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SCHOOLS HEBRIDEAN SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 1982

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North Uist	Hugh Lorimer
South Uist	Richard Young
Loch Shiel	Simon Lord
Harris	Simon Atkinson
Mingulay	Ian Arrow

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EDITORIAL

Each year, the Annual Report has the effect of bringing together and rounding off the previous summer's Expeditions.

The making of reports, be they climbing and boating reports, or accounts of bivvies, projects undertaken or testaments of achievement, all have the effect of sealing a purpose in SHS Expeditions! They remind us that an Expedition with the Society is not just another adventure trip.

This year, there have been fewer 'scientific' reports than in former years. This is in some respects a pity, particularly if it reflects a lack of activity in these areas. On the other hand, all the material in this year's report speaks of successful Expeditions wherever members went and whatever they did.

I have enjoyed compiling this report; reading accounts by people I have known and about places I have been to always encouraging to read of what people really thought about that first climb, canoeing to Burial Island, or how I felt to face another summer of midges, gales, expedition food, Hebridean tranquilly and companionship.

I hope that this Annual Report will motivate and inspire us all, members and intending members alike.

Tim Short

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I wonder how many of you can, like me still taste the "tangle o' the Isles", clear and fresh from one of this summer's expeditions to those remarkable islands, the Hebrides. What a summer it was, too! With thirteen weeks of scorching sunshine, it was certainly the "land of the shining rivers" to those of you on an early expedition. And even for those on a later expedition, for whom it was more the "sweet fall of Scottish rain", the magic of the Hebrides always seems to remain undiminished.

It is fitting that at the end of a tremendous summer I should be bringing you good news of a healthy and vibrant Society. Financially, the SHS has probably never been stronger or more stable. Last year saw a competent and well organised team of Society members, a number of very able new faces among them, planning the year's expeditions. Much confidence was in evidence at the last meeting of the Board, not only about the present position of the Society, but also in regard to what the Society is doing. This was apparent from the strong belief expressed that the Society's aims as they stand are intrinsically good and worthwhile, and that an SHS expedition is a justifiable end in itself, and one which is much desired by young people in our country to-day. With this excellent news, I believe that the Society has a very bright future, with much potential to realise and much to work towards in order to achieve something which is not just good but excellent.

We say a heart-felt thank you to John Round this year, on his retirement from the Board. John has contributed greatly over the last nine years in many different roles to this Society. There is little doubt that much of the Society's present health can be attributed to efficiency and clear-thinking such as his. It is good to welcome Simon Lord and Hugh Lorimer, both 1982 expedition leaders, on to the Board. For those of you not already acquainted with them, I do recommend that you introduce yourselves, as well as making contact with the other directors. Not only will this help you to keep in touch: It helps up to keep in step with members' views.

Once again the enormous and often difficult task of mounting six expeditions to the Hebrides was achieved by the Management Committee, now a good twenty strong. Particular thanks must go to John Round, as Director of Expeditions and 1982 crisis handler; to Dave Crawford, who has done a magnificent job with the Society's finances over the past three years as treasurer; to Simon Atkinson, for stepping into the breach at the last minute to lead the Harris Expedition; and to Phil Renold and Jonathon Orr for voluntarily taking on equipment and boats respectively. We are grateful to Gavin Macpherson for the way in which he re-[organised]? the passenger travel in the face of the British Rail strikes, to John and Sue Jones, who yet again arranged the food; and to Mike Young, for providing us with six excellent new canoes.

Everyone's contribution was indispensable. and I know I speak on behalf of all Society members when I say a very sincere thank you to all.

One of the lower notes of last year's expeditions was that quite a number of expedition places were left vacant. This lost opportunity seems such a great shame, besides being a point of serious concern which could easily impair the Society's otherwise good prospects for the future. Our motto and whole emphasis for the coming year must be for us all to spread information about SHS Expeditions around the UK. We must do this as soon as possible and as much as possible. Each member has been sent two copies of the prospectus and a poster. Do please use them and remember that more are always available. Try to put up posters everywhere as well as giving prospectuses to people in contact with other young people. Talks and slide shows are of course always best, and help with these and other publicity materials are available from Tim Short, in charge of recruitment.

I wish you all great enjoyment as you re-live some of the special moments of last summer's expeditions related in this report, and as you begin to plan and prepare for the coming year.

1983 will see Expeditions travelling to Colonsay, Jura, Rhenigidale, Rhum and two new and exciting sites: one at Cravadale in the North West extremity of Harris and the other at Camasunary in the heart of the Cuillins on Skye. Both sites show tremendous promise and will present a great challenge to the members who venture on them. What a privilege to have available to us such rugged mountain beauty and peace and solitude, to be shared with such excellent friends! We have a great summer to look forward to, and I hope to see many friends in the Islands in 1983.

Stephen Paynter

1983 EXPEDITION LEADERS

Colonsay Collette Armitage

Collette has been with the Society almost since the sensible move was made in 1977 to run mixed expeditions. She now has the honour of being the first female Leader in the Society's twenty year history. Collette has accumulated a wide expedition experience and worked hard in tough positions of administration within the Society. This, coupled with her effervescent personality, makes her an excellent choice of Leader for this year's junior expedition.

Jura: Hugh Lorimer

Hugh has been on many previous Society expeditions. He led the very successful North Uist Expedition last year, and has now joined the Board. He has worked hard and enthusiastically in leading positions of administration and his efficiency and expedition experience will compliment each other well in his leadership of this year's expedition to the exciting island of Jura.

Cravadale: Stephen Paynter

Steve was first with the Society in 1975 as a member of the South Uist Expedition. He has since visited half a dozen other sites as a member, assistant leader and leader. He has been Chairman of the Board since 1980. It is quite a few years since the Society has mounted an Expedition to this part of Harris - the last and only one was in 1965. Steve has the experience, both from previous expeditions and from activities apart from the Society, coupled with a sense of authority which commands respect from members. These attributes make him a good person to bring together and lead an expedition to a site such as Cravadale.

Rhenigidale: Paul Lake

Paul was introduced to the Society on the 1981 Loch Shiel Expedition, where he was an assistant leader. It soon became apparent that Paul was a careful and knowledgeable mountaineer with a high degree of leadership ability. He was a dynamic influence in the life of the Expedition with a wide variety of positive and constructive ideas to offer. With Paul in the driving seat of the Rhenigidale Expedition, its members can look forward to a safe but challenging and active time with many unknowns in store.

Rhum: Richard Young

Richard is another long serving member of the SHS who, although in his early twenties, has many expeditions under his belt. Richard bravely led the very wet South Uist Expedition last year, but remains adamantly enthusiastic about the magical qualities and attractions of Rhum. Rhum is unique and extraordinary, and with Richard's thoughtful and sensitive leadership, the expedition holds great promise right across the board.

Skye: Alan Smith

Alan may outstrip many of us in years, but he is not someone to pick a race with to the top of Britain's more lofty peaks. Alan is a member of the Oldham Mountain Rescue Team. He has visited the base camp site of Everest expeditions and is an experienced Society member. Alan's breadth of experience, mountaineering qualities, ingenuity and resourcefulness on expeditions make him an excellent choice of leader for this summer's very challenging and exciting Skye Expedition.

Obituary
RICHARD THOMPSON

I am sure that all who knew him well will join me in mourning the loss of Richard Thompson, who died after a motor accident in Scotland.

I first knew him while he was still a boy and I was staying in Culrain with Desmond and Maimie. Even then, Richard's unassuming personality was attractive, and over the years he blossomed into a man of discernment and character. Though he was never one to seek attention he was in fact a fine leader, and also a very good naturalist. He was one of those rare people to whom one instinctively listened; he knew his mind and transmitted dependability and good sense to those he was with, yet he was never forceful nor intrusive.

Richard chose an outdoor life after leaving school. He was happy and fulfilled in the wilds, and was also a valued assistant to Desmond in his research on Greenshank. He loved the SHS and while at school he went annually on expeditions; but for his work commitments I know he would have come on many more as a leader.

I was with Richard on Jura in 1975: he was also on Raasay (1974), Harris (1976) and Loch Shiel (1977)... He was a harmonious companion in the islands who seemed instinctively to understand more than we did about the environment we were in. Of course Richard would be the last person to put these things into words, but there was no need, for his life was evidence enough.

This life, so full of promise, has been tragically truncated. We send our love and sympathy to Desmond and Maimie, whose upbringing did so much to foster Richard's gifts, and to Bruin, Patrick, Eamonn and Katherine who, with Richard, formed a close family.

We are the richer for having known him: may his perception, generosity and sensitivity live on in us.

Roger Weatherly

RAASAY EXPEDITION THE SKYE BIVVY

This bivvy came about in an unusual way. Due to the complete failure of the canoe bivvy, a weather casualty, an alternative was devised. Steve Paynter decided instead to go to Skye and explore a possible site for a senior expedition. The trip represented the ideal solution. The long haul involved, however, proved to be a disincentive to most and so, in the end, there were only four members, plus Steve, bound for Camasunary.

In order to set up camp in good time we needed to catch the early ferry; so we availed ourselves of the services of A L Mike Osbourne, who had his own car. Even so, we still had to be away from camp by 0800. The ferry left at 0900 and we arrived on Skye without a hitch.

