jura; but once on the island things sorted themselves out remarkably well. At least comparatively well, as the engines caused much worry to all who came near them. Even the patient and painstaking Roger blew a fuse or two over those two metal brutes.

One potential hazard of which I was unaware on arrival on Jura was the profusion of adders, greatly helped by the warm weather. Fears of bitten multitudes were nearly realised with Duncan Smith's efforts to capture the entire population of adders by whatever means he could. One unfortunate victim added variety to Duncan's diet. Memorable events such as this were a mark of the expedition. The sight of Peter regularly bathing in the early hours was the only thing that could tempt the camp out of bed. A programme of early rising was discussed and agreed upon, but only Peter was willing to implement it. Another event which brought the camp to its feet was the water fight. Somehow this blew up while most of the officers were out of camp; and they returned to find themselves in for a ritual wetting from a group of bedraggled boys. All taken in good fun though.

Project work was not the strongest feature of our time on Jura. However, everyone benefited from the variety of activities possible. Climbing, canoeing and walking were popular as ever. Many trips were made to Ruantallain; and bivvies manfully attempted the Paps and Corryvreckan. The latter inevitably attracted most of the rain we had. The Ardlussa Sports proved successful, with Harold Campbell streaming to victory in the 220; and barrel rolling sorted out the balancers. Mrs Nelson warmly welcomed us at the sports, while the vicar from Craighouse bellowed at the competitors with a well tuned voice. Paul Gradwell kindly donated his raffle-won haunch of venison which gave us all a meal with a difference. The sailing regatta performance of Miles Peters and Tony Thompson was perhaps the highlight of our contact with the islanders; although the football fanatics would argue that the final day's game on the airstrip was our glorious moment, when we won 5-2.

There are many people to whom we are indebted for our happy time on the island. Not least of these are the estate keepers, especially Neil McInnes who ferried our equipment; and Charlie MacLean who acts as the island postman, minibus service and news-link between the far corners of the isle. And what a good bunch of officers for the leader to lean on. Roger as mentioned and Alan his ex-Durham contemporary, a veritable duo of battling wits; Peter our strong quiet medic; Mark our culinary expert; Tim, mine of information on climbing and photography; and Graham, truly an eccentric canoeist.

Thank you too, to all those who came and contributed to make a memory that will not fade.

ASTRONOMY

Cruib Lodge 25th July - 12th August,

The wonderfully clear skies around Jura afford a superb view of the Summer stars and constellations. A pair of 10 x 50 binoculars revealed myriads of stars, some of particular interest to amateur astronomers. A fine globular cluster (mass of stars) could be viewed in the constellation of Cassiopeia; Antares the famous red giant star was also prominent in the south. But the centre of interest in the night sky was Perseus.

It is from this constellation that the Perseid meteorites radiate, and on 9th August when the meteor shower was nearing its maximum, many members of our camp, myself included, observed meteors streaking across the night sky. The radiant point of the shower was later found to be slightly north of Perseus.

Unfortunately at the time of our camp the planets rose in the early hours and thus were not observed. Only Mercury rose in the early evening and this was too faint to be of much interest with 10 x 50 binoculars.

Andrew Evans.

CRAIGHOUSE REGATTA

The sailing regatta proved to be the most interesting of experiences. The arrival of our lusty band at the harbour was most dramatic although the sight of a new looking 420 at the water's edge did little to encourage us. After a most entertaining ten minutes stepping the mast, during which Roger nearly fainted twice, we were afloat.

The light winds, or rather lack of them, proved to be no problem as we idly drifted over the line after the gun. What little wind we had soon disappeared as we followed the 420. After deciding which buoy we were aiming at, we realised we had come the wrong way. As we passed a boat which had in fact started half an hour before the rest, we received encouragement of the most unusual and uncomplimentary kind!

It was slightly painful to finally drift past the 420, and I was tempted to tell them how to do it. We eventually crossed the line - but continued on due to misinterpretation of the garbled message shouted to us.

We retired sometime later to the relative comfort of the Harbour mud; Just as soon as I had woken up my crew! Quazy (Graham) later broke the news of the result in a most discreet manner - he shouted it across to us!

The canoeing race was equally entertaining - my second time out in a canoe and not exactly sure what I was doing, I paddled out. Graham came as well and although we didn't win, we didn't do badly either.

After boring myself to death sailing, exhausting myself canoeing, I was mad enough to enter the swimming, but by then I had had enough.

Miles Peters.

RAISED BEACHES AROUND CRUIB

The raised beaches at Cruib ore best illustrated at the 25' O.D. level. The raised beaches were formed as Scotland was lowered slightly by the weight of the glacial ice during the latter part of the Pleistocene age, causing isostatic movement. Since the Pleistocene ice age, Scotland has gradually risen. The sea stacks on the raised beach at Jura Cruib, illustrate the presence of a raised beach at a height of 25' (7.5m) O.D. These stacks are of hard quartzite rock and have therefore resisted erosion by the sea.

Bryn Griffiths.

A NIGHT AMONGST THE PAPS

The Paps of Jura, rising to a height of 2^00' dominate the island. They provide a sharp contrast in terrain. 1 scree slopes tower above the shallow, heather filled valley.-which large herds of deer roam wild. They present a i all those who visit the island.

On a usual Hebridean day (cold, wet and a force 8 gale) we set off for the Paps in the Harvey Wallbanger, Roger acting as pilo . We were accompanied by five canoeists who were to escort us to Glen Batrick, but due to the deteriorating weather they took halfway and then disappeared into a small inlet for shelter.

Roger put us down at 2pm in a small cove a mile or co from Glen Batrick. We walked to the glen and then off up into it, with our bivvi packs. The mist which had been dogging us all through the morning cleared, and revealed Beinn Shiantaidh t:he second highest. Pap. We continues up the glen for a further three hours before making camp at 5pm with two, two-man tents which were pitched on a flat piece of moorland. Even so I had a large protrusive boulder in my back.

At 5.50 (am? Ed.) the four of us emerged from our tents, made breakfast, and an hour later set off for the ridge which would lead us to the summit of Beinn an Oir (2571'). We followed the ridge which was now endowed with a thick coating of mist. It led us for nearly a mile, up scree slopes, round small crags and finally after a steep climb, over scree to what appeared to be a rocky plateau. To our surprise we discovered there the remains of a building. A broken wall led from the building up into the mist, we followed it and after several hundred yards we came across a trig point and the summit.

The view in the mist is not to be recommended. It was all of 6 yds.

In the lee of the summit we ate some Kendal mint cake, drank some water and watched the mist turn into rain. We descended from the barren wastes of the summit to the col between Beinn an Oir and Beinn Shiantaidh, which towered into the mists above our heads. We went up the west side, this being protected from the wind, over loose scree, and signed our names in the book at the summit.

On the way down, Mark's boot, which had been threatening to break, broke; and although Pete did a temporary mending Job, it was clear that it would not last him up a third Pap, and he and Bryn headed back to camp.

Pete and I headed off for the third and last Pap, Beinn a Chaolais. We traversed around the side of Beinn an Oir across several patches of loose scree and numerous bolts of wet slippery rock. The scree dragged on endlessly until it came to an abrupt halt at the base of a large crag, the top of which led to the summit. The only route up was into an evil looking gulley which was blocked in two places. The second caused some problems, but from the top of the gulley it was an easy scramble to the summit cairn.

Simon Lord.

members: Peter Merlin, Bryn Griffiths. Simon Lord and Mark Schofield.

CLIMBING JURA '77

Only four days were spent climbing, but even that was more than I expected.

Cruib is conveniently situated on a raised beach with small cliffs on each side, and having no water at the bottom even at high tide are available for climbing whatever the state of the tide, and anyone falling off is unlikely to drown. (Doubtless a great comfort – Ed.)

The rocks next to Cruib to the west overhang for their entire height, but slightly further along it is more like a sloping stairway with overhanging rungs* Both examples are ice fractured and bits come away in the hand. To the East of Cruib the situation is slightly better, and once vegetation and a small amount of loose material has been removed, the climbs were much safer, to within 2 or 3 feet of the top, where there was a cover of unconsolidated muck. This same layer made finding a belay point difficult.

And so to the climbing itself; the first climb was slightly overgrown, and when I reached the top I moved several 'outcrops' before finding a secure belay about 25feet from the edge. Climbing commenced and the second person had considerable trouble with the heather and a couple of close shaves. After reaching the top he then kept well clear of .the edge as he was scared of heights! The rest of the climb went so well we walked to the bottom and started again further along, which only goes to how pointless climbing really is.

As I didn't want to spend all my time belaying, I encouraged others to do some themselves, which was very enlightening. On several occasions whilst I was climbing and someone else belaying I jumped (from a safe place) to see what would happen. Even if I gave warning I almost always ended up on terra ferma, and for this reason I would strongly recommend that the society purchase some stichplates to enable people to belay more successfully, particularly if the person climbing (or falling) is heavier than the one belaying.

All those who climbed learned quickly and enjoyed themselves.

Tim Gilbert.

POSTSCRIPT FROM JURA

The 'Sound of Islay' rounds the southern coast of Jura in the gentlest of a swell; we pass a cruising yacht. Port Askaig slips behind the headland, the Paps pass out of sight one by one; a black guillemot inspects us from the water. Things are strangely still now as I, a solitary rearguard, return to Kennacraig - with the tourists who eat crisps and throw the bags overboard. Jura House, a green oasis, passes unnoticed; the lady with the vulgar sunglasses and waspy tunic notices my uncombed hair and I am amused. I see she has a dachshund which is presently licking her nose.

The expedition is slipping away from me; it will not be lost, it merely settles. Soon I shall forget precisely what I did each day, that the weather was only sometimes hot. I recall Harold's expression as he piloted the outboard, and Mark's when I fell in the mud in Loch Tarbert yesterday. I remember those amazing raised beaches at Ruantallin.

There is a unity in this landscape, an unsentimental strength. It offers free geography lessons in full-bank erosion processes. But we do not belong to it; if we are truthful, we are guests only, passing through. I realise that I always leave these inlands enriched, feeling deeply grateful for their peace and purity, and conscious that I take much and give nothing. It is not perhaps surprising that we found so many visitors with us at worship last Sunday morning.

Craighouse comes into view; I think of the Regatta and of Miles, Tony and the Harvey Wallbanger - and Jack Paton's splendid hat. "Does the television work on this boat?" asks one young passenger, who pushes past me. Suddenly the Paps reappear, half-drowned in the haze, and I wonder if I can see Lagg bay. Twenty minutes later the whole island is fading, ethereal in the mist, and Kintyre's outline gains definition. It is a gentle parting.

Back on board a crisis! The dachshund, evidently feeling sick, is taken below for a coffee. I follow as passengers are invited to reoccupy their cars.

Roger Weatherly.

COLONSAY 1977

Leader: David Lennard:Jones.

Officers: Roger Butler, Tony Ingleby, Gavin Macpherson, Robert Orrell,
Peter Street & Chris Venning.

Boys: Alastair Anderson, Steven Ashmore, David Axup, Timothy Bennett,
Tim Blythe, Ashley Bookman, Roger Brereton, Timothy Brown,
Christopher Dalton, David Frankland, Andrew Holt, Jonathan Hunter, John
Lane, Robert MacArthur, Michael Moorhouse, Paul Nichols, Dave Nichols,
Michael Parffrey, Ian Rolinson, Alasdair Saunders, Nick Stanley, Simon
Tolson, Eamonn Thompson, Jason Williams, Anthony Townend,
Christopher Wilson, Paul Wyatt and Michael Young.

LEADER'S REPORT

"Excuse me Sir, is this your party?" The Scottish sleeping car attendant looked benevolently over his glasses at me as he consulted his booking sheet. I admitted responsibility for the pile of rucksacks and people littered on the platform, and I felt for the first time that our expedition had really begun. It would surely not be long before all those unrecognised faces gained names and a personality to go with them. It is hard to believe that within 48 hours we were firmly established at Tobar Fuar bay on Colonsay and beginning to explore the island.

Colonsay is a superb island to go to. It is not perhaps the ideal site for an SHS 'get away from it all' expedition -the islanders are too friendly for that. Instead we managed to combine the more usual physical activities with a good deal of socialising with the islanders as well.

From a wide variety of social backgrounds we achieved amongst ourselves a sort of common identity. We northernised some of the southerners and even civilised some of the Northerners; with some we just had to give up. All of us learned a great deal about living with other people in a confined area. Not only because we had to get to know each other on the expedition, but also because we began to get some idea of what it is like to live on a relatively small island.

During the expedition there was plenty of scope for everyone to launch out in their own chosen direction, although most people had a go at most of the major activities as well. We all have our own memories of the stay, but for me, one of the highlights must surely be the ceilidhs we went to which were held in the village hall. 25 of us went and we were most pleasantly surprised to find that there was no shortage of young ladies to dance with.

I began to wonder if we really had left civilisation behind, for they were the most civilised dances I have ever been to - where else could you have tea in china cups and sumptuous cream cakes at half time?

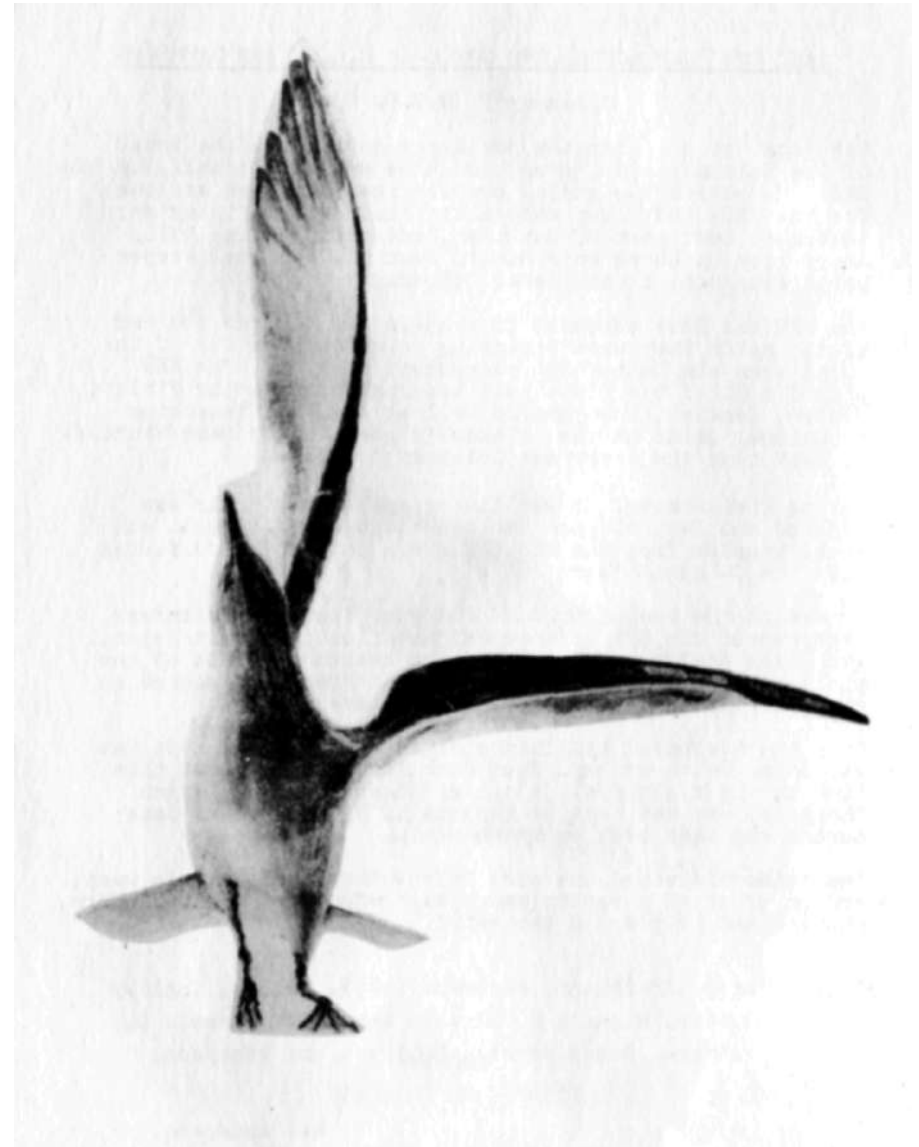
For other people memories will be different. Perhaps some will remember getting stuck for an hour while climbing, or perhaps walking all the way round the island in the rain. Some went canoeing in a gale with huge waves to surf on. Some went rabbit hunting, others chased the girls in School Cottage. Most of us got to Oronsay Priory for a short visit at least and some were able to stay there overnight. We bivvied on the cliffs, we bivvied at Kiloran, (and even liked it so much that we went back for more) we even bivvied at Hangman's rock when we missed the tide to go over to Oronsay. Fishing was a popular pastime but a rather disheartening one, especially when we learnt that the mackerel are to be found on the East of the island and we, unfortunately, had our boats and campsite on the West.

During the evenings and on rainy days we kept ourselves busy about camp with singing to the accordion and tin whistle; bridge occupied the intellectuals amongst us and Gavin edited 'Protoveg' our camp newspaper. Ali Anderson won a balloon debate as a most convincing Jimmy Savile, beating Nick Stanley as Denis Healey in a closely fought final. Magnus Magnusson Yenning pushed us to our intellectual limits with Masterteam, while Rob Orrell introduced night activities involving political intrigue and violence. All this proved to be just too much for some who quietly crawled into bed!

The weather was idyllic for much of our stay - we could have been in the Mediterranean. (I know how you feel Ed.) In the last few days however we saw what the winter on Colonsay brings when we had three gales in as many days. We survived these, and when the time came for us to leave the island I sensed an atmosphere of melancholy tinged with relief. Melancholy, because we were leaving such a beautiful place; relief, because- now there would be real milk, potatoes and meat to eat off china plates at a table. Armchairs to collapse in and a real bed with sheets to sleep in at night....bliss.

I felt sad to leave all those kind people behind on Colonsay, for without them we could not have had such a good expedition. So thanks to Dr Hall-Gardiner for diplomatic help and cabbages; to Mr and Mrs Charlie Mackinnon for carting us about and for supplying us with numerous bottles of fizzy drink and boxes of Jaffa cakes. To 'Watty' Williams and Rev Crawford for their friendship and lifts, and finally a big Thank You to Lady Strathcona for allowing us to camp on Colonsay: we had a great time.

David Lennard-Jones



JACK THE OGRE SCORES TWO GOALS AS SHS. ARE HAMMEREDColonsay 5 S.H.S. 1

Big Jack, no not Charlton but Roger Butler was the toast of the Colonsay side, even though he was centre half for the SHS. He scored two goals, one for the islanders and one for the SHS; the first was easily the better. Finlay an islander, beat most of the team, and crossing the ball, Roger rose up above everyone to beat his own goal keeper David Axup and it was there. Colonsay 1 : SHS 0

The SHS may have conceded five goals but towards the end of the match they were beginning to get the better of the local team who lacked the youngsters stamina. The SHS played most of the first half keeping the menacing Finlay, Hector, Seaview, Ross and Co well at bay, and launching occasional raids on the Islander's goal led by Dave Nichols. At half time the score was Colonsay 1 : SHS 0

During the interval it was discovered that Nichols was injured and Ian Rolinson was substituted. Bob Orrell and Jock Thompson from the SHS team were both still suffering from the Colonsay 'Germ'.

It was in the second half of the game that the Islanders overpowered the SHS defence and the flood of goals began. Two quick goals in as many minutes sealed the fate of the visitors and five minutes later David Frankland scored an own goal that he could probably not have avoided.

Only the technical brilliance of the SHS 'keeper kept the marauding Celts at bay. Then Jack struck again, but this time in the right goal. A corner taken by Jock (Eamonn Thompson) who had come on in place of Peter Street, came across and Jack beat everyone again.

The islander's added one more before the final whistle went, and an offer of a return match was refused by the Islanders, who refused to play in the rain!

Team: Axup, Frankland, Anderson (cap), Butler, Ingleby, Hunter, Nichols F, Street, Saunders, Nichols D, Ashmore. Subs: Orrell, Rolinson and Thompson.

Ali Anderson.



THE PROTOVEG ANTHEM

(to the tune Men of Harlech)

What's the good of eating mushrooms*
Steak and chips and peans and onions,
That's the stuff to give you bunions,
Protoveg is best.

You can keep your Swelfood carrots,
Beans on toast and fish with maggots,
Protoveg is best.

It will make you healthy.

Pit and well and stealthy,

Grow your own outside your home.

It might even make you very wealthy,

Redundancy no cheers for me.

When I give you Protoveg for tea,

No more moans and no more groans,

Protoveg is best.

Gavin Macpherson.

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

Protoveg is the worst of all the food we eat on Colonsay to put it mildly.
The best thing about it is that it is good for throwing at the leaders.

It comes out of a packet and as soon as the dehydrated pellets rattle on the bottom of the pan, the marquee goes silent. People fight back their tears when they realise they are going to have to go hungry again. D. L-J is the only real person who will have seconds of it, although Gavin claims that it is nice.

Yours etc.

Ali Anderson

Boring Ed.

(Hey! I write the Ed. lines around here Ed)



THE CELEBRATED COLONSAY COASTAL WALK

The round-the-island walk was not really intended to be a round the island walk at all! It was something that developed on the day we had the worst weather of the whole expedition. Originally our party of six (Bob Orrell, Al Saunders, Ian Rolinson, Mike Parffrey, Tim Bennet and myself) had left camp to walk around the south end of the island and up the east coast to Scalasaig. Despite the weather, we found the going much easier than we expected and arrived at the big city before 1pm. and in time to visit the shop. Here we cheated and stocked up with biscuits, milk and pineappleade and by 'democratic' means elected to complete the walk.

After leaving the road the terrain became much tougher and pausing to rest at Raisg Buidhe, the ruined village, we continued on clambering up and down over the cliffs and rocky coast and through patches of woodland, where one or two wild goats surprised us when sheltering during one of the worst downpours. It was hard walking all the way north to Balnahard Bay, following the coast as much as was possible.

The long retreat south began in heavy rain, and at Kiloran Bay we were honest enough to refuse a lift - perhaps the only people on the expedition to do so ?

From Uregaig we cut across the moors to Lower Kilchatten, despite Bob's suggestions that we follow the road! We arrived back in camp at about 7.30pm just in time to prepare ourselves for a force 9 gale.

The 20 mile walk had been completed in about 9½ hours, which I believe is an SHS record!

Roger Butler.

SCALASAIG

The day started off wet and windy, we walked to Scalasaig and the rain stopped half way there. Scalasaig was the main village on Colonsay. It has a pier where the ferry comes from Oban bringing visitors and all of the island's supplies; there was a snail Church of Scotland church, an hotel, a Post office and one other shop. We visited the potter there and watched the potter making a coffee pot. We talked to a fisherman about the weather: he was about to go out mackerel fishing.

We went around the coast for a while before heading back across the hills and bogs to camp. When we got there, my boots were full of water and my feet were frozen.

Michael Young

CLIMBING ON COLONSAY

During the expedition, Chris Venning took most of us climbing. He found some good places to climb on the rock outcrops within about half a mile of the campsite so there was not a lot of walking to do carrying the equipment. The first rock face that was climbed was not very high, but everyone who did it was keen to have a go at something higher and harder. We were shown how to belay as well as how to climb. (The belayer is the person who takes in or gives out the rope to the person climbing.)

There were no major accidents but a few people had second thoughts when they were half way up a face and told to take their hands off the rock and put them on their helmets, and then to take their feet off, so that they slid down .for a yard or so until all their weight had been taken on the belaying carabiner.

Robert MacArthur.

THE ORONSAY BIVVY

Nine of us with leaders Peter and Tony left camp one afternoon for a one night bivvy on Oronsay. We carried our sleeping bags, rations and our fishing and drawing gear down with us, the tent was already there. We crossed the strand at low tide and went to a site south of the Priory. We woke late the next day and went to explore the buildings.

The ruins of the Priory, which was built of the local blue-grey Torridonian rock, still stand up to 20' high on the southern slopes of Beinn Oronsay. They date from the 14th cent, although there is evidence of an earlier monastery of the 6th century.

There is a great cross standing to one side of the church, and the cloisters are also very fine. We discovered an alcove with a heap of human bones in it and spent some time doing rubbings and sketches around the Priory. My tombstone rubbing was of an abbot who died in 1554. It was one of a collection of 50 slabs of dark schist, up to 7' long which were carved on Oronsay and Iona in the 15th and early 16th centuries.

We returned back to camp that night after wading back across the strand.

Michael Young

LEWIS (MEALISTA) 1977

Leader: Phil Renold.

Officers: Mike Baker, Pam Harrod, Ken Hunter Helen Robinson, Alan Smith.

Members: Brian Barnes, Amanda Belshaw, Ian Carr, Julia Coate, Pauline Drummond, Simon Froude, Ian Gartside, Simon Horridge, Michael Johnson, Richard Jukes, Angela Hewton, Fiona Nicholson, Julian Penrose, Judith Pielou, Steven Rawlins, Alison Roberts, Nicholas Roberts, Julie Salt, Susan Scanlon, Tim Short, Charlotte Streets, Helen Sudlow, Philip Swan, Sue Walker, Claire Weatherly, Janet Webster, Elsie Wiggins.

LEADER'S REPORT

As an experiment in running a mixed expedition it was without doubt a success. As an expedition all I can say is that I enjoyed it more than any of the other eleven I have been on over the last thirteen years. We were fortunate in having an excellent group of both officers and members. Ken was without doubt the meanest (and therefore best) Camp Administrator I have ever met! Since his medical skills were not in great demand, he spent his time guarding the stores tent, putting Protoveg in everything, walking far and wide and generally making a nuisance of himself. Our other doctor Helen, walked much, carried out our marine biology project and canoed in circles. Pam devoted much of her time to dyeing, spinning and weaving, drawing and pressing flowers. Mike was responsible for the meteorological project as well as the geomorphological and surveying work in the few spare moments he had from writing a report on his recent expedition to Guayana. Alan walked miles, bivvied under rocks, organised a fiendish orienteering course and climbed. I paddled around in canoes, dismantled the outboard motor and slept a lot.

We had twenty seven members (12 boys and 15 girls) and without exception they all worked hard. One interesting point was that the girls were if anything keener and more enthusiastic than the boys. When we arrived on site we were blessed with good weather so setting up the camp at Mealista was a real pleasure (apart from the flies). The site itself was an idyllic setting, being on level ground just behind a little shellsand beach which faced out past some islands to the open Atlantic. A hundred yards behind was the track from the nearest habitation at Breanish - just 1½ miles to the north - whilst beyond that rose the Uig Hills.

Being in such a remote spot, walking was a major activity throughout. Frequent visits were made to the beautiful beaches to the north at Mangersta and Uig. Much activity was, also seen in the Uig Hills and along the precipitous coast to the south. Especially notable were the 'real' bivouacs led by Alan using poly bags and rocks as shelter – made more arduous by the fact that Ken refused to give them any food!

We had a number of excellent rock climbers amongst the lads and they pioneered a couple of long routes on Griomoval as well as performing acrobatics more locally. There is scope for much really serious climbing in the Uig Hills in the future - on this occasion my caution prevented it!

Boating activities were of considerable importance. Apart from getting exposure through doing capsizing drill with the entire expedition and sinking the inflatable I took people surf canoeing in a bay just to the north. This proved to be very popular and exciting as well as wet. One canoe bivouac was organised to Uig Sands and although arduous, the excitement of passing amongst the islands and cliffs in a ten foot swell is something I shall not forget in a hurry. Project work was somewhat spasmodic but work on meteorology, geomorphology, geology, ornithology, surveying, weaving and art was carried out. Of particular note was the weaving done by a nucleus of about six people. I got tired of finding the marquee littered with wool, plants for dyes and odd shaped bits of wood. As is usual on many expeditions, insufficient preparation had been done by some members, but since everyone enjoyed what they did do I had no cause for complaint. One project which was to prove of particular interest from a purely practical viewpoint was that on meteorology. We were blessed with hot, mildly breezy days for the first two weeks but then we had to endure six days of gales and rain in which the marquee took on the appearance of a live thing. How it remained standing I shall never know! The last night was particularly exciting with three 'Icelandics' collapsing but we all survived to tell the tale.

An important feature of the expedition was the social life. Although our singing (and guitar playing!) may not have been tuneful it was certainly loud. It was amazing how cheerful everybody was, even when faced with protoveg, midges, rain, gales, walking 400 yards for water, blisters, capsizing drill, waiting for exam results and Ken. Of course, there were certain added extras such as members of the opposite sex. The presence of girls led to a very civilised atmosphere.

In conclusion, I would like to thank George and Sheila Newhall, the Islivig postmistress, Ian Gillies, and Mr. Kesting for all their help. Also the backroom boys organising food, equipment, travel etc. 'without whom this expedition would not have been possible' but most especially the expedition members who made it what it was - a great experience.

Phil Renold.

PROTOVEG COOKERY

(or how to make food for 20 feed 20,000)

These recipes are simple - except that you must somehow contrive to use at least one packet of protoveg. Hence the ever popular spaghetti Protobolognaise, Corned Beef Protohash, Irish Protostew, Hebridean Protocurry, and yes – the indestructible, indigestible, indescribable, bionic Protohaggis

To the inexperienced in such camouflage cookery, the secret lies in tenderising the protoveg granules and chunks prior to cooking. This requires the gentle caress of the marquee mallet to tenderise the Protoveg without rupturing the polythene bag. The fine brown powder so produced has a high nutritious value while being indistinguishable from the base flavouring agents. Thereafter any combination of orthodox foods may be assembled to create the masterpiece, which has to be seen and tasted to be believed.

The pinnacle of protoculinary perfection was the creation of the Protohaggis and protofruit cake - the latter being almost unique without the benefit of added protoveg. It is indeed tragic to record the failure of the Calor Gas to burn hot enough to cook the cake in less than 23 hours.

To offer the ultimate in survival for future expeditions blessed with protoveg, I shall reveal the recipe of Protohaggis.

1. Tenderise one packet of pork (chunky) protoveg.
2. Fry protogranules in deep fat for 5 minutes.
3. Add 1 pound of oatmeal to adsorb fat and cook for 2 mins.
4. Add onions, salt, pepper, mixed spice and curry powder to taste.
5. Place the mixture in two watertight bags and boil for 30 mins.
6. Serve with due pomp, ceremony and potato flakes.

This quantity will satisfy all who can look the creation squarely in the face and still muster an appetite (six is the record to date).

Protoking (alias Ken Hunter)

ON BEING BURIED ALIVE

The Atlantic surf is crisp and cool.
The heat of sun on Sand so cruel.
Then sand on sand, patted firm,
More and more I try to squirm.

Now locked fast in sandy cast,
Cold and wet, the worst is passed,
Smiling sweetly till sand is smooth.
Artists and bathers all approve.

Sat upon by sadists : Photographed entombed.
Will I ever eat again? – Protoveg exhumed!

ROCK CLIMBING REPORT

The amount and type of rock climbing near to the Mealista campsite was unusually varied. 300 yards away from the camp were some short cliff climbs, at the mouth of the stream Abhainn Motard. Less than two miles away from these were the huge slabs of Griomaval, on its north side, opposite Loch Dubh. Some climbing was also done at the top of the valley in between Liavala Deas and Naidevala Muigh (G.R. 023 231) on a small crag, perhaps 60 feet high in places, and on sea cliffs at a beach (994 214). The rock (Gneiss) is very good for friction when dry, but veins of smooth quartz provide variety. The sea cliffs are very loose and care must be taken when choosing holds.

The slabs of Grionaval (001223)

These can be easily seen from the campsite. On the day that we chose to climb them they were wet from rain the previous night. There were plenty of lines to choose from, but we decided to go straight up and hope for the best. From where we stood at the bottom of the slabs they looked very steep and wet, and an overhang leaned outwards 120' above us.

The first pitch was quite thin and wet. I took a more or less straight line up to a grassy ledge at 70' for a belay. Protection was awkward to find unless pegs were used. Nick Roberts followed and I abseiled down to retrieve a peg we had used for protection, prusiked (? Ed) up to the ledge and began the second pitch. This was more awkward, with the hardest part being a short traverse to a vertical crack about 15' below the overhang. The crack became a shallow corner at a point where the overhang leaned out about 2' The overhang went easily and I moved up to a wide ledge and traversed 20' leftwards for a belay. The pitch had used about 120' feet of rope by this time. By now the midges, by far the worst hazard to rock climbers on Lewis, were attacking in full force, and the last pitch, a hundred and fifty feet of easy rock and scrambling to a grass gully, was done with incredible speed. The rest of the climb, about 600' of very easy and rather boring climbing was done at a later date. In my opinion, the first two pitches of the climb would be graded at about mild very severe, but the climb would have been easier if dry.

The crags of Naidevala Muigh (023231)

Those are really only small outcrops usually not more than 20' high, but the one at the top of the valley is much more impressive, about 60' high, steep and sometimes overhanging.

As usual there were four in the party, Alan Smith, Judi Pielou, Phil Swan, and myself. The first climb we did was more to the right of the crag, 50* to the left of a large corner/chimney and about 20' right of a lot of large flakes and blocks. The line we went up, was a series of thin cracks, dripping from the previous night's rain, which went up to an overhang and then left, to avoid arriving at a stance. The crux came 20' up, and involved getting from a large ledge at 10' over a leaning wall, using two cracks.

The second pitch was about 20' of easy climbing but was necessary because of the need to go a long way back to find a belay. I would say that the grade was about 4b VS. Protection was not excellent and I dropped a peg on Phil, the second.

The other climb we did there was a very obvious line on the other end of the crag. There is a broken brown slab, which reaches a vertical crack at 10'. The crack gradually gets steeper and the holds on the side thinner until it opens into a broken leaning chimney at about 30'. This is the last problem and is about 10' high. The climbing is hard all the way and the protection scarce at times, being small stoppers until the chimney is reached. Again I would give this climb a VS grade, but more sustained and direct than the previous route mentioned,

Alan and Judith found a line up the large flakes and blocks previously mentioned with the last part being the hardest, a pull onto a sloping ledge from another sloping ledge, 7' below. Stance and finish as for the first climb on this crag.

Sea Cliffs

Not much serious climbing was done on the sea cliffs because of their smallness and the inaccessibility of the harder climbs at high tide. They were useful for top roping and soloing around a few feet above the ground. The rock on the cliffs is much more friable and loose than on the mountain crags, but there are many lines to be done, some of them involving 20' overhangs.

Conclusion

The amount of rock climbing available was exceptional, although the amount done didn't quite match that. A visit to the 400' vertical cliff Craigdhubb Dibadale would have been interesting but adequate supervision was not available. It is a great experience to climb unclimbed, uncharted rock.

Steve Rawlins

HOW TO ADD LIFE TO A BIVVY IN FIVE EASY LESSONS

(Useful notes for officers and members)

1. It is essential to choose your day carefully: either pick a hot windless day, which is sure to bring out the midges (members react in a very amusing way to these attackers by flapping their arras about madly) or pick a day which is wet and the wind is blowing a force nine gale. (By the end of the bivvy members will be soaked to the skin having discovered their waterproofs are not waterproof).

2. Some encouragement is occasionally needed when walking long distances. A useful phrase is 'It's only over the next bill' but this ploy cannot be used for long as members soon realise this might not be the case.

7. On a bivvy take only a small amount of food. This should encourage walkers to go faster and reach camp quicker. The recommended amount of food between seven people/day is: a small amount of porridge, sausages and mash, one seventh of an orange and a shared Bar Six.

When asleep at night, remember to snore as loudly as possible, so you can keep everyone else awake. (Please contact A.S. for further details about this technique.)

If you're bivvying by the sea you may find that a quick streak across the beach very refreshing. But always remember news spreads rapidly among small Hebridean Communities.

All the above techniques have been tried, tested and approved during the 1977 mixed expedition to Mealista on Lewis.

Amanda Belshaw.

The Enchanted Tent

by

Fleet Jewish Anderson

Once upon a time, far away in the harsh and barren land of Mealista, where the monotonous scenery was broken only by the occasional pit of evil-smelling liquid, there lived a wicked magician called Philo, and he pitched a small green tent. Uttering evil incantations such as "Cap Size Drill" and set a guard outside this tent. The guard was the terrible Kenomster whose fearful weapons consisted of cold porridge, lumpy spaghetti and worst of all curried proto-veg. Then the magician built a canoe and set off to the human world to capture four beautiful maidens called Julie, Susan, Judith and Fiona.

Every day the terrible Kenononster forced then to climb up mountains, continually shouting 'It's only over the next hill' to add to the maiden's torture. However one fine day a handsome prince called Tim happened to stumble on the enchanted tent. (Which wasn't too difficult to find by this time as it was surrounded by a strong smell of cheesy feet). When the maidens caught sight of this perfect human male, they immediately began to suffer from a belated attack of the after-effects of proto-veg. Prince Tim cried out, 'I shall surely save you I stumbled out and fell splat!' into a conveniently! placed cow pat, cleverly magicked into position by the evil Philo. But the maidens worked hard cleaning him up and soon he was fully fit and ready for any danger. To break the evil spell he had to sit up all night, listening to the crooning of the infamous Brian. As the infamous Brian fell asleep, Tim could easily break the spell, and carried the four maidens in his rucsac, back to his Marquee Palace, where he fed them on Kendal mintcake for a week. As they were all very attached to him (owing to the gooseberries which he used to attach them to his rucsac) he married all four and they lived happily ever after under a drift wood table and slept on a bed of pure proto-down.

The End.

Fiona Nicholson.
(What is this about? Ed.)

THE BIVVY

The pleasure of the hills
The midges and mist
The boots and packs
The midges and rain
The stoves and tents
The midges and bogs
The food and first-aid
The midges and aches
The survival bags and karrimats
The midges and blisters
The mountains and lochs
The midges and sunburn
The shielings and sheepfolds
The midges and tics
The sunshine and wind
The midges and flies
The pleasure of hills
The midges, the midges, the midges.

Alan Smith

THE MEALISTA KILLER WHALES?

The crofters told us that Killer whales do visit Hebridean waters in Summer, and indeed many of their ancestors would have enjoyed the whaling, which was still a prosperous occupation at the turn of this century. Martin Martin recorded the fishing for whales off Gallon Head, which at that time was renowned for its "Particularly enormous type of whale, known as the Gallon whale" and he reported how in 1660, one boat with four men was overturned by a whale which then devoured three of them.

Killer whales usually roam in small packs and are very fast and powerful swimmers. The bulls often grow over 30' long but their mates seldom exceed half this length, but they are all jet black above and white beneath, with a large triangular dorsal fin up to 6' long in elderly bulls, and large flat horizontal tails which can be used most effectively against its hunters. They are members of the dolphin family.

Basking sharks apart from their size have little in common with these predators. They are plankton feeders, very sluggish, cruise near the surface at a speed of 2 knots filtering their food from the plankton-rich warm Hebridean waters. They are often in small groups, but are all of the same size being; darker above and pale below, but in common with all sharks, they have dorsal and pectoral fins on their backs as well as tall vertical fins.

Little is known of the life history of the ocean bound killer whales or basking sharks - a future project for some good swimmers?

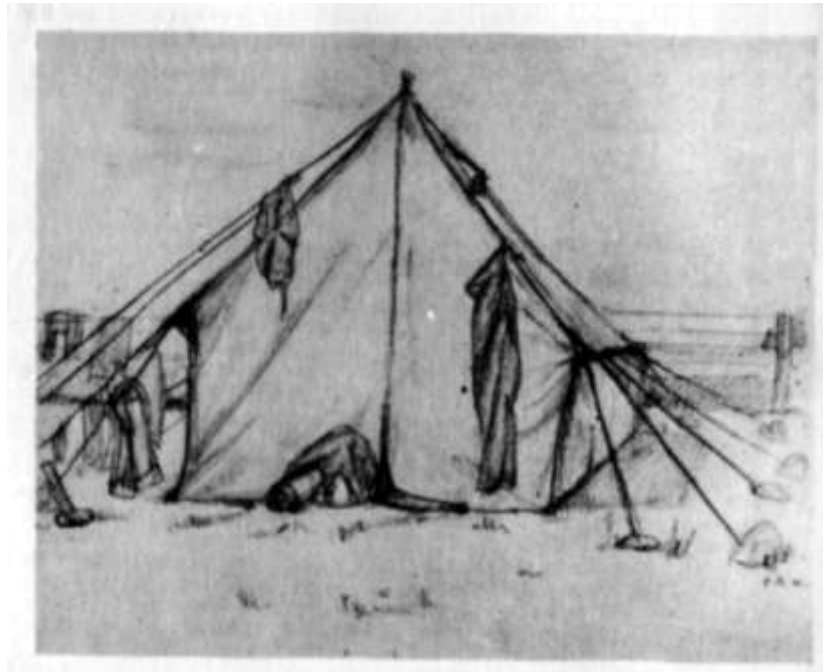
Ken Hunter

BIVVY TO LOCH A'CHANA

With Alan, Pam and Helen, the other nine of us set off at about 9:00am on our bivvy. We walked along the coast from the camp to West Tamana, stopping on the way for rests when we were frequently attacked by clouds of midges. When we reached a small loch at West Tamana, at about 11.30 am we had a break for lunch. Ken's rations weren't as stingy as usual, although there wasn't much left for the next day. Leaving West Tamana, we carried on along the coast, past East Tamana and on to the entrance of Glen Tamanisdale. We walked on until most of us were tired out (with the exception of Alan, who could have carried on forever!), and put up our three small tents at Loch a' Ghana, next to a small sheiling. The soup which was thick and lumpy was followed by Irish Stew, liquid potato (through lack of potato flakes, beans and coffee containing - lumps of milk powder. After lighting a fire to rid ourselves of the midges (which didn't work - midges seem, to be immune to smoke), we turned in for the night. Just as the mist was creeping up the valley sides.

After a reasonably good night, we were awakened by Alan's voice shouting "Come on you happy campers, time to set up!" We crawled out of our sleeping bags and after clearing the sheiling, breakfast was started. By this time the midges were driving everyone crazy as they had been around since 6am and it was now 7.50am. The porridge was served out with midges mixed in, and we ate sausages, liquid potato and more midges.

We walked on up the valley and stopped for coffee when we reached Loch Roanagail. By this time to our relief, the dreaded midges had vanished and we were left with spotty faces from their bites. Working our way past Loch Mor ne Clibhe, the last stretch back to the camp was relatively flat so we walked slowly back on to the road at Breanish and home sweet home.



LOCH SHIEL 1977

Leader: Peter Liver.

Officers: David Crawford, John Round,
Bruin Thompson and Chris Waltho.

Members: David Clarke, Piers Hart, Paul Lemkes, Graham Kramer, Richard Thompson, John Carey, Philip Jones, David Nichols, Neil Rivers, 'Sandy' Robertson, Roger Hyde, Chris Buckley, 'Fred' Thomas, Simon Leman, Mike Stannier, Russell Marsh, Mark Banks and John Hudson.

LEADER'S REPORT

"I'm afraid you can't go," said the avuncular figure on the bean bag.

"It's the deer stalking you see."

It was May, but even so the rain lashed against the glass walls of Bradford University building where the board of the SHS was in crisis session. The man on the bean bag stared intently out of the window as if expecting to find the answer in the storm clouds rolling down from the Yorkshire moors. Then turning back to the room he said; "So Rhum is out this year, but Moidart, on the mainland has been suggested."

There was a stirring in the room, and the short-lived confusion that goes with ten people opening maps at the same time. I found Moidart and stuck my finger on a deep glen running south west into Loch Shiel. And that is where we went.

I'm glad that we did, for the site at Glenaladale is one of the most beautiful I have visited. The first glimpse of Loch Shiel from the viaduct at its head cannot be improved on as an introduction to an area where the hills rise steeply from the calm loch, their sides dappled by forest and sunlight. The deep initial impression was reinforced by the boat trip that took us from the comparative civilisation of Glenfinnan to the tranquillity of a glen deserted by its inhabitants nearly a hundred years before.

The sun shone for us, and the camp was rapidly established. Intrepid souls immediately crawled over the glen where Bonnie Prince Charlie spent the night before sailing to Glenfinnan, and raising the standard of rebellion on another warm August day in 1745.

Our canoes sailed down the isles to the sacred isles of St. Finnan, and the party lunched amongst the graves of generations of Highlanders. The climbers found a convenient rock and set about it, and the first bivvy party set out on one of the rare rainy days to visit the Forestry Commission settlement at Polloch.

Some fiend dreamed up a peak contest that set the fit at every slope to hand, and the cunning at every ridge that was possessed of several peaks in a row.

The midges were awful, and to be caught bathing off the small pier, as - the sun dipped behind Croit Bheinn could be a nasty experience as clouds of the malevolent beasts rose up from the heather.

Nevertheless the sun continued to shine, the bivvy parties kept going out, and an enjoyable rhythm developed to our daily appreciation of this calm place.

The Highland gathering at Glenfinnan momentarily interrupted this rhythm, for this was a special, and essentially local and annual event. It is true that some of the pipers were from Australia, but the crowds in the main were not tourists but local people from the surrounding countryside. Friends who had not met for a year exchanged yarns and drams while youths competed at piping, dancing an Irish jig, hill-racing, and throwing things. I threw balls at Coconuts, but desisted when I hit the thumb of the girl taking the money. Never mind - the trip back up to camp on Henderson's boat, with Henderson's festive friends, made up for it, even if I was pinned to the gunwhale by an unsteady man with an unsteady gaze with copious and mumbles stories of the way.

We had our own games on the last day, although 'Throwin' the welly' didn't have the same ethnic appeal as a telegraph pole.

When at last we left Glenaladale it was in the full knowledge that we had pioneered a site that was worth returning to. And when we departed it was with gratitude to John Hutchison who did so much to set the thing up, to Robert Crockett, the stalker, and his wife for bringing bread post and advice, and to the admin men of the Society whose arrangements went so smoothly.

Peter Liver.

CORRYHULLY BIVVY

Chris Waltho, Dave Clarke, Sandy Robertson, Paul Lemekes, John Hudson and I set off for Corryhully. Bruin ferried us across in two trips and we set off from Scarmordale at 11.30, reaching Glenfinnan at 3pm. After buying sweets and sending postcards, we reached Corryhully at about five, and called in on the owner to obtain permission to sleep in the bothy, to which he agreed.

The peaks were covered in mist the next morning at 8, so we waited until 11 when it cleared somewhat. We were 300' from the top of Sgurr a choire Raibhaich when we saw a Golden Eagle. We reached the top (852m) at about 2, and had lunch in the cold thick mist. After an hour we carried on along the ridge to Coire Carnaig, but as the mist was getting thicker, made our way back to the bothy.

Sandy had an accident in the night and got up at 3am to wring out his sleeping bag! But not being able to sleep, he and Dave got up at six, built a fire and made some soup to warm themselves up. Slowly everyone woke up, and after official breakfast at 8.30, we cleared up the bothy and arrived back in Glenfinnan at 10.15.

Richard Thompson

THE MIDGE BIVVY

It was raining when we set off, and this persisted, gradually getting worse, throughout the bivvy. Bruin, Fred, Mike, Roger, John and I set off at about eleven o'clock, crossed the loch, and started down the Forestry Commission Road. Walking leisurely down to Polloch, seven miles from the jetty at Scamodale, we arrived at 3 o'clock, stopping many times to put on and take off our cagoules.

We walked about 1½ miles out of Polloch itself and found a spot for camp in a new plantation next to a stream. It became quickly obvious that one tent was a complete disaster, while the other was quite good. As soon as we stopped the midges began to rise in dense clouds, and quickly drove everyone mad. Bruin successfully blew up a Primus stove, but after repair, we had a reasonable tea, liberally spread with the little beasts, and then set off up a small peak to avoid the pest.

It poured all night, and we finally managed to crawl out of our beds at 11.30 next morning and finished breakfast just in time for lunch. We packed up camp in a matter of minutes and trudged back to Scamodale, making a detour to visit a small loch on the way. Finally we decided the bivvy had been worthwhile, despite the rain and the midges.

Phil Jones

(The rewards as Director of Projects are never great. You can't expect the frontiers of Science to be advanced on SHS Expeditions, or for earth shattering discoveries to be made. No Nobel prizes will be heading my way. So when I designed the Barnacle project for the expeditions, I didn't set my sights too high. Or did I? I knew about the unpredictability of animals, especially wild animals, but I had forgotten Man is an animal as well. But perhaps my biggest error was in making the project only fool proof,..)

LOCH SHIEL BARNACLE PROJECT

Looking for something interesting to do, I chanced upon a mysterious manila envelope. It was marked "On Her Majesty's Service. Loch Shiel Barnacle Project. Code No 26-73". and with rising excitement I realised I had discovered an official communication from the Director of Projects.

I opened the envelope, and out tumbled an A4 sheet entitled 'Barnacle Project (All ages).' Reading on, I wondered if I was old enough to experience 'one of the most beautiful things in biology'. Later I was told that barnacles live encased in a hard shell and are fitted with a small, tightly closed lid - like a small beak, to enable some communication with the outside world. Was NTD getting at the Treasurer again? Finally it seemed that barnacles would open and close their lids in order to throw out fishermen's nets to gather food in. A bit like Crawford drinking soup through his beard in the evening perhaps.

Now here was a project worth doing I decided, and all I needed was a bucket of water and some barnacles. The water was no problem with Loch Shiel close by, so I set out to look for the barnacles. It was here that I hit the first snag. There wasn't a single specimen of Barnaculus Delius sp. to be found. Worried, I returned to the project sheet but there were no contingency plans to follow should finding the animals prove difficult. In desperation; I set the Longworth Mammal Traps by the shore line, baiting them with surplus gooseberries, and sent out two canoe parties to beat the loch with teatowels, driving the animals inward. Again no barnacles. Finally I studied the notes on the 'Animal Sizes Project' and wondered if the barnacle was such a small creature it might not be visible with the naked eye. So Prof Buckley surveyed samples of Loch Shiel water beneath his microscope, for days on end, but to no avail.

In the end I gave up. I put the sheet marked 'Barnacle Project (All ages)' back into it's manila envelope, and I must confess, I was disappointed. There were no Barnacles at Loch Shiel. Camp-sage Bruin said he thought it might be something to do with the fact that Loch Shiel was a fresh-loch, but I don't think he knew really. Anyway I had already lost interest by then and was getting on with the Loch Shiel Winkle Project.....

JSK Round.

THE GLENFINNAN GATHERING

Members: Dave Crawford, Graham Kramer, Roger Hyde,
Mike Stanier, Dave Nichols, Peter Liver, John Round.

We set off along the Forestry track and made good progress until we approached the river. We had been assured by Chris that we could wade across the river where it entered the loch and thereby save ourselves miles of walking. Our faith in Chris proved misplaced. After wading through a very boggy area of ferns and heather we eventually reached the river which turned out to be 10 yards wide and 8 feet deep. We returned to the road and continued for about a mile looking for somewhere shallower to cross.

Although our primary aim was to visit the gathering, we also intended to carry out a sociological survey of the life of the community on the day of the gathering. Our first stop was therefore at the Glenfinnan Hotel, ("therefore" ? Ed.) and from there to the Stage Inn, (I think I'm beginning to understand) before going on to the gathering itself.

The gathering was a local affair, and did not suffer from the professionalism that we were told plagued other gatherings. The games consisted of the ordinary field and track events as well as dancing and tossing the caber. The term 'gathering' is very appropriate, since the event was such a local happening. A boat was running to take those attending the gathering back to Polloch and we decided to catch this back to the campsite. The return journey in the back or the boat with a dozen or so drunken Scotsmen was a complete contrast to the polite applause of the tourists, so much in evidence at the gathering itself, and showed us another aspect of the community, at least on this occasion.

As several bottle of whisky were passed around among the occupants of the boat, one middle aged man insisted on recalling his wartime experiences in North Africa, the Middle and Far East, Germany and Dunkirk; how he escaped from a POW camp and walked 500 miles in three week.- without food and water.

Another kilted and corpulent gentleman was leaning backwards dangerously over the edge of the boat, swigging whisky and shouting that all the English should be thrown overboard whilst periodically tapping as from his cigar into the captains pocket. Two others had devised a system in whereby one would distract, the attention of the captain's daughter (who was in practice in charge as the captain was drunk) whilst the other would pinch her posterior. We eventually arrived back in Glenaladale and watched the inebriated Scotsman waving goodbye and leaning over the side of the boat more dangerously than before.

Fred.

THE LOCH SHIEL PEAK RACE

The expedition itself began with everyone in camp appearing to be very keen hillwalkers. In fact a small group of boys became bored with the setting up of camp on the first day and decided to prove themselves keen by climbing the nearest peak to the camp in a matter of a couple of hours: Beinn an t-Samhainn (525m.)

This short expedition of theirs proved to be the first of many more and within a few days, their list of peaks was looking unbeatable. But not so though, soon everyone else was off on walks with the energetic officers (!) and the lists grew.

One of the most popular walks was that around the ridge of Scammodale (a perfect example of a corrie). This could be seen clearly from the campsite, and everyone agreed it would be a good place to walk. Good it certainly was, the views were fantastic from Sgorr an Tarmachain (756m.) and it was possible to see Eilean Shona on the far side of Acharacle. Although the views were good the climb was exhausting.

Dave Crawford led a six peaks walk along the forestry commission road and up Meall a Choire Chruinn (643m.), which was very steep indeed. This was closely followed by five more tough peaks, and the group arrived back in camp just in time to face an evening meal of appetising protoveg. (sic Ed.)

Another popular walk was Croit Beinn. Situated further up Glen Aladale, it is 633m high, and several people climbed it more than once in an attempt to earn more height and win the peak race. The highest peak climbed on the expedition was Sgurr Thuilm at 963m, and proved a fast but enjoyable climb despite poor weather conditions.

But- to the results:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|---|
| 1 Mark Bankes | 7268m | Extremely keen person |
| 2 Sandy Robertson | 6751m | (Sandy would probably have won if he hadn't left early) |
| 3 Piers Hart & John Carey both | 6689m | |
| 5 Dave Clarke | 6314 | |
| 6 Richard Thompson | 5244 | |
| 7 Dave Nichols | 6985 | |
| 8 Neil Rivers | 4798 | |
| 9 Phil Jones | 4628m | |
| 10 John Hudson | 4513m | |
| 11 Graham Kramer | . 4333m | |
| 12 Mike Stanier | 3889m | |

13 Simon Leman	3465m
14 Chris Buckley	2595m
15 Russell Marsh	2170m
16 Roger Hyde	1188m
17 Paul Lemkes	824m

All our thanks must go to Pete, Dave, John, Bruin and Chris (the Officers) for organising all these different walks and keeping us all so tired. Perhaps it might be a good idea to look at the officer's scores....

1. Bruin 6139m Not bad Bruin (for an Officer)
2. Peter 5146n Very good Peter
3. Dave 4838m Could do better.
4. John 4333m This boy's a natural
5. Chris 2394m Better luck next time Chris,

Mike Stanier.



KNOYDART 1977

Leader: Craig Roscoe.

Members: Ian Arrow, Simon Atkinson, Don Campbell, John Cherrington, Neil Cornick, Benoit Hetier, Paul Hillman, Neil Hyde, Tony Ingleby, Steven Jeff, Hugh Lorimer, Gary Marshall, Ian Mayhew, Andrew Morris, Mark Pratley, Ian Shortman, Bill Siggins, Gordon Stevenson, Simon Traynor, Pete Weston.

LEADER'S REPORT

We viewed the site at Shamadalen with some suspicion; after all, the mainland of Scotland is not the Outer Hebrides. On arrival I had the feeling that the experience would be somehow diminished by this fact. Fortunately, I was wholly wrong; Knoydart provided a mountainous beauty unknown on the islands. We all felt this more than compensated. My first inkling as to the ultimate success of the expedition was when it became apparent just how badly it was starting off. Torrential rainfall and zero visibility on the crossing from Mallaig led the more pessimistic elements of our party to suggest that Bruce Watt was going along the wrong side of Skye. Needless to say Bruce Watt was right, and at last the village of Airor became visible through the rain. The weather remained exciting and provided us with the monsoon necessary to enliven the boring and unchallenging process of carrying all our equipment a mile to the site. At this point I must thank Don for sorting out the gear at the landing place, Simon for the prompt way in which everything was stored when it reached the house, and everyone else for some terrific sherparring in truly frightful conditions.

True to form, the weather cleared up as soon as camp was established, we were little troubled by the weather from this point onwards, the only exception being the day of Tony's watersports in which rivers were caused to flow across cricket pitches, and Viking burials were re-enacted using an SHS canoe and the Frenchmen Ben.

Ours was very much an activities expedition. The walking potential of the site was exploited by everyone and few of us will forget the sight from the top of Ladhar Beinn; a landscape of mountains. A great deal of canoeing and boating was also done thanks to Tony's enthusiasm and Pete's astonishing ability to keep our outboard motor going. Mention must be made of the Mackerel slaughter performed by Gary (Davy Jones) Marshall and Co. Fishing expeditions yielded so much mackerel that it was necessary to follow the EEC and place a limit on the catch size. I seem to have gone off fish since the expedition. When none of the aforementioned activities were in progress, the entire camp was engaged in the Knoydart test-series (Kerry Packer please note.)

As our level of physical activity was high, our level of mental activity was almost non-existent. Only two projects were carried out, both by Don, who took time off from walking us into the ground, to produce a woodland survey and a bird species diversity index.

About this stage in the report it is traditional for a leader to list the memories of his expedition that he will 'carry with him to the grave.. I see no need. to depart from that tradition and will, therefore, beg everyone's' indulgence. My most vivid memories are of the great race to the top of Ladhar Beinn, the breathtaking view from the top, sunset of the Cuillins and the state of my feet after the 58 mile return trip to Camusrory.

The expedition was a good one thanks to both people and place. It was over too soon however, and we went south with a sense of loss. I would like to thank everyone who made the expedition possible; the SHS administration, the expedition members and the inhabitants of Knoydart. My special thanks must go to Mr Ken Dixon who delivered our bread, Mr A MacDonald, the land-factor, and Mr. Bruce Watt whose punctuality puts British Rail to shame.



KNOYDART CRICKET CLUB

With two members of the now infamous Mingulay Cricket Club on the expedition it was inevitable that the genesis of the Knoydart Cricket Club should come about. The ground could not have been better; it was flat! There was even a wicket cut ready for our use and the surroundings could only be equalled by those of Mingulay. Rather lovely peaks surrounded us on three sides while the Sound of Sleat and the Isle of Skye faced the batsman at the crease. A boundary was marked out while a convenient wall served as boundary at long on/off (this proved to be particularly elusive due to high winds). The first bats were cut from fish boxes washed up on the beach, but as these were broken at a rate of six per game, a larger plank was procured and the 'Atkinson Special' was carved from it; a fine piece of craftsmanship which weighed twice the weight of a normal bat and played havoc with the wrists. (It's still there; somewhere.)

These games proved to be highly competitive and many different characters came to the fore. The C.A. (I forget his name) scored the first half century but, not to be outdone, Chez scored the first whole century after being dropped five times, much to the opposing Captain's frustration. Neil H. must be mentioned for his four Golden Ducks.

The sun was setting over the Cuillins (which could be seen completely - a marvellous sight in itself) when a full toss was bowled, the batsman advanced up the wicket and hit the ball with all his might sending the ball clear over the wall by six feet. The unfortunate bowler; Bill, was trying to equal Malcolm Hash's record at this time.

This year's winner of the Geoff Boycott boring batsman award goes to Hugh Lorimer; no further comment required. Without doubt, on a wet track there cannot be a better bowler than Hugh. With movement either way, batsmen found him extremely difficult to score off. Similarly, Ian Mayhew was difficult to play, but on a slow dry track he was seen to get much 'stick'. Chez managed the only hat trick - a truly magnificent all round performer. It must also be added that the wicket took much spin when the cows had been on it, although some work was required before play could start in these circumstances.

Eagles stopped play..... not familiar headlines, but on two occasions Eagles did in fact stop play and sent everyone running for field-glasses for a better look. Finally mention must go to Neil Cornick for his Derek Randall-like fielding, Hugh for his close catching, Don for bowling 'spin' in his wellies, Jock for his alertness, Mark for his bowling and Craig for his enthusiasm and everyone for a great expedition.

SJFA

