

1981 Annual Report

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The 1981 report did not have page numbers or index so I have reduced the number of pages by 'compressing' the reports – several blank or substantially blank pages were included in the printed version but have been reduced for the electronic version.
Nick Smith

Schools' Hebridean Society Annual Report

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Report Editor Christopher Venning

Winchester.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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Expedition Leaders

Colonsay	Christopher Venning
Lewis - Mealista	Gavin Macpherson
Jura	Roger Weatherly
Lewis - Tamanavay	Peter Fale
Rhum	Alan Smith
Loch Shiel	Steve Paynter

It has been another very successful year for the Schools' Hebridean Society. Expeditions have been to Colonsay, Jura, Lewis Tamanavay and Mealista, and Loch Sheil and Rhum, as well as an early expedition in April to the Lake District. Not all ran smoothly but the problems and difficulties encountered were met and overcome with admirable fortitude. I will not steal the thunder of the individual expedition leaders and members who individually recount just a few of the joys, successes and failures of their island adventures in the following pages of this report. But I am sure it will be evident from these reports, both to us and also to those not familiar with the Society, just how worthwhile and rich an experience an SHS expedition to the Hebrides can be.

Not only are we as a Society supremely fortunate to have open to us access to some of the most enchanting islands in the U.K., so rich, both in the abundance and variety of life as well as rugged challenge and frequent beauty; but also to have within our ranks many people of extraordinary generosity. They more commonly come under the banner of directors and management committee members and no accolade is too great for their very many hours freely given, hard work and efficiency. Once again all the nuts and bolts for six expeditions were assembled in the right places, even if some were a tight fit, thus making possible yet another successful summer of SHS activities. I am sure that you all join with me in expressing our very sincere thanks to all of them.

Also, in addition to thanking you, we must also say farewell to a number of names very familiar to many of you. In particular Jim Turner, Mike Hayward and Roger Weatherly have officially stepped down from the SHS administration, although happily not completely out of the Society. All have made very considerable contributions to the SHS over the past years and deserve our whole-hearted thanks and appreciation. Without them who knows what shambolic shower would attempt to operate under the name of the Schools' Hebridean Society.

However, an extra special tribute must surely be paid to an extra special member of the Society, our Bishop, Launcelot Flemming. Launcelot has faithfully supported the Society since its foundation in 1959 in his official capacity as honorary adviser and it is to our great sadness that he has decided to relinquish this title. Launcelot has participated, encouraged, supported and advised in every way that he could, remaining totally committed to the Society and its ethos throughout his long and priceless service. He has become a friend to many of us and has undoubtedly enriched us with his company. For the joy that Launcelot has brought to us and for his sound counsel and advice we say 'thank you' and we look forward to future frequent visits to us in his new capacity as 'honorary friend'. So finally, although this has been said many times by others, it has never been more truthfully addressed to anyone than it is here: "Your kindness to us, Launcelot, has only been exceeded by the inestimable qualities of your good looks and the inimitable nature of your personal charm."

Hence with the moving on of such it can be seen that the future of the SHS lies squarely with the new, up and coming talent within our ranks. What should the Society be doing in the future and how best that is to be achieved, are questions which need answering with diligence, courage and inspiration if the maximum potential of the SHS is to be realised in the future.

To all of us in the Society whom the challenge concerns we can only be grateful for the very fine examples we have to follow.

Stephen Paynter Chairman



LEADER: Christopher Venning.

ASSISTANT LEADERS: Tony Ball, Angela Newton,
Sue Irons, Vincent Smith.

MEMBERS: Mark Bacon, Michael Bailey, Richard Butterworth,
David Cookman, Howard Feasey, Gareth Griffiths, Steven
Haigh, Damian Haworth, Andrew Knowles, Jason Liddy, Ian
Whitworth, Adam Williams.

LEADERS REPORT

This was an unusual SHS junior expedition, for because of a shortfall in recruiting, there were only seventeen of us altogether including five leaders. It was obvious after a smooth journey to the island, when two groups from London and Manchester, were separately congratulated by fellow travellers for their good behaviour, that something must go wrong, and on going ashore the problem was soon apparent -the equipment due five days previously had just arrived, and the planned transport across the island for ourselves, kit and food was not available - all of this well after midnight.

We were very thankful for the Jura rear-guard, who were still erecting the tents, as we eventually arrived at the campsite with only that which we needed for the first night, the food and remaining personal equipment was collected the following day.

After that the expedition went smoothly into a routine, completing swimming and capsizing tests quickly. As usual on Colonsay the islanders made us very welcome, amongst other things, taking a group out fishing for an afternoon and playing the traditional football match, where we were beaten by fourteen goals to nil, despite the referees bias and inability to count the number of players on the pitch!

The smoothness of the expedition that Sue Irons our CA had helped to create was disrupted when she hurt her back, but after a visit from Dr. Hall Gardiner rest was prescribed and soon Sue was to be seen hobbling around camp and the immediate shore line - and despite further back trouble Sue very bravely stayed with us, even helping direct the packing up of the expedition, while seated on a black box before her chauffeur arrived to take her down to the hotel games room, where we spent the last night on the island.

Other notable events that occurred included the "O limp it" games which culminated in the three legged - one forwards one backwards - blind folded egg and spoon race over an obstacle course, which was thought to be too easy - so only half the eggs were hard boiled!

All those of us who went to Colonsay gained a great deal from our time on the island, in the more relaxed atmosphere that was possible with such a small group, and our sincere thanks must go to all the islanders whose island we disturbed, and to those who worked so hard on the arrangements before we arrived. As the leader I should like to thank the group of assistant leaders who worked very hard.

Christopher Venning.

Bivvy

Nine thirty in the evening. We had just finished supper and four eager campers, Michael Bailey, David Cooknam, Damian Haworth, and myself were planning out a bivvy to the north of the island. The bivvy was scheduled for the following day so the route had to be planned.

Eight a.m. We rose for breakfast excited and full of anticipation. After a big breakfast we returned to the tents to undertake the job of packing all the necessary equipment. After a lengthy packing session we were all ready. Tony Ball, the assistant leader in charge of the bivvy, signed out and we left camp and reached a point where there was no return and we had to press on until we reached the camp site we were destined for.

The first leg of the walk was along five miles of the winding road that goes between the camp site and the scenic Koloran bay. At the big bay we stopped and had lunch on a big rock, lapping up the sun.

The final leg was at first over a rough track but after a few more miles we broke out into the countryside and from then on followed a winding, lonely fence stretching out into the distance. The end was then in sight as we left the fence whose company we had endured so long, and strode off over the neighbouring hills in search of a likely site. We found a suitable point and made camp.

The dream like bivvy nearly turned into a nightmare when we discovered that a vital part of the second tent had been lost on the road, so we pitched our single tent which was to be home for the five of us overnight and put the heavy rucksacks in a bivvy bag.

The only thing we could do was eat, so we heated our dehydrated food staffs and tried to enjoy our meagre supply as much as we could. Afterwards we packed up the utensils and tucked up into our inviting sleeping bags.

We told stories and laid our plans for the following day and, eventually, we turned in for the night, each

with our separate thoughts on the day's events and the rewards we would want the following day to bring.

We began early the next day and were on the road by nine a.m. striking out a good pace. Before we started, however, we saw on the peak of an adjacent hill a magnificent billy goat showing off all its splendour. After we had walked a mile a golden eagle swooped and soared before us and that was the greatest moment in a magnificent two days. We continued to make excellent progress and we reached the track more quickly than before. We continued to chat and walk all the way back to camp. When we arrived in camp we all felt a great satisfaction and pride.

All in all it was a great success and I thoroughly enjoyed my first ever bivvy.

Ian Whitworth

Boating Report

Although Colonsay is such a small island Tobuar Fuar offers a large expanse of beach, which at high tide was ample of a quick paddle was all that was needed.

Unfortunately, the tide takes a long time to come in and it did not seem to be in for more than about five minutes before it went out again, so the sea spent most of its time a vast distance from camp.

The capsized drill was over and done with in the first couple of days; swimming was the first ordeal and all those who attempted this cold feat passed it with flying colours, mainly blue! So the following evening, at high tide, the capsized drill took place; I perched myself in the inflatable armed with camera and Sue for company while 'hero' Vince demonstrated how to hit your head on the sea bed - I had an action replay of this skill a couple of days later which I will never forget. Again all those who tried passed this test, despite a couple of hiccoughs on the way.

Michael had decided that swimming and canoeing were both not for him, so he watched his camp mates from the shore, although later in the expedition our slip-a-disc Sue passed him on his swimming test and then on the last day he amazed everyone with the decision to go canoeing, which meant another capsized drill and a quick canoe around the island before the canoes were carried back to camp for the last time in the expedition.

This meant that everyone capable of canoeing did so; poor hop-along Adam had an ear infection and so could not go out in the boats - this was even more unfair since he sprained an ankle during the first walks of the expedition so spent most of the time hopping around camp - he became quite an expert in making coffee.

The canoes were out practically every day and no-one seemed to mind the trip across the sand to get to the water and back again.

The inflatable accompanied them whenever it was able - when the tide was in!

And a splashing time was had by all.

Sea Food

Eight in the morning and the mist has just cleared,
The tents are still standing; the storm again has veered,
The saucepans are bagged and breakfast is called,
Are the eggs scrambled, they are certainly not boiled.

Sitting in camp all day is no fun
So it is out in the boats with the waves and the sun.
We'll visit the island, and collect some more shells
No, not dogwhelks or mussels but periwinkles.

"We'll eat them" said Chris, there not hard to cook
The recipe is written somewhere in this book
'First leave to soak for twelve hours in the bucket'
Next morning they stunk so Sue said "Chuck it".

So much for our sea food, what a disaster.
Not quite: For Chris, with cockles proved a master,
Lovely to look at, delicious to eat.
The boys not so sure said "This s'posed to be meat?"

Angela Newton



Tip Tew

A selection of printable contributions from Colonsay expedition's addition to the journalistic world - Tip Tew.

Watch out - time is on a go slow.

Don't ask Tim Short the time on Colonsay, you could be misinformed. 'Tim Time' as it is now popularly known, has nothing on magnetic variation.

Decreasing by about five minutes a day since the middle of last week, things look set to be confusing. At 12-15 (BST) on Tuesday morning, Tim Time made it 11-45 pm on Monday night. When is today not today, or when is it yesterday?

Normally such problems can be easily remedied. The days of the wind-up watch are numbered. On pulling out the winder to adjust the hands the owner was left with a watch on the left wrist and a small pin in the right hand.

All is not lost however, the pin may be replaced and the watch regularly wound; alternatively the time piece can be adjusted correctly but have no means of winding the wonders of modern science!

Tim Short.

Quotes of the day.

"Is this road one way?" Asked on the Sound of Oransay.

"At first I thought it was a sheep but then I realised that it was Angela"

"What does a ferry look like?"

Climbing instructor petrified by slow abseil - described as a gentle beetle crawl.

On Tuesday, a small green Michael pretending to be, and closely resembling a beetle, was seen to be slowly crawling backwards down a forty foot cliff, attached to ropes. The interesting point was that it took twenty five minutes. The fact must be raised that a normal beetle (Beetalus Beetalus) can cover the same distance on the flat in about ten minutes, and does not roll about in uncontrollable ecstasy towards the end.

Vincent Smith.



Lewis, Mealista

LEWIS, MEALISTA

LEADER: Gavin Macpherson

ASSISTANT LEADERS: Mike Hayward, Simon Ward, Janet Simpson Theresa Forrester, Ian Gartside.

MEMBERS: Craig Eason, David Gooberman, Jimmy Macmillan, Adam Shebbing, Dale Hobson, Ian Horsfield, Tim Gallagher, Howard Wilson, Robert Brook, Amanda Thorpe, Nick Pender, Les. Smith, Mike Ledger.

LEADERS REPORT

I quickly discovered that the new chairman came out of the same mould as his distinguished predecessor. 'Dear Gavin' he wrote 'I expect you think this is a silly idea, and we have tried everyone else but they are going to Alaska or joining the army or already leading expeditions. So we're desperate; could you possibly lead Mealista?'