The next stage was the most uneventful of the whole trip. Before reaching the cross-section where we were to branch off and walk on a country path, we had a four mile section of road to cover, which we did in seventy-five minutes. After consulting the map, we started out on the eight mile track, next stop Camasunary.

Having made excellent progress so far, we could relax and soak up the glorious hills from the valley. Following a late lunch, with picturesque views, we continued along the track until we reached our destination.

As everyone had their priorities right, we decided to eat immediately after the tents had been put up. It was a rather unusual concoction, but we wolfed it down nevertheless. Later, Phil, Richard and I went off to explore the excellent campsite and found no fault, except that it is rather exposed to the elements. An hour later, we decided to call it a day and went to join Mark and Steve, who were doing a spot of bird-watching. As we turned in for the night we hoped that the following day's weather would be as good as that on Day One....

Hmmm.... not quite!. There had been a howling gale blowing during the night and the two tents were lashed about and saturated with rain. It was impossible to cook breakfast, so we had to retreat to a mountain bothy after striking camp. We hid in the bothy for about an hour, but then had to leave to set out for Raasay.

We found the path and struck out for home. It had been raining so much that the trip to the road can only be described as a wade. The path was a stream, and the trickles of the day before were raging rivers. Crossing them was extremely hazardous to say the least. The wallet in my back pocket containing all my worldly wealth - a sole fiver - was soggy by the time we got back to camp. On several occasions on the way Butty was seen to be swimming across the rivers!

We arrived back at camp soggy, but happy. Life-saver Steve had had some chocolate which quickly did a vanishing act, after which things seemed less bad. The trip along the road whizzed by, and we soon found ourselves on the ferry. Mike was there for us at the other side, and in no time the camp loomed up in front of us. A boiling cup of soup revived our senses and then there was time to reflect on a wet, enjoyable, but unforgettable bivvy which turned out to be not unlike the canoe bivvy that it was intended to replace.

An anonymous comment, while wading through deep water: "It's a good thing I dubbed my boots before we set off, otherwise my feet would get wet!"

Members: Steve Paynter, Richard Butterworth, Phil Genge, Mark Harris, Ian Whitworth.

Ian Whitworth

RAASAY MAMMAL REPORT

The aim of this project was to become familiar with the appearance of some of the small rodents to be found in Britain by live trapping and handling them. Basically, we wanted to be able to identify species rather than attempt more complex studies on distribution or population numbers by habitats. We were also out to test the practicalities of pitfall trapping, illustrated in a British Museum (Natural History) publication, "Finding and identifying mammals in Britain" by G B Corbett.

We were able to make use of materials commonly found on Expeditions, namely large marmalade or sausage tins. A "pitfall" is basically a hole in the ground into which one hopes the animal will fall. It helps to provide unscalable walls, in this case using tins, to stop the animal scrambling out again. The tin is buried with the top level with the ground surface, and is covered with board propped up on stones a couple of centimetres above. This keeps out the rain, and also provides an attractive crevice to entice animals into the pit. The book suggests a pit 30 cm deep is adequate to hold shrews and voles, but mice require something deeper. The traps should be inspected every day.

Early in the expedition we set up a "trap line" of four pitfalls, each of a single tins depth, baited with stale banana sandwiches, but failed to catch anything except ground beetles, notably the Violet Ground Beetle, also commonly

found in sleeping bags and rucksacks. Either the bait was unattractive or the pits were too shallow and the animals were escaping. So we set up a second trap line with each pit two tins deep, and baited with Branston pickle. Again we had no success, except a drowned rat in one of the pits which flooded due to poor siting in an area of high water table. The wet, pit and sewage pits - traps on the grand scale - were also successful in catching rats and several drowned in these too. Fortunately, no rats were discovered in the quartermaster's stores, which remind me of the omission of the SHS songbook.

So pitfall traps were unsuccessful, but the technique is appealingly simple, and if it can be made to work it could easily be copied on other expeditions.

We had two Longworth traps in the project box, and used these to catch several Bank voles (*Clethrionomys glareolus*) or possibly the same vole several times. Vital statistics of this vole were:

Weight (approx) 15 gm

Length of head and body 110 mm

Length of tail 45, mm

These measurements help to distinguish it from the Field vole, where the ratio of tail to head and body length is 30%. Raasay has its own unique sub-species of Bank vole. This highlights another problem with identification of mammals in the islands. Possibly some species may not have returned to the islands following the ice ages, or because of isolation have developed as a sub-species whose appearance does not quite square with the general textbook descriptions and causes confusion in identification.

Other mammals commonly seen were the Common Seal, Grey Seal, Rabbit and Hare. Otters were also present along the shore, usually when nobody had their cameras with them. The islanders reported that Red Deer were on the island but I doubted this until Stuart Brown picked up an antler cast by a four year old stag, whilst on the fishing bivvy.

Bats were seen flying around the campsite soon after sunset. Most species are confined to southern Britain, and the number to be seen in the north of Scotland is limited. By far the most common is the Pipistrelle, but we may possibly have seen the Long-eared Bat or Daubenton's Bat.

Tish, Rachel, all the Andrews, Chris, Mark, Chuck, Paul and o/c Mammals Project Mike.

FISHING BIVVY

Many people came to Raasay prepared to reap some harvest from the sea, but went home without the extra protein they had hoped for. We had a multitude of tackle, fly rods, match rods, canal rods, beach casters and tried every known method, fishing from the rocks around Brochel. All to no avail, except for a single rock gubby, caught by hand at low tide.

So in desperation a 17 man fishing bivvy to the western seaboard set off. I think the popularity of this bivvy was more due to the length of the route (1½ miles - 45 minutes walking) than the keenness to fish. On reflection we had the people to walk line abreast across one of the shallow lochs and drive the fish into the shallows where we could have speared them with tentpoles, but perhaps this would have been considered unsporting. The trout in the lochs are reported to reach 1½ lbs. Nobody was able to prove it.

The bivvy proved interesting as a trial of lightweight tents. We took all the available models, including two belonging to members (a total of seven tents of five different designs) and succeeded in getting them all soaked. The campsite chosen was flat, and had delightful views up and down the coast. However, it was on an exposed headland, was boggy and fresh water was a long way off.

We had come to fish, and most people did their best for a couple of hours on the falling tide, until it became clear that the west coast was much like the east. We didn't catch anything except the solitary gubby, this time by line. Chuck caught a crab using Stuart's fingers as bait whilst poking around the rocks for sea urchins at low tide.

Supper was prepared on driftwood fires on the beach below camp. As evening entertainment we were given a demonstration of fishing by an islander, out in the middle of the bay, hand lining fish into his boat until it appeared so full it could barely float.

Most lessons learnt were to do with camping rather than fishing. For instance, the factors to be considered when choosing a campsite, how to pitch a tent so that the wind blows hard on to the front door, and how to divide up the equipment so that your mates get the wettest and heaviest section of the tent, and you only get the poles, or better still, just the pegs, to carry back to base camp.

John, Phil, Tish, Steve, Mike, Mark, Ian, all the Andrews, Chris, Paul, Joanna, Kate, Skippers Clare and Mike O, and A N Other to make up the numbers

WOODLAND SURVEY

One reason for visiting Raasay is the opportunity it offers to look at the semi-natural woodlands which are present, a feature which sets the island apart from most of the others which are windswept and treeless. The island also has extensive ornamental woodlands, around Raasay House, and plantations of exotic conifers which provide a good habitat for survival bivvy enthusiasts as they offer shelter and abundant fuel. These plantations also illustrate the luxuriance of plant growth which can develop once sheep are excluded. Raasay Forest close to Brochel provided a relatively warm and sheltered haven for bird watching parties on several stormy days. Many people enjoyed chewing the wood sorrel found growing there, although it is clearly no substitute for a Mars bar. ("Food for Free" was one title missing from the project hut library).

At the suggestion of Andrew Currie, the Nature Conservancy Officer at Broadford, Skye, we took a look at the extent and variety of native British trees and shrubs on the island. The project consisted of noting the presence or absence of some of the species we might have expected to find in North West Scotland, and to gain some idea of the age and health of the woodland by looking for seedlings, coppice growth and young trees. The presence of these would indicate where the woodland was regenerating and the habitat stands a chance of surviving grazing pressures.

The species we were looking out for are shown in the table on page 14. I have indicated sightings (S) and non-sightings (NS) against each together with my assessment of abundance.

The two species of birch are quite difficult to separate, and we were insufficiently experienced to be able to do so. Intermediate and hybrid forms commonly occur to confuse the problems of identification. Other species of willow may also have been present, but differentiation again wasn't easy.

The two most interesting areas of woodland were the Hazel/ Birch/Rowan community around Arnish and Torran, and the Birch/ Rowan scrub along the cliffs and screes south of Screapadale. This latter area contained the only examples of Ash, Alder and Hawthorn seen whilst on the island. Both these areas are grazed by sheep and cattle, and only where seedlings were growing in inaccessible gullies and rock clefts were they able to survive. Despite grazing the woodlands appeared well stocked with younger coppice growth. The islanders do not appear to burn the moors very extensively, and this may be a more important factor in ensuring the survival of the woodlands than the removal of the sheep. Fencing out sheep would enhance woodland growth but at present the woodlands appear to be able to tolerate the current levels of stocking.

Raassy Woodland Survey - Table of Sightings

Species	S/NS	Abundance
Alder	S	Not common
Birch - Silver	S	Widespread
Birch - Downy		
Hazel	S	Locally abundant
Hawthorn	S	Rare
Ash	S	Rare
Holly	S	Rare
Juniper	S	Locally common
Aspen	S	Rare
Gean	NS	
Bird Cherry	NS	
Blackthorn	NS	
Sessile Oak	NS	
Pedunculate Oak	NS	
Goat Willow	S	Widespread
Whitebeam	NS	
Rowan	S	Very abundant
Elm	S	Rare
Guelder Rose	NS	

Heather, Steve, Rachel, Tish, one or other
or all the Andrews, Chris, Paul, Clare, Neil,
and the Head Forester, Mike O.



NORTH UIST EXPEDITION

Leader: Hugh Lorimer

Assistant Leaders: Alan Tytler, Teresa Forrester, Matthew Nettleton, Paul Bloomfield. Mike Young.

Members: John Bailey, Nicholas Close. Craig Eason, Andrew Edwards. Douglas Gordon, Richard Hinxman, Mark Huxham, Andrew Jackson, Alison Jones, Rhys Latham, Tina Malhotra. Heidi Meister. David Nash. David Nightingale, Neil Rushmere, Helen Smith. Christopher Sorrenson, Jeremy Squires.

'Hugh. Pugh. Barley Magrew. Cuthbert, Dibble and Grub (Tring, Tring)" was the last I heard from the North Uist Expedition as they (tailed out of Lochboisdale Harbour leaving Mike and myself on shore - what could it mean? It must have been a sign that we had all had an extremely enjoyable time by the shores of a loch on a far flung Hebridean island. It was one of those fortnights that SHS members must spend the long winter nights dreaming of - 13 days of dry and sunny weather leading to 24 brown (or in my case, red) bodies.

Despite the settling of the rail strike just 24 hours before our departure, we found ourselves travelling to Oban by hired coach, arriving at 4 o'clock in the morning without having had much in the way of sleep during the previous 24 hours. We then had to wait eight hours in Oban before the ferry arrived, and to a fifteen year old eagerly awaiting a holiday on a remote island, Oban is not the most exciting of places in the world. However, the crossing was good, and many of us were able to make up for lost sleep in preparation for a hard day setting up camp.

The Society were visiting North Uist for the seventh time since 1970 but this year we had chosen a new site on the northern shore of Loch Obisary with a fantastic view of Eaval, Burrival and the loch from our tents. With such good weather we made excellent use of the sheltered loch and swimmers and canoeists were in and out of the water all day. Most of us completed capsized drill and were soon able to explore the loch and the many islands in it.

Climbing was popular on the southern slopes of Burrival and many who were climbing for the first time were keen to go back for more.

Alan must, have taken a dislike to the camp food since he was out of camp on bivvies more often than not. Two bivvies went to the Balranald bird reserve, one to Baleshare. one to South Uist, one to the top of Eaval and two canoeing bivvies went somewhere along loch Eport. A large number visited the

Agricultural Fair at Hosta where many of the Island's crofters net to show their stock. To us, all the animals looked pretty much the same but it was interesting to see and photograph the many people and faces that were there.

Teresa and others spent many days on short walks that concentrated more on identifying flowers and birds than clocking up miles. We spent one fine day walking just a couple of miles along the East Coast, sitting on rocks watching dolphins as they jumped their way across the bay, the gannets as they dived for food, the seals coming up for air, puffins, shearwaters, gulls and many others flying past as we sipped our cups of tea and browned ourselves in the sun. On another evening we took a short walk around Burrival and were rewarded with fine views of Peregrine, Golden Eagle and a dozen Red Deer (including three royal stags).

The fishing was uncommonly poor all over the island due mainly to the warm weather but this was a small price to pay, and in any case, we had brought plenty of stores with us.

One project was undertaken to survey the plant life of the many islands on Obisary, but this was not an expedition for exercising the mind but more a time for exercising the body and giving the brain time to recover from the stresses of the school year. Games and other physical activities proved popular in the evenings - playing at being fireman was one of the best, incorporating a mock battle for Two Sisters Ridge.

Learning how to survive and live with other people in a small isolated community can be a very trying experience for many people and prompted many interesting discussions between members and leaders. Happily, we all came through pretty well unscathed and learnt a lot in the process - yes, it's time to read "Lord of the Flies" again!

Ten of us attended the local church one Sunday for the monthly service in English and were warmly welcomed by the Minister and the congregation. We are very grateful to all the islanders who helped in many ways. In particular, I should like to thank Lord and Lady Granville for allowing the Expedition to use their land, David Shaughnessy, the Estate Factor, for all his help and advice, Alistair MacDonald for the loan of his boat on loch Obisary, and Alan Tytler for doing the preliminary site visit for me and finding this excellent new site.

All good things have to come to an end sooner or later, and for us it was far too soon. The islands attract me back year after year and without doubt many more people have now caught the same bug for the Hebrides that I caught seven years ago - I even applied for a job there this summer -and will be applying to go again next year.

With thanks to all the members for a great time in a great place (TRING TRING!).

Hugh Lorimer

BIVVI TO BAYHEAD

A group of seven members and two leaders left their camp by the shores of Loch Obisary on a fine July morning, intending to go for a short bivvy to a nature reserve near Hougharry, having been informed that it was only ten miles away. We set off at a leisurely pace, just quick enough to arrive at Hougharry, spend a few hours looking around, then camp down for the night.

Once on the main road, which was about six and a half miles away, we stuck out our thumbs. But it was all to no avail, as car after car passed by us, with a finger pointing to the full back seats or a pitiful shake of the head. If a car did stop, the driver would apologetically explain that he was only going a short way down the road.

After walking about ten miles and seeming no nearer to Hougharry than we were a few miles back we realised that someone had made a mistake, notably Alan, in reading the map. On closer inspection it was discovered that the reserve was situated about nineteen miles from the camp and we were only just past half way! Because of this, the decision was made to go to Bayhead, only a few miles further up the road, and then carry on to the nearby sand dunes.

Nearing Bayhead a van offered some of us a lift. We got in but soon re-emerged when it became all too apparent that both the driver and passenger were drunk! Just, our luck!

Getting on to the dunes should have been easy enough, if only we hadn't taken the wrong turning (thanks to guess who?) and we ended up half a mile off the track that we were supposed to be following. Well, we didn't arrive at Hougharry, but we did miss the salt water custard back at camp (even if our instant potato did look more like semolina)

Alison Jones

WEDNESDAY THE 5th

In the early hours of the fifth of August the occupants of Ted's (David Nash's) tent were raided by five occupants of our tent. This SAS style attack was led by Matt Nettleton with a crack team comprising Andrew Jackson, Nick Close, Chris Sorrenson and myself.

The first wave of the attack was attempted with canoe paddles under the ground sheet, but this did not work out as well as expected since the paddles did not go underneath the groundsheet but over it, battering the occupants of the tent.

Matt's next plan was for us all to walk straight through their tent. But they were waiting for us with the dreaded Secto (which is jolly cold on the backside as Boo-Boo found out). Then the famous five grabbed the nearest two canoes and passed them both ways through the tent - you should have kept your head down, Neil.

Then to cap it all we resorted to the old standby of letting down the tents, though as we were later laughing so much about the escapades of their tent, we had a big shock when our tent was let down. The culprits were: Ted, Neil (Mars Bar) Rushmere, Rhys (Cambo) Latham and Richard (Dicky) Hinxman.

Andrew Edwards

A TED'S EYE VIEW

I don't know how or why, but everything I tried in the first week seemed to go wrong, or at least have a very funny side to it.

It all started on the first day when I, like an idiot, decided to try canoeing for the first time. I managed to fall in twice, which wasn't, bad considering I was only trying to get into the canoe at the time, in only six inches of water. Added to this the dye ran in my trainers, my feet turned blue and my shorts blew up like a bell tent. These events were not to be forgotten by the rest of the camp as I unanimously gained my first D'o'D Award.

Shortly after this I thought that I might try my hand at rock climbing though it was really a pretty silly idea as my rather large build is not really suited to this activity. For a start, I didn't really know what to do and started to use the safety rope to climb up (which any rock climber knows is not the thing to do). Then I managed to fall at least ten feet to the ground (unscathed), not a

MT FIRST EXPEDITION

problem that anyone else had - I sort of panicked and slid ungraciously to the ground! My climbing gained me a second D'o'D and put me well on the way to my first W'o'W award.

These are just some of my many activities during the first week of the expedition, though I should end here before I start to embarrass too many of my new friends. I hope that all were suitably entertained on North Uist - who needs Morecambe and Wise when Ted's about?

David Nash

P.S. .Ted's guide to losing weight

- Go to North Uist for a fortnight
- Eat as much as possible
- Walk a lot and do a lot more than normal
- Drop from 13st 7lb to 12 st in two weeks! (This is true)

FISHING ON NORTH UIST

Loch Obisary appeared immense as we approached it on reaching the camp site in the afternoon. Did not Hugh's pre-expedition note say something about good fishing? So this was the prolific fish pond. How I would enjoy landing all those fish! Still, we could get sick of eating fish all the time.

There was too much work to be done on the first day for us to go fishing. Why were we bringing all these supplies with us? Didn't the camp administrator make allowance for those lovely trout just waiting to be caught?

Rick Hinxnan and I got our chance on the second day. Off we went, armed with our spinning tackle. We tried for two hours. Well, maybe the fish were dour, or having a day off. We would try again later. Further sorties to the loch on other days produced similar results. So perhaps it was too sunny. After all, the Hebridean trout must be unaccustomed to these near-tropical conditions; maybe they suffer from a sort of underwater hay fever. Or maybe one has to sing lullabies in the Gaelic. The fish must be there. OUR LEADER SAYS SO.

One night after cocoa, the tranquillity of fishing and the appeal of my own counsel suddenly seem appropriate. I took up my rod and tackle and made for my favourite fishing spot. Three casts later, the line started to run. I had a nice one on. It was well hooked. It was a beauty! In my enthusiasm I damaged its head in stunning it but I did not spoil the fish. The proof? In the stomachs of the rest of the camp, who sampled it minutes after landing.

Douglas Gordon

"Here we are", said the leader, as we approached the end of an island. But as we had previously been stranded for nine hours from four o'clock in the morning on the streets of Oban, this wasn't such a shock to us, for a few hours at least.

The first novelty on the 'campsite' is the game of sheep-dropping throwing, as the supply is rather plentiful! Having completed this kiddish amusement we learn of the secrets and horror of the ghostly purple holds. This is where the hideously famished ticks lurk in bleak corners. They await the passing of fleshy, bare ankles, although they will bury their scavenging heads into any of the warm, juicy parts of the body that they can reach.

Having learnt this, we discover the real remoteness of our situation and the language of many members and leaders gradually degrades.

The unknown alien to England (called the 'sun', I believe) frazzled our campsite and lobsterfried Hugh, Pugh, Barley, Magrew, Cuthbert, Dibble and Grub (Tring-Tring) - sorry, Hugh, I couldn't resist it!

The first canoeing bivvy to Locheport and onwards refounded the Garden of Eden as the SHS members and leaders washed their stenching bodies for the first time in a week (don't worry, Paul, I shan't mention anything about your scratching habit. I know it wasn't your fault).

Ah, yes! The food. Salt water custard, salt water cocoa, salt water coffee, slices of soup, spag bol with mushy peas and sunflower seeds to which I am now addicted. Yes, the food was excellent (occasionally), especially Paul's curry, and 'le tip-tew' was very interesting. Of course fried egg butties at two o'clock in the morning were the best.

We went fishing one day, got lost, and eventually had only half an hour's fishing at the good loch before having to return home. So there was an excellent contribution to the meal - nothing, not one fish. Still, who likes fish anyway?

Sundays were the best days, since this was when we would spend all day in our sleeping bags, surfacing occasionally for our tea. Well, it says in the Bible that Sundays are rest days! Even Teresa, who would go out for many 'walks' never walked for more than five minutes before saying "Oh! Look at this flower", and settling down with her little book for another half hour before moving on.

Bivvying on top of Eaval was great fun, seeing who could slide downwards the fastest and ending up at the bottom of a mass bundle (I'm still suffering from this, Mike!)

Apart from getting exposure, I hope everyone from the expedition survived, had a great time and is hooked on returning, cos I did, I did and I am!

Heidi Meister

SURVEY OF THE LOCH OBISARY ISLANDS

Edward?

No!

Billy?

Yes!

Melissa?

No!

Can you find anything else?

No!

This is not a school register, for Edward and Billy are actually plants. I don't think Heidi or Helen have heard of Linnaeus! I'm sorry if this is getting somewhat confusing. Perhaps I'd better start again.

The North Uist Expedition was centred on the shore of Loch Obisary, which has at least forty islands of varying sizes dotted over it. Very early on in the Expedition, Hugh had a bright idea: that someone might carry out a vegetation survey of the islands. Funnily, he only mentioned it once. I think he must have been taking his responsibilities seriously, trying to encourage Assistant Leaders to do something. However, having exhausted myself during the first week (hitching lifts is hard work), I decided that a bit of pottering here and there, sun bathing, and, of course, project work in the local area was a good idea.

Heidi and Helen, mentioned earlier, are NOT plants but two budding botanists who, along with Craig and Andy, joined in at some stage during the survey of the Islands. Heidi and Helen insisted on re-naming all the plants they found: so, for example, bell heather became known as Melissa, *deschampsia flexuosa* was Squeaky and chickweed was Billy. There were many more.

Only .ten Islands were surveyed, but even so, some interesting

observations were made early in the study. No two islands were the same, and even those only a few metres apart were very different. For example, islands 4 and 5 were at most ten metres apart. Island 5 was very low lying and had thick, lush plant growth dominated by grass species. Island 4 was high and steep-sided. This island was covered with elder bushes, honeysuckle, bracken and bramble - none of which were to be found on island 5. Surely there are not different climatic conditions between islands so close!

The differences between the islands can be attributed mainly to their size and the animals which inhabit them. Large islands are likely to have a wide variety of habitats -island 10, for example, was large enough to have its own small lake in the middle. We would expect that a large number of different habitats will be able to support a large variety of different plant species.

The islands frequented by birds and used as nesting sites (the low lying ones in general) were dominated by grass species with little or no heather present. The enrichment of the ground with droppings will provide very different conditions from those found on the main areas of land. Islands used by rabbits and sheep were heather dominated and very similar to mainland vegetation, where of course rabbits and sheep are the main biotic factors affecting the vegetation.

The most interesting find for me was the discovery that island 2 was very likely used as a nesting site for a sea otter family. It is a steep sided island covered at the top with elder bushes. There was a hole at one side with a distinctly well used runway of bare soil and flattened vegetation leading down to the water. There was also an area of bare, smooth soil under the elders at the top - a play area, perhaps?

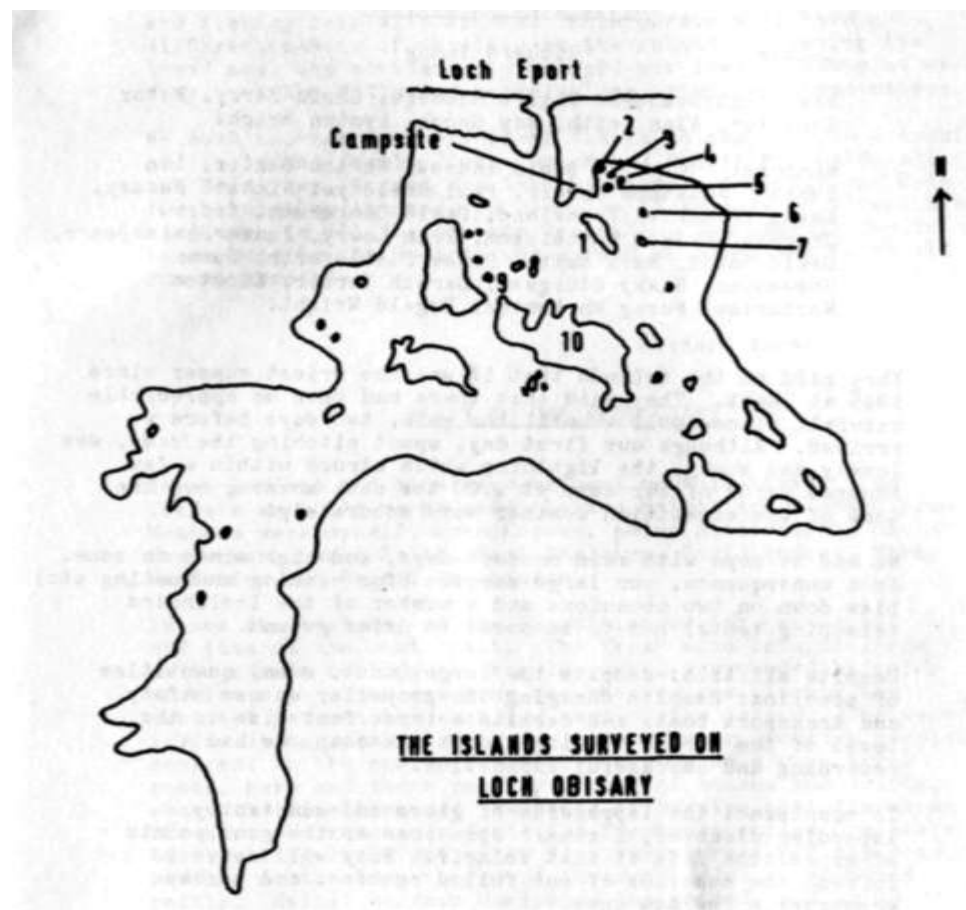
Perhaps the Nature Conservancy will give me a grant to go back and investigate the area more thoroughly!

Teresa Forrester

Summary of survey of Loch Obisary Islands:

<u>Island No:</u>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10*
<u>Species</u>										
Calluna vulgaris	+	+	+	+						+
Erica cinerea	+	+		+						+
Erica tetralix	+		+							+
Birdsfoot trefoil	+	+	+	+	+		+		+	+
Sea plantain	+	+	+		+		+	+	+	+
Tormentil	+		+	+				+	+	+
Thrift	+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+
Eyebright	+								+	+
Common catsear	+	+	+				+	+	+	+
Marsh pennywort	+									+
Bracken	+			+				+	+	
Devilsbit scabius	+									
Deschampsia flexusca	+			+	+		+			
Cotton grass	+			+						
Milkwort	+									
Sheeps sorrel	+	+		+				+	+	
Common chickweed	+							+	+	
Common scurvygrass		+			+					
Ribwort plantain		+			+		+	+	+	
English sonecrop		+								
Honeysuckle		+	+	+						
Marram grass	+	+								
Umbellifera		+						+	+	
Elder		+	+	+						
Matgrass				+	+	+				
Timothy grass	+	+	+	+						+
Juncus squarrosus			+	+						+
Lady's bedstraw				+						
Bramble				+						
Common sorrel					+			+		
Ragwort							+		+	
Iris								+		
Lousewort		+			+			+	+	

* Dwarf willow, birch, foxglove, water lobelia, water lily and round sundew were also present on island 10



SOUTH UIST EXPEDITION

Leader: Richard Young

Assistant Leaders: Claire McCombe, Chris Parry, Peter Schuller, Alan Smith, Ray Snook, Lynton Wright

Members: David Andrew, Marion Baxter, Ian Benton, Jonathon Darwin, Paul Edelstyn, Richard Feasey, Kevin (Frankie) Frankland, David Goberman, Andrew Grayson, Brigit Hutchinson, John Lowry, Janet Shakespeare, David Smith, Mark Smith, Peter Stableforth, Susan Stevenson, Nikky Sturgess, Gareth Turner, Kirsten Warburton, Morag Warburton, Dugald Wright.

They said on the islands that it was the driest summer since 1946 at least. They said that there had been no appreciable rainfall since April - until the gale, two days before we arrived. Although our first day, spent pitching the camp, was lovely and sunny, the lightning which struck within a few hundred yards of our camp at 4.00 the next morning set the tone of the expedition weather more accurately!

We had to cope with rain on most days, and high winds on some. As a consequence, our large marquee (for cooking and eating etc) blew down on two occasions and a number of the Icelandic's (sleeping tents) had to be moved to drier ground.

Despite all this; despite the large (vast, even) quantities of semolina; despite damaging the propeller on our safety and transport boat; and despite a three foot rise in the level of the stream flowing through the camp, we had a rewarding and successful expedition.

To counteract the impression of gloom and constantly impending disaster, I remark upon some of the good points of expedition life at Allt Volagir. They will serve to refresh the memories of our fellow members, and perhaps encourage a few new ones.

Many people enjoyed bivvies, to the Usinish bothy, to the Howmore hostel and greylag goose reserve at Loch Druidibeg, to the west coast (on foot or by canoe), or the round-the-island walk featuring semolina with beefburgers (sorry, Chris!) Who will forget Glen Corodale and the Prince's Cave, or the momentary sighting of a young eagle during an afternoon walk in the rain?

John Lowry will doubtless remember his single handed consumption of seven kilograms of accidental porridge, just as some folks will remember making it (sorry, Claire). I have no doubt that Nikky and Susan still wake up screaming at the thought of little brown furry things scuttling around in their sleeping bags. Or the sight of the C A in his Y-fronts, vole in hand - well, what can I say? (Sorry, Ray)

Others (i.e. the leader) are grateful for the memory of the new plastic loo, with sealing lid; also the slate collecting and fishing trip with Archie. Each person will have a different memory of our time on the island (including the bread man, who accidentally dropped our loaves twenty miles away, and the following articles may bring back some others.

We must express our very great thanks to many people - Archie and Angie and family, John-Joseph and Donald McDonald, all the McIntyres, Mr and Mrs John MacKinnon, to Greig and Sons for permission to camp, to Hercules (bear-ly a dog!) and also very much to all the parents (providing the money!) and to those many in the Society who worked so hard to make it all run so smoothly.

Richard Young

BIVVY TO THE WEST COAST

Three leaders and nine members went on this bivvy. The leaders were Claire McCombe, Lynton Wright and Richard Young. Members were myself, John Craven, Peter Stableforth, David Goberman, David Smith, Paul Edelstyn, David Andrew, Morag Warburton and Brigit Hutchinson.

It was the best day of the Expedition so far, as we set off towards the west coast. The fresh wind brought large white clouds rolling in from the west, surrounded by veins of blue sky. Upon reaching the shop we saw clearly the contrast between the east and west of the island. The west is low lying, dominated by small freshwater lochs: a complete contrast to the east. We trudged westwards along narrow roads, here and there passing groups of houses and crofts, where the time honoured fragrance of burning peat flavoured the air. We reached a fortified farmhouse called Ormiclate Castle, long since gutted by fire, and turned off the road, heading north along the coast through fields of Highland cattle. Rabbit burrows dominated the ground, and as we walked on, the occupants appeared in their dozens.

In the late afternoon we arrived at a lonely cemetery on a small peninsular called Rubh Aird Mhicheil. Twenty yards from the cemetery was a small hollow, our campsite for the night. Whilst dinner was being made, several people braved the cold water and seaweed, by going into the large breakers swelled by icy winds racing in across the Atlantic from Greenland. After a wholesome dinner, including tasty Hebridean mushrooms from Ormiclate Castle Farm, we went for a short walk along the coast. On the way back, I realised as darkness enveloped this lonely outpost, that not only were we camped next to a graveyard, but that we were about a stone's throw from a standing stone and a supposedly haunted ruin. To aggravate matters, Lynton began to sing a mournful song. Whilst walking, we had noticed that the wind

had become warmer, a sure sign of an oncoming warm front. Sure enough, the night brought force five winds and driving rain. Five members, including myself, spent the night under Richard's flysheet. This was surprisingly warm, but draughty and wet at times. (Not half as wet as Richard and Lynton's though! - Leader's comment)

Morning came and we walked three miles up the coast to a hostel at Howmore. to book places for people wishing to visit it and the neighbouring loch at a later date. Back at the tents we packed up and set off over the nine miles back to the Main camp.

On reaching the ridge that looked down towards the camp, there seemed to be something missing..... Alas, the Marquee had blown down for the second, time.

Jonathon Darwin

CANOEING BIVVY

Originally, this was planned to take place at the end of the first week. Unfortunately it had to be postponed, due to adverse weather conditions. This was a pity, as it would have connected with a previous foot bivvy and could have used their tents after them. But it was not to be. We (that is Ray) had planned to leave after breakfast (which means before lunch) so we were well pleased with our 11.00 a.m. start.

We were soon off down Sloc Dubh with the tide on our side for the journey up Loch Eynort towards North Locheynort. We made good progress and were glad to find that the tide was high enough to allow us through a narrow channel north of the island of Calvay. This led to a bridge under which the water was supposed to flow at an incredible rate, although we found it navigable. On reaching the top of the sea loch, we managed to tow our canoes through a narrow but channelled stream to Loch Ceann a' Bhaigh. There we turned due west down the loch to the main road. Once here, we carried the canoes two by two, up and over the embanked main road, to a .small loch with no name. From there we continued overland to Mid Loch Ollay, a large inland loch on which we could canoe further west for some time. Sadly, all good things come to an end and we were soon out of the canoes once more, carrying them half a mile or so, through bogs, across fields, over fences, finally arriving at West Loch Ollay for the last leg of our epic voyage. This loch was like all the others, shallow and rock-strewn; but with an additional hazard: reeds. Wending our way through, it felt like James Bond.

Once there we jumped out and spoke to a local farmer, who told us that the ruin where we were to camp was not after all haunted and had once been owned by a Pakistani before being burned down.

The tents were soon erected, thanks to Chris Parry and David Gooberman. At this point, the beautiful weather which we had had for the whole journey closed in and we were confined to our tents and duly slept most of the time, enjoying a similar existence to that of the rabbits (eating, sleeping, but not....! - as Ray suggested).

The next day, we managed to start back at the incredible time of 12 noon, allowing for a stop for lunch at the top of Loch Eynort. Canoeing down the channelled river, on the way there, we came as close to white water canoeing as is possible in South Uist. On the whole our return journey retraced the route of the outward voyage. Due to the state of the tide, however, we had to go south of Calvay. This was fortuitous as it turned out in that, as we rounded the island, we saw twenty or more seals basking on the rocks. Some of these swam out to investigate us, coming as close as ten feet and following almost all the way home. At one point, when we saw Ray making his way towards the southern .shore of Loch Eynort to plane in the by now quite large waves, we feared that he must have got caught short. Aware that this could be our fate too, the rest of us put our backs into returning to camp at the soonest!

That concluded our long and hazardous voyage, and I for one found it the most enjoyable part of the whole expedition. Thanks go to Ray, Chris, David, Ian and Frankie, who took part.

Dugald Wright

MEMORIES OF A PAST TRIP TO SOUTH UIST

The sea-blue sky's clouds pour above
He. The dog beside lies warm asleep, or catching flies.
Sea-brown rock's sand subsides
Is glad to be washed, and washed again
Yet more, and clean, and cleaner.
This is forgiving ground.
Two birds, grey on the rocks
White sentinels stand.
They do not need to look: they quietly know
The sea's bare truth.
Grey isolated death
For each. We ask but grace itself! but life.

Ha! Imperative waves!
You do not sense nor care.
Well-timed leapfrogs, yours,
Of each these now-smooth rocks.
Years, years are wasted: gone!
You cannot love!
Your immortality denies you life:
In death alone will love take root, and grow.

Anonymous

THE EAST COAST/LOCH DRUIDIBEG BIVVY

After an early breakfast, we set off from camp to do the three peaks of Beinn Mhor, Ben Corodale and Hecla, in one day, before staying the night in a bothy we had heard about on the east coast. Both Beinn Mhor and Ben Corodale were topped by mist, so we only caught a few glimpses of the impressive loch-filled scenery. Having had enough of mountains we decided to walk down to Loch Corodale, and explore the beehive cells and souterrains of Glen Usinish. We found several, including one that didn't appear on the map. These souterrains are large circular mounds of anything up to thirty feet in diameter and they tend to be covered over with bracken, heather and ferns which makes spotting them quite difficult.

We then walked down to the coast and the Usinish bothy, which we found to be positively palatial after the confinement of camp. We collected firewood and built a marvellous fire in the hearth. With the thick stone walls around us, and sponge pudding for desert, we soon dried off in comfort and warmth. During the night we listened to the howling gale which blew outside and were glad that the roof didn't leak (much). We saw nothing of the infamous rat which numerous accounts in the visitors' book laid claim to.

The next day saw us walking across the low lying bogs from Usinish Bay to the col next to Beinn na h-Aire. It was a hard slog in bad weather made even more difficult by the water from the many streams which had overflowed after the night's rain. We stopped for dinner with a good (if wet) view over to the east, where Skye was clearly visible. To the south, Beinn Mhor, Hecla and Ben Corodale dominated the horizon, but we could see Barra in the distance.

Presently, we walked quickly down past Loch Spofal and on to the road where it runs past, the nature reserve of Loch Druidibeg. We walked very quickly along here in an attempt to reach the shop before it closed but this didn't prevent us seeing several buzzards, ducks and a lone golden eagle. We cut across a track to the main north/south road and then struck out for the hostel at Howmore. There, although the shop had shut after all, we enjoyed a full meal, the highlight of which was Chris' Semolina Surprise - a large helping of semolina complete with gravy, mixed veg and hamburgers. Still, it took Dave three mouthfuls to work out that it wasn't Smash, which says something for Chris' cooking (or Dave's taste buds).

After the luxury of a camp bed, we made a punishingly early start to walk down the west coast where rabbits, beautiful beaches and castles masquerading as pigsties all abound. We visited the cemetery, which is a testimony to the long living islanders in that a fair majority lived into their eighties, and that there were more centurions buried there than I have ever seen in all the graveyards I have visited. We had lunch and a sunbathe in the dunes opposite Ormiclate Castle and then returned to camp along the Loch Eynort road, enjoying some of the best weather of the expedition.

Thanks go to Dave for his navigation, to Chris and Pete for leading and to our camp administrator, Ray, for the muesli.

Leaders: Chris Parry, Pete Schuller.

Members: John Craven, John Lowry, David Goberman, Richard Feasey, Gareth Turner.

Gareth Turner

MEMORIES OF SOUTH UIST: AN A TO Z GUIDE

A was for Alan, the oldest swinger in camp, and
B was for Bheinn Mhor and Bivvies, both very damp.
C was for Chris and Claire who took charge of canoeing, and
D was for Dug, never sure of what he was Doing.
E was for Eynort, the loch below Bheinn Mhor, and
F was for Frankie and Fisherman and Food in great store.
G was for Guinness which they sold in 0-ban, and
H was for Hercules, the dog who ate dregs from the pan.
I was for Inflatable which kept us afloat, and
J was for John-Joseph who helped with his boat.
K was for Kite which barely left the ground, and
L was for Lynton who bird-watched around.
M was for Marquee which kept blowing to the floor, and
N was for Niky who liked chocolate and kept asking for more.
O was for Orienteering with a puff and a blow, and
P was for Porridge which went in one go.
Q was for Quietness in the still of the night, and
R was for Richard, our leader, our trusted guiding light. (!)
S was for Semolina, gallons of the stuff, and
T was for Twins, not Terrible but Tough.
U was for Uncertainty about the time of the trains, and
V was for Very wet sleeping bags, a result of the rains.
W was for Wind which Whipped in from the West, and
X, Y and Zzzzz meant a well deserved rest.

Ray Snook
Camp Administrator

THE USINISH BOTHY

It was Wednesday on the last week of the expedition, and I had not yet been away from camp on a bivvy. I had intended to go on one earlier in the week, but the sight of that heavy rucksack drained my energy straight away!

It was around mid-day when we set off on the Usinish Bothy Hike. The delay in leaving was mainly due to a slight technical hitch on the part of the acting duty group. They miscalculated the ratio of porridge oats to liquid and in consequence about three tons of the stuff had to be consumed. Breakfast turned into a marathon porridge eating competition, which lasted for about two hours. At this point, I'd just like to congratulate John Lowry who tackled three bowls and lived to tell the tale. You'll probably agree that John did extremely well, as the stuff not only resembles 'Polyfilla', but also sets like it.

Following this somewhat unusual breakfast, eight of us, including three leaders, set out. The first leg was a steep uphill climb to the summit, of Beinn Mhor. It was agony going up to the top, but there was a tremendous view which made all the struggling worthwhile.

Once over Beinn Mhor, we sheltered from the blustery winds behind a small crag, and tucked into our jam sandwiches. Although the bread was stale, it was amazing how tasty they were after a couple of hours walking.

We then ascended Ben Corodale, followed by the cold and somewhat bleak Hecla. Beginning the descent, we passed over Ben Scalavat which, although it sounds impressive, was a comparatively small and insignificant peak. From this point, it was only about half a kilometre to the bothy, so we began to collect dry wood and heather, which could be used to make a fire. The bothy was situated in a sheltered valley next to Loch Corodale. To the north was Hecla and to the south Ben Corodale. It was very peaceful in the valley and deer could be seen wandering around with their young. I saw five deer, but other members of the party said they spotted more.

It was very warm and pleasant inside the bothy and we all ate a hearty meal of mince and mash. The snag came, however, when we had to do the washing up in the dark. The stream was about fifty metres away, which proved to be very awkward. In the end, we lost a couple of forks and spoons and we also lost our way going back to the bothy. We had a laugh, anyway!

The following morning, we got up reluctantly as it had been the first proper night's sleep we had had for two weeks. We didn't even see a rat during the night, which surprised me. According to the record book, the place was full of them.

At about eight o'clock we had what hotels call a continental breakfast - which means very little - and then we set off. At first we headed for the lighthouse near Nicolson's Leap, on the coast. Here, we split into two groups: Richard Young and two others headed south following the coast back to camp visiting Prince's Cave on the way. The rest of us headed north a little further inland towards Maol Hartaig and then west to Loch Druidibeg and the nature reserve. Here we had our lunch before dividing again. Alan Smith and Andy Grayson went south, making for camp, taking in another couple of peaks, I think. With the other two, I headed west to the road. Alan claimed we'd 'lost our bottle', but I still think that ours was the harder route; and anyway, I wanted to phone home for my 0-Level results. This acted as an incentive and so I really set a stiff pace, reaching the phone box five minutes before the others.

An hour later, we arrived back at camp, well behind Alan but before Richard. Most people asked me what my results were, and when I told them, I think they were shocked. "Not all these 'slow' Yorkshiremen are daft", I said. "Just because you southerners talk posh..."

The hike to the bothy had been a great success, as, in fact, had the whole expedition. I'm definitely going again next year. So watch out, everyone!

Mark Smith

SOUTH UIST WITH THE SHS - 1982

After meeting at Glasgow Queen Street, the party took the train to Oban via the usual scenic route. Then there was the long, rough journey across to Lochboisdale via Barra, which lasted seven and a half hours. Fish and chips seemed expensive but the trek to the Schoolhouse was rewarded by a much needed night's rest.

Repose was something there was no time for next day. A coach took us to within a couple of miles of our site on Loch Eynort, at the top end of Sloc Dubh. Until the Poseidon had been inflated our equipment had to be carried round to the site. What remained was ferried over in the boat.

Sunday was largely a rest day, as most people were still tired after Friday's travel, not to mention the previous day's hard graft. Some people used the opportunity to do their capsizing drill. It was while this was going on that the infamous weather began to turn against us. It stayed that way for the duration of the expedition. In fact, there was not a day when we were without rain and fierce winds, some of the time. Cagoules were the order of the day. (On the theme of high winds, did any other expedition manage to get its marquee blown down twice?)

Happily, the expedition was not totally ruined by the terrible weather. Even though we were nearly washed away after a period of torrential rain, a full range of activities went ahead. They included rock-climbing, hiking (force nine gales on Beinn Mhor), orienteering, canoeing, fishing, ornithology, swimming and snorkelling. Numerous bivvies were undertaken including one in canoes to the Atlantic coast. Sailing was also possible, thanks to the McDonald family who lived at the end of the road by Loch Eynort. They caught and gave us fish: Mackerel, pollock, coley, cod, crab and lobster. Our final day, a Sunday, was spent breaking camp, and even then the weather offered no mercy. All in all. however. South Uist 1982 was a successful expedition, although it was a shame the weather was so hard on us, particularly as it had apparently been so good the previous month.

John Craven

THREE DAY 'DUKE OF EDINBURGH' EXPEDITION BIVVY?

Day One:

We set out from camp at 0930 and made our way up the pass (Bealach Crosgard). The weather was sunny, with a breeze to disperse the midges. It wasn't, however, enough to clear the top of Beinn Mhor which was enveloped in a damp, unappealing cloud - not unusual! At the top of the pass, we turned northwards towards the summit and within a few minutes were in the cloud. Visibility was so bad that five times we thought we had reached the summit, and only the lack of a cairn showed us that we hadn't. We did reach it eventually, but only stayed there ten minutes before making a steep descent to the col for dinner. After dinner, we climbed again, this time up Ben Corodale. At the summit, where it was clearer, we could see Skye and Harris, and we thought, perhaps, Eigg, Muck and Rhum. We turned east, deciding to miss out Hecla. The ridge that we were descending was very soft, which gave our feet a good rest. Eventually we found a stream to follow down into the valley, where we were looking out for souterrains. We discovered all but one of those marked on the map - this one is supposed to have a twenty foot tunnel going into the hillside, which opens into a chamber. From close to the souterrains we spotted a pair of golden eagles before going on to the Usinish bothy. The bothy was very luxurious, with a real fireplace, proper bunks - well, almost - can openers that work and a solid roof.

Day Two:

We set off at the nice, early time of mid-day, making our way across boggy moorland. This was particularly hard going due to the heather, streams and general water-logging.

After pinpointing our position, we took a bearing up a small side valley and had lunch there in the shelter of an overhang, out of the driving rain.

Fifteen Minutes later, we were off over the hill towards Loch Skipport. This was very unpleasant as there was no shelter from the driving rain. Fortunately, however, we had only a few streams to cross. Even so, this stretch of about two miles took an hour. Arriving at the road just where we had intended, we were so pleased that we permitted ourselves five minutes rest before setting off apace past Loch Druidibeg and down the road. We reached our destination for the night, the hostel at Howmore, by 1730.

Cookery notes: When taking both semolina and smash on a bivvy Make sure that both bags are clearly labelled. Have you ever tried beefburger and semolina with Smash for pudding?!

Day Three:

We set off in good time to reach camp for tea. For a few miles we followed tracks and pathways that ran parallel to the sea. It was very warm and pleasant for a change so we decided to stop and look around a graveyard before lunch. As we were largely following roads and tracks, the day seemed uneventful. We reached camp in time for tea - and midges.

David Goberman

WHY DO PEOPLE GO ON AN SHS EXPEDITION MORE THAN ONCE?

Surely people outside the Society, who don't think along the same wavelength. must ask themselves this question. After all, going on these expeditions we have to suffer rain, gales, midges, floods, tents blowing down, and even vole-in-the-sleeping-bag if Richard, Ray or Peter is around. (How gross -Ed.)

So why is it that people come again and again and again? What is the attraction of such a lifestyle? Obviously, one of the inducements must be the spectacular and beautiful scenery that surrounds you in the Hebrides some people find that the magnificent landscape talks to them. It conveys some feeling of peace and solitude that is not to be found elsewhere, where there are always people. Perhaps the very remoteness calls us to go to these islands. We enjoy walking, climbing and all the wetter water sports, even though the rain can change the land to an overgrown mire in parts. And yet, where else can one be so alone but so free from worries, so peaceful? The simple lifestyle may be a stimulus to some

people, along with the attraction of getting to know people with like interests, learning new skills and making new friends.

To my mind, however, there is that little element of madness, that small touch of insanity in all SHS'ers who go time after time, which makes them do just that.

Brigit Hutchinson

SOUTH UIST SPECIES LIST (AUGUST 1982)

A specimen list of the biologically interesting species found and classified on the 1982 South Uist Expedition follows. Only the rarer or local species have been recorded, but it is hoped that future expeditions will add to the lists, noting the time of year.

The famous Urnu (!) was unfortunately not seen or heard, although a Sh! Sh! Sh! noise was often heard in the early hours of the morning. This was usually followed by a hollow resonating sound of something being hit, and ending with a sickening thud. I only investigated these noises once, to discover that the CA had tripped over a guy rope whilst suffering from an overdose of cocoa at supper-time.

<u>Heather Moor</u>		
<u>Birds</u>		
Robin	Hooded crow	Kestrel
Blackbird	Raven	Golden eagle
Wren	Twite	Barn owl
Stonechat	Meadow pipit	Merlin
<u>Wild flowers</u>		
Tormentil	Common milkwort	Cotton grass
Bog asphodel	House wort	Ragged robin
Bog bean	Common sundew	Water lily
Heather/bell heather	Greater sundew	Skull cap
Eye bright	Butterwort	
<u>Mammals</u>		
Mouse	Shrew	Bank vole
Rabbit		

Insects

Marsh grasshopper	Fox moth	Small white
Sheep tick	Red admiral	Common blue
Oak eggal moth	Small tortoiseshell	Common dar beetle

Fresh water stream

Birds

Meadow pipit	Dipper
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Wild flowers/shrubs/trees

Wood sage	Butterwort	Rowan
Bramble	Marsh gentian	Juniper
Silver weed	Lesser spearwort	Wild briar
Violet wood	Devils bit scabrow	Mountain willow
Stinging nettle	Wild thyme	Wild bilberry
Lesser hawkbit	Wild strawberry	Silver birch
Yarrow	Bog pennywort	Beech

Fern

Royal fern	Hard fern
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Insects

Water boatman	Blue dragonfly	Cabbage white
Dragonfly - Downy emerald		

Estuary/Loch shore

Birds

Heron	Redshank	Curlew
Oystercatcher	Greenshank	Red throated diver

Flora

Ancophyllum	Polysiphonia
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LOCH SHIEL EXPEDITION

Leader: Simon Lord

Assistant leaders: Tim Short, Alison Hillier

Members: Clare Bourne, Gregory Cotton, Francesco Edlamm, Nick Gradwell, Glenda (Fay) Holmes, Sue Lovelace, Julian Rake, Alison Spink, Jenny Watson.

Glenaladale has seen many events, ranging from a visit by Bonnie Prince Charlie to this year's trendy SHS Expedition. Even though it is a mere thirty miles from the bustling metropolis of Fort William, it is one of the most remote and peaceful sites we visit.

The sun shone for most of the time and towards the end of the expedition complaints regarding the sun's intensity were common, as lumps of red flesh emerged for breakfast.

Sun was not the only thing in abundance. Vast quantities of food seem to have ended up with us, much to the annoyance of the Camp Administrator, who traditionally enjoys great power. Even with the glut of food, things still went missing, and I haven't forgiven someone for consuming expedition supplies out of hours.

The P IV inflatable was without doubt our greatest asset and many a happy hour was spent relaxing in Ra-ra skirts on the sun-baked sand, watching the members leaping like lemmings from the P IV with blood-curdling screams, each trying to make the biggest splash. He-men tried to impress the delicate young ladies with a glorious display of swallow diving and small talk.

The canoes were used extensively, and three people to a canoe was not uncommon. Longer outings with picnic hampers and straw boaters went, to view the local graveyards and other topical places. On one trip to Burial Island, the peace and calm was ruined as a heavily laden Royal Marine landing craft drove on to the island and disgorged its contents of bikini-clad beauties who had come for a look round.

I managed to coax most people into going on a he-man bivvy by promising them sweeties and lollipops. But some of the young ladies foiled my attempts to make them suffer by producing tent, radio and hair shampoo. (Obviously they knew how to cope with men in dirty raincoats! - Ed)

Evening activities were curtailed somewhat by the absence of songbooks, but Tim and Glenda gave us an insight into slug and spider life - "pull their legs off and watch their bodies lurch about". How gross.

Francesco took up fishing with enthusiasm but no success and



certainly with no help from Nick who unexpectedly slipped down a rock face to stir up the waters a bit and then threw parts of his camera in so that he could enjoy another dip.

The midges were a bit rough, and an evening party departing for a 'wee heavy' to escape them were caught defenceless on their return, at the pier.

All in all, I enjoyed the Expedition, as did most of the members, I think. This was the first expedition I've been on where we all got a tan.

Simon Lord

DOMESTIC TRIALS

Loch Shiel was my first expedition, and I thoroughly enjoyed it because of the friendly, relaxed atmosphere, nutty (? - Ed) leaders and blazing sunshine. The main surprise was the abundance of food. Twelve people wore pent away with food for thirty! Fun, you might think. Put when this meant regularly consuming an expedition sized tin of rice pudding, the indigestion that followed got beyond a joke. Ron" of us became quite expert at making porridge and custard - though not together, thankfully.

Certain members with aspirations for 'Haute cuisine' used us as guinea pigs on cheese and marmite fondues. Mind you, the packed lunches were the killers: marmalade or jam or marmite on bread and huge slabs of chocolate..... we had it tough!

Towards the end of the expedition, the fruit had turned soft. and brown, and the bags of uneaten bread mounted up to such an extent that some members resorted to using them as pillows.

One girl, who will remain nameless, made a soup so thick the spoon stood up in it. I am glad to say I was away on a bivvy on that occasion.

Those were the days! We all had fun, I think. But even going to collect water was a challenge coming back from the stream negotiating a path through clumps of grass, no hands free to ward off attacks from ravaging midges, it was no joke. Even so, the expedition was really good, and I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to making it so.

Clare Bourne

MIDGEMANIA

Arrival on site: we set up our camp in the bountiful valley of Glenaladale beside Loch Shiel and had dinner just before dusk when....WHAM! We didn't know what hit us. Everyone rushed for cover and protective creams and lotions, but it was useless. There was no place to hide. The midges had found us and were to plague us for the next two weeks.

Oh, when I think of those nights, sleepless, spent feeding those creatures. Over the course of the expedition, you would have thought that the combined night of hands, repellents, tilley lamps, mallets (yes, mallets, one of the members got so desperate that he tried a midge massacre with a mallet) would have got rid of most of them, but the WORST WAS TO COME. On the last day, midges came from miles around with all their friends and relations (gnats, cleggs, spiders, earwigs and slugs) to bite us goodbye while we packed up the equipment.

Despite all this, we had a great time, canoeing, swimming and bivvying. But I must say, I'm glad that midges don't like the lead fumes of London.

Sue Lovelace

EXPEDITION BIVVI: IS THIS A FIRST?

An expedition bivvy! How can this be? Where did they go? How did they get there?

Well, I don't know if this is a first, but I think it might be. The explanation is simple. An expedition bivvy is perfectly simple when the total expedition totals only twelve members. On Loch Shiel, there are plenty of suitable islands for such an enterprise. Two islands were earmarked on the doubtful basis that they were less midgey than our base camp.

To get to the camp we had two options: 1) swim or 2) take canoes accompanied by the P IV, which barely floated. (Note to reassure parents: members always tend to exaggerate for effect - Ed) We set out for our islands as the weather began to deteriorate. Most people got pretty wet from spray as a result. After landing, we set about making a fire - in the best boy scout fashion, of course. Cocoa was brewed and subsequently consumed round the fire. As it got dark, some of the party set out with the P IV to spend the night on the other island. The only way to escape for those who remained was to swim. Instead, we decided to settle down for the night. For some this meant a hole in the heather) for others it was a five star bivvy shelter (i.e. a fly sheet draped over a tree wedged between two rocks). And so we settled down with teddy (?) and midges, in the hope of sleep. Sleep was the last thing you got, however. Apart from the midges which found us out and started biting, a gale blew up whipping up leaves and sticks towards our shelter.

The next morning, after a delicious breakfast of muesli (so we were led to believe) we returned to base camp and our midge friends. All in all, an expedition bivvy is an unusual but enjoyable experience.

Alison Spink

TASK FORCE TO GLENMOIDART HOTEL OR WAS IT?

One sunny morning we set out, little knowing what we were in for or whether we would return. There were five in our party: Simon, Francesco, Nick, Sue and me. Us girls being girls, we took everything but the kitchen sink and as the men strode on before us, we struggled on behind. We puffed and swore, panted and cursed, but kept going in spite of having wet boots, wet socks, wet just about everything. Up the valley, passed Glenaladale House (which Simon told us was haunted) we went. We struggled through sphagnum bogs, across grass humps and uphill until we reached a ridge. After having experienced much difficulty in climbing it was a pleasure to sit with heart pounding, legs aching and back breaking. From the ridge, we could see back down the valley. It was a steep incline, and Sue had been hindered by her weak ankles and Nick's bionic legs (? - Ed).

Over the ridge, we carried on down to a place called Glenforslan, where there was a pleasant old ruin, with a river running through it. It seemed a suitable place to spend the night, and as we started to prepare dinner, Sue and I came to the conclusion that man cannot cope without the dying race, woman. Seeing what we had brought with us, I realised I would have to use my culinary skills to convert a tin containing large lumps of fat and occasional pieces of soya bean into a delicious dish called Stew aux Irlandais. Later we were to discover that the only food we had brought with us was stew, ginger cake, porridge and coffee. Again, it was a woman who came to the rescue, producing sugar to go with the coffee.

The night was yet young, and looking at the map, we saw what we took to be a hotel. Pints of lager ran up in front of our eyes. Setting off apace, and with one thing in mind, we were undeterred by a sign on a bridge saying 'Private'. Shortly afterwards, we bumped into a rather obtuse gentleman who claimed he owned the place.....the trouble was, he did.

Needless to say, he wasn't pleased that we had ignored his 'Private' sign, and accused poor Simon of being unable to map-read. We beat a retreat most displeased to have found that the symbol 'Ho' stands for House, not Hotel. Retracing our steps to the bridge we decided to spend the night by a lake set above us up a hill. The hill turned out to be extraordinarily steep. We clambered up it, suffering many a sore foot on the way. We spent the night on the hillside. But girls will be girls, so Sue and I spent the night in the small tent we had brought with us.

In the morning, we ate thin porridge. Thin, because Nick had put some in his coffee the previous night. We also had some ginger cake. After breakfast, we all washed our hair, thanks to Sue who had brought some shampoo. Typical of a man to forget!

The return Journey took us over Beinn Gaire. From then on it was downhill. We stopped for a rest on some flat rocks by a waterfall. This lasted for over an hour as we all fell asleep. The last leg of the journey took us down Glenaladale, where we passed Bob Crockett in his mean machine. I am happy to say that we all returned in one piece although with a fewisters and twisted ankles. At this stage I am prepared to admit that I enjoyed myself and do not regret having taken part in such a bivvy.

Glenda Holmes

MINGULAY EXPEDITION

Leader: Ian Arrow

Members: Martin Charters, Richard Pitts, Nick Deeley, Sean O'Reilly, Simon Lingard, Richard Young, Louise Worsdale, Julie Edwards, Alun Grant, Simon Atkinson, Karen Heeley, Vince Giavarini, Andrew Gray, Pat and Jane MacKeram, Ruth Jessup, David Chapman, David Edwards, Janet Simpson. Special guest: Colin Archer.

After weeks of wading through sheaves of papers of organisation it was a pleasure to see the expedition members congregate at Oban Station. That great SHS tradition, the crocodile, wended its way to MacBraynes. Within no time, we were within sight of Castlebay where, as before, the schoolmaster there, Mr John Campbell, Made us warmly welcome.

On the first tide the following morning, John Macleod sailed "The Boy James" for Mingulay. A big swell coming in from the Atlantic made for an exciting crossing for those who chose to sit in the bow. In a hectic afternoon, all the gear was landed and camp pitched just in time for a roaring sou'westerly. All hands went to the marquee, but regretfully our engine room was awash. However, Colin offered us warm hospitality around his fire and yarned as one who has seen SHS expeditioners before.

When camp was settled, we started to explore the island and took up the activities which were to occupy our stay. We marvelled at the cliffs: Vince undertook a mammoth botanical study; while some folk had the pleasure of climbing.

Our thanks to Nick and Jane for such good grub. Dinner was regularly punctuated by reassuring calls to the Oban coastguard.

For me, the Dun with the kittiwakes conjured up the aura of the islands, a sanctuary from the roaring winds and the whipping seas. But, other members no doubt, had their favourite places. There is no doubt that the 1982 expedition to Mingulay, like past expeditions there, was a leisurely affair. Regular sing-songs and extensive use of the en suite were the order of the day. On our final day on the island, we were joined by the shepherds who had come to take off the sheep. John Macleod's pressing schedule meant that we had to leave a day -early. So we spent an enjoyable day playing the tourist on Barra.

Everyone gained a lot from our stay on this usually uninhabited island, for folk spoke of what they would do when they returned. I hope that many do. My thanks go to all who made thin expedition possible, especially to Colin, the Barrahead Sheep Stockholding Company, to the Coastguard and to the trusty Assistant Leaders.

Inn Arrow

Dandelion	Red clover	Daisy
White clover	Meadow sweet	Ribwort plantain
Ling	Ragwort	Lousewort
Bird's foot trefoil	Bell heather	Lady's bedstraw
Cross leaved heath	Yarrow	Tormentil
Sheeps bit	Silverweed	Wild celery
Black knapweed	Ragged robin	Lesser spearwort
Heath milkwort	Greater burdock	Wetted thistle
Field forget-me-not	Water dock	Cats ears
Common sorrel	Round leaved sundew	Sea holly
Thrift	Knotted pearlwort	Eyebright
Hawksbeard	English stonecrop	Roseroot
Bog asphodel	Creeping buttercup	Sea plantain
Marsh willowherb	Common scurvy grass	Bog cotton
Common storksbill	Green alkanet	Wild thyme
Sea campion	Bog pimpernel	Curled dock
Self heal	Water forget-me-not	Common chickweed
Broad leaved willowherb		

Total 52 species

Ruth Jessup

OH YAMAHA!

Some people have poured their hearts out in poems to a skylark, a nightingale and so on. Following this tradition, this ode is dedicated to a Yamaha outboard engine. Unfortunately, it is sung to the strains of "Oh Christmas Tree".

Oh Yamaha! Oh Yamaha!

You did the dirty! Yamaha!

Oh Yamaha! Oh Yamaha!

Oh what a little sod you are!

How could you go and disappear

And leave us with no boating gear?

We'll pay for this. Oh dear! Oh dear!

What will the Board say when they hear?

Where did you go that fateful day

Beneath the waves of Mingulay?

Were you really washed away

Or didn't you want to stay?

Oh Yamaha! Oh Yamaha!

We never thought you'd go that far.

Oh Yamaha! Oh Yamaha!

If only we knew where you are!

Though we've lost some things before

This takes the cake for ever more.

This is beyond tolerance -

Hell! What will we tell the Conference?

Colin Archer. The Priest's House

HARRIS EXPEDITION

Leader: Simon Atkinson

Assistant leaders: Judith Pielou, Ian Swann, Sarah Kew, Doug Payne

Members: Peter Davies, Elspeth Dobson, Paul Drayton, Brian Edgar, Alison Golsworthy, Jane Hemingway, James Hester, Andrew Hosty, Hark Johnson, Michael