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SCHOOLS HEBRIDEAN SOCIETY

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ANNUAL REPORT

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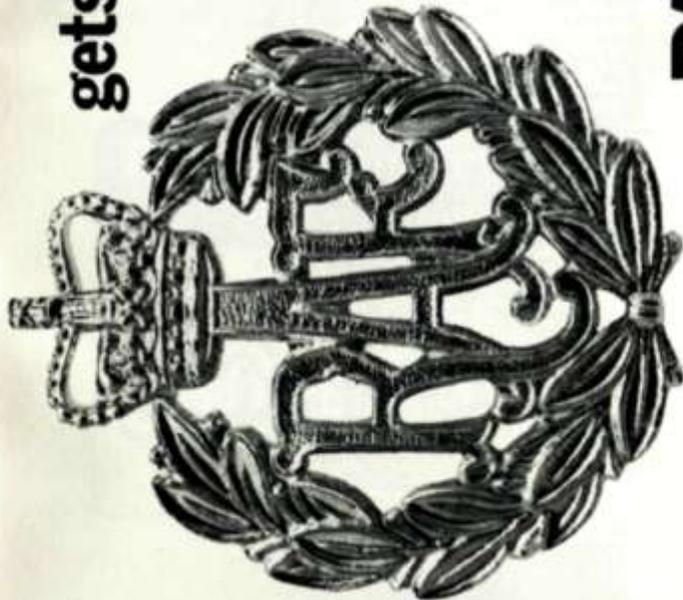


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## EDITORIAL

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Islay	Roger Weatherly
Jura	Steve Paynter
Lewis (Mealista)	Pete Weston
Lewis (Tamanavay)	Tony Ingleby
Rhum	Mike Hayward (Chris Venning)
Loch Shiel	Alan Smith

#### 1980 EXPEDITIONS

Colonsay	John Round
Mingulay	Nick Deeley
North Uist	Steve Paynter
South Uist	Simon & Rose Atkinson
Harris	Jonathan Orr
Knoydart	Ian Arrow

>

The 1979 Report is again very pleasing, especially when the extremely poor weather conditions experienced on expeditions is taken into account. Project work this year seems a little below par, with notable exceptions. The real disappointment is lack of artistic contributions - our thanks go to Roger Butler and to Mike Hayward, without whose camera and watchful eye many members would feel less embarrassed!

In order to maintain standards in the face of rising costs, you will notice that this year we have made available a small amount of advertising space to people in closely associated fields (!). The subsequent revenue has contributed some 10% of the production costs of this magazine.

We have found our two years as Editors of the SHS Report very rewarding and hope that you will continue your contributions and help the new Editor by producing vast tomes of interesting legible material (long lists of species are interesting but pure purgatory for a non-scientific typist) as soon as possible after the year's expeditions (no personal affront intended!)

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## CONTENTS

	Page
Chairman's Report	1
Islay Expedition 1979	3
Lewis (Mealista) Expedition 1979	12
Jura Expedition 1979	13
Lewis (Tamnavay) Expedition 1979	30
Rhum Expedition 1979	40
Loch Shiel Expedition 1979	47
The Road to the Isles" - the moving story of how the food/equipment gets where it should be....	57
"Twenty Years On" - Thoughts of first Chairman Abbott	60
"Join the Professionals" - Mary Jones, secretary to the Society since its beginnings, tells of the start of her invaluable involvement....	62
<b>Projects</b>	
Lichen Flora of S.E. Islay	64
Ornithology on Islay	70
Geological Prospecting on Loch Shiel	71
Islay Limpet Project	72
Geology of Ardilistry Bay Area	74
Study of Proaig Croft, Islay	76
Renewed Population Census of Manx	
Shearwater on Rhum	80
Seashore Zonation (Mealista)	84
Past Expeditions	87

-1-

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As usual this year has been full of adventure and exploration, and to judge by the reports I have received the expeditions have been very successful. In particular the new Poseidon inflatable rescue boats have proved a great success; congratulations to everyone who contributed to the Appeal which financed their purchase. We still have about £1,000 to raise to buy the last of the three boats, but I hope the Board will be able to agree to this purchase before the summer.

Once again many backroom people have contributed to the smooth running of the expeditions, but I must single out Mrs. Mary Jones. Mary has again held all the Society activities together with enormous enthusiasm and energy, and made sure our meetings are properly ordered and our decisions minuted. She has politely but firmly blasted Directors from their winter hibernation to ensure decisions are taken on schedule; she has refused to take no for an answer. And yet we all love her - the truth is we know what is good for us! Sadly, after five years devoted service Mary finds that now she must retire, and she will be difficult to replace. But be assured, Mary, we would not be where we are without you, and please accept our thanks. Two long serving Directors have also resigned, and we are deeply grateful for their service. John Cullingford, or to give his correct title, Brother John Francis, has been associated with the Society from the earliest days, and we have grown to value his counsel and advice. John has brought his light-hearted yet deep thinking future to many expeditions, and latterly selected assistant leaders with perception and tact. There is little doubt that the Hebrides is a place which touches the spirit - John has helped many of us to explore this important side of our lives.

The loss of Gavin Macpherson was also a blow but, like John, he rightly felt he should concentrate on other calls upon his time. Gavin has led expeditions, and filled almost every post on the Board; he even moved to Leeds to be near the store! His great practical abilities and his clear mind will be missed, but thank you, Gavin, for all you have contributed.

This year two incidents gave us cause to see our safety and emergency plans put to the test. The first was the sudden illness of Chris Yenning, who was to lead the Rhum expedition. The paperwork was exchanged, and Mike Hayward took over at the 'very) last minute. Sometimes we wonder if the hidden bureaucracy within the Society is really worthwhile, but suddenly it is useful to have things written down! I think everyone would like to thank Mike for his great contribution, but also Chris, who worked so hard and then was denied the enjoyment of the expedition itself. Very happily, Chris recovered quickly, but not until after the expedition was over

The other incident was Eamonn Thompson's fractured ankle, again on Rhum. Was it a climbing, boating, walking accident? No - a trip on the camp site field! Our thanks to the Air Sea Rescue crew for a great piece of flying and also again to Chris Yenning, whose laborious safety planning was needed after all. Eamonn made a complete recovery in Inverness hospital.

Sometimes I am asked if I think the Society is getting soft, with all the emphasis on safety and the stress on expensive rescue and emergency equipment. Are we losing some of our flexibility and freshness? Surely not - the more prepared we are the more we can turn the uncalculated risk into a calculated and controlled one. No-one would pretend that expeditions to the Hebrides are more safe than staying in bed all summer - but there is no excuse for a casual approach. The route to greater adventure is through more thorough preparation and training.

In the four years I have been Chairman I have seen the Society grow numerically and in the standard of our equipment and administration. This is due to the commitment of many people on the Management and Board committees, and to the enthusiasm of expedition members. It has been a privilege to be part of such a movement, and as I retire from the Chair, I look forward to rejoining the grass roots department, from where, doubtless, my successor will be elected. The Society is now twenty years old - it is nice to see prospects so rosy for the next two decades.

ROGER WEATHERLY



### ISLAY EXPEDITION 1979

LEADER: Roger Weatherly

MEMBERS:

Mark Bankes, Vince Giavarini, Jane Kiteley, Chris Buckley, Libby Fry, Liz Simmonds, Roger Butler, Alan Howard (ASSISTANT LEADERS)

Peter Ash, Andrew Bishop, Neil Chiverton, Kenny Crowe, Terry Houghton, Paul Barton, Simon Brown, Peter Cox, Gary Finch, Neil Marshall, Anthony Biddulph, Daniel Cardinal, Andrew Croucher, Tony Gratton, Paul Millis Russell Moss, Keith Pierce, Tim Ratcliffe, Tony Robinson, Steven Ward, Sean Palka, Paul Price, Julian Rake, Richard Rowland, Jonathan White, John Palmer, Tony Rabin, Jonathan Rawlings, Mitchell Stubley, Robert White.

### LEADER'S REPORT

This was the first time we have visited Islay, and I hope it will not be the last. The site at Ardillistry Bay was beautifully sheltered and gave opportunities for canoeing, sailing and shore line studies, with access to fine ranges of hills for walking. Although climbing was limited, some crags close to the site were popular. I would like to thank Mrs. S.A. Mactaggart for permission to use the site, and Mr Courlay and Mr. Nicol for their assistance and interest. As always there were many other people to whom we were indebted, especially Mrs. Davidson, Mr. and Mrs. Stone and Mr. Andrews.

The weather was disappointing, though the second half of the expedition was much better than the first. It was interesting to notice a frost on the morning of 24th August - surely a 'first' for SHS expeditions! The indifferent weather limited our boating too, but canoeing was surprisingly extensive. The damage to the Harvey Wallbanger on Jura meant we had no sailing, but both the Wayfarer and the new Poseidon were often on the water for general duties or to accompany the canoe trips. We all benefited from the increased speed and flexibility of the new safety boat and its powerful engine.

As can be seen from the accounts elsewhere in the Report, we explored the island very fully, travelled twice to Jura, hunted the Prime Minister (I confess that we did this conspicuously unsuccessfully, but perhaps this was due to the red tee shirts everyone seemed to find for the occasion), and began some project work which we can take much pride in. The lichen study and the bird work, together with the geological survey and the Proaig study show that junior expeditions can produce research work of a high standard, using simple techniques and producing sound original conclusions. Since projects are often eclipsed by more strenuous activities, it is worth saying thank you to Donald Campbell here for the great lift he has given project studies over the past few years.

As always, the quiet moments by the camp fire or walking in the hills were as important as the wilder times (of which there were many - I cannot remember a louder expedition!). I think of the reading of the last episode of the Islay Epic in the stillness of one evening as the sun set across the water and the outline of the Fairy Hill darkened against the sky. Such things are expeditions made of. The football matches were good too, and always entertaining since we shared the football field with a herd of heifers, who were always able to supply their unique contribution to the playing surface. The 'mix1' of expedition members was a very wide one this year, and everyone learned a lot about living together; the leaders were tremendous in both giving a good example here, and in encouraging everyone to tackle activities and projects.

This was my tenth summer in the Hebrides; for many of the expedition members it was their first. Together we all tasted the special pleasures of the freedom and purity of the place, and enjoyed the peace. Thus it was a colossal blow to learn of the murder of Lord Mountbattan in the midst of all this, situated as we were within a world that embraced two great extremes - but we were grateful for suffering the shock of one while being reminded so powerfully of the peace of the other. As we move into the Eighties the memories of the Hebrides will count for a lot in an increasingly violent world: maybe what we started to learn on Islay we can continue to feed on. A big 'thank you' to everyone on the expedition for making it a valuable and memorable trip.

ROGER WEATHERLY



### A TRAMP TO THE OA

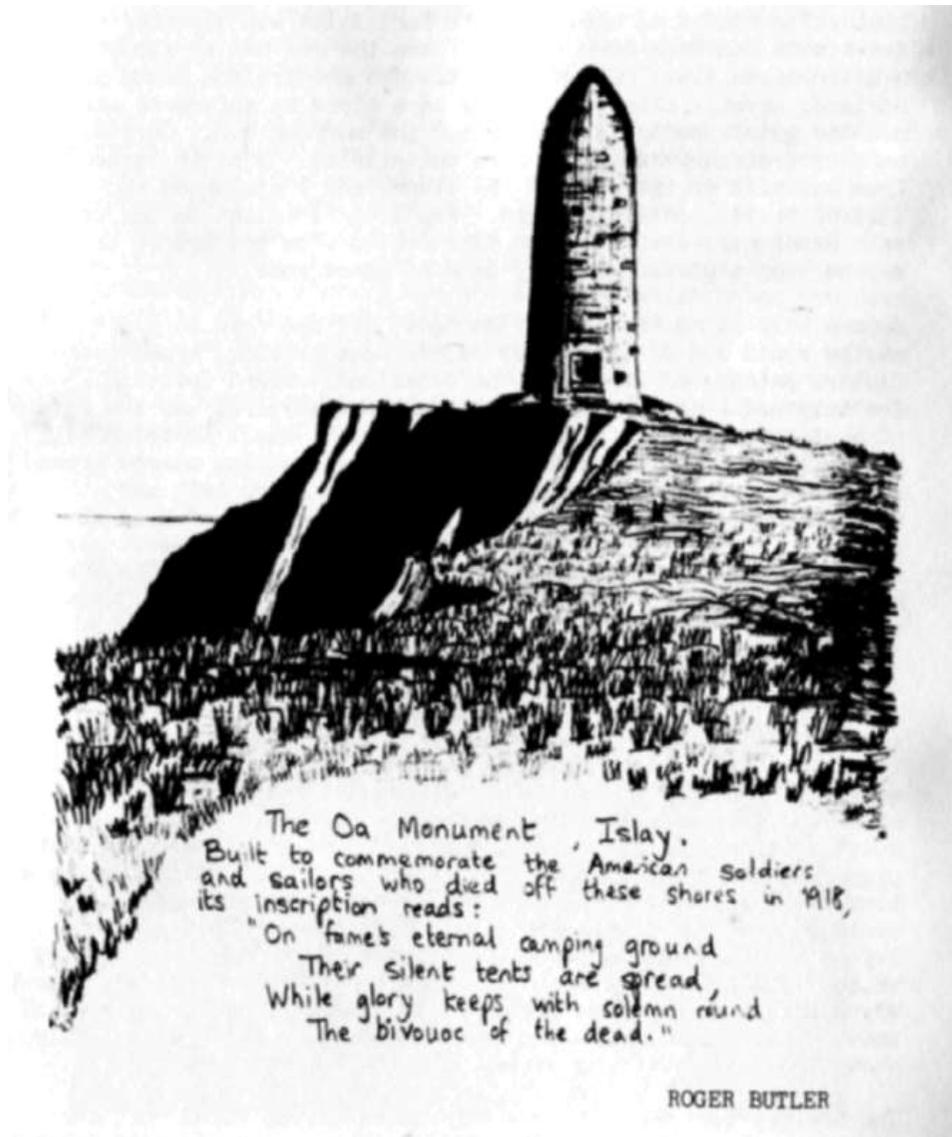
A fine, sunny day when half the camp seemed to be away on bivvies and the rest still in bed, gave me the chance to leave behind the smell of Harris sausages and walk alone. A quick glance at the map - the long expanse of Laggan Bay looked inviting -and I was away.

It was one of those days when the Hebridean scenery is at its best. The road from Ardilistry to Port Ellen was deserted except for a sole surveyor from the O.S., and the sea was an almost Mediterranean blue. The Hull of Kintyre and Ireland stood on the horizon, crystal clear; the rocky bays close by shimmered and the seaweed glistened as it dried under the morning sun. Curlews flew and oystercatchers noisily broke the silence. A stoat rushed from one side of the road to the other, and I disturbed two lizards basking on a milestone. Small birds called in the woods near Laphroaig: chaffinch and tits darted from one branch to another and a goldcrest shyly made an appearance.

Beyond Port Ellen the scenery changes and the road to Kintra at the south end of Laggan Bay passes peat cutting, broad open fields, patches of marsh and the occasional ruined dwelling. The only noise apart from the wind and the skylarks was the rattle of a silage wagon two or three fields away. Small tortoiseshell butterflies sunned themselves atop thistles, whilst meadow browns skipped over rough pasture. The road bends sharp left and suddenly Laggan Bay is there, white sand, a couple of hundred yards wide, but stretching over five miles in length. The waves gently rolled in, a couple of children laughed and splashed in the shallows whilst gulls stood unperturbed, occasionally turning their heads, occasionally ruffling their feathers.

I had made good time, and the north coastline of the Oa peninsula, which rises gradually from the sands was an attraction, caves, cliffs and ruined chapels being marked on the map. Leaving the road I followed a boggy path through a patch of ancient woodland until emerging on higher ground. Here it was all heather and I sent clouds of pollen into the air like small smoke signals. A group of wild goats scattered on my arrival, bounding down onto the rocks that signalled the beginnings of the cliffs. At first small gullies and tiny caves appear and the extensively grazed grass resembles a bowling green, contrasting markedly with the purply-brown moor beyond. Eight miles across Loch Indaal Port Charlotte gleamed white, like a Greek village, whilst much closer, a solitary gannet dived offshore, as if to give me a private performance, a special show. Shags flew across the water and fulmars drifted endlessly above. And always, as a background, the Paps of Jura.

The scenery becomes much more impressive beyond Rubha Mor, the northernmost point of the Oa. Gullies become steep cliffs and the combination of stream and sea have carved natural arches.



The Soldier's Rock, a stack rising perpendicular from the sea, provides a fitting foreground for the first of the large caves. The inaccessibility of the shoreline below could be judged by the vast piles of driftwood and debris no doubt deposited during the winter storms, when these cliffs must be a very different place indeed.

Each new cliff face was taller and more splendid, and keeping to the tops the walking was straightforward. Visible from a distance was a dun, circular in shape and commanding what would have been a strategic viewpoint over North Islay in centuries gone by. And below it, the sea rose and fell and swayed and the birds wheeled, as they have always done.

The sun was beginning to dip slightly in the sky when I reached Glen Astle. Here a stream tumbles over several knickpoints before it eventually enters the sea in a small waterfall, the waves competing with the constant splash of the fresh water. The monument at the end of the Oa was visible from the tops now, and behind the cliffs and offshore skerries the sea was silver, the birds now only silhouettes.

I cut inland, through peat, marsh and heather to Fang Dhu, a name that sound more like a Chinese takeaway than a Hebridean farm! The combination of the heat and the silence was powerful, and only the steady plod of my boots against the track broke the peace. Then in the background came the unmistakable sound of an engine; a Land Rover clattering over the gravel. Thankfully, I accepted the proffered lift and was dropped off in Port Ellen. Then it was five miles back along the road. The birds were still there, but now they had stopped their chatter. All was still, and a heron mirrored perfectly on the sea, rose from a rock, flying low and slow. The stillness was not broken until I left the road, came through the trees, and from the marquee someone shouted "Seconds of mince"!

ROGER BUTLER

### ISLAY BOATING REPORT

The inflating of the Poseidon took longer than expected because of the loss of the inflating tube, but this was eventually found and Roger Butler, with some help, got it ready and put the engine on the back. Although primarily a rescue boat for canoeing, many people enjoyed 'pleasure trips' in this boat.

Unfortunately, the sailing was a flop because the mast had been broken on the Harvey Wallbanger by the Jura expedition so a new one had to be brought up from Euston. When we fitted this we found it was too short!

After much wasted effort, we resorted to putting the seagull on the

stern and having two rescue boats, except that we couldn't start the engine and spent the afternoon clambering over rocks, towing the Harvey back to the launching site. Then Roger Weatherly started it almost immediately when we had carried it back to camp!

Liz led a very enjoyable trip to another small inlet north of Ardilistry Bay. Simon Brown and I paddled there and half way back, but the sea was a bit rough so we were towed the rest of the way back to camp. The person holding the front of my canoe let go, so all the starboard bow - wave came over into my canoe, half filling it with water. When I set out to beach the canoe further round the bay, the weight of water tipped me to one side and I nearly capsized, but managed to right the boat before going under. All those in the Poseidon, instead of helping roe, laughed and took photos!

On the last day Liz, Jane and myself took all the boating gear down to Port Ellen where it was packed into the Harvey Wallbanger and towed by the Poseidon, which did a remarkably good job considering it was towing 440 lbs of Wayfarer, a road trailer, four canoes and various other small things, e.g. Liz. It takes one hour to get to Port Ellen normally and we took only one and a half hours to get there, all credit to the Poseidon and the Yamaha engine.

Altogether the watersports on Islay were very enjoyable, even with the difficulties we encountered.

KEITH PIERCE



### MY GRANDFATHER

(Taken from the Islay High School Magazine)

My papa was an ornamental sculptor and his dry, cut hands showed just how hard he had worked at his job. He was 65 years old but he never looked that age because he was tall and slim.

I was my papa's favourite so he used to tell me stories about when he was young. Once he told me about when one of his friends had stolen potted meat from the butcher. The butcher found out and started to chase the boy. The boy stuffed the meat down the front of his vest and ran as fast as he could. By the time the boy got home after the 2-mile run, the potted meat had melted and ran all the way down his vest, his long johns and into his tackety boots.

My papa had a rhyme especially for me. It was:

"Siobhan, Siobhan you'll get yer fern

The deil'll roast ye like a hern (herring)"

I still don't know what it means though I should because I got it every time I went up to my papa's house. Before he died, my papa wrote out a list of people to contact in case there ever was an emergency for my mum and my gran. He went away with my gran to Welwyn Garden City in England to visit his sister. A few days later he got taken back home to Scotland as he was feeling ill. At home two days later he took a heart attack and was taken into Hairmyres Hospital. Nobody thought it was serious. However, he took a turn for the worse, so the priest gave him the Last Rites. A day later he died.

At the funeral reception we met people whom we had not seen for many years. It would have been nice to have seen them in different circumstances, but this wasn't a happy occasion. My papa had died.

SIOBHAN WIGGENS 2B

### THE CHOUGHS OF ISLAY

Choughs belong to the family Corvidae and are the rarest of this family. There are under one hundred breeding pairs in the British Isles and the fourteen pairs on the Mull of Oa represent the largest colony in Britain.

Being one of our rarest birds, a group of dedicated 'birders' set off on a twelve-mile trek to the Mull.

On our way from Port Ellen a female Hen Harrier was spotted by eagle-eyes' Roger. We sat down beside the American war memorial watching a group of carrion crows. John followed them round the back of the memorial and a few minutes later returned shouting "Chough, chough"

In a dip behind the memorial there were about twelve of these beautiful crows. They are totally black except for the thin, delicate down-curved bill and the legs, which are a very bright scarlet.

We followed these birds round the cliff where they were soon joined by another half-dozen and managed to get within twenty-five feet of one of them.

This was certainly one of the most exciting moments of our bird-watching career and we set off home in a very elated mood.

JULIAN RAKE





LEWIS MEALISTA EXPEDITION 1979

LEADER:- Pete Weston

ASSISTANT LEADERS: James Bompfrey, John Deighton. Brian Dickinson, Tim Haley, Jonathan Orr, Hugh Lorrimer, Mark Pratley.

MEMBERS:- John Bird, Paul Bloomfield, David Broom, Jonathan Carr, William Cox, Kieran Dampsey Neil Drummond, Quentin Elvidge, Frank Farnham, Denis Hetier, Giles Hetier, Jonathan Hick, Martin Lawrie, Philip Lewis Ian Martin, David Mason , Robert Nichol, Jason Oliver, Tim Orme, Andrew Purvis, David Rolinson, Andrew Smith, Andrew Tetley, Adrian Thomas, Stewart Walker, Darren Ward, Tim Williams, John Wright.

LEADER'S REPORT

Ullapool pier was as I'd remembered it, MacBraynes still ruled and had rather splendid new offices in what had been the Seaman's Mission, and there in the corner of the car park another memory was stirred - a large pole covered in groundsheets which could only be the SHS equipment and food. However, I was mistaken. This was a cunningly converted boudoir for Hugh - who was one half of the advance party. John was using the more functional but infinitely more boring tent. Everything was ready for the start of the Mealista expedition, so we waited for the bus carrying Jonathan (the walking public address system), Jamie (the somnambulist in anything above a force 6) Tim and Mark. By the time we reached Stornoway and the very comfortable Retirement Centre (many thanks to George Newhall) we had already discovered that a few of 'the lads' were already characters. Zingy had been marked for an early bath (which he never did get), DM was having his patches read by everyone and AT was sleeping.

The ride to the site was uneventful and home was quickly pitched. The next morning we took the camp apart, moved it a kilometre and set it up again. A small clerical error on my part but a good warning of the joys to come arranged by a higher authority. The real Mealista site was excellent, a near flat water meadow behind a storm beach of large shingle. Golden sand outside the front door lapped by a sea of incredible clarity. Ideal in ideal conditions - a sense of security pervaded the party.

In retrospect it is all too comfortable to remember only the good days and the halcyon times. The problems that were mastered with determination, the canoe trips that became longer and more and more adventurous (more rewarding, especially the trip to the beach on Mealista), the strenuous but interesting walks and the digging of various pits and ditches.

However, the true flavour of the Mealista '79 expedition is not to be found in these successes - to concentrate only on the good is to ignore the real challenge which Mealista set. The times when the CA calmly ignited a small incendiary device (laughingly known as a pipe) whilst the leader had hysterics, are best forgotten perhaps. To do so would be to ignore the very evident change which was wrought in the thirty-five.

With so many new members one must admit that the weather (though typical of recent years) did not make for an easy or comfortable stay. After each storm the camp came back to normal more and more quickly as the group of individuals became a well-motivated team. The real test of our young band came towards the end of the expedition when a real storm appeared from the south-east. By 9.00 pm the stores tent had been dropped for safety and the first of the Icelandics had collapsed. An hour later, one Icelandic less, and the battle for the large marquee was joined. The night is a story in itself and each member played a vital role. Around midnight (only three Icelandics left for 28 people) it became very obvious that if the marquee went, and we had already written off the remaining Icelandics, the expedition would evacuate. By 2.00 am the storm was at its peak, continuous Force 8 winds with gusts to 9 accompanied by driving rain. Two Icelandics were left and for the next four hours were literally held up by the fourteen in each tent. At this time the great peg making industry got under way - the A, Ls splitting (with a mallet and spade) a 9 x 9 length into pegs four feet long to hold down a very wilful marquee. The occasion was not without humour. Jamie had slept through it all and was only awakened when the Asst. Leaders tent re-pitched itself 20 feet away. By 6.00 am the storm had abated, by 9.00 am the camp was cleared up and jerry-rigged Icelandics were being erected. By the evening meal the storm was only a memory and fast fading. The expedition had not only survived, it was already working towards tomorrow.

Mealista '79 was not an easy holiday, it was an expedition to a remote and rugged coastline, to a site whose conditions tested equipment and members to the full. New members had a real taste of camping without an escape route- the more experienced will have seen how demanding the Western Isles can be. Next year the weather may be better, the site drier, the expedition longer - the Islands and the Islanders will be the same and their help and concern is acknowledged by all. Mealista '79 will either have dampened your enthusiasm or whetted your appetite.

PETE WESTON

### AN SHS RESCUE

"OK Lads" said Peter Weston, "John and Mark are two hours overdue. Their 'panic' time was half an hour ago, we're going out to look for them."

This news sent murmurs around the marquee. The two officers were stuck out in the Uig hills. They had left a route card and had gone looking for crags. Pete split the expedition into two and we left Hugh Lorimer and the invalids (blisters etc) behind to cook the evening meal.

The two parties set out at about 5-30. Jonathan Orr's party were to follow a route up the Brenish River, go past a small tarn and onto Loch Ulladale. Pete Weston's party were to make a bee-line for this Loch and then search a valley which, according to their route plan, the officers had planned to visit.

I was in Pete's party and we went at a very fast rate to the Loch. There we spread out and began our sweep search. There were three officers with us - Jamie in the valley bottom, Big Tim Haley in the middle and Pete on the steep side. Strung out in ten yard intervals we started off.

We had nearly got to the end of the valley when Pete spotted something on the opposite side. "Get a bearing on it, man" he yelled at a couple of us near him, but when we looked where he was pointing the orange colour he had seen had gone. However, on investigation John and Mark were found in a small hollow by a boulder. John told us he thought that Mark had a dislocated shoulder. We brewed some tea laced with condensed milk, sugar and syrup (disgusting) for them on a Mexamine burner. While it was brewing Big Tim H. was handed a block of what he thought was Kendal Mint Cake and he took a bite. Those of you who have tasted Mexamine will know what he felt like.

Pete then said that Mark would be moved by slit rope technique. I was sent with Frank Farnham and Kieran Dempsey to wait for Jonathan's party and give them the news. After finding them we set off back up the valley. We met the others coming down with the 10 stone Mark on big Tim's back, with a leg through ropes slung over Tim's back and he carried Mark 3½ miles back to camp. The rest of us went back to camp with Jonathan. Then, everyone was soaked to the skin by the constant rain.

While we ate our Irish Stew we heard that Dr. Jonathan had put Mark's shoulder back into place. Big Tim looked half-dead after his exertions. Then Pete came in and gave us our de-briefing. He began "As some of you may have guessed, tonight's escapade was a trial run...."

TIM WILLIAMS

MEALISVAL - "THE SECOND TIME"

After Jonathan Orr's party had successfully climbed the 1885 foot peak a week earlier on the expedition, Tim Haley decided to take up a party which consisted of himself, Dave Rolinson, Tim Williams, Martin Lawrie, myself, Brian Dickinson and Mark Pratley.

We left on the bleak, foggy Tuesday morning of August 7th. After twenty minutes we reached Brenish and after passing the Brenish river, we turned east up Allt Geislir. This led to the dog-shaped Loch Sandavat, from where we could see the grim 60° slopes of Mealisval itself. We had walked three miles and gained 400 feet. Now we would walk only half a mile and gain 1485 feet. At about the 1000 foot mark we got lost in the beginnings of the scree, but pressed on hopefully upward.

The scree proved fairly easy going, we reached what we thought was the summit about thirty minutes earlier than calculated, only to see, lurking behind a cairn, a further bank of scree. It ended, however, very abruptly, just as it had started, and we ate in the 'shade' (?) of a trig point.

Because of the mist and rain we decided to go down and climb Mula Mee Sciathain at 1410 feet. There was a loud groan as we started uphill again. Well, they say fortune favours the brave and it did us, the ridge we had been on was at about 1350 feet - we had hardly any more to climb.

We trundled downhill from the summit and found ourselves looking down on Loch Sandavat again - we had only just time to take a bearing on Islivig before the mist closed in again, but we made our way to a track.

After numerous stops for water we reached Islivig fifteen minutes later and then took the road to Brenish and the track to the camp at Mealista.

We returned, after a successful outing, tired but satisfied.

NEIL DRUMMOND

THE LETTER HOME

Dear All,

Am enjoying myself to the utmost, even though we changed our campsite once.

I have walked up several of the nearest mountains (as well as crawled) in the pouring rain not even waterproofs can stop the stuff) with help from our learned friends the assistant leaders.

Even when we go fishing we have to have four members in the party plus an assistant leader. Before you go you have to sign out telling who went and where and when you are due to return. There is also a 'panic time' say about 1 - 1½ hours after you hope to return. Then we would have to mount a search. Two nights ago we found that two assistant leaders were 2 hours late. After two hours search we found them, one with a dislocated shoulder or so we were led to believe. We trudged back to camp and started to dry out. Ten minutes later the assistant leader came into the tent with the others and calmly took his arm out of its sling and we realised it was a trick. We were congratulated on our valiant effort and shipped off quickly to our tents.

Mostly I have been canoeing and we have already canoed round most of the islands round Mealista and climbed to the top of the biggest one.

Yesterday J. Orr, Tiny Tim and myself went to get materials for a lobster pot and dropped it three hours later off the new rubber dinghy. Today we hauled it up and in it was a massive crab which we boiled and turned into something which Mr. Orr passed as "Crab Thermidor".

A few days ago we found a large oil drum had floated onto the beach. After burning out the inside J.O. turned it into an oven and today, after he had mixed the dough, I made some mouth-watering bread.

The first few days it rained practically all the time. Then the sun came out and the weather was great but alas a Force 9 gale struck and six of the eight tents were laid flat, including J.O.'s store tent. Luckily ours was one of those which survived, defying the elements to the bitter end.

Finally I find it fascinating, when you put two full grown men into a brand new dinghy with a small but powerful motor (people like Pete and Tim Haley) they play with it like a new toy. On one of the first days Pete went flying about in it using nearly the whole of a five gallon petrol tank!

Hope I will survive - see you soon,

MARTIN LAWRIE

### JURA EXPEDITION 1979

LEADER: Stephen Paynter

ASSISTANT LEADERS:- Ian Shortman, David Ward, Jeremy Biggs, David Davis, Humphrey Southall, Giles Henschel, Dick Light.

MEMBERS: Timothy Baxter, David Bentley, Philip Bower, John Fairey, Andrew Fawthrop, Lee Godfrey, Robert Greenwood, Andrew Griffin, John Hornsey, David Hunt, Philip Jones, Geoffrey King, David Lee, Austin Madelaine, Keith Marsh, Ian Marshall, Kevin Mott, Paul Nichols, Billy Orr, Paul Reed, Gary Robinson, Hugh Filton, Garry Stephenson, Roy Tooth, Douglas Warburton, Tony Ward, Gary Yeo.

### LEADER'S REPORT

I shuddered as I passed the telephone in the hall and made for the front door. "If that 'phone rings now", I thought, "I'm gonna take out a contract on 'Buzby' and provide an interesting job for a telephone engineer'. Thank goodness for this expedition, I'll be able to escape all this organising and paperwork" thinks cool-headed leader as he frees his rucksack from between the porch doors. Is this the reason leaders ever go on their expeditions, to take a break from the pre-expedition organisation?

Well, Jura 1979 was underway for me and it gradually gathered momentum and took shape over the next few days. Somehow the confused mass of bodies and equipment fused into a semblance of order and structure around that bastion of permanence - 'Cruib Lodge'. Cruib must have been made for an SHS expedition and proved both a hospitable and charming host to us.

Something that never fails to surprise me about outward bound activities and especially SHS expeditions is their sheer eventfulness. The incredible amount of new and varied places, people and experiences which somehow get crammed into two short weeks. Jura 1979 was certainly no exception. There was the Jura Sports Day which was washed out for the first time in forty years. The memory of watching some locals engrossed in a hammer competition while I was eating hot meat pies and drinking a can of MacEwans will take a long time to evaporate. They were to a man in shirt sleeves and seemed oblivious to the absolutely torrential down-pour taking place.

Then one peaceful evening while resting after a day on the paps,

some members of a yacht crew came ashore and reported two of their number missing on the island in plimsolls, tee-shirts and a compass but no map.' Our last search party didn't return until after midnight and during the operation both the Coastguard and Islay Lifeboat turned out.

Meanwhile, intrepid expeditioneer Roy completes a reconnaissance for his 'Trans-Hebridean Trek'. The party is weary and sore but flushed with their success.

Eventfulness was certainly the trademark of Jura '79. I will always remember the epic which took place on the mud flats of Loch Tarbert, as Tim Baxter, Dave Bentley, Peter Youngson, the Jura minister, and myself fought an hour long battle with an outgoing tide + the new inflatable and engine, four 32 lbs gas cylinders, some considerable quantity of wood for furniture, a bread supply and the shell project which Peter was going to present to the expedition. We would get the inflatable into deep water, but by the time we had it loaded it would have grounded again. Well, eventually success seemed within our grasp as Peter laboured under the last gas cylinder, stuck fast in the mud, waited for me to manoeuvre the craft to him. Peter keeled over backwards and seeing him there in the mud with the cylinder in his lap left me helpless with the ridiculousness of the situation.

Roy's 'Trans-Hebridean Trek', a 50 mile four-day hike, actually set out twice, but on both occasions was forced back to base. Then tragedy struck on the eve of the [J]Ura regatta. Harvey was demasted in transit and her resultant withdrawal from the expedition and the regatta was a great loss to us all. Good positions in the canoeing and swimming did something to raise morale.

It was events such as this, and many more, which wove together to form the unique character of Jura '79 and made it special for each one of us. Our memories may differ but we shared the experience together in a place of rugged breath-taking beauty bathed in calmness, peace and permanence and surrounded by a flow of rich, abundant life.

Thanks must go to Peter Youngson for his unreserved enthusiasm to help, not only with the excellent shell project and social interviews but also with the practical side of the expedition. Thanks also to Neil MacInnes, Charlie MacLean and Jack Paton for their cheerful welcome, friendship and help with the difficult problem of transport and last but not least to the Jura people for the warmth and generosity they showed us throughout our stay.

STEPHEN PAYNTER

### SAILING ON JURA

The peaceful setting of Cruib Lodge on the shores of Loch Tarbert which once played host to the Queen's Yacht Britannia now entertained a band of enthusiastic and quite brilliant (?) sailors;

Loch Tarbert, which nearly cuts Jura in half, provided an excellent boating area to suit all. The large bay immediately in front of Cruib gave about three square miles of water ideal for both exciting and safe sailing.

There was, however, one small catch – a 100 yard pull of the "overweight" Harvey to the low tide mark. Once there though the Wallbanger looked a picture with her new sails crinkling with the morning rain.

Everything was ship-shape and Bristol fashion except for one thing - the wind! The wind, like the tide, proved to be very temperamental, for example when the tide decided to change direction the wind would deviate through 180°.

However, Harvey's first sail took place in a nice gentle Force 3 ideal for breaking in her new sails and crew. This very nice chugging through the flat sea in perfect tranquillity was suddenly interrupted by "inflated Ian Shortman" in the noisy, dirty, smelly, fast, slick, brand new inflatable. Then with some very cutting remarks accidentally overheard concerning Harvey's speed, a battle of insults flew as I tried to restrain my vicious crew. "Give me a Force 8 anytime" was my last remark as the inflatable zoomed off into the distance!

Sailing continued throughout the week with myself and Dave Bentley showing people the sheets in conditions varying from a quiet drift to a hair-raising Force 5- This exhilarating wind saw the Wallbanger at its best with a crew of three-up planing past a small seagull powered inflatable from one of the rather posh yachts seeking shelter in the bay. "Jolly nice weather we're having" were my thoughts as we left in a burst of spray with a rather cheeky smile.

Harvey was now being used regularly with, I hope, everybody getting a sail and her crew, Dave and myself getting in some good practice for the oncoming regatta. This regatta was due to be held on Saturday and staged every event from swimming for the under-nines to canoeing and rowing. Our sailing and canoeing representatives were to start off on Friday and bivvy overnight at the Minister's ready for the 10.30 am start.

Harvey was to be towed down for us on Friday night with the canoes whilst we walked to Craighouse. Eventually we got there, to bivvy in the Minister's barn and enjoy a three-course meal in the Antlers Restaurant. (We needed strength for the race!)

Anyway, spirits high after seeing our first female for a week, we returned to the Minister's only to be told that Harvey had had an accident whilst being towed. Our faithful old boat had reached its pick-up point late and missed its tow. In the rush nobody had thought of taking the mast down and later on, when a kind-hearted islander towed the boat down for us, the mast was still up. Evidently he hit a tree or something and Harvey's mast bent and snapped above the goose neck, luckily causing no damage to the hull.

The news crushed all spirits as we sank back into the barn to spend a restless night on cobbles and amongst the rats. That was the end of sailing on our expedition and I think that the lack of Harvey showed most people that a sailing dinghy is really appreciated on an expedition and that everybody would hope to see it back again next year.

PAUL NICHOLS

PS Looking forward to Harvey's come-back it has come to my notice that certain people, who shall remain nameless, have suggested that Harvey's name should be changed from Harvey Wallbanger to Harvey TREEbanger!



### THE TRANS-HEBRIDEAN TREK

I went to Jura with the SHS for a purpose - I hoped to return with the expedition section of my Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award completed. A letter to the leader, Stephen Paynter, outlining my plans, produced an enthusiastic response, so I set off, hopes high. Award Book in hand.

Once on the soggy ground of Jura, preliminary training, first aid, camp craft etc, was quickly sorted out. A group was formed and a leader, Jeremy Briggs, was roped in for the one night practice bivvy to the northern tip of the island.

We set off on Wednesday, August 1st at 9.45 and were soon on Cruib, looking back to the campsite and Loch Tarbert. As we walked on over Rainberg Mor, Beinn Bhreac and Ben Garrisdale, the cloudless sky gave us superb views all round; the Paps looked very imposing and the view over Scotland was fantastic.

Around 17.00 we staggered off Ben Garrisdale down to the campsite at Glengarrisdale and, as the task of setting up camp reared its ugly head, we discovered a walker's hut where we cooked, slept and talked to two Danish girls who had walked from the island's only road.

On Thursday we did not wake until 8.45 - so much for our 7.00 start! We had a meagre breakfast of porridge ("Oh! You should have been given sausages", said the C.A. on our return. Grrr) and then raced off. The confused folds of land made navigation difficult. My frequent stops to check our position made progress slow.

"Put away the compass and let's get some walking done", Jem said and off we went... south instead of east! Despite such mishaps we eventually reached Corryvreckan and looked down expectantly on to the only whirlpool off the British Isles - which wasn't there! Lots of turbulence as currents met, but no sign of a whirlpool.

We followed a well worn track down to Kinvachdrach, passing two family parties on the way (tourists? on Jura?) and were told that the whirlpool only forms during the violent March and October storms.

It was 17.00 as we ate a snack unexpectedly provided by the lady at Kinvachdrach Farm and then the seventeen miles (mostly on road) back to camp took until 22.00, despite a five mile lift we got from some scouts camping at Lealt. As the sun set we crawled, footsore but triumphant, to bed.

By Sunday it was obvious that few people wished to spend the rest of their holiday doing a three-night fifty mile bivvy around the South of the island and over the Paps; even after an appeal from Stephen only John Fairey had volunteered. My spirits sank, and I was mentally working out how I could walk the Paps anyway with another party when Keith Marsh and Tim Baxter said they would help out so I could do my Award Expedition.

Spirits high again I arranged with Stephen that we would do the first two days walking on roads and tracks without an SHS leader and meet up with another party with a leader at the base of the Paps on Tuesday evening. However, as I crawled into bed the Fates took a hand, and the rain started.

It hadn't stopped when we got up on Monday so, when our little group, laden with bivvy equipment, set off for the road we found the first stream we got to in full flood. We walked, in vain, a mile upstream searching for a place to cross and, finally, had to admit defeat. We trudged, disappointed, back to camp, boots squelching, clothes wet through.

Ian Shortman met us at camp and offered to lift us across the Loch in the inflatable bypassing the major streams. We peered through the driving rain at the white caps being blown across the Loch and accepted the offer. Twenty minutes and a lot of salt spray later we clambered out and set off once more.

The weather really had it in for us. Down came thick mist and we plodded on along a compass bearing, visibility no more than a hundred yards.

Then, Fate hammering the final nail into the Expedition's coffin, Keith twisted his ankle. With him in front (to avoid us going too fast for him) it took a further 2\ hours to cover the few miles to the road where, Expedition abandoned, we went to the nearest house. Keith's ankle was bandaged, and, while sipping memorably delectable cups of tea, we planned what to do next. Charlie, in his minibus, stopped at the house to deliver supplies and then ferried us to the end of the track leading to the Boat-house on the Loch. Then, whilst Keith hobbled down the track, Tim moved all our rucksacks down to the boathouse and John and I set off armed only with emergency flares and Kendal Mint Cake, to run round to the main camp and tell them to send the boat for Keith and Tim

After we had run/walked for about 45 minutes we saw the SHS inflatable, on a routine bread collection run, pick up Tim, Keith and the gear - our marathon was unnecessary. It took us another 40 minutes to get back to the camp, having to go far inland to use the bridges over the streams, and when we arrived the others were already there.

Stephen came out of the marquee. "Oh well", I said, "It did say go on an expedition that's different!"

Wet, cold, windy but thoroughly enjoyable, it WAS certainly different.

ROY TOOTH

### HEBRIDEAN HOSTILITIES

"Jura is an island of remoteness, its small population enjoy a life of tranquillity and natural beauty" someone once wrote. That was before the 1979 SHS expedition!

Having survived the ravages of the London-Glasgow SLOW night train and a British Rail breakfast, eight reasonably sane leaders and twenty-seven unreasonable and insane lads made their assault. From their remote base at Cruib, fiercely defended by ticks, horseflies and midges, the SHS planned their attacks on the Jura community.

The first strike was on the Craighouse store - a strategic position containing the only supplies on the island. In no time it was stripped of all biscuits, chocolate, postcards and the most dangerous local weapon of all - Jura malt whisky. Just to make sure Jeremy cleared out the Ardlussa venison sandwiches, negotiating a special price of £1.60 - smart work!

The islanders attempted to strike back, led by their vicar the Rev. Peter Youngson, in a submarine assault on our inflatable. However, our fearless leader handled the situation as delicately as ever and baptised the intruder in Loch Tarbert.

Then followed a fortnight of guerrilla warfare. To prevent us winning all trophies at the Regatta, Harvey was neatly demasted en route in a devastating ambush by a local tree. Sabotage was also committed to our Japanese armaments - the Yamaha outboard -at which point the First Sea Lord Shortman resigned. Humph (hide the milk powder) Southall was approached by the Antler restaurant to starve us all of bivvy rations and Roy tried to destroy our morale with his Trans-Hebridean bivvy - was he really a double agent? Those traitors caught (code named Snp and Hash) were marooned on a tiny island in the centre of Loch Cruib. However, the pressure of active combat began to tell on the older members and Dick Light-Bonnington tried to end it all by hurling himself off a twenty foot cliff at 4.00 an. Alas, poor Dick...

The battle has now ended for this year. The SHS rode home victorious, stopping only briefly to sack the stores for the last time. As the scars of biological warfare disappear from our bodies, intelligence sources reveal that the islanders have a lethal new weapon - a transit bus powered by Charlie's dregs - and we are preparing for the next encounters of the Cruib kind!

A. SPROGG

### SANDY BUIE - AN OLD CROFTER

The day we met Sandy we were woken by Steve at 6.30 am, had breakfast and were across the Loch and walking an hour later. We lunched in Craighouse and then walked to Knockrome where we met Sandy, a very strong, fit man in his seventies, working in the fields.

Steve: "Mr. Buie, we're from the Schools Hebridean Society, camping at Cruib. We wondered whether you could tell us more about the life in Jura when you were our age."

Sandy: "Well it's changed - there are so few native Jura folk left all my neighbours are newcomers. There used to be twelve crofters here working this land, now there are hardly any. None of the young people today want to take on the hard work of crofting."

Steve: "Why do you think this is?"

Sandy: "Well today everyone is assured of being well fed. In my day we left school at fourteen and had to work to live -still we were never hungry. When we were at school we would have time off in the Autumn helping the crofters which we enjoyed, but we were missing our education."

Steve: "What else was here about the time you were going to school?"

Sandy: "There was a school here in Knockrome and there were more houses, and about four places, fairly inaccessible, where whisky was made. My Grandfather used to take it down into Craighouse to sell it, past the Customs and Excise office. One night he was almost caught by the Customs when he knocked over the officer and held him to the ground for half an hour allowing a friend to escape with the whisky. The officer noticed that my Grandfather was bald and vowed he would catch him at church where he would certainly be on Sunday. But my Grandfather wore a wig and he wasn't caught!"

Steve: "What about other stories, like the passing of the Campbells?"

Sandy: "Ah yes that was an old woman who prophesied the downfall of the Campbells. One of the lairds in earlier times was ill treating an old woman one day. She turned to him and said that it would not be long before the last Campbell left Jura. He would have a patch over one eye and only one leg and all his possessions would be taken from the island in a cart drawn by a white pony. Well, sure enough the power of the Campbells on Jura soon dwindled and eventually the Campbells had very little left on Jura."

Sandy:- "Then a war wiped out the remains of their clan except for one who returned to Jura to collect the last of his possessions. He had a patch over one eye and only one leg - wounds he had received in the war. When he arrived he had nothing to take away the few items left belonging to him and so the islanders lent him a cart which was drawn by a white pony. And that's how he left Jura, just as the old woman had said all those years ago, aye, Just as the old woman had said."

Steve: "Have you ever been off the island?"

Sandy: "Only for the market at Oban, when we used to take our cattle over on the ferry. Now the price is too much for the ferry and we just have the market on Jura, which is much smaller of course. The thing I remember about those trips to Oban is meeting the Yorkshire farmers - you could tell them a mile off with their accent."

Steve: "What are your feelings about the island itself?"

Sandy: "It's a beautiful island, very unspoilt, particularly where you're camping by Loch Tarbert. All the Gaelic names mean something. A couple of months ago the Ordnance Survey people came and kept pestering me about the Gaelic names. I told them I would tell them the names if they wrote them down - I'm no scholar you see but I could give them the names of every field around here, och yes."

Steve: "What do you think the island's future is?"

Sandy: "I don't know about that. We've got a good laird here but what will happen in the future I can't say."

Even though Sandy is about seventy to eighty years old he looks very fit and is as strong as an ox, still working full time on his croft. You might expect these crofters to be simple folk, leading the life they do, but this is certainly not true of Sandy. His wit was sharp and the man had a rich, peaceful personality and he obviously possessed great wisdom. He is a man of enterprise and was the first crofter on the Island to own his own tractor, which he bought thirty years ago and which is still running perfectly well. He now owns his own croft and his hobby is making walking sticks, using goat horns and deer antlers as handles and birch wood shafts. He was a fascinating man, entertaining and interesting to talk with. We were grateful to have been able to spend some time with a man of such a different life style to our own and one which sadly must be dying out - crofting in the true sense of the word.

TIM BAXTER AND ANDREW GRIFFIN

ORNITHOLOGY - JURA 1979

Jura has a wide variety of birds but, based at Cruib, it requires time and stiff walking to spy out the more interesting species. On Loch Tarbert common terns, gulls, curlews, eiders and divers were plentiful, and it would be hard to imagine anywhere with a higher density of herons.

It took, however, a marathon bivvy to Corryreckan to see golden eagles - always an exciting event - and the Arctic Skuas. Ardlussa (Jura) is the southernmost breeding colony of the Arctic Skua. Despite a determined posse the peregrines of Reviberg gave us the slip.

The deep sea birds such as gannets and auks were seen in huge numbers from the ferry, and it was clear how seriously they would be affected by oil spillage such as the Shetlands are now suffering.

Some project work was started on river birds, but the project rapidly became re-named the river bird-less project as a morning of dogged watching in pouring rain produced only one meadow pipit and three pled wagtails. This might give significant results but did not encourage the potential birdwatchers!

The 'tickers' claimed several little auks and a white throat amongst others, but no-one managed to see an Urnu. Could it be that only the keen sight of junior expeditions is good enough to spot this special bird?

DAVE DAVIES



### A BIVVY TO THE PAPS OF JURA

At 9.30 am on Saturday, August 26th Mark Bankes, Chris Buckley, Tony Rolinson and myself all left main camp for Jura.

We started by walking all the way to Port Ellen, which was six miles down the road. Then we caught the 10.35 bus to Bomore and Bridgend. We found at Bridgend that we had missed the bus to Port Akaig, so we had to get a lift, Mark and Tony were lucky but Chris and I ended up walking all the way. We caught the Terry across to Feolin and caught the minibus to Just outside Craighouse.

We then met Mark and Tony and proceeded to our camp site for the next two nights (unaware that we were to sleep the second night in Craighouse). Mark and Chris went up a pap during the evening while we slept.

In the morning after a breakfast of sausages and midges we started the big climb up the paps which was hard and exhausting. We climbed the first pap in 1 hour 13 minutes. When we got to the top we had a beautiful view and saw a 'glory' - a rare sight - then the mist started to roll in. I found a book on the top and we wrote our names in it before starting the hard journey down. When we got to the bottom we had a rest before climbing the next one.

We climbed Beinn on Oir in three-quarters of an hour, but we had a 1000 ft. head start. When we got to the top we had lunch and signed the book before Chris and I decided to go back to camp instead of climbing the next pap. Mark and Tony had climbed Beinn a'Chaolais and we met up with them on the way down.

When we got back to camp we had tea and then walked to Craighouse where we camped. We arrived back at base camp at about 2.00 pm after a lift which took us to Lapraig [Laphroaig?] Distillery. Mark and Tony arrived some hours later.



LEWIS TAMANAVAY EXPEDITION 1979

LEADER: Tony Ingleby

MEMBERS: Neil Hyde, Ruth Arrow, Felicity Dyson, Simon Bell, Richard Blackford, Ilan Zvikler, Helen Robinson, Alison Paynter, Janet Sample, Matthew Nettleton, Antoni Orgill, Michael Padmore, Dave Deeley, Nick Stanley, Duncan Stewart, Andrew Sutherland, Roger Welham, Jason Williams, Peter Schuller, Susan Leaver, Tara McCarthy, Simon Curtin, Chris Dalton, Martin Fleminger, Amanda Wastling, Jean Standridge, Ros Dring, John Richards, Ian Rolinson, Jonathan Sharrocks, Jo-Anne Haddock.

LEADERS' REPORT

The Lewis Tamanavay expedition proved to be very activity-orientated, with most people sampling the joys of bivvying, camping, climbing, walking, canoeing, orienteering, fishing and various assorted distractions. The site was excellently situated as a base for trying out all these pursuits and the leaders usually found it fairly easy to drag people away from tea and toast in the marquee (especially when it blew down!)

Everybody will have his (or her - Ed) own memories of the expedition, I'm sure, but we'll all remember the midges and the weather! This didn't prevent lots going on, especially as there were enthusiastic leaders to egg people on. Pete Weston helped devise devilish compass and orienteering courses, despite supposedly recuperating from his Mealista expedition; Neil Hyde managed to drag most people, even yours truly, up impossible looking crags with the help of all sorts of weird and wonderful devices and found time for ambitious walks and bivvies; Dr. Helen Robinson proved very welcome medical cover, led long bivvies via the delights of downtown Brenish and injected much needed cultural and biological expertise. Helen was aided and abetted by Mandy Wastling, who managed to look cheerful all the time, despite scurrying around leading people on everything from fishing trips to two-day bivvies; Pete Schuller proved a tireless walker, to be found all over the island at various times during the expedition - and being a godsend when it came to the bread run! Dave Deeley hatched ambitious schemes such as the very well received canoe trip to Scarp, and kept lots going on on the volleyball pitch; Mike Dodge had the unenviable task of keeping tabs on the food and keeping hungry hoards at bay from the stores tent - he also managed to try out just about every activity and emerged intact from a desperate two-day bivvy to Shoulladale.

With this vast array of talent and a generally enthusiastic bunch we managed to thoroughly enjoy ourselves for three weeks, taking home many happy memories which I hope we can all be nostalgic about at the Conference.

TONY INGELBY

THE BIVVY TO UIG

MEMBERS: Richard Blackford, Michael Padmore, John Richards, Nick Stanley, Janet Sample, Andrew Sutherland, Felicity Dyson, Helen Robinson, Dave Deeley.

Helen and Dave had decided to take a group over to Uig Sands for a two-night bivvy and, not being a sensible type by nature, I said I'd like to go. So nine of us set off over to Brenish via the route we had followed to the camp. We weren't too bothered about the drizzle that set in or the gloomy, overcast sky as we set off by the Loch. John, Nick and Andrew strode ahead, determined to get to Brenish first so that they could visit a certain Mrs. Gillie who had invited them to come anytime and eat to their hearts' desire (no mean invitation with their appetites).

Thus it happened that six of us were just crossing through the pass beneath Grieraval when the weather decided to break. We were all soaked and continued on in gloomy silence, envisaging a depressingly cold, wet night under canvas near Brenish. Even the sheep seemed to object to the weather's sudden outburst and hid in subdued groups behind boulders.

We eventually arrived at Brenish having reached the optimistic(!) conclusion that we would all die of pneumonia or frostbite by morning and went to No. 19 where we were greeted by Mrs. Gillie's smiling face and led into the kitchen. There they sat, smugly sipping mugs of scalding tea, their clothes steaming over the kitchen range and a contented gleam in their eye. We dumped out rucksacks and found to our dismay that waterproofing and plastic bags had failed miserably. We were cheered, however, by brimming mugs of tea followed by bread and butter, dropscones, rowan and apple syrup and jam. A silence descended over us (well, apart from a few appreciative noises and grunts of contentment) and we were struck with the generosity of the Gillies who, faced with nine miserable, drowned specimens did not turn tail and run but smiled and did their best to get us all in.

A few brave people peered out of the window to report on the weather but having tact did not mention the force 8 gale and sheets of rain outside.

Another ominous silence....Then source of genius suggested asking the Gillies if they would give us bed and breakfast and, much to our amazement, they agreed. We spent the most comfortable night of the whole three weeks there (apart from nearly bursting with the amount of food we had eaten!)

Next morning the sky was bright and, though loathe to leave the comfort of No. 19 we set off in high spirits to Uig sands and arrived in the early afternoon after a lovely walk along the coast. The sky was blue, the sun shining and the sea clear and when we arrived at the Sands we had almost forgotten about the previous day's discomfort. The sand stretched for hundreds of yards and we pitched our tents in a small hollow in the dunes. There was a small shop nearby and, having been deprived of sweets for the last 1½ weeks most people decided to raid it.

Helen and I decided that the walk to Valtos wouldn't be too taxing and we set off over the sands and took a path across the hills to the harbour town. The coastal and inland views were beautiful and worth the walk. However, luck was not on our side and, on the return journey it poured down resulting in a pair of rather miserable people trudging back (somewhat exhausted) over mud, bog and streams. We eventually returned to find a depressed looking fire trying to thaw out some baked beans and sausages and rock hard steam puddings which would have done Dartmoor justice as granite rocks. These wondrous specimens of tinned delight took approximately three hours to 'cook'.

The next morning our diet extended to Weetabix and lumpy dried milk but it really tasted more like Cordon Bleu as starvation loomed over us.

We caught the post bus back to Brenish and, luckily, the weather remained fine for our return journey to camp. We all tantalised the others with descriptions of food at No. 19. being sadistic by nature, and heard how the marquee had blown down in the gales -so all in all we were very glad we had taken the opportunity to go.

#### LONG PADDLE TO THE ISLAND OF SCARP

Anticipation was rife in the air  
When the day of adventure dawned bright and fair.  
Five eager people comprised the inflatable crew  
Accompanied by five others, each in a canoe.  
Time passed;  
Dave discovered feelings which proved hard to hide  
And his expressive phraseology was justified  
For the refusal of the engine to start  
Meant for Scarp we could not depart.

In a brief interlude when appetites were satisfied  
A minor mechanical fault was rectified,  
So with customary SHS punctuality  
It was afternoon before the trip became a reality.  
In a flurry of foam the canoes raced out to sea  
The Inflatable followed at maximum speed.  
Once out at sea, it was faced with a simple task,  
To herd the canoes together - not much to ask.  
Too much it seems, for as one hugged the coastline  
Another headed for the horizon,  
To the distant shores of the isle, the remaining three  
Took an indeterminate course in-between.  
With the escort of an immature gull,  
We eventually reached our goal  
Where the silver sands of Traigh Mheilein  
Were bathed in a shallow sea of emerald green.  
On this lovely beach we chose to land,  
Leaving our footprints in the sand.  
Now the inflatable crew had a project to do,  
So the canoeists were left in the surf to play  
And we went to the island for the churchyard survey.  
While engaged in our work, someone did mention  
That a capsized canoeist had caught his attention,  
The piercing whistle rent the air in vain  
Since the inflatable refused to start again  
We paddled and rowed right out to the swimmer  
Whilst Dave's patience grew noticeably thinner.  
The capsized canoe was emptied, no mean achievement,  
And hauled aboard, somewhat wet, was its occupant.  
The engine was started, but benefits of towing the canoe  
were debatable  
In the opinion of the two draped over the side of the inflatable.  
Sights were turned towards the rolling hills of home  
Once more the canoes across a wide expanse did roam.  
One hitched a lift, for the effort was a marathon If you're ready to steer  
was Dave's condition  
For another the situation looked grim  
Since his canoe with water was full to the brim.  
The emptying process started anew  
And he joined the increasing ranks of the inflatable crew.  
In early evening three canoes paddled in  
With their achievement they were elated  
The inflatable followed, her crew quite deflated.

LEWIS TAMANAVAY CLIMBING REPORT

"You'll find the climbing gear in Black Box No. 3", cried Mike across the marquee. After a short search I found it hidden away in a corner. I slid the lid off and my eyes nearly popped out. Brand new ropes, descenders, new carabiners, harnesses and various, other new pieces of equipment greeted me. There was even an ice hammer, which I trust was the start of an accumulation of gear for a winter expedition. My thanks must go to all those on the committee who have wisely invested in this equipment, as it makes the climbing instructor's job an easier and safer one.

The range of climbing possibilities around Loch Tamanavay included superb boulders and large crags. A ten minute walk from the site revealed a large series of boulders strewn across the hillside. It was here that most people had their first and hopefully not their last climbs. To my recollection people ascended - by whatever means - one particular boulder by an interesting route on the left-hand arete. This was usually followed by a short abseil, as the only practical means of descending. A small roof on one of the boulders was pegged, and with the aid of a pair of ebries and a sky hook, aid climbing was introduced. From Tony upwards to Ian (sorry Ros) everybody appeared to enjoy themselves on this bit of mechanisation. No doubt many expertly taken shots will recall those exacting moments - "and this is our Freddie half way up this 610 foot high cliff..." Felicity's finger will probably remember it with a more exacting sort of pain.

The tremendous cliff at Loch Dhibadail (see page 93, Scottish Climbs, vol 2 by H. MacInnes) was also visited on two occasions by Roger and myself. The first visit resulted in an ascent of the North Buttress, a 400 foot Grade III. Despite the atrocious weather conditions, no E.B's - just boots and rucksacks, it proved a pleasant outing. Whilst trying to find South Buttress - a route on the west way, we climbed, I hope, a new route. It involved two pitches of about 4c and we decided to name it 'By the way' for some unknown reason. The overall climb was about 500' long with six pitches. I found that this was a unique experience and this feeling was, I trust, shared by Roger.

On the last few days of the holiday eight of us decided to pay a visit to Harris and bivvy at Strone Ulladale. This spectacular piece of rock is described as one of the most impressive in Britain. I think it left its impression on most of us, it was unfortunate that no climbing was done. Bristling with overhangs and superb lines it was possible to lie underneath all day. The bivvy was a fitting climax to an excellent expedition.

NEIL HYDE

AN ORIENTEERING FIASCO

One of the many exciting forthcoming events scribbled on the notice board was 'Orienteering' -

"Oh great.", Jo and I exclaimed, "at last we have an opportunity to prove to the others that we aren't totally incompetent in absolutely everything!"

Dave had experienced my incompetence earlier when trying to teach me how to canoe in a straight line. Nice chap, he made excuses for me saying, in a very sympathetic, indeed controlled, voice that it was possible that my canoe was off-balance. Somehow I still got the impression that he thought I was a pathetic female who couldn't do anything right. Jo gave us a taste of her incompetence by serving up celery cocoa one evening - well, we all make mistakes! With all that behind us and being such budding Geographers, we just had to do well. About six pairs entered - we had an infallible threesome (or so we thought) - Jo, Flick and myself. We were given ten grid references each referring to a station where there was a plate with a letter on it. Each letter was awarded a certain number of points. One stupid rule was that there was a time limit with five points knocked off your total for every thirty seconds over the limit. We set off last because we had been earnestly working out compass bearings to be at an advantage. However, we didn't use any of them because we didn't have any faith in our calculations. Our first grave mistake was that we forgot to take a watch with us. We set off at a phenomenal rate which soon gave way to a slow trudge over the moor. Our main aim was to beat Dave at all costs, but we also wanted to be overall winners for extra satisfaction. Pete and Tony had spaced the plates much further apart than we had anticipated; it certainly was a vigorous exercise which called for ingenuity. So, we split up to find some of the plates - which we said defensively, was using our initiative, but which certain others dismissed as cheating! We found the first few quickly enough, but the next two, one situated by a loch and the other at some shielings, were nowhere to be found. We all ran off in different directions and it didn't take long before I got fairly and squarely lost. While I was trying to find Flick and Jo, and they me, we wasted valuable time. I eventually found camp again (much to my relief) and a little later my comrades arrived. We thought, optimistically, that we might have won, but in fact we had achieved the worst result. We were twenty minutes over the time limit, giving us the grand score of -130. The humiliation! We were full of excuses, saying that the loch and the shielings didn't even exist. Throughout all this, Dave and Jas were smiling smugly to themselves. It was later revealed that a dirty, rotten trick had been played on us; poor little Jas, under the orders of that Devil-in-Disguise Deeley, had been forced to hide the plate at the loch. Knowing they couldn't win by fair play they had to resort to trickery! Not only that but Pete gave a wrong grid reference for the shielings (fancy a one-time Geography teacher not being able to take grid references) Taking these little incidents into account - we didn't do too badly!

ROS DRING

THE NEW ROUTE

Wonderment and fear. Midway, between one wave and another. What lay ahead? Question unanswered, without a description. New route? Answer will have to wait. Trusty Moac, holds falls. Study the next move, fit the pieces together. Required - one foothold. Search. Little quartz knob - semi-mantelshelf. Belay in niche. Plan formulates. Move a little, very little. Wired stopper in. Loose above. Consistency is the key. Welcome on the mat to the entrance of the niche. Three Cheers.

"I'm safe, Roger" Settle down. His turn, my recuperation. "Taking in". Awkward from here. Pendulum to left. Idiot, shouldn't have climbed diagonally right. "That's me". "Climb when you're ready". Silence. "Climbing" Check "OK" Drifting memories. Worm up slab to stave. Then footing about. Neither one way nor the other. Eventual horizontal traverse right. Vertical horizons of the main cliff haunt my mind. Must not reach it. Now this.

What next? Out left, up a groove. Dirty and no holds. Down. Smiling. Climb over him. Swing out of balance. Re-arrange feet, like a chess game this move. Up. I am sailing. Another gangway. Pinnacle set into the wall. Could be. Up and down. You're like a yo-yo. Unlock the door and exit left. Another ledge. Small problem on what looks like loose rocks. Soon be at the top - hope? Big ledge, huge in reality. Dead sheep accompany me. Belay. Roger ascends. The buckets pitch arrives. Where have you been? Soon be there. Repeated twice. The top. Cool wind whilst coiling rope. Tension obliterated by relief.

Mais Bar. Ace day. Roger on duty must return to reality and washing up. Greasy descent. Pictures on instamatics. Bogtrot home, released and laughing from anxieties above. At last marquee, people, warmth. Why? Escapism. Who will ever know.

"Good day?"

"Yes, brilliant weather and a new route by the way."

NEIL HYDE



BIRD REPORT FOR LEWIS TAMANAVAY

The Isle of Lewis, being the largest island in the Outer Hebrides, offers probably the best range of habitats in the area. However, the area immediately around Loch Tamanavay was all we could hope to cover, and consequently the list does not indicate precisely the immense wealth of species the island is host to.

Loch Tamanavay is a coastal loch and so the birds in the immediate vicinity were likely to be sea birds and waders. Gannets were driven into the loch, during some of the stronger winds we experienced, and on one occasion manx shearwaters were noticed. During bread runs Artic Skuas were watched harassing other sea birds for fish, mainly gulls - five species of which breed on the island. Waders had already started their return migration, and flocks of Golden Plover, in semi-summer plumage, and Whimbrel, incessantly calling, dotted the coves south of Islivig and the golden sands of Uig. Fulmars were present in great numbers, evidence of the amazing success in colonization this bird has had in recent years.

Inland from the camp to the north, south and east lay large expanses of bog and moorland, valleys, crags and bare mountain tops. A pair of Golden Eagles had obviously bred nearby that year and successfully raised one young as both the adults and this white wing patched juvenile often soared over the camp.

Two bivvies camped at Uig Sands, seeing Hen Harriers, Buzzards, and some even a slate-blue bird we hope was a Peregrine, flying at an unbelievable speed.

Some enthusiastic people actually did complete a survey of the river Tamanavay, but apart from Dippers and Stonechats their efforts were not rewarded, unless they continued as far as the Loch at its source which was frequented by a pair of Red Throated Divers, probably the most exciting and memorable birds in the Hebrides.

The total number of species is not impressive, but the content is magnificent. The birds of prey, the divers, the Ravens, Skuas and Grouse, all are such captivating species I think we must all wonder why we didn't spend longer watching them.

Now many of the birds will have left Lewis to suffer the fierce winter by itself, but marking our camp site we have left two symbols of the fruitfulness of a summer's bird watching in Lewis - they are a Gannet's head and foot, looking south west out to sea, to await the return of the migrants, and the next SHS group to Tamanavay.

MIKE PADMORE

LIST OF SPECIES

Red-t-Diver	Lapwing	Collared Dove
Fulmar	Ringed Plover	Skylark
Manx Shearwater	Golden Plover	Swallow
Storm Petrel*	Snipe	H. Martin
Gannet	Whimbrel	Raven
Cormorant	Greenshank	Hooded Crow
Shag	Great Skua*	Rook
Heron	Arctic Skua	Jackdaw
Mallard	Gt-bl-b-Gull	Wren
Teal	Ls-bl-b-Gull	Dipper
Shelduck	Herring Gull	Song Thrush
Greylag Goose	Common Gull	Blackbird
Golden Eagle	Black-h-Gull	Robin
Hen Harrier	Kittiwake	Dunnock
Buzzard	Commic Tern*	Meadow Pippit
Peregrine	Guillemot*	Pied Wagtail
Red Grouse	Puffin*	Starling
Coot	Rock Dove	Twite
Oystercatcher	Wood pigeon	Chaffinch
		H. Sparrow

\* seen on ferry - Stornaway to Ullapool – only

MIKE PADMORE

## RHUM EXPEDITION 1979

LEADER: Mike Hayward

MEMBERS: Ian Arrow (CA), Steve Ashmore, Mark Banning, Tin Bending, Tim Bennett, Tim 'Sam' Coombes, Julian Cotton, Andy Evans, Mark Frost, Mark Gyopari, Andy Harding, Andy Jarratt, Andy Thompson, Eamonn Thompson, Pat Thompson (AL), John Tutton (AL). Ian Walters, Dean Wooding.

### LEADER'S REPORT

"Hello Mike, had a good expedition?". The Loch Shiel expedition had indeed been very enjoyable but I knew that this was not foremost in the mind of the person at the other end of the phone. I had heard that enquiring vicar-like voice before and waited to hear what little gem Weatherly had up his sleeve this time. Was the Rhum expedition off? Had I got to take all the equipment and food to Ullapool or Oban instead of just up the road to Mallaig?

"Well it's like this Mike; Chris Venning has gone down with a viral illness which has rendered him quite incapable of going out of the house let alone leading an expedition. So I wondered if you, well, could sort of..er.. lead the expedition until he arrives...."

Unfortunately Chris' recovery was rather prolonged, but it must be said that this should have been his expedition and it was a great pity that he was not able to join us on the island and see through his ideas to their ultimate completion. It must have made all that paperwork seem a waste of time, but we certainly benefited from it.

We were off to a good start from the beginning with three people missing by the time I met the main party at Fort William. Then, a twenty minute stop at Glenfinnan while we tried all sorts of manoeuvres to load the canoes and marquee into the guards van. However, the piece de resistance was the transfer of equipment and "ample" food from the Lochmor to Rhum's work boat. By the time this had been completed all the other passengers on the MacBrayne ferry were watching the entertainment from the aft decks.

Some of the lads must have wondered what they were letting themselves in for as we walked from Kinloch to Salisbury's Dan with full packs. However, maintaining the camp site in itself did not prove to be too much of a strain as the stream did not flood, the ground underfoot stayed dry even in the wettest of weather and the Rhum midges didn't seem to be interested in living up to its usual reputation. And only once did we have to re-erect the marquee (and I use that term loosely to describe those ill fitting pieces of canvas!)

The first week was decidedly wet and that combined with a leader who had suddenly been thrown in at the deep end it's a wonder we did

anything. However, by the end of the first week everybody had done canoe capsize drill, the ridge walk had been completed and some of us had walked back from Bloodstone Hill in the dark, having watched a glorious sunset over the Outer Hebrides.

So much of "seeing nature" these days is done in relative comfort at the expense of losing the qualities of remoteness and isolation, but Rhum has not, as have some nature reserves, passed beyond the realm of countryside preservation into that of the safari park. I'm sure that those of us who walked up Hallival in the rain, cooked our meal in a leaking wooden hut and proceeded to watch the shearwaters by the light of our torches will have more vivid memories than had we been sat in a comfortable hide. The atmosphere was fantastic, chicks calling from their burrows dug into the rich grassland, the adult birds screaming as they encircled the high gabbro mountains shrouded in mist. It was almost like the setting in Hitchcock's "Birds" as they sometimes flew into us – quite a shock in the dead of night!

The second week was mainly dry and very hot for three or four days – even causing some sunburn! This was the sort of weather for enjoying a Sunday down on Kilmay beach or relaxing on the Bloodstone Cliffs watching the gannets in the sound between Rhum and Canna. But Ian "the sparrow" Arrow maintained a high level of "epic" activity with a round the island walk and all but three people managed the ridge walk; in fact Julian did it twice! We were treated to a display of RAF piloting skills when a Mountain Rescue landed on the only part of the Salisbury Dam site that we weren't occupying. I'm glad to say that Eamonn is recovering well from his operation, although it will be a little while before he is playing football again – if his doctor can restrain him that is! Then of course there was the close up views of Golden and White Tailed Eagles, Kinloch Castle, the climbing – the list is endless.

At times we relied very heavily on the staff of the Nature Conservancy and our grateful thanks go to all of them, especially to Mr. Bob Sutton, the Chief Warden, for his help and advice and permission to camp out of Kinloch. To Angus, the estate foreman who manhandled all our equipment and food onto his tractor to transport it to the camp site, Rhum has not been "opened up" and we were extremely fortunate to enjoy this unique experience. One of the island's former owners, John Bullough, wrote just before his death – To thee dear Rhum, once more I come, thy deer to chase, thy storm to chase". Simple, but a sentiment with which I feel all of us would concur.

MIKE HAYWARD

### THE "EPIC" STROLL

The "Epic" Stroll, the first epic to take place on Rhum 1979 was attended, quite unwittingly, by most of the camp. I feel that no-one apart from our scheming leaders knew the route. (Had we known the attendance may have been smaller) When I left camp I thought we were just going down to Harris, along the track and then back over the top of Ruinsival, the main purpose being to observe some feathered friends.

We did manage to walk down the track to Harris and did turn off the track and head towards Ruinsival, shrouded in mist as it was, but then we started going round instead of going up. However, the pace was quite slow and, apart from the occasional outburst of rain the walk was enjoyable. We saw several small herds of deer and even some mountain goats.

We stopped for dinner just above Inbhir Ghil and, with this completed, went on to contour round Sgurr nan Gillean, pausing to admire Papadil and various other sights. As we rounded Sgurr nan Gillean and started to head up Glen Dibidil, we realised we would have to go down to the valley floor, owing to the large amounts of scree. We then headed for Bealach an Oir, a small coll between Tralvall and Askival. From the top we had an impressive view of the work of glaciation. Glen Dibidil has an almost perfect 'U' - shaped valley.

From here we descended into Glen Harris and headed for the road, reaching it just above Loch an Dornabac. We were all very tired now as we had been walking all day and had not yet become adjusted to the type of terrain. Having reached the road myself, Eamonn Thompson and Julian Cotton set off at a ridiculous pace for Salisbury's Dam, cream crackers and jam. The rest of the party finally arrived in small groups behind us and so ended Epic No. 1.

TIM BENNETT

### THE EVENTFUL 26<sup>TH</sup>

It was a lovely bright morning; the kind not often experienced on Rum. After breakfast, seven of us trekked over rough ground, led by an N.C.C. employee much given to recounting tales of glory. Iain, Sam and I had to build a path through a muddy bog, where only midges ventured; the others were path-building further on.

We were all exhausted when we returned to camp. For relaxation we participated in some playful wrestling! All went well until suddenly a "snap" was heard from under the pile of wreathing bodies. My leg! Dr. Mike was called for. He pulled off my wellies and socks (brave lad is Mike - ed.), prodded and poked and then sighing, "Looks as if it may be broken...."

They carried me to the tent, where I awaited the return of Mike and the party who went with him to 'phone for some assistance. Soon they returned, accompanied by Angus the tractor driver - one of Rum's characters. They had got through to R.A.F. Lossiemouth and a helicopter was on its way!

What excitement when it landed on the camp-site! But the lads tore themselves away and put me on a stretcher and lifted me into the 'copter. Then, up and away, across the sea and over the mainland to Inverness. Within 25 minutes I was in the hospital. My subsequent recovery has been a little slower!

I would like to thank Mike, Iain and all the other S.H.S. colleagues, and Angus, for being so kind both on and off Rum.

EAMONN THOMPSON

Ed's note - We have acceded to the natural bent of the Thompson family and misspelled Rhum!

### THE RHUM RIDGE WALK

Members: Ian Arrow, Pat Thompson, Ian Walters, Steve Ashmore, Eamonn Thompson and Mark Banning.

The Ridge Walk takes in the seven highest peaks in Rhum; Runisval, Sgurr nan Gilean, Ainsival, Tralval, Askival, Hallival and Barkeval. Our party set out at 11 o'clock with the intention of beating Mike's nine hour time at least, even if Pat's idea of doing it in four and a half hours seemed a little doubtful!

We set off at a cracking pace as the clouds surrounding the peaks got thicker. The first part of the actual climb started soon after we left the Harris road. Pat, who had done this marathon before, convinced us all that climbing Runisval was definitely the worst part of the walk, so with this in mind we carried on. Ian shot up like a goat as the rest of us struggled with the steepness, heather and loose rocks. Once at the top Ian informed us that the rest was a piece of cake but looking towards Sgurr nan Gilean which was covered in cloud, we weren't too sure. However, by the time we reached this second peak, the clouds had gone, and we sat and ate our lunch in a weak sun and strong wind with a magnificent view of the valley 2000' below us. Neither Ainsival or Trallval caused much of a problem, but seeing the descent that was required to get to the coll between Trallval and Askival rather depressed us. Arrow the Sparrow led us down Trallval, a trip which was pleasant because it was out of the wind and then the ascent of Askival began. It was generally agreed by everyone who did this walk, and most expedition members did, that this was far and away the worst part. A never ending slope covered in loose boulders which stretched out of sight into the clouds. It was half way up that we were caught in the most torrential hailstorm. There was no time to put on waterproofs, so the rest of the walk was done in wet clothing, a fact which at the time was not really too important.

No sooner were we at the top than we had to carry on to keep warm. In retrospect, how we got off the mountain safely without being able to see where we were going was either due to Pat's memory or lucky compass work, but get off it we did and then climbed Hallival, perhaps the easiest climb of the walk.

By now Ian felt it was time to eat his orange and was disappointed although not surprised to find that the inside was blue with mould rather than orange, a somewhat common characteristic of the oranges on the expedition.

Worse was to come. On the ridge between Hallival and Barkeval, the hail got at us again and my most enduring memory of the walk will be Pat standing up against the storm in his cool trousers, totally soaked, in a defiant pose, whilst the rest of us got as much shelter as we could from the ridge. Once the storm abated we eventually found the top of Barkeval in the mist before descending to the relative ease of the flat land around Loch Long and back to a comparatively warm camp.

Of the three parties who walked the Ridges of Rhun we had the honour of doing it in the fastest time - definitely an epic!

MARK BANNING

## CLIMBING ON RHUM

One of the few indiscretions I showed this year was to be conned into going on an SHS expedition. Another was admitting to the fact that I could climb.

Climbing on good old secure sandstone I find quite relaxing - find a Hebridean outcrop and you've got wet feet before you begin. Admittedly the rock is exceptional, the composition of Barkeval is something even ICI would have difficulty matching for friction, but the most striking feature which quite literally hits you is the wind - not as cold as other places but thoroughly unremitting. There's no doubt those characters who came climbing will have a deeper tan than through a week on the Med! Enough of the niceties - what did we actually climb? (Excluding Salisbury's Dam!)

In all we managed to get virtually everybody, including a rather zealous Hayward, up and down something. The main areas we tackled were outcrops, Minishal and Dornabac and a bit of an epic on Barkeval.

The outcrops on Dornabac are quite interesting 80° slabs going up to 40'. They're fairly barren at the best of times but to climb them in the face of a force 8 is something to be experienced. Most people happily scrambled up a corner arrette. One character in particular - "Is there thirds?" - Frostie amused all by expertly executing a passe double on a ½" ledge whilst wearing at least size 12s!

Moving along we found a quite interesting slab which people quite 'happily' threw themselves off, hopefully having previously acquainted themselves with how to reduce such a marked acceleration. (In the most part we American rappelled later using a figure of 8).

Minishal - only about 500 yards from camp - sported two nice outcrops both of about 20'. They have obviously been the site of previous SHS activity, for here we found the stark remains of a periton sling draped somewhat mournfully over a spike. I don't think any other self respecting climber would be so idle as to only venture this far from the road.

The lower outcrop was quite straightforward, giving one good traverse. The upper was slightly overhanging and provided both merriment and dejection - I think the general feeling was if you fell off the tenth time you were as good as everybody else and fitter than most.

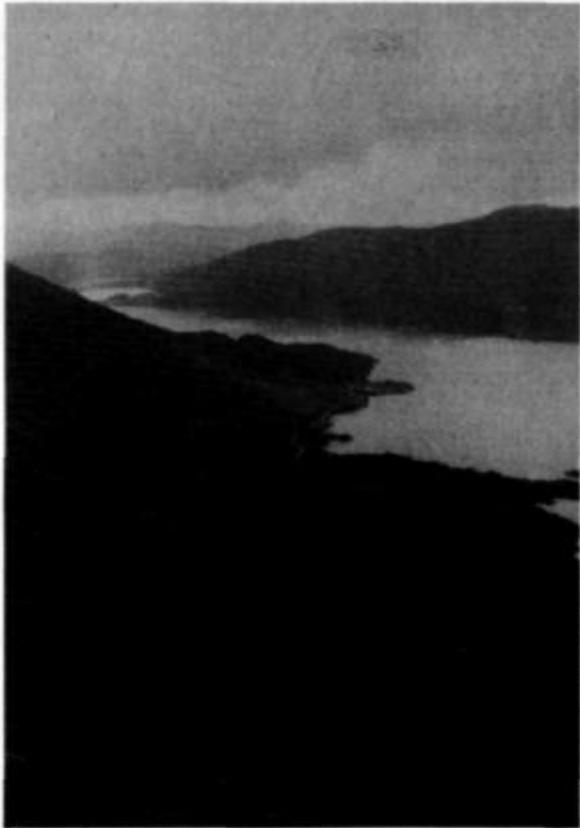
By driving in a few fence posts in at the top of Salisbury's Dam (a feat in itself - the wee character from Inverness overcame all) we were able to go up and down it at will.

However, the climbing epic came on Barkeval. As usually happens in these situations, we were just going up Hallival to do some shearwater monitoring and what have you and thought it proper to take some climbing gear to while away the time. This it certainly did and we spent the best part of a day pushing our way up a somewhat insidious buttress - I think an SHS first.

Points to remember:

- 1) Abseil with a rope
- 2) Climb head first
- 3) Take a book to read

IAN ARROW



LOCH SHIEL EXPEDITION 1979

LEADER: Alan Smith

ASSISTANT LEADERS: Judith Smith, Tim Gilbert,

Ben Buxton, Mike Hayward

MEMBERS: Collette Armitage, Janet Simpson, Sue Irons, Penny Ward, Judith Pielou, Katherine Parker, Fiona Nicholson, Debra Harrison, Julie Tinsley Mark (Bionic) Bankes, Hubert (Rudolph, Incredible Hulk, Mr. Universe) Lelijveld, Graham Tarling Brian Barnes, Simon Lord, Martin Belderson, Ian McLeod, Ian Gartside, John Ringrow, Chris Young, Michael Johnson, Peter(Hermann) Sebire.

LEADER'S REPORT

The site we used at Glenaladale is in a magnificent setting, with steep hillsides to the north and south. We used a site higher up the valley than the previous expedition, as the area at the Loch side was a bit wet! The area we used involved a walk of around a mile through a pine plantation to a clearing near a bend in the river. It was here that Glenaladale House used to stand until the '45 rebellion, when it was demolished by the Red Coats as retribution against the McDonald and Clan Ranald clans, for their part in the uprising.

One of the most interesting places on Loch Shiel was the Clan Burial Isle which most people visited either in canoes or inflatables. Unfortunately, civilization is reaching the more remote points of the Highlands, and the Chapel Bell is now chained to the wall, since it was recently stolen, but luckily was recovered.

The steep sided rugged mountains and deep gullies around the site filled with rushing torrents - especially when it rains, which it did almost every day. In fact, we had only three days when it did not rain!

The wild life is quite varied. In addition to the deer, some of us sighted a badger in daylight - a fox was seen - and ptarmigan -whilst the highlight of the trip for me was watching a Golden Eagle sat on a ledge about twenty yards away.

The main activities seemed to be canoeing and walking, as climbing was not possible most of the time because of the wet weather. Brian Barnes organised an Orienteering Event which most people enjoyed. Brian also organised the Sports Day. Unfortunately, during the practice for this event, we had our only casualty. Mike, putting the shot, was interrupted by Ian heading it!

However, he survived my First Aid treatment and managed to reach Fort William for stitches, with the timely help of Bob Crockett and his tracked vehicles and boat.

The marquee was rather a puzzle, as the two ends and the centre section seemed to be quite different - however, it only collapsed once - at 2.00 am in pouring rain - only the poor leader heard collapse of course: Rousing the whole camp at 7.00 am proved enjoyable, and after realising that breakfast could not be prepared until the marquee was re-erected, everyone threw themselves into the task at full strength, and breakfast was served at the usual time of 8.30 am!

Almost everyone went on at least one bivvy trip, even though some of the destinations were a little suspect.

I thoroughly enjoyed the expedition, and feel sure that the members and assistant leaders did too.

ALAN SMITH



### BIRD REPORT FOR LOCH SHIEL

The area around the campsite teemed with insectivorous birds, who seemed to be enjoying a boom season, and when we arrived so did the midges!

The woodland around the river flowing by the campsite was especially rewarding, and on favourable days blue tits, great tits, coal tits, long-tailed tits, whitethroats, robin, wrens, chaffinches, tree pipit and willow warblers were in abundance. The nearby conifer plantation was the favourite haunt of wrens and goldcrests.

The meadow pipits around the campsite must have had rich pickings of craneflies and beetles, if the numbers in the tents were anything to go by, although unfortunately the midges must have been too small for the pipits to pay any attention to them.

As we chugged along the loch in the inflatables, black-throated divers were seen to take flight and gulls, hoodies and herons flew overhead. A pair of red-throated divers were spotted at a smaller loch near Pollach.

On the lower marshy ground, sedgewarblers, reed buntings and the occasional snipe were seen; and going up higher into the mountain, greenshank, stonechat, wheatears and buzzards.

There were three sightings of golden eagles, including the unfortunate bird stumbled on by one of Alan's walking parties, which on seeing the intrepid band bearing towards it, took to the skies in blind terror. Alan's parties also saw ptarmigan on the higher peaks.

On our excursions to the sea lochs, we saw herons, curlew, oystercatchers, and parties of female eiders and the splendid aerial display of terns on Loch Moidart.

Despite these interesting sightings, however, the aerial life which produced the most excitement were the strange iron birds which flew low over the loch, between the mountain ranges, causing a flurry of activity. The curious ritual was triggered off by a thunderous roar, whereupon in a frenzy, people rushed out of their tents, the marquee walls were nearly torn down as heads peered out, and then arms waving the ecstatic shout of "Jagz! Jagz!" went up until the tailing off of the thunderous roar signalled the end of the proceedings, and people were back to the daily routine activity of playing cards and eating toast.

JANET SIMPSON

## THE BIVVY

Or Alan Smith and his Faithful Followers go for a Short Stroll

Introductory Note: to go on one of Alan's biwies you either have to be -

1. New to the society and therefore unaware of what you are letting yourself in for
2. extremely super-keen
3. very attached to Alan

The members were Alan, Ben, Hubert (commonly known as Rudolph), myself, and the expedition's two hard men, Simon Lord (commonly known as Simon), and Mark (Bionic) Bankes.

We set off up Glenaladale and within fifteen minutes I was carrying several gallons of water in my socks, Glenaladale being a very wet place. Alan refused to give us the satisfaction of watching him fall in one of the numerous streams which I regard as very mean of him. At the top of Glenaladale, we leapt (well, walked) over the Glen Moidart. We stopped for lunch at the remains of an old village and Ben attacked the rocks with his geological hammer. Approaching Glen Moidart House (quite a smart 'little' place), we met the owner of the land we were walking on, but after Alan had convinced him that the SHS is wonderful, he let us pass. (Brave man - Ed). Soon we reached civilization -the village of Kinlochmoidart which actually has a shop which sports such luxuries as REAL milk (yes, the liquid kind) so we promptly bought all the milk in the shop. After walking several miles along the road, we decided to stop for the night at Smirisary, an isolated village right on the coast. It was then that we discovered our leader's (possibly deliberate) mistake. We had hardly any food - just one tin of beef mince, six eggs, the inevitable tins of sausages, some very old bread and not much else to keep us going for three days. I think this may have been a plot by Alan to ensure that we suffered a little more pain. After eating the evening's rations in about two minutes, we crawled into our tent/hole in the rock/polythene sheet shelter.

The next day we awoke feeling fit and ready for another eighteen miles (?). We thought we would be original and have some Harris pork sausages for breakfast, and then we set off again, following the coast round to Glenuig where with great will power, we actually managed to walk PAST the Glenuig Inn. After several miles along the road we turned inland and conquered all 882 metres of Rois Bheinn. When the mist cleared for a few seconds at a time we had a superb view. Near the top, Mark's bionics failed, and he actually slowed down, a hitherto unknown happening. We could have reached camp that evening but we didn't want to disappoint the rest of the expedition by arriving back early, so we camped on top of the ridge by a small loch. The temperature was about -20°C

and the mist was very thick. As I wandered over the rocks to seek a ladies powder room, woolly hat pulled well over my ears, I wondered if I would ever find my way back to the comfort of a karrimat. After another mouthful pretending to be a meal we again crawled into our tent/hole in the rock/polythene sheet shelter. Most of us were in bed by eight o'clock, but not Bionic Bankes. Not satisfied with a simple shelter, he spent the next two hours or so shifting massive rocks to build himself a two storey super-luxurious 5-star bivvy with bathroom suite attached and wall to wall carpeting. It was in this stone castle that we believe he secretly ate all the chocolate that we couldn't find the next morning (that's what those munching noises were in the middle of the night).

The next morning we had three and a third sausages each for breakfast and then set off early back to camp where we knew there were about forty loaves of bread waiting to be eaten. We walked round the top of the corrie, and then started an extremely steep descent involving VS rock climbs, and Hubert's rucksack would have hurtled all the way down the mountainside if Alan hadn't caught it (fortunately Hubert was not attached to it at the time). Once at the bottom, all we had to do was walk down the valley, into camp, find the bread, and eat, and eat

JUDITH PIELOU



"THE ROAD TO RUIN"

(To be sung to the tune of "The road to the Isles")

1. It's the far hotel that's a-pullin Mike away  
As he steps with his whisky up the glen,  
It's thr far hotel that's a puttin love on him  
As he leans against the bar once again.

CHORUS

By Clenfiddich and Glenlivet and Glen Grant we will go,  
As we call in all the pubs upon the way  
If you think that you're going to have stagger in your step,  
It's because you've had spam curry every day.

2. It's the far sound of whipping that pulls Colette away.  
As she steps with swarfega upon her hand  
It's the far sound of whipping that's a putting love on her  
As she goes for Mike Hayward with her brand.

CHORUS

3. It's the singing of poor Herman that we love to admire  
As he says "you b...." in his solo song.  
It's the singing of poor Herman that's putting love on us,  
As Colette garottes him with her leather thong.

CHORUS

4. It's the calling of the bogtents that's a pulling Clod away  
As the curry gets to work upon his bowels.  
It's the far call of the bog tents that's putting love on him,  
And if he doesn't make it Tim will get his trowel.

CHORUS

5. It's the natter in the girls' tent that's a pulling us away.  
As we try to get to sleep every night  
It's the gossip and the giggles that's driving us insane,  
As Colette slips into her black fishnet tights.

CHORUS

6. It's the peat bogs and the summits that pulls Alan  
far away,  
As he strides to conquer 1000 metre peak,  
It's the peat bogs and the summits that's a puttin  
love on him,  
Leaving Mark and Judith hobbling on sore feet.

CHORUS

(Do you really want this attributed to you, Mike??)



Dear Sir,

Having been a faithful member of the SHS for three years I feel it is time to write and complain about the suitability of a certain member of the medical profession for participation in the expeditions. This person, who shall remain nameless, but who is characterised by the constant presence of a whisky bottle in his hand, is not suitable company for the delicate young ladies to be found on mixed expeditions. He is known to have several strange habits such as parading outside the marquee in a lady's nightdress and prefers his cocoa with handfuls of grit instead of sugar. He terrorises the females by writing letters of dubious content and sending them to their parents, and he freely encourages perversions involving tins of swarfega - for further information see Collette Armitage.

He is highly amused by a type of drug which encourages trips to the (for want of a more delicate description) loo tent. Well brought up young ladies are very sensitive and greatly offended by the activities of this lunatic doctor and females entering the Society should be warned against his company. I trust you know to whom I am referring.

Yours faithfully,

A young lady of the Loch Shiel Expedition.

(We must point out to the young lady (whoever she may be) that we did try and confiscate this person's lady's nightdress at the last Conference, but he refused to be parted from it. However, we did manage to remove (!) some highly suspect underwear for which the young lady should be grateful. We just hope that the person in question does not sue us for printing this!)



### LOCH SHIEL PROJECT REPORT

Not much project work was undertaken this year at Loch Shiel. However, we were able to test the results of a previous expedition.

Round et al (SHS 1977) using a method laid down by Deeley, claimed that no barnacles were to be found in the Loch. By using a new system of barnacle studies devised by the present author (Nature, awaiting press) it was possible to detect the free living larvae of Balanoides nonmarina var. Caledonia. No mature specimens were found as the expedition was not equipped for benthonic studies.

The nearest attempt at a submarine venture was the construction of a UFO (Unidentified Floating Object) codenamed R.A.F.T. (Rather A Fanciful Tetragram) under the leadership of our resident marine engineer O/Cdt. I. McLeod, RAF. The craft, later named Swarfega 1, was made of driftwood squarelashed with twine (and by the artist's impression which came with the original script was heralded by a rather naughty pair of bloomers, although Tim did not say to whom they belonged. Ed)

Although Swarfega 1 floated she was unfortunately unable to take the weight of a crew.

'Incidental discoveries' were two frogs, a drowned shrew and a drowned vole at various tines in the wet pit. An attempt at a small mammal survey resulted in the trapping of several slugs, and one shrew which died as the bait used was for herbivores.

Whilst on a canoe bivvy to Acharacle, Janet Simpson stopped off at Claish Moss, said to be the finest example of a raised bog anywhere in the Western Highlands, to take samples of peat for the construction of a pollen profile; thus showing the changes in local botany since the peat was formed.

For some reason the biting insect survey failed to produce any results.

Bird watching, as opposed to ornithology, was fairly popular, and I observed a number of fine flightless specimens during the course of the expedition.

TIM GILBERT