"Yes" I said; it is a word you should never use when dealing with SHS chairmen, but I was out of practice - I meant to say "yes it is a silly idea" but Steve had seized his opportunity. So some months later I was reliving old memories, driving a Salford Van Hire minibus crammed with rucksacks, fishing rods, boots and Leeds United supporters along the single track road that winds and climbs its way to Breanish in the west of Lewis.

We had arrived, of course, in the rain, which was more than could be said for the food and equipment lorry, which did not arrive at all. Poor John and Jim! Tipped into ditches, hijacked to Jura, split tyres long distance explanations to waiting employers....Stornoway was the limit of endurance and it took three more days before we had finally moved into Mealista.

Even then we were not complete. Vital valves for the P4, which had been within yards of me as we loaded the rail wagon in Leeds, had been sent to Jura instead of to us! Three more days passed before replacements arrived from Lancashire and we were half way through the expedition before the P4 finally took to the water.

Yet, in a way, none of this mattered and perhaps even helped. Our phone calls to the home agent might have made a significant contribution to British Telecom's profits this year and we may have been hungry for a day or two, but at least we were at Mealista. And Mealista, with its sandy beach and craggy outcrops, its many flowered machair, and its mountainous backdrop must be as perfect a site for an expedition as could be found.

Part of the reason for the existence of the SHS is that each expedition develops its own individual character....So it was with us; over the two weeks nineteen individuals fashioned themselves into a single unit, a unit that will be a small part of each of us for ever.

Bivvies - real ones, in orange plastic bags - proved reasonably popular, so we were able to explore the Uig hills and to range as far as north Harris. People spent the night in such unlikely spots as the summit of Lavail-a-Deas. Indeed they might have qualified for the ultimate accolade of the he-man bivvy, had they not returned in time for breakfast.

No doubt we will all treasure different memories. The view from the top of Griomioval, with the mainland hills on one side and the mysterious island of St. Kilda on the other, will stay with us for a very long time.

Or watching the P4 at high speed on the run back from Mealista island, or the gannets circling or the light on the Flannans keeping its lonely vigil. From the comfort of my home in Leeds, it is still easy to conjure up the image of the breakers crashing on the sands at Mangersta, and that long, long slog back along the road with the bread.

Perhaps it is inevitable, seventeen years after my first SHS expedition, that I should notice how times have changed; Lewis has changed almost out of recognition. The roads are broader now, and they carry more traffic, so most days three or four car loads of visitors drove down to Mealista. But the benefits are there to see. Houses are being rebuilt or extended, painted and newly pebbledashed. New enterprise is growing in the island, and its future is looking more secure. MacBraynes car ferry, "Guilver"(?), may be uncomfortable but she is very efficient. The contrast with the late-lamented "Loch Seaforth" could hardly be greater.

The SHS has changed a bit too. There weren't any girls in 1964 but despite all the hours spent debating that issue the change is barely noticeable. There were no black boxes either, no boats except what we could borrow on the island. The society owned no tents, and they all had to be hired at inflated prices. Food, for all the tins of real butter that we had, was certainly not up to Mealista standards.

But while some things change and develop, others remain. The Western Isles themselves still have that magic quality that draws us back year after year, and an expedition still is an expedition, a group of people drawn together for a fortnight, dependent upon one another. Our purpose was to find enjoyment and also to learn something about ourselves. We succeeded on both counts.

That we were able to do so is due to many people and the hard work they put in on our behalf. To all of them we are deeply grateful.

Gavin Macpherson



LEADER: Roger Weatherly
ASSISTANT LEADERS: Anne Beckerlegge,
Ros. Dring, Vince Giavarini Jo. Maddock, Tim Short,
Roy Tooth, Alan Tytler
MEMBERS: Cindy Bearcroft, Ian Benton, David Brooks,
Brian Burbridge, Alice Chalk, Gregory Cotton,
Charles Creagh-Osborne, Kevin Frankland,
Alison Galsworthy, Brigit Hutchinson, Ruth Jessop,
John Lowry, Michael Parker, Ben Patrick, David Pond, Julian
Rake, Karl Randall, Tony Robinson, Robert Smith, Richard
Stodman, Nicola Sturgess, Gareth Turner, Jenny Watson,
Kirston Warburton, Morag Warburton,
Carl Windsor, Fiona Young.

LEADERS REPORT

In 1811 MacDonald wrote of Jura "it is a common sight, on entering a cottage.....to find five or six grown-up individuals, half naked and savage looking, around a peat fire, watching a pot of potatoes (their sole food for nine months of the year) without any idea or wish of changing their manner of life!" A hundred and seventy years later, early in the morning at Cruib Lodge, had this intrepid traveller called again he would have seen a somewhat familiar scene; for peat read Calor gas, for potatoes Rhino-burgers, but the half naked savages.....?

And we certainly didn't wish to change anything, for Jura 1981 was one of those happy expeditions, where everything and everyone conspired to make a great experience.

It is impossible to say how expedition spirit grows, but it has something to do with the island and a lot to do with the attitude of those present. Cruib is very remote indeed - two hours from the road and five from the only shop; it is a place where, if you will, you can find yourself, unhindered by the so called necessities of life, and stimulated by the purity of the air and the primordial landscape. But, as we said one evening, such self discovery involves growth, and you often don't grow unless first you are stretched. Those of us who let go of ourselves, who lost ourselves to the strains, bruises, joys and excitements of this wilderness, found most: so, the uninhibited singing into the evening, the hard walking on the coast, the first terrifying drop off an overhang, the peaty cocoa late at night - all melted subtly into the expedition 'thing'; and none of us would have missed it, though none could say fully what it was.

The means to fulfilment were varied - in the early days, when the weather was indifferent we built furniture, explored our immediate environment, started canoeing; but as the days brightened our horizons lifted, and we became more confident. A tremendous four day bivvy to Kinvachdrach with a party working on a croft for a day, included some mighty tramps on the west coast. There were lengthy canoe trips, by people whose canoeing made great progress during the expedition. Some good climbs were logged, mostly near the camp. Orienteering was popular on the penultimate afternoon, though not everyone found the clues, and excellent studies were made of wild flowers, the raised beaches near Cruib, and birds. Some poets and artists emerged, and did themselves credit. Over two hundred species of lichen were discovered, with the enthusiastic help of many expedition members.

Of course there were other achievements. There were many other bivvies and long walks, a visit to John Mercer, trips to the Ardlussa sports (where we showed great athletic prowess) a walk to see the Jura regatta, and two visits to Church on the two Sundays. There were numberless, but very memorable, short walks, canoe or boat trips, chances to talk, fish or just sit. It was great wasn't it?

I want to express thanks to Lord Astor for making the expedition possible, and to Mr. Boyd and Neil MacInnes for their assistance. Charles Maclean, Mr. and Mrs. Shead and several friends in Craighouse gave every help, especially on the first night when our equipment failed to arrive because of a lorry accident. The Reverend Peter and Mrs. Margaret Youngson once again showed interest in what we were doing and gave valuable advice and practical help. To the assistant leaders what can I say, for your enthusiasm and sheer hard work made the expedition the dynamic experience it was. And to all twenty seven members, thank you for entering so willingly into everything, for taking the rough with the smooth, for the good relationship you made and the good reputations you maintained. It was a vintage expedition -of that I have no doubt!

Roger Weatherly

Climbing Report

My first climb of the expedition, and indeed in my life, was at the back of our camp site. The climb was not more than about fifteen feet high. The very bottom part was very easy but above that was a slab. With difficulty I just about managed it.

A few days later I came back from a hike to find a group of people abseiling. The next day Rob suggested that I have a go. They say that the experts make it look easy, well so long as you stay cool, it is. The rock face would, I think, have been very difficult to climb. At the top it was reasonably O.K., although a bit crumbly (like most of the rock on the island) but at the bottom was a very sharp over-hang which I would have thought impossible, I did abseiling twice more and on the third time I think Rob found it difficult to believe I was down, let alone up again.

I didn't do much climbing after that, in fact, only one climb near the camp site, which was reasonably hard, but I managed it.

The Jura expedition was, I thought, very successful and, in fact, I have never enjoyed myself more while camping.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Roz and Wodger for such a great time.

David Pond

Canoeing on Jura 1981

If any member of the expedition wanted to take part in a canoe trip they had to pass four simple stages, these are as follows:

Stage 1. Paddle forwards and backwards in a straight line. Turn left and right using simple strokes. Capsize (without spraydeck) - swim ashore with canoe.

Stage 2. Sweep turn through 360° to the left and right. Slap for support on left and right. Capsize (with spraydeck).

Stage 3. Sweep turn and slap for support in open water. Touring paddle stroke for ½ mile continuously. Seal launch from rocks. Rafting in open water. Deep water rescue.

Stage 4. Touring for a day or more. Navigation.

Five members of the expedition passed all four stages, although several other members passed their second and third stage.

There were three attempted and several smaller ones to the next bay or so.

The first of the three trips followed the north coast of Loch Tarbert until we reached a yacht which was anchored at Curihain Mhair. We then circled some small islands and returned down the centre of the loch to Cruib. The members who took part in this trip were Alan Tytler, Charles Creagh-Osbourne, Tony Robinson. The members involved in the second trip were Alan Tytler, Mike Parker, David Brooks, Tony Robinson, Charles Creagh-Osbourne: the trip took us down the north coast of Loch Tarbet and past Cumhann Mor to a beach just past Rubha Liath.

The last trip was from the beach near Rubha Hiath back through the narrows and Curihann Mor. We carried on down the centre of the loch until we reached Cruib. The people who started in this trip were Roy Tooth, Alison Galsworthy, Tony Robinson, David Brooks and Charles Creagh-Osbourne.

Personally the canoeing on Jura 1981 was very successful, mainly due to the enthusiasm of Alan Tytler.

Tony Robinson

Ornithological Report

Although the area surrounding the camp was devoid of bird life, save the ubiquitous red-throated diver and various small brown birds including meadow pipits, stonechats etc., those who were prepared to travel further were able to appreciate the full variety of birds. The Atlantic coast offered many, including kittiwake, razorbill and peregrine and the northern hills gave habitat to eagles, dipper and ravens. A red breasted merganser's nest was found as was the area of a red throated diver's nest and, possibly, a peregrine nest.

Seventy one species were identified altogether. Among the more curious were two great northern divers in summer plumage on a small fresh water loch. No evidence of a nest was found, however.

Another interesting ornithological occurrence was the observation of signs indicating the cross breeding of the herons and the elusive arctic urnu. This could, perhaps, lead to interesting project work on Jura in finding this, the rarest of all Hebridean birds.

Julian Rake

The Ardlussa Games

We awoke to the sound of rain pattering gently on the roof of our tent. The rain subsided to a gentle drizzle which gave way to a soggy mist.

We set off for the games at about ten o'clock; it took all twenty three of us about three hours to reach the road, three hours of soggy wet ground and air.

When we finally hit the road we ate our frugal lunch, then bit by bit we split up into groups of two and three and started the walk down the road.

David and I walked at the back and we were the only two to get a lift.

On arriving at the sports field we found no one was there so we all sat down on some seats and got eaten by a few midges, after about half an hour the drizzle returned, but some people came too.

Brigit, Alan, Carl and Greg entered in some of the games, they all came somewhere, we also entered the tug-of-war, a male team and a female team, we came second with the female team out of two, and the male.....well lets not talk about that. Despite the rain we all really enjoyed the games and I should advise anyone visiting the island at this time to go to the games (if this doesn't sound great you do get some good food).

We split up to walk back and got another lift to a place where Wodger (our leader) met us and took us across in the inflatable to camp where we all had supper and collapsed into bed.

Cindy Bearcroft

The Puffin Bivvy

One morning, a group of five of us set off towards the north of the island. The idea of the trip was to go puffin hunting and to go and see John Mercer.

We had a long walk straight up the road via Inverlussa and Ardlussa looking at various things on the way. When we arrived at Ardlussa, we met Mrs. Nelson - a land owner of that area, and we stopped there for lunch.

The coastline beyond Ardlussa is renowned for its puffins. We headed up in that direction, but didn't see any, we then headed straight on until we reached Lealt, where John Mercer lives. He has written several books about the highlands, including "Hebridean Island, Jura, Gigha and Colonsay".

He is also a spinner, weaver, and dyer. He uses lichens for the dye and his goods varied from rugs and jumpers to belts and hair bands. It was very interesting.

We then walked down back the road about a quarter of a mile until we reached a building where the sheep are kept in winter months.

We pitched camp and set about lighting an open fire to cook on. It worked very well and it kept us warm as well.

The next morning when we got up, we discovered that a herd of cows had wandered up the road and were grazing round the tents.

However, after a quick breakfast, we packed up our tents and set off down the road.

By the time we reached Lussagive our feet were quite painful, and an offer of a lift, in the doctor's car was very welcome. Nicky and I got a lift back to Tarbert where we had to wait for Roy, Richard and Ben to arrive.

When they arrived, we had our lunch and set off on our painful three and a half miles back to camp where we collapsed, glad to be back.

Ruth Jessop

The Crofting Bivvy

A party of us set off at the Alan Tytler meantime of nine o'clock i.e. 12.30. We walked across an assortment of quagmires to the road where we stopped for lunch on a supposedly deserted road. Subsequent to Roy's comment that the road was totally unused, six landrovers passed us. We slogged along the road for six miles to Ardlussa where we stopped to watch the dippers while Roy set off as fast as his little legs would carry him to make a phone call. When he returned we continued our marathon to Kinuadidrach.

The object of this bivvy was to help on Mike Richardson's croft and we started work at nine thirty the following morning. The work entailed moving three tonnes of logs over half a mile and, between eleven of us, it turned out to be incredibly hard but enjoyable work. After a swim we had tea and went to the fabled whirl-pool of Corry Vrechkan, but the only entertainment was listening to Alan Tytler's pronunciation of the word whirlpool.

An early night was had by all to rest our weary bodies. We set off from Kinuadidrach at Alan Tytler mean time nine o'clock, ten thirty and walked and walked and walked in Ben Garrisdale until we reached our bivvy site of Corpach Bay, where we slept in the open air on this beautiful beach.

The morning was a lazy one because the walk ahead of us was not hard. Alan caught seven trout which were eagerly devoured by us all. We left at one under Julian's leadership for camp. On reaching the foothills our intrepid John Lowry took over leadership: we were promptly lost. Eventually, however, after Jenny and Roy had stoically sprinted up Ben Cruib, we arrived in camp to be greeted by the assistant leader's dinner!

All in all we walked about fifty miles but it was unanimously agreed an excellent trip.

Bivvy members: Alan Tytler, Roy Tooth, Julian Rake, Ian Benton, Jenny Watson, Kirston Warburton, Morag Warburton, Brigit Hutchinson, John Lowry

Jenny Watson and Julian Rake

Corpach Bay bivvy

There were ten of us on our bivvy up the west coast. We all piled into the inflatable, feeling strange in full waterproofs, for the 45 minute journey to one of the raised beaches two miles from Ruantallain. When we landed we headed for Ruantallain where we left our packs in one of the ruins on the top of a small hill and walked down to the other ruins near the shore. The first small house was full of wood, ladders, bed-heads, Marmite pots and other junk, and it was slowly collapsing. Spoiling; the effect of Ruantallain was a grotesque stone building with a rusty corrugated-iron roof; through the small windows it looked dark and dingy inside, with orangey-brown walls because of the damp atmosphere; one part was in a disgusting state, but in the other I could see wood panelling and beds with linen on top.

We discovered a fantastic cave which would have been great for a bivvy shelter, except for deer and goat droppings, which wouldn't have been exactly pleasant! It was obvious that it must at one time have been a shelter for the animals of the villagers below.

We headed up the coast towards Shian Bay, passing good examples of raised beaches, and by this time stomachs were telling us we were hungry, so everyone tucked into sandwiches, oranges and Kendal mint cake; walking boots came off - some basked in the sun, and some went down to the shore where the waves were lashing against the rocks.

After a short stay we were on our way again, through bogs, over marsh and raised beaches, scrambling on rocks, through tick country - bracken and heather - until we arrived at Shian Bay. Spotting what looked from a distance like a perfect sandy beach, to our disappointment it smelt disgusting; some said it was, Methane given off by the sea-weed, others that it was something else which I won't mention

Shian Bay, and especially Shian Island are breeding grounds for seals; a lot of rubbish had been washed up on the shore and we came across a dolphin carcase, not a pretty sight. We had a refreshing swim in freezing water and then set off again to Corpach Bay.

As we were only half way we didn't really expect to reach Corpach Bay but we headed in that direction, again over raised beaches which seem to spread a fair distance up, towards Rubh'a'Caiginn Lionta, where there are caves. But the tide was coming in and, from above the shore line, they were impossible to see. Most of us felt exhausted by now for two reasons: 1) it was hot and we were hungry, 2) it was close to the end of the holiday and everyone was generally exhausted by the activities we had taken part in. Then, almost by accident, we came across a bay which had to be Corpach!

There were great long stretches of golden sand, plenty of shelter from a huge cliff surrounding the bay, and a rugged shore line of worn, mis-shapen rocks. We went down a steep slope to the bay and found a huge sand dune about 10 metres high. Everyone dropped their packs and ran up it, but it already had its own inhabitants - flying ants - so we soon descended! We walked along the beach, looking for a source of fresh water, and found a stream which had a water-fall above it, next to the stream was a flattish area of land where we camped. It was a beautifully clear night and we were eaten, alive by midges but, after several attempts we got a fire going and sorted out the food, to find: that we had no bread. and the portions of meat etc. were small for ten people! But Gareth saved the day as he'd brought some dehydrated meals for a rainy day or an emergency - and this could be classed as both! After quite a substantial meal (although someone who shall not be named mixed semolina and margarine up instead of Smash, which didn't exactly taste nice! we snuggled into our sleeping bags round the fire and, after a supposedly scary story, went to sleep, to be awakened at 4:20 a.m. by rain. Everyone crowded into their bivvy bags like animals into their shells - to be sweated out through condensation.

We woke again to what we thought was a dog barking but it turned out to be a stag and to back this up there were hoof marks in the sand! Alice spotted a rabbit with red, bulging eyes and we thought it must have myxomatosis. After breakfast, with added protein from midges, we packed up and started the walk back.

It was a steep climb on to the high ground above Corpach Bay and then we headed inland but kept to the lower ground which was wet and boggy, and on to Rainbarg M'or at a steady pace, except for a few who had then to keep stopping to wait for us. We stopped for a breather beside the River Allt an Tairbh, then walked on round Rainbarg M'or and then had lunch at Loch Airigh Nualaidh where we stayed for two hours, because the sun was very hot. The walking became harder as the terrain became tougher and hillier. We walked round Ben Cruib and down the valley to Cruib Lodge, where we made a dive for the kitchen and food!

Alison Galsworthy

First Experiences

Even though I had been on climbing and canoeing holidays with the school, this was the first time I'd been away to a place where I knew nobody.

It was also the first time I had been to the Hebrides and I was looking forward to this very much.

Another first for me was the travelling. It was the first time; I had travelled such a distance with only one travelling companion.

The only unexpected first came on the second day. After arriving at the site at which we were to camp, we had to remove the remains of an old buggy so that we- could pitch the tents. About ten of us picked up one end and started dragging; it across the grass. As we reached the thick heather everybody let go, except me. As the buggy hit the ground I managed to pull my right hand out but the middle finger on my left hand was caught between the buggy and a spike of rock. A visit to the doctor was required but the finger was not bad.

The activities I enjoyed most were climbing (one handed), canoeing and the one night bivvy.

On one of the information sheets I received it said "expeditions to the Hebrides that are different", I thought it was great.

Michael Parker

Cocoa Time

Usually we have to start making the cocoa whilst the duty group are still washing up, the kitchen in chaos, most pans dirty and the floor awash. It seems that a) we made it the first night before duty groups were arranged, b) everyone seemed to like it, c) we enjoy making it, d) no-one else wants to, e) on a cold evening it is a nice warm job and f) it is assumed that we make the cocoa every night.

So we start by collecting pan, whisk and large jug, together with a tablespoon and one large stirring spoon. From then on it is really a matter of guesswork and hope! We make up some very thick concentrated milk in the jug, pour it over some cocoa powder in the pan and whisk it all hard to make a thick chocolaty paste; then either hot or cold water is added and the whole brew whisked thoroughly again and put on two gas rings to heat up.

The next stage is the most popular; it involves frequent tasting as the chocolate warms up and we are never short of volunteer tasters, notably Ben and Robert. While the cocoa is heating we have frequent visits from the boys asking whether it is ready yet, if not how long; it will be and, if it is a cold evening, a crowd will accumulate in the kitchen to get warm.

When the cocoa is finally ready, we process into the marquee in this order - Tilley lamp bearer, cocoa carrier, biscuit carrier, cup carrier and anyone else hanging around. Someone, usually Kirston, sticks a head out of the marquee and the shout "Cocoa" brings the crowd. The queue jostle, trying to get a "bona" cup which is a large brown one and holds more than the orange one! and then using a cup as a ladle, we serve out the cocoa and one person holds the dish of biscuits and tells people how many they may have. When everyone is served peace returns, until the shout of "Seconds" when at once, or even sooner sometimes, Frankie and Tony and most of the others will descend like vultures on the server and plead for more than their share. However, much we make, the pan seems to be empty in no time!

Whether this sort of ritual happens on other SHS expeditions we don't know, but it certainly seemed to work on Jura.

Brigit Hutchinson, Kirston and Morag Warburton

Abseiling for the first time
Up to the edge of the cliff
Edging gently, slowly off
Blindly searching for foot holds
Letting the rope slide through my hand
The rope which rubs your back endlessly
Looking down the seemingly endless cliff
It slides away gently, then sharply
Till it hits the ground suddenly
The foot holds disappear,
My feet are on a flat face of rock
Which I bounce down
Then my feet touch the ground
I release myself from the rope
And gratefully walk away.

Cindy Bearcroft



JURA

The great army marches towards its foe,
The multitude of colours speaking their splendour.
Proud rocks jut up,
Daring the horizon and marshalling the hills.
Four to carry the destiny.
Many smaller to obey their will.
Proud rocks with shape,
Rising above all others to command the land,
In its fight against man.
The hills crowd round,
Drawing into every-changing formations constant only in their
readiness.
Their colours speak of war,
The greys, greens and browns of tactics,
The heater red of blood.
Beside their bulk runs the great destroyer,
Ever flowing to the battle and sparkling with the hope of
victory.
Down from the hills it flows,
Eager for the fight as it readies thrust,
Flowing to kill for ever.
Above all these stride the silent gargantuans,
Drifting steadily in their formations,
Flowing into different shapes but always formidable,
Closing tight and presenting their great bulk for constant
slaughter in the cause,
Yet they will always return ready,
Their looming presence a threat that completes the armies of
the land.
They have readied for this battle long,
And speak silently of their knowledge,
In the strikes they make.
No man battles these forces,
And none will succeed in the ultimate war but the forces of
the land
With their great armies silent, ready,
And waiting.

Gareth Turner

The Paps of Jura

Standing so majestically,
High above the sea.
Threatening those below,
Whose peaks they cannot see.
Grey covered tops.
Dull covered slopes.
Standing grouped together,
The four a family.

Alison Goldsworthy





LEWIS TAMANAVAY

LEADER Peter Fale.

ASSISTANT LEADERS: Collette Armitage, Cath Dalton, Heather Linley, Hugh Lorrimer, Stephen Martin, Mike Shelley, John Tutton.

MEMBERS: Timothy Walker, Katherine Ball, Alison Redding, David Brown, Helen Rush, Richard Skipper, Angela Greetham, Kieran Dempsey, John Easton, Michael Kell, Sarah Walker, Ian Webster, Ian Martin, Paul Masters, Frank Farnham, William Welch, Rachel Wheeler, Liz Whitehead, Cath Dyson, Deborah Miller Peter Lawson, Susan Bailey, Chris Welham, Stuart Dawson, Zoe Smith, Mark Johnson

MEMORIES OF A LEADER

Although perhaps the oldest SHS leader ever, I was also the greenest and so I experienced for the first time the panic induced by trying to piece together the various parts that have to be strung together in what may loosely be termed 'organising' an SHS expedition. However, I need not have worried; things somehow happen in the SHS and, within 24 hours of the main party arriving at Stornoway, Mike Shelly and I found ourselves on a particularly wet, deserted bit of Lewis with a heavily loaded trailer of equipment with a punctured tyre and no spare. I knew then that everything was going to be fine. Our walk over the mountain to the site was an epic and I felt like Moses leading the Hebrews - or was it just the way I walk? Miraculously all arrived in great spirits and our expedition got under way in conditions that made us pity those poor folk lying on Mediterranean beaches.

SHS expeditions are more about people than what they do or what they are. My chief memories are therefore of members and of the occasional islander. There were certain larger-than-life characters such as Steve Martin - rock climber, mammal trapper, extraordinary dresser, cabaret artiste, drag speciality, and quite a performer with a bus ticket; Cuddly Collette the pancake queen; Big M 'I will do anything in a wet suit' Shelly who combined the art of looking immaculate at all times with that of marathon raspberry blowing.

There were also groups that spring to mind such as the lassies from Lancashire, never lost for words and always willing to give haircuts and elocution lessons; the energetic cheerful girls from the West Country; the large Poole contingent with all their various accomplishments from bird watching to crab dressing; and finally all those individuals who did not fall into any group

but quietly contributed to the general activities. It was a privilege to be in such an enthusiastic, good hearted group. We experimented with having no camp rules other than those that safety demanded, and I appealed to their regard for the feelings of others. Apart from a few incidents (which rules probably would not have avoided) it was a very successful experiment which speaks volumes for the members and led to a free and easy relaxed atmosphere. In addition to the members we shall all remember Jonathan the jovial lobster fisherman who had a verbal answer to every situation that would make an Irishman envious, and Mrs. Buchanan the landlady who looked after Rachel and gave us all very welcome cups of tea.

The days passed with spontaneous activities such as capsizing canoes, fishing for cameras in flood water, drying sleeping bags, repelling midges, and digging drainage ditches. Occasionally we found time for other things; rock climbing was very popular with nearly everyone doing an aided climb up an overhang and the more adventurous doing routes on Crag Dibbedale. The weather did not prevent expeditions and most members got away from camp for one night - some in bivvy bags, some in tents, and some unfortunates put up with sleeping in a house with a roaring fire. The canoeists managed to get to Mealista Island where the flies replaced the midges - what a superb beach! We tried to maroon Michael Kell there, but he swam after the P4, money-belt and all. There were other overnight expeditions to Uig Loch Seaforth and West Tamana. Bread runs were for some reason popular - possibly the flesh pots of Brennish and Uig exerted their fascination. There was the day pilgrimage to the telephone at Brennish to get '0' level results. Around the site gill walking gave some a masochistic pleasure and others chose to swim in the Loch - diving masks and wet suits were made good use of. The hills were usually in low cloud, but occasionally a climb

offered great views of the whole island. An orienteering exercise proved hard going in the boggy, uneven terrain and it was won by John and Steve. There were a fair number of projects including mammal trapping and subsequent observation of field mice, ornithology, botany, a worm survey, underwater survey including a Crustacea collection, a measurement of river profile and flow, a flotsam and jetsam collection, and suspension bridge. Steve was the most, in fact the only, successful angler with a number of brown trout. Sea angling was fruitless but Paul Mestas had a rewarding day lobster fishing with Jonathan - we benefited with a box full of crabs - we discovered that week-old crabs give off a smell that is not entirely pleasant.

The evenings were relaxed and rarely very active. Always guitar playing - John's guitar brought out the budding Sergovias, Dave, Kate and even Brass. Singing was accompanied by seaweed, black red Indians and dancing 'girls'. There were numerous group games - some more intimate than others, a few talks and plenty of chat.

It is difficult to say whether an expedition is a good one or a successful one, but this was one where time passed too quickly; there was good companionship, new friendships were made, old ones renewed; most members got a sense of achievement - for some from just surviving, and everyone caught the magic of the beautiful, if damp surroundings.

Peter Fale

Wish you were here

Wish you were here,
With lots of supplies,
Of whisky and beer,
And sprays for the flies.

The weather is cold
It rains all day,
And force nine gales
Blow the bog tents away.

The food is atrocious,
With curry and spam,
Some in abundance,
Some by the gram.

The scenery is breathtaking,
Or so I am told,
For the drizzle and mist,
Like a blanket, has rolled.

There's plenty of water,
Outside and in,
So when walking through tents
You can see where you've 'bin'.

Canoeing and walking
Are what we're here for,
But for those with more energy,
There are worse things in store.

Space invaders, pinball,
Cowboys, Indians and spies,
Dunkings in rivers
And cold porridge pies.

Here ends this letter
Written to you
And I'll say it again,
Wish you were here too!

Climbing Report

Climbing activities on this expedition were severely hampered by bad weather, to such an extent that the rock after the first week never dried out suitably for climbing.

Lewis is an area of Scotland which is very rich in huge crags these offer climbs of higher grades, and are unsuitable for the massive invasions of SHS expeditions. Smaller local crags offer some climbing, usually of the aid type because of their steepness. Despite these minor difficulties some victories were to be had.

The first day of the expedition found us at the foot of Creag Dhubh Dhibadail, a very impressive crag over four hundred feet high. The next day saw the north buttress fall to a team of three, Frank, Mark, and myself, a long route of modest standard, but very pleasant for the easiest route on the cliff. After a break a new variation pitch to the north buttress seemed in order. A bit harder and no protection for seventy feet, but never the less enjoyable. This was named Hampsters Trundle by popular demand, sorry Helen.

Things were looking good for ascents of more routes new and old, but this was put paid to when the monsoon started, otherwise called scotch mist. So we turned our attention to the local crags and boulders, Dave, Frank, and myself spent some time bouldering but this activity was uninteresting to the majority. So a fixed route was created - this provided hours of amusement.

To close this report I would like to thank everyone on the expedition for taking such an active part in the unfortunately limited activities. Loch Tamanavay is unusually rich as a climbing area and given good weather, and more than one assistant leader climber, it could yield a very rich and rewarding experience.

Stephen Martin

BIRD REPORT

Unfortunately no unusual rarities were seen around the camp, but Mike Shelley did report seeing large ostrich prints on Mealista beach, but were dismissed as it was believed he was under the influence of drink (probably coffee in his case) or bivvy stew. There were a fair number of species, but numbers were small. The most common were probably Stonechats, around the camp itself and on the higher ground; snipe were often disturbed, flying only when people were a few feet away. On the shores of the loch, near the camp, there were a few wrens which were often seen flying between the holes in the rocks; living up to their Latin name of 'Troglodytes Troglodytes' meaning cave or hole dweller. Another bird belonging to the same group as the wren, the dipper was occasionally spotted wading through the shallow water where the fresh water joined the loch, feeding on small fish and invertebrates. Other heath birds seen were twites spotted occasionally north of camp, ouzels, skylarks, wheatears in roughly the same area and meadow pipits seen up the valley from the camp. On the higher ground, wood sandpiper were reported on the moor along with a golden eagle seen soaring above a valley about 1½km. from the camp. Buzzards were also seen in the same area. Another bird of prey, the merlin, was spotted hovering above the camp.

Seabirds around the camp were very few; herring and black-headed gulls were seen foraging along the shore across the loch from the camp, red-throated divers were seen flying over camp along with great northern divers. Cormorants were seen in the mouth of the loch flying to and from the probable fishing grounds.

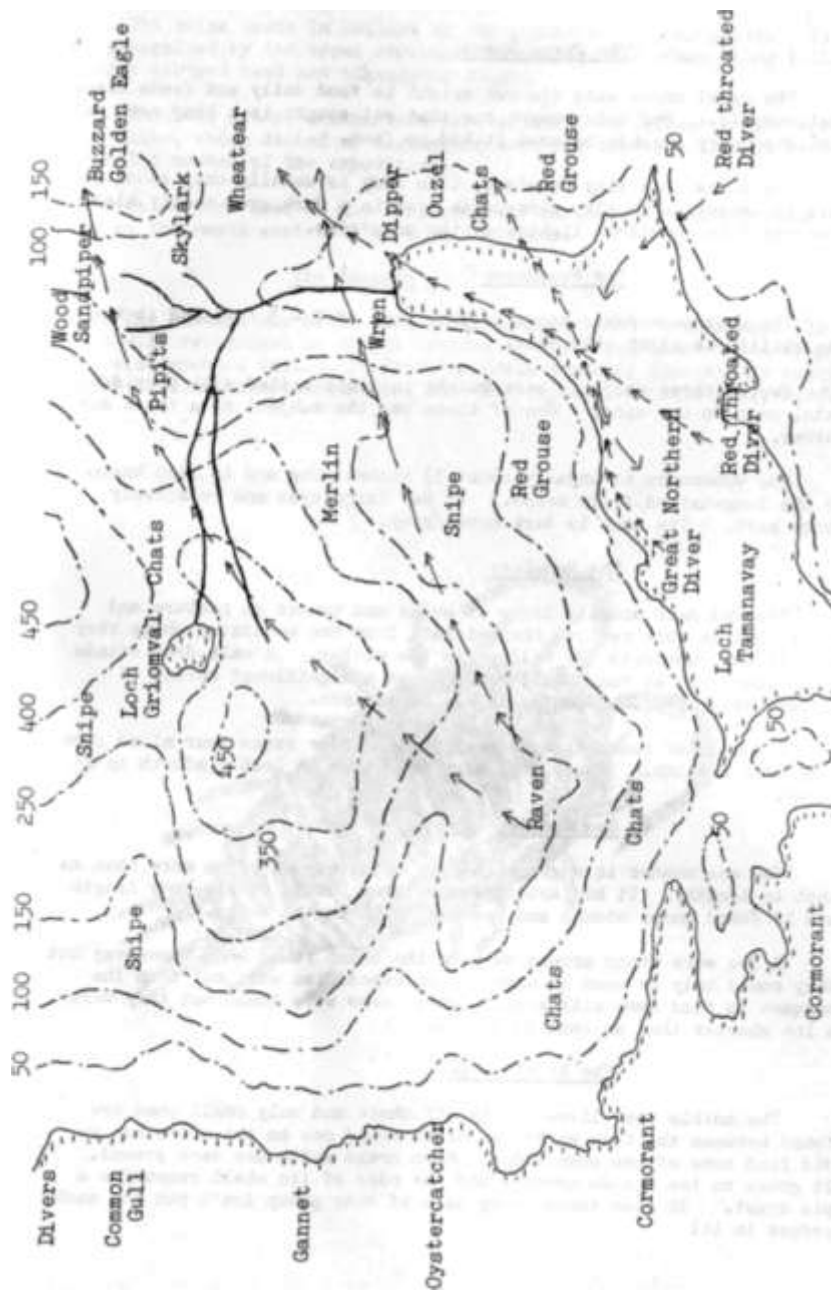
A fair number of birds were seen on a bivvy to Valtas about 15 km. north east of camp. Chats, pipits, ouzels were seen along the valley with the occasional raven flying overhead and of course snipe. Near Valtas buzzard, house sparrows and starlings were seen in numbers with a few blackbirds and a robin.

Also lapwings, hooded crows, jackdaws, and rooks were fairly common, with a yellowhammer seen on a solitary bush. At Valtas pier a Curlew was seen flying across and common scoters seen in the water. A ringed plover and a turnstone landed on the beach at dusk, but took flight immediately.

On the bread run to Brennish, gannets were regularly seen diving from anything up to 75 feet into the water. Also cormorants were seen, apparently a delicacy for local fishermen! Divers, northern and red throated were seen with oystercatchers and common gulls on the shore opposite Mealista Island.

The most birds, however, were seen on the ferry across to Stornoway, gannets; black headed, herring, and greater black back gulls, and the occasional arctic skua followed the ferry across with manx and great shearwaters flying across the water to one side of the ferry and also puffins and razorbills flying close to the surface. Common gulls and kittiwakes joined the "escort party" out of Ullapool but left as we got further out but rejoined as the ferry approached Stornoway. Fulmars were in force following the ferry and was the only species to follow the ferry on the return journey. Also another bird followed the ferry "Mother Careys Chickens", storm petrels.

In all, the bird watching was very good and a fair number seen in a month which is not all that good for species numbers. Also, if the weather had been better, more would probably have been seen.



The Pygmy Shrew

The pygmy shrew eats its own weight in food daily and feeds almost continuously. For this reason one that got caught in a trap near our camp died very quickly because it had no food.

The shrew is a tiny creature, (its body is usually only about one inch in length) with tiny pink-prick eyes in a dark grey nearly black coat which is sometimes lighter on the underside.

The Woodmouse

The woodmouse makes kangaroo-like hops of 2 - 3 feet and it has the ability to climb with ease.

Two or three woodmice were caught in traps baited with porridge oats, near to the camp. One of these was the subject of a three day survey.

The woodmouse is usually about 3½ inches long and is also known as the long-tailed field mouse. It has large eyes and relatively large ears. Its coat is dark brown/grey.

The Red Deer

The red deer usually lives in woods and browses on pasture and leaves but in some regions they migrate from the mountains, where they live in the summer, to the valleys in the winter. A male deer stands about four feet at the shoulder and grows a magnificent spread of antlers every year. The female has no antlers.

A couple of red deer were seen running over rocks four miles from camp near Brennish. There were also deer seen at Loch Seaforth on a bivvy.

Sea Scater

The sea scater is a greenish-grey woodlouse of often more than an inch in length. It has antennae about two thirds of its body length and is found under stones and sea-weed high on the shore.

A few were found around camp on the beach round Loch Tamnavay but they could only be seen at night. An expedition went out from the marquee to find some with a tilli lamp; some were found but they were a lot shorter than an inch in length.

The Edible Crab

The edible crab lives mostly off shore and only small ones are found between the tide marks (we never found one on the shore but we did find some of the more common shore crabs which are dark green). It grows to ten inches across, and the edge of its shell resembles a pie crust. It also tastes very nice if duty group don't put too much pepper in it!

The Snipe

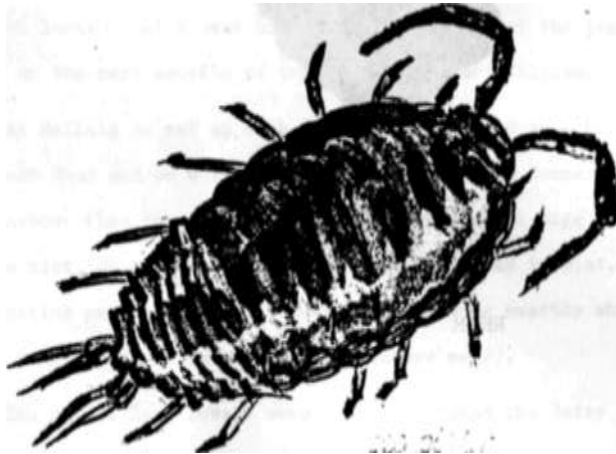
The snipe nests in hollows on the ground often near water. It is recognised by its brown streaked and patterned plumage, long bill, boldly striped head and zigzagging flight.

The long grass, heather and fern around Loch Tamanavay were perfect for snipe, which dashed up zigzagging into the sky when flushed by a startled member of the expedition.

Snipe were seen in the long grass to the east of Coire Dibadale and on the south east side of Loch Tamanavay.

The Buzzard

The buzzard was often seen circling the tops of mountains. It is easily recognised in flight because of its broad blunt-ended wings and wide rounded tail. It feeds on small mammals, especially rabbits; sheep carrion, sometimes birds, some insects and, occasionally, berries.



RHUM



LEADER: A. Smith

ASSISTANT LEADERS: Judith Pielou, Jonathan Orr,
Steve Kent, Simon Atkinson.

MEMBERS: Jeremy Dawes, Joanna Walker, Robert Wilson,
Roger Gilchrist, Paul Bloomfield, Nicole Crease, Ashley
Crossland, Douglas Warburton, Brigit Hennessey, Peter Miles, Ian
Swann, Ceri Mort, Tim Scrimshaw, Alison Paynter.

LEADERS REPORT

The bleakness of Preston Station yet again, not an inspiring experience, but one which could only improve.

The train arrives, at last a comfortable seat for 12 hours or so -no such luck. Not a seat until Glasgow. Most of the team found each other on the next section of the journey to Fort William.

At Mallaig we met up with Jonathan and his advance party, loaded the Loch Mhor and we were on our way to Rhum. No sooner had we left the harbour than the rain started - a quick stop at Eigg - hardly visible in the mist, on to Loch Scresort at Rhum, shrouded in mist. The Rhouma was waiting patiently for the Loch Mhor, knowing exactly what to expect after years of experience of the SHS (brave men!).

The N.C.C. land rovers were clustered round the jetty for the free show. Angus Macintosh organised the loading of our gear into a horse box trailer and quickly transported us to Salisbury's Dam. The first priority of course was to set up camp and eat!

After a misty 24 hours, at 1 a.m., the river rose around 3 ft. and re-routed itself through the camp. Result - a rapid evacuation of the tents, and everyone into the marquee with all perishable goods and wet clothes. We spent the first night there drinking endless brews and soup! The whole performance was repeated again seven days later'

Parties left camp almost daily for Harris, Kinloch and various mountaineering trips. On Sundays visits were made to Kilmory to see Fiona Guinness and the herd of 300 deer involved in a project.

Bivvies could only be undertaken at weekends, due to the stalking, and only to the Bothy at Dibidil. This however, was a superb place to visit, with good views of Eigg and dramatic cliff scenery.

The third week was spent in Kinloch at the Farmhouse Bothy, because of stalking restrictions. We carried out voluntary work for the N.C.C. for three days.

Here we were able to use the canoes for the first time. This was the big moment for me - after four years I had finally decided to try my hand at canoeing - the first step of which is of course "capsize drill" (the bit I dreaded). Ceri and I entertained everyone else by our upside-down epics - during which my past flashed before me more than once!

The story of the Manx Shearwaters trip and rescue are told elsewhere by Judith in her report.

The final evening of the expedition was spent at a Ceilidh organised by Colin, one of the Wardens. This was an ideal opportunity for our trio of musicians to perform on the one and only guitar owned by Steve;

I would like to thank the Nature Conservancy Council Wardens and staff for their help and friendliness at all times; in particular, Peter Duncan and Angus Macintosh who did everything possible for us, including delivering the bread!

Rhum is an island I shall try to revisit as often as possible because of its ruggedness and wildlife - the midges were not the scourge I had been led to believe! - although as we were preparing to depart from the island, the midges arrived in great numbers (ugh!) - as if they had just realised what they had missed!! Simon alone was immune since he was smoking one of his 'present from America' cigars!

Alan Smith

Shalom goes Shear-watering

Being in the habit of identifying all birds as Blackbirds, I decided it was time to broaden my knowledge of ornithology and at the same time see one of the most famous sights of Rhum - the Manx Shearwaters. Most of the members were decidedly unenthusiastic about the prospect of staying out in the mountains until early morning, possibly due to the enticing night life of Kinloch (an antique war film in the Village hall). Simon Atkinson and Ian Swann left for Hallival at 7.30 p.m. hoping to photograph the sunset on the way, while Alan and I set off at 8.00 p.m. along with four tourists who were interested in seeing the Shearwaters. As soon as the walk started getting steep it became obvious that these four had thought they were going for an evening stroll with a party of school children, not 2,000 feet up a mountain. Soon after we had left Oibidil path, one of the tourists, an American called Shalom Glixman decided to abandon the Shearwaters and, after assuring us he could find his way, he set off back for Kinloch. The other three reluctantly struggled on behind Alan and myself and it was 10 p.m. and completely dark by the time we joined Simon and Ian amongst the Shearwater burrows, high on the north slopes of Hallival, and celebrated our arrival with a can (only one) of McEwans.

We then settled down to await the arrival of the Shearwaters - flying in from the sea late at night to feed the young back in the burrows. Already several of the young birds had ventured outside and they were extremely tame, allowing us to go right up to them with our torches before retreating slowly back into the ground. We only had to wait half an hour before we were rewarded by the first of the adult birds flying in. Immediately after we were surrounded by birds and the night's silence was broken by hundreds of loud cries and the sound of flapping wings. On a couple of occasions birds flew straight into us and flapped away again, rather confused. After about an hour creeping silently about with torches, we decided to leave these incredible birds to their mountainside and return to Kinloch.

Earlier we had noticed a light down near the coast flashing at intervals. By the time we were ready to leave it was obvious that the light was somewhere inland, not out to sea, and Alan decided we should make a detour and go straight down to investigate the light, since it was possible that Shalom had lost his way. Alan took a compass bearing on the light and we took a direct route towards it, being very careful not to tread on any Shearwaters? This way down was very steep so Simon and Ian took the three tourists down to the Dibidil path by an easier route. Alan and I carried straight on to the light, down a steep heather slope with no idea what was below us! We had to negotiate a ravine, two rivers, and a seven foot high deer fence, but luckily no sheer rock faces. We had no idea what we were going to find at the light - the most popular suggestion was a navigation light. Or could it be someone else out to see the Shearwaters or Jonathan Orr on a night orienteering exercise? The possibility of Shalom having wandered off across such rough ground seemed remote and at one point we nearly gave up. But as we got near the light we heard shouting, and a few yards further we found Shalom very shaken but uninjured and very relieved to see us.

We found him near the coast at Lainhrig, about a kilometre from the Dibidil path. How he managed to get there remains a mystery but when he realised he was lost he sat on a rock, flashed his torch, and waited.

By then it was 12.45 a.m. and the walk to Kinloch took us two hours. We rejoined Simon and Ian and helped by chocolate and mint cake and hindered by fading torches, we stumbled our way back. Shalom was exhausted, slipped on everything it was possible to slip on, and although we had to make frequent stops, we eventually returned him safely to his room at Kinloch Castle.

After a cup of coffee and a quarter of a can of McEwans each we gratefully crawled into our sleeping bags - at four a.m. - a lot later than we had intended, but with a night to remember and permission to sleep through breakfast the next morning.

I now identify all birds as either Blackbirds or Manx Shearwaters.

The Ridge Walk

Jonathan Orr, Roger Gilchrist, Joanna Walker, Tim Scrimshaw.

Being the only female among; the first group to do the Rhum Ridge walk which is about 13½ miles with 6,000 feet of ascent, I have had the great privilege of being; asked to write it up.

As far as I know no previous female member of the SHS had completed the ridge walk; so in an attempt to prove that females are no weaker than males, I foolishly volunteered to accompany sergeant major Orr (disguised as expedition medic), on the big walk. Having done the first three mountains already, I felt fairly confident that I would make it.

Setting off at a cracking pace along Long Loch, my calf muscles were complaining and on the almost vertical ascent of Barkeval I wondered if I was going to make it.

However, the top soon came into view and I knew I had to keep going now. I could see all the other mountains; a magnificent sight and determination welled up inside me. Down the coll, then up Hallival – a slightly less rigorous way than Simon had taken us; no rest on the top and straight down the next coll. The scramble up Askival was quite tough but once on the top when the cloud had cleared, the lunch time views were something out of this world; the Outer Isles, Ardnamurchan, Knoydart and the Cuillins of Skye were all in view.

Soon we were off again. Up Trallaval we trudged and after stopping just long enough for Roger to take a picture, we retraced our tracks then clambered down around the base of the mountain to the next coll.

A survey of Ainshval by our leader told us we ought to be able to make it up what looked like an extremely difficult slope, if we went up the edge of some scree; knowing this to be the last real climb, we quickly got to the top. The gentle walk onto Sgurr nan Gillean and then along the ridge to the base of Ruinsival gave us a break from climbing and some great views of the island. Tiredness was now beginning to show and, although the climb up Ruinsival was not very steep, it almost finished me off.

Coming down was hard going too, but once across the Harris river and onto the track, the going was much easier. We soon arrived at camp, just in time for the evening meal, to proudly announce our accomplishment which had been achieved in 8¼ hours.

Joanna Walker

The Work Party

After two weeks of 'Mist' as Alan Smith termed it (heavy rain to the rest of us) and with the camp site at Salisbury's Dam having been flooded twice (not to mention the floating bog tent - access by canoe only), most people were quite relieved by the thought of spending the last week of the expedition in the farmhouse bothy in Kinloch, in warm dry surroundings - or was it the fact that the Post Office (Rhum's only shop) was only a few minutes walk (or stagger?) away.

The nature conservancy, who own the island, obviously played upon the fact that we were in high spirits on our arrival at Kinloch when they suggested that we would be helping the conservancy if we did some jobs for them and thus there was no shortage of volunteers for weeding, haymaking and painting on the first day of our stay in Kinloch.

Strangely enough the great enthusiasm which was abundant on the first day was almost non-existent by the second and much cajoling and gentle persuasion (i.e. threats to withhold rations) ensued. The lack of dedication to the job (quite unknown in SHS circles) had quite a lot to do with the bountiful supply of midges at both the weeding and painting sites and the presence of a young man named Gasgoine who did much to make himself a nuisance to at least one of the more attractive (but modest) female expedition members!

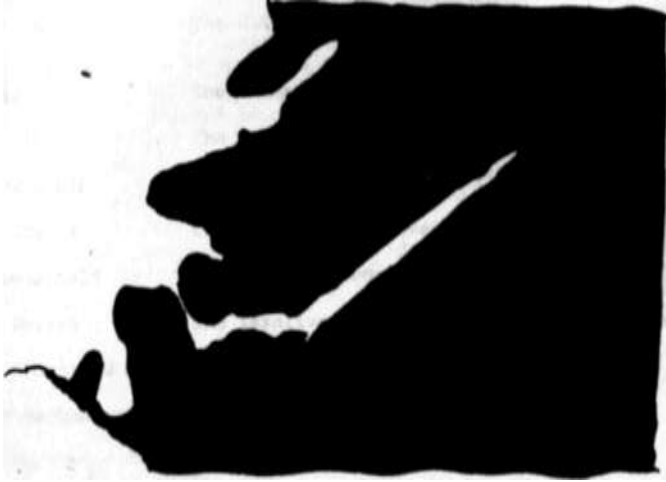
Midges apart, we all agreed that the backache, midge bites and paint splattered clothing were worthwhile as a Ceiledh in our honour was held on our last night, ostensibly to show the islanders appreciation for the work we had done - but probably to have a sigh of relief that once again the island would be returned to its quiet and tranquil self after we had left.

Alison Paynter

1981 Rhum Expedition Awards

Recipient	Award
Alan Smith	The R.S.P.B. Award (Royal Society for the Prevention of Bats)
Jonathan Orr	The rubber bung award
Peter Wilson.	The lone- ranger's award for sleepy indians
Robert Wilson	Les Dawson's. musician of the year award
Nicole Crease	Campari's airport award
Paul Bloomfield	The invisible bog tent award
Jeremy Davies	The laxative award for running with wellies on
Ashley Crosssland	The coat of many sponges award
Douglas Warburton	The Cadbury award
Alison Paynter	The leather seat for trousers award
Bridget Hennessey	The Mary Poppin's award
Jo Walker	The brand new combine harvester award
Roger Gilchrist	The Hamlet award (to pee or not to pee)
Robert Wilson	The circus acrobat award
Steve Kent	The Mick Jagger award for Sticky Fingers
Judith Pielou	The gassy bottle of cider award
Ian Swann	The burnt sock award
Ceri ;Mort	The wonder woman award for hill climbing
Tim Scrimshaw	Lee Majors award for aspirins bionic men
Robert Wilson	The human torpedo award
Linda Lilo	Gardener of the year award for producing lots of leeks
Simon Atkinson	Fanny and Johnny Craddock's garlic cook book award
also	The iron lung award for inflatables
Alan Smith	The garden gnome award for silly hats
Jude Pielou	The van Hellse award
Ceri Mort	The eskin'o roll award
Jonathan Orr	The pyjama award
A. Midge	The Talisker award for drinking the most whisky

LOCH SHIEL



LEADERS REPORT

Magnificence, splendour, grandeur, and rugged beauty are words which go well with the combination of lochs, mountains, and sky which make up the Loch Shiel area of the Scottish Highlands.

Glenaladale, a remote Glen opens out onto the long narrow waters of Loch Shiel some six miles down her north shore. It is a short way from the mouth of this glen that our base camp was situated, and like Loch Shiel herself we too lay between the steep sides of mountain peaks often rising to just below three thousand feet. A common view from the camp was vast banks of rolling breaking swirling clouds around those lofty summits and high mountain ridges.

Access to Glenaladale, although remote, was however relatively uncomplicated. Alighting from the Mallaig train at Glenfinnan, a short walk brought us to the pier on the shores of Loch Shiel. Glenfinnan boasts a number of characteristic landmarks. An impressive railway viaduct makes a wide pass around the head of the loch. Down below it on the head plain of the loch itself lies Glenfinnan Monument, a tall tower surmounted by a Highlander and erected to mark the place where Bonnie Prince Charlie first raised his standard in 1745 to signify his arrival to challenge for the throne of England from the Hanoverians. However, Glenfinnan and her historic attachments with the past began to diminish above the wake of the 'Rose Isle' as she carried us - a motley crew of newly thrown together individuals - and our expedition, food and equipment down Loch Shiel between the gradually receding steep mountain towards Glenaladale.

After twelve hours of almost total inactivity on British Rail the task which awaited us at Glenaladale provided for a rather abrupt awakening.

Mug, mud and midges dogged the following four hours as we moved the food and equipment the three-quarters of a mile from the jetty to the site and established camp. Balancing marquee poles while fighting off the first heavy midge offensive proved amusing. The camp site is excellent at Glenaladale lacking nothing, not even its own historic attachment. The low walls onto which the marquee backed were the remains of a cottage destroyed in the highland clearances and widely believed to have been used as a refuge by Prince Charlie while on the run and as the possible meeting place of seven local clan leaders trying to assist the Prince in his escape.

Once a functional camp had been established expedition activities could begin in earnest. Basic climbing and abseiling instruction was given as was canoeing techniques; the capsizing drill was undertaken by nearly everyone, and deep sea rescue instruction for those wishing to do longer trips. These included day trips to the Burial Isle of Glenfinnan as well as two one night canoe bivvies. Walking day trips and bivvies were naturally frequent and covered a very wide area.

Swimming proved a surprisingly popular activity and a number of loch crossings were made. After one of these attempts Lee began to show definite signs of exposure and Brian and the rest of the swimming party made use of an excellent talk on exposure, given by Paul, earlier in the expedition to deal with the situation quickly and effectively.

Claire undertook much of the project work; there were two main areas of study, the first a comparison between the plant and insect life found beneath natural deciduous woodland with that found in an artificial coniferous plantation; in the second the effect of altitude on certain plants and lichens was studied. The other activities which took place on the expedition included a full scale search and rescue

emergency practice, a wide game played out as a re-enactment of a hypothetical skirmish between Charlie's men and the English red coats, and an excellent orienteering course laid out chiefly by Jane.

The Glenaladale Estate factor Bob Crockett became a great friend of the expedition and not only helped us with the bread, mail and equipment, but also kept us fully informed about the unexpected dangers we faced living in the Glen. Our stay was fortunately incident free and we are all grateful to Bob for all the help and advice which he gave during our time in Glenaladale.

An end-of-the-world sketch gave rise to much hilarity and with the last night bar-b-que and camp fire sing-song, proved a fitting end to a thoroughly good expedition.

We had arrived largely unknown to each other and left with new friendships and shared experiences.

Hence it was with grateful farewell that we left the Glenaladale pier, on the Saturday morning of our departure. The SHS Loch Shiel expedition 1981 had proved interesting, worthwhile and enjoyable and our many thanks go out to all those of you who made the expedition possible.

Stephen Paynter Leader

Canoeing Report

Loch Shiel is an SHS canoeists dream, a wide stretch of water eighteen or more miles long and over a mile wide in places. With the camp site at Glenaladale it was easy for day trips to be made to the Burial Island and Glenfinnan.

The capsizing drills were got out of the way on the second day of the expedition leaving the canoes free for everyone throughout the rest of our stay; on only two or three days were they not used in that time.

For beginners there was a small bay about two hundred metres along the shore from the pier which provided sheltered waters, when there was a strong wind blowing on the loch, where could be learnt techniques of canoeing, keeping in a straight line and rafting-up.

There were three day trips to the Burial Island, normally these started at about nine or ten and took about two and a half hours to reach the island, about six miles away; this left plenty of time to have lunch and look around the chapel and grave stones before the return paddle to camp. On the first trip we started off with five canoes, but had to leave one on a beach half way because it leaked so badly, but as we had the P4 this presented no problem; later trips were, however, limited to four canoes, which was a pity as there was no shortage of people wanting to go.

Loch Shiel is one of the few sites the SHS use where canoe bivvies are possible. This year two took place, the first led by Steve, with Martin, Nina, and Fiona and involved canoeing down to Shiel Bridge and camping near Burial Island. They left in appalling weather, low cloud and a strong wind making canoeing fun but hard work; they returned on one of the hottest days of the expedition.

The second led by Dean, with Chris, Louise and myself involved canoeing along the loch, up the river Pollock and along Loch Doloch to the far end where we were camping. On the way back we canoed down to the Burial Island for a quick look round.

In all, canoeing was easily one of the most popular activities throughout the expedition, even though canoes kept sinking!

Mike Young

The Great Loch Shiel Rescue

The watch face flashed up seven thirty and three fully equipped and briefed rescue teams set off in their respective directions. Incredibly, three walking parties had failed to return from the Glenaladale Horse Shoe Ridge and nearly all the available manpower in camp had to be called upon to make up the three search parties required to go and find out what had happened.

The tale of two of these search parties is recounted below.

The rescue party: Paul, Chris, Darren, Sarah and Johnny.

The walking party set off from camp, on a wet overcast day, and climbed quickly to the top of the Bienn Budhe, and then dropped down a little way into the saddle to wait for the rescue party. It was here that I accidentally slipped on some rocks, broke my leg and sustained minor head injuries. My leg was splinted and my head bandaged, I was wrapped in bivvy bags and sleeping bags.

By then it felt very much like lunch time, so we ate our rations and about fifteen minutes later heard the rescue party shouting through the mist. I was then bundled-thrown-carefully placed on a Pygot stretcher made of climbing rope, and tied in so that I could not fall off-escape.

Now followed a very bumpy ride down the mountain and the discovery that the climbing rope stretched, so that the stretcher ended up about two feet longer and much more comfortable to carry than when we had set off. Three quarters of the way down, when camp was in sight, or would have been but for the mist, Paul sent Sarah and Rocky back to camp to alert them as to our arrival.

By the time we had reached the Glen, Steve and other expedition members were waiting with Bob Crockett's Deer carrying trolley or 'Tonka toy' as it was known. I was then strapped in and wheeled back to camp, where the evening ration, they called dinner, was waiting for us.

The Great Loch Shiel Rescue

The rescue party: Dean, Mike, Lee, Will and Fiona.

The Glen rescue party was the last party to set off at around eleven o'clock, or as Steve would have us believe, seven. We were fortunate in having two pairs of binoculars so that instead of having to walk up all the tributary valleys we were able to scour them with binoculars. This advantage was most decidedly counteracted by the fact that Steve had provided us with a trolley stretcher affair. This metal monstrosity had only one wheel, and was designed to suit a very strong short imp...

However, we set off in high spirits taking it in turns to push the trolley; crossing rivers did prove tricky'. Mike eventually spotted our injured walking party about two miles up the Glen hiding behind a plantation, so we raced across to them, across that stream again, trolley and all. We found them strewn around on the ground in near delirium; this was however easily recognised as normal behaviour for Brian, Harin and Nina; Louise however was diagnosed as having exposure. Brian and his gang had already spotted this, and placed her fully clothed, except boots - which Brian did not want to dirty his sleeping bag with - into a sleeping bag and bivvy bag.

Once Louise's condition had been discovered we stopped for a quick lunch, as Paul had informed us the night before, if we were too late she would die anyway! Dean gallantly proffered the Dextrasols in Louise's direction, and only just managed to snatch them back. They were, as he informed us, only to look good - you could not actually eat them. So after a thirty minute rest we loaded Louise on to the trolley, strapped her down and set off - it weighed a tonne, no insult to Louise meant there. We took it in turns to push with two people on either side, but still we had to stop regularly to swap around. We arrived back at camp at three o'clock, the first party to return.

Costa-del-Sol Bivvy to Strontiar

Leader: Pete Schuller

Members: Adam, Rocky, Sarah, Nina, Rebecca, Shiela, Jane, myself (Geoff.)

At the unholy hour of seven o'clock (a.m.) I awoke, packed my sleeping bag (being careful to get out of it first), and wandered over

To the marquee, on completion of this mammoth trek I was greeted by Pete who managed to look wide awake, even at that hour, "good morning" he said.

"Eh? Oh I hadn't noticed" I managed to stammer -. After consuming some breakfast I felt a little more alive and Pete proceeded to hand me a hike tent and some bivvy rations which were duly stowed in the depths of my sack.

Some 1½ hours later the whole group of us made our way to the jetty with Steve, who was to ferry us across the loch to Scamodale jetty. Half of the party boarded the inflatable and we pushed out, started the engine and were away across the loch. About half way across, I realised that someone was going to have to get their feet wet to take the painter ashore.

"Who, says the age of shrivelry is dead? (Mostly Steve since he can't pronounce chivalry)", I said to myself, so I rolled up my trousers, stood up and took the appropriate rope. As the inflatable approached the other shore under Mr. Paynter's expert control (crawl, crawl) I selected a convenient rock and stepped onto it. I fell in. Calling upon the gods of my pagan forefathers I emerged, slipped, and fell in and for the second time in five seconds. (Beat that), a short while, and a quick change of clothing later the entire party was assembled and we set off along the south shore of Loch Shiel.

A couple of hours later we stopped for lunch at one end of Loch Doilet. We- passed through Kinlochan and began to ascend. After frequent, stops to admire the pine trees around us (that's my excuse, anyway) we reached the point where the road is 342 metres above sea level. After this the going was easier, down hill, and soon we were walking through such places as Arindle, Scotstown and, finally, Strontian. After raiding the village supermarket we pitched our tents for the night in (whisper it) an approved, paying camp site. Some food was cooked, eaten and then we adjourned to a local ale house for a meal.

The next morning, after breakfast, we packed the tents and walked back the way we had come the previous day to a nature reserve. This proved to be well worth the visit, since it is one of the last oak forests in Scotland. The valley looked so idyllic that a large portion of the party sat down and went to sleep while Pete, Sarah, Adam and myself walked along the trail discussing the merits and failures of modern art.

That night we camped at a convenient stream just north of Belsgrove. In the morning an early start was made, before breakfast in fact. A stop was made about a mile up the road for a bite to eat and then on.

The return route was exactly the same as the outward one, we even ate lunch in the same place. At about two the party stopped at Ceanna Garbh where the road turns right to avoid running into the loch. The weather was warm and ten minutes later any passing person would have noticed nine SHS members catching up on lost sleep. We reached the Scamodale jetty in such good time that when the inflatable arrived to pick us up we were all lying on the beach wondering when the inflatable would come.

And so to the last mile of a most enjoyable bivvy. Just before entering the camp site we put on our most pained expressions and began to act our most blister beridden (not acting in some cases) so that the others wouldn't think it had been too easy. I staggered into the marquee and was greeted by Mr. Whitely who said "You lazy person, I believe you partook of excessive amounts of alcoholic beverages on both nights", or that was the gist of what he said

Thanks to Pete and Adam, who permitted me to use one third of the tent, and anyone else who helped to make it a great bivvy.

Geoff. King

Bivvy Report

How a bivvy should work, with Paul, Claire, Jim, Keith
4 - 5 August, 1981.

Nothing much to report about this bivvy since everything went according to plan. We didn't see any pubs, the view was good, and the walk along the Drain Fiacloch ridge and "along" to Rois Bheinn was magnificent. The cow shed we wanted to cook in was unfortunately occupied by cows, but then this bivvy was well planned and so the rain kept off until the tents were up and we had finished eating. Naturally we had plenty of food (macaroni and Irish stew) and an expert in Claire to cook it - she also knew how to put the tents up. The second day we went up Croih Bhein amongst others and so on the expedition all our party had climbed all the accessible peaks around.

Jim got wet crossing the river back to camp; Claire's equipment - boots, rucksack, gaiters, appeared to have reached the end of their useful life, but apart from that nothing happened. Party leader was Paul, but Jim and I lead the party, usually. Good Bivvy that one

Flora and Fauna seen on Rhum expedition

Shag	Red-throated Diver
Guillemot	Ringed Plover
Razorbill	Common Sandpiper
Manx Shearwater	Heron
Fulmar	Grouse
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Chaffinch
Great Black-backed Gull	Raven
Gannet	Twite
Kittiwake	Ring Ouzel
Herring Gull	Rock Pipits
Common Tern	Hooded Crow
Eider	Robin
Snipe	Blackbirds
Curlew	Woodpigeon
Oystercatcher	Cuckoo
Sea Eagle	Tree Creeper
Golden Eagle	Wagtail
Kestrel	White Tailed Eagle
Hebridean Sparrow	

List of birds seen on Lewis Tamanavay Expedition

Mammals

Deer
 Otter
 Goat
 Seal
 Shrew
 Rat
 Major-minor J.P. Orr (has rather unusual habits - hence specific inclusion)

Others

Spiders
 Butterflies (various)
 Bumble Bee
 Worm
 Slug
 Emperor Moth
 Dragon-fly
 Sea Urchin
 Ragworm
 Sea Anemone
 Trout
 Jellyfish
 Crabs
 Ticks
 Midges (no positive identification!)

Plants

Bog Asphodel	Birdsfoot Trefoil
Butterwort	Golden Rod
Ling	Blue Fleabane
Bell Heather	Devilsbit Scabious
Cross-leaved Heather	Sea Plantain
Honeysuckle	Thrift
Ragwort	Stonecrop
Eyebright	Yellow Saxifrage
Alpine Lady's Mantle	Beautiful St. John's Wort
Sundew - two species	Cloudberry
Creeping Butterwort	Whortleberry
Common Spotted Orchid	Ragged Robin
Heath Milkwort	Stunted Scots Pine
Knapweed	Roseroot
Primrose (primula Scotica - not in flower)	Cotton Grass
Red Rattle	Rock Whitlow Grass
Clover	Self Heal
Various Lichens, Grasses and tree in enclosed plantations.	Sphagnum Moss

Bird

Where seen

Great Northern Diver	In the loch; took off when passed by P4
Red-throated Diver	Flying over camp and on fish trip to Loch Grunavat
Fulmar	On bread runs and on ferry
Manx Shearwater	From Ullapool ferry
Sooty Shearwater	From Ullapool ferry
Storm Petrel	From Ullapool ferry
Gannet	On bread runs off Mealista and from ferry
Cormorant	In loch, off Mealista, and from ferry
Common Scoter	Off Valtos pier, swimming
Buzzard	Near camp, in Valtos
Golden Eagle	Near camp
Merlin	Above camp
Oystercatcher	On Atlantic coasts
Ringed Plover	Valtos beach
Turnstone	Valtos beach
Lapwing	Valtos
Wood Sandpiper	High ground around camp
Curlew	Valtos
Snipe	Most high ground around camp
Great Skua	From ferry
Artic Skua	From ferry
Black-headed Gull	Along shore from camp
Herring Gull	Along shore from camp
Common Gull	Seen on the bread run along coa
Kittiwake	From ferry
Common Arctic Tern	From ferry (too distant for identification)
Razorbill	Flying with puffins from ferry
Puffin	From ferry
Skylark	Near to camp
Swallow	At Valtos and Brenish
Meadow Pipit	Up valley from camp
Pied Wagtail	Seen along river north of camp
Grey Wagtail	Seen along river north of camp
Stonechat	Around camp
Whinchat	Around camp
Robin	At Valtos
Blackbird	At Valtos
Ouzel	Close to camp near shore
Wren	Around camp
Dipper	In river close to camp
Yellowhammer	At Valtos
Twite	Around camp occasionally
House Sparrow	In old crofts at Valtos
Starling	In flocks on telegraph poles
Raven	Frequently flew over camp
Hooded Crow	At Valtos
Rock	At Valtos
Jackdaw	At Valtos

In all a total of forty nine species were seen.

Flowers seen on the Jura Expedition

Bog Asphodel	Harebell
Tormintil	Lady's Bedstraw
Lesser Spearwort	Purple Loosetrife
Eyebright	Tufted Vetch
Heath Spotted Orchid	Pineapple Weed
Marsh Bedstraw	White Water Lily
Bell Heather	Grass of Parnassus
Cross-leaved Heath	Honeysuckle
Heath Milkwort	Lousewort
Common Sundrew	Yellow Pimpernel
Ling	Golden Rod
Wortleberry	Alpine Lady's Mantle
Ox-eye Daisy	Heath Bedstraw
English Stonecrop	Foxglove
Birds-foot Trefoil	Cow-wheat
Wild Thyme	Creeping Spearwort
Smooth Sow Thistle	Devilsbit Scabious
White Clover	Broad-leaved Plantain
Ribwort Plantain	Black Meddick
Skullcap	Yarrow
Silverweed	Red Campion
Herb Robert	Common Scurvy Grass
Daisy	Meadowsweet
Common Chickweed	Thyme-leaved Speedwell
Common Catsear	Hemlock Water Dropwort
Mousear Chickweed	Sneezewort
Self Heal	Common Valerian
Sheeps Sorrel	Marsh Birdsfoot Trefoil
Stinging Nettle	Angelica
Red Hemp Nettle	Wood Sage
Thrift	Lesser Kanpweed
Creeping Buttercup	Shepherds Purse
Beaked Hawksbeard	Ragged Robin
Marsh Thistle	Sea Aster
Water Forget-me-not	Lesser Sea Spurrey
Bog Pimpernel	Common Pearlwort
Marsh Willowherb	Common Ragwort
Red Clover	Great Oblong-leaved Sundew
Redshank	Oblong-leaved Sundew
Birds-eye Speedwell	Slender St. John's Wort
Marsh Valerian	Brookweed
White Beak Sedge	

Worm Distribution Survey

The object of this survey was to discover whether there was a significant difference in population density between flat ground near the stream and the higher ground around.

A transect was selected running from the stream to a ruined croft approximately 10 m. above the level of the stream. Along this transect population counts were made at varying intervals according to topography. The method employed was that of pouring a bucket of soapy water onto an area of ½ m. by ½ m. within a quadrat, the number of worms surfacing within 20 minutes of the soapy water being applied was recorded.

Results

Site 1. Flat ground

1½ m. from stream

½ m. above stream level Short grass, exposed

12 worms found.

Site 2. Level, half way up a steep bank

5 m. from stream

2½ m. above stream level

Grass

15 worms found.

Site 3. Grass patch surrounded by heather on slope

9 m. from stream

6 m. above stream level

5 worms found.

Site 4. Sloping ground, grass, sphagnum, marram

14 m. from stream

8 m. above water level

10 worms found.

Site 5 Level ground, sphagnum

19 m. from stream

10 m. above stream level

6 worms found.

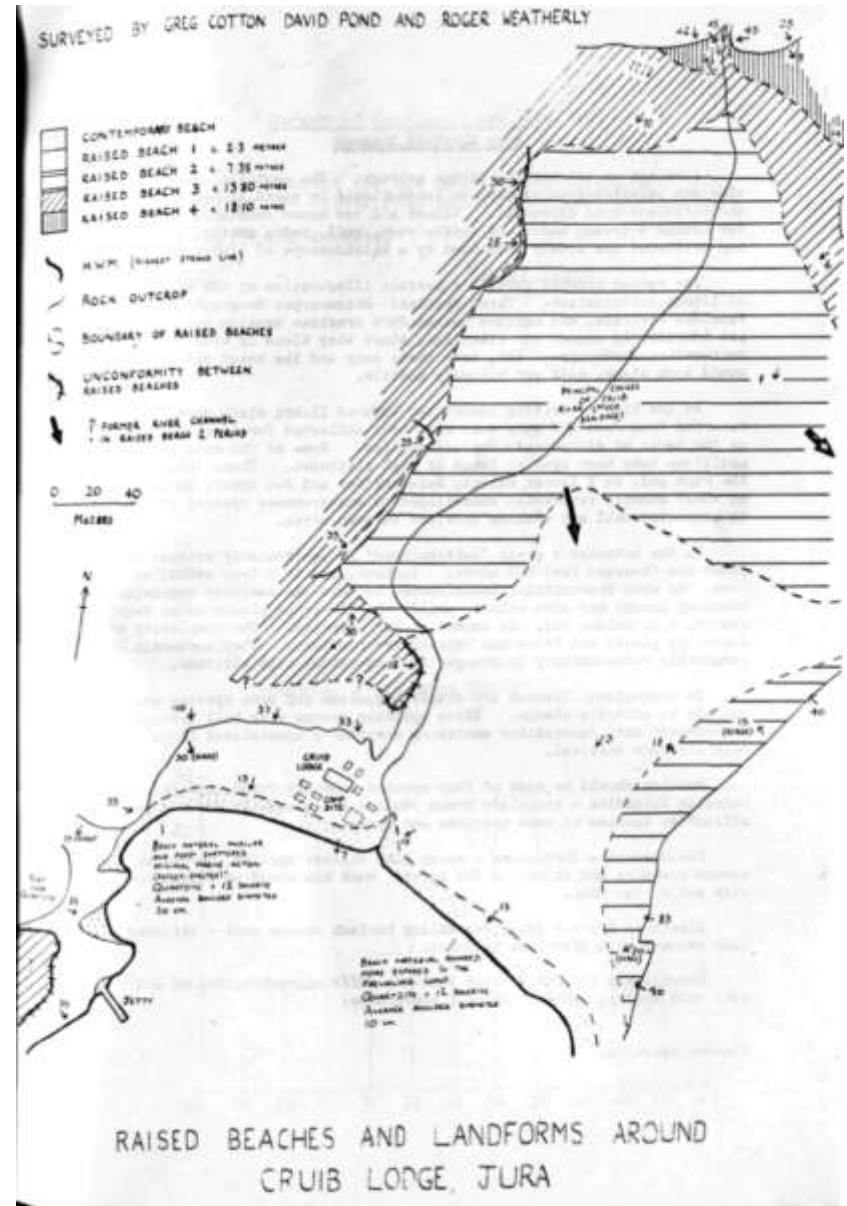
The arithmetic mean is 9.8 worms. It would therefore appear that the worms prefer the level ground near the stream as shown by sites 1 and 2. The drop to 5 at site 3 may be due to the heather, which has a dense root system, since the count comes close to the average at site 4 with 10 worms, which is mainly grass. Similarly site 5 is level yet only 6 worms were found; this may be put down to the sphagnum.

We therefore conclude that worm distribution is affected by a combination of topography and vegetation, flat land with grass is most favoured and steeper sloping land and sphagnum avoided.

Raised Beaches at Cruib Lodge.

Four horizons of raised beach were identified, using a clinometer and ranging pole as a level, distances were measured from a base line on the beach with a 50m tape. Much of the area is over grown with peat, and future expeditions may wish to question our conclusions. It may well be better to regard these four horizons as stages only in the recovery of the land after the ice depressed it during the last ice age, and not true horizons at all. However, here is a proposal, a working hypothesis, that is accurate enough, we hope, for others to develop in future years.

Greg Cotton, David Pond, Roger Weatherly.



High Altitude Lichens

Jura has an interesting lichen ecology. The unspoilt country side and pollution-free atmosphere lends itself to rapid lichen growth and efficient wind dispersal. Almost all the known substrates on the island - trees, basic and acidic rock, soil, peat, mortar, palings and driftwood are widely colonised by a kaleidoscope of lichen thalli.

The varied beaches provide a perfect illustration of the effect of lichen colonisation. Three species: *Rhizocarpen Geographicum*, *Fuscidea Rochiana*, and *Lecidea Lactea* form crustose mosaics but do not immediately engage our attention, since they blend in with the surrounding landscape. Yet, take these away and the beach material would look stark, cold and bitterly hostile.

At the time of writing almost two hundred lichen stata have been recorded from Jura and many more have been collected for identification on the basis of microscopic characteristics. Some of the most recent additions have been species found at high altitudes. Those 'big brothers' the Paps and, to a lesser extent, Rainberg'Hor and Ben Cruib, support at their summits remarkable assemblages of non-crustoes species attached to compacted soil and shallow crevices between scree.

To the botanist a great 'switcharound' is particularly evident at about one thousand feet and above. Lichens, and to a less extent on Jura, the moss *Rhaconitrium Lanuginosum*, becomes the dominant vegetation; becoming larger and more robust, whilst the flowering plants adopt dwarf status, e.g. Golden Rod, six inches on Var Cambrica. The complexity of flowering plants and trees has imposed restrictions. They include a remarkable vulnerability to changes in temperature with altitude.

In comparison, lichens are simple organisms and some species adapt quickly to climatic change. These splinter groups with well developed anti-freeze anti desiccation machinery comprise a specialised flora for high altitude survival.

Mention should be made of four species commonly found on Jura; *Cetrelia Islandica* - chocolate brown thallus and elegantly erect - an attractive species of rock crevices and scree.

Pseudoevernia furfuracea - strap like foliose species, spreading across boulders and chinks in the scree; much blackened on the underside and at the base.

Alectoria Sp. - a genus resembling baclish sheeps wool - attached like seaweed by a disc-like holdfast.

Ochrolechii frigida - thick thallus, white encrusting mosses and soil with spiky, somewhat prickly appearance.

Vincent Giavarini

Survey of Cockles found in Tobuar Fuar

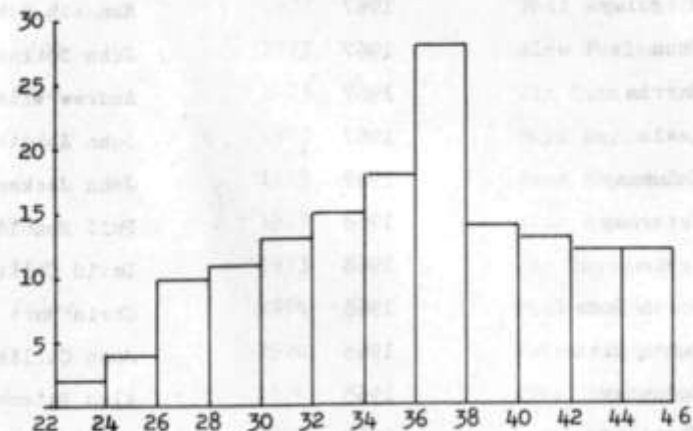
Sample area - around the low water area, as the tide was retreating, in the Tobuar Fuar bay at grid reference 353937.

Total sample - 152 cockles.

Size range	Number found
22 - 24	2
24 - 26	4
26 - 28	10
28 - 30	11
30 - 32	13
32 - 34	15
34 - 36	28
36 - 38	18
38 - 40	14
40 - 42	13
42 - 44	12
44 - 46	12

Millimetres

Cockle - *Cardium Edule*



PAST EXPEDITIONS OF THE S.H.S.

EXPEDITION	YEAR	LEADER
Geometra	1962	John Abbott
Rhum	1963	John Abbott
Geometra	1963	Tim Wilcocks
Mingulay	1964	Martin Child
South Rona	1964	John Abbott
Raasay	1964	Richard Fountaine
Geometra	1964	James Emerson
Harris	1965	John Abbott
Jura	1965	Johnny Ker
Raasay	1965	Clifford Fountaine
Morvern	1965	Jim Hardy
Lewis	1966	Roger Dennien
Harris	1966	Alan Bateman
Jura	1966	Andrew Wilson
Colonsay	1966	Chris Dawson
Dingle	1966	John Hughton
Mingulay	1967	Kenneth Buxham
Rhum	1967	John Dobinson
Harris	1967	Andrew Wilson
Lewis	1967	John Abbott
Colonsay	1967	John Jackson
Vatersay	1968	Phil Renold
Lewis	1968	David Cullingford
South Rona	1968	Chris Hart
South Uist	1968	John Cullingford
Colonsay	1968	Alan Bateman
Shetlands	1969	Chris Dawson
South Uist	1969	John Cullingford

EXPEDITION	YEAR	LEADER
Lewis	1969	John Hutchinson
Rhum	1969	Chris Hart
Colonsay	1969	Roger Trafford
South Uist	1970	Geoffrey David
Shetlands	1970	David Vigar
Fladday	1970	Mike Baker
Lewis	1970	Alan Howard
North Uist	1970	Phil Renold
Ulva	1970	Alan Fowler
South Rona	1971	Roger Weatherly
Rhum	1971	Phil Renold
Jura	1971	Charles Hooper
Colonsay	1971	Alan Howard
Mingulay	1971	Hugh Williams
Muckle Roe	1972	Ray Winter
South Uist	1972	Gavin Macpherson
Raasay	1972	Paul Caffrey
North Uist	1972	Roger Weatherly
Harris	1973	Phil Renold
South Uist	1973	Alan Fowler
South Rona	1973	Jim Turner
Rhum	1973	Mark Rayne
Jura	1973	Dave Bradshaw
Colonsay	1973	Alan Howard
South Uist	1973	Jim Turner
Outer Isles	1974	Paul Caffery
Raasay	1974	Peter Carlisle
Harris	1974	John Hutchinson
North Uist	1974	John Cullingford
Colonsay	1975	Phil Renold

EXPEDITION	YEAR	LEADER
Jura	1975	Lawrence Hall
South Uist	1975	Alan Evison
Raasay	1975	Gavin Macpherson
Mingulay I	1975	Nick Deeley
Mingulay II	1975	Nick Deeley
Lewis	1976	Paul Caffery
Harris	1976	John Bromley
South Uist	1976	Mike Hayward
North Uist	1976	Alan Fowler
Rhum	1976	Roger Weatherly
Lewis Uig Sands	1977	Nick Deeley
Jura	1977	Dave Harding
Colonsay	1977	David Lennard-Jones
Lewis Mealista +	1977	Phil RenoId
Knoydart	1977	Craig Roscoe
Loch Shiel	1977	Peter Iiver
Raasay	1978	Roger Weatherly
North Uist	1978	Simon Atkinson
South Rona	1978	Mike Hayward
South Uist +	1978	Dave and Angie Crawford
Rhum	1978	Humphrey Southall
Knoydart +	1978	Jim Turner
Rhum	1979	Mike Hayward (Chris Venning)
Islay	1979	Roger Weatherly
Lewis Tamnavay +	1979	Tony Ingleby
Loch Shiel +	1979	Alan Smith
Jura	1979	Stephen Paynter
Lewis Mealista	1979	Pete Weston

+ denotes mixed expeditions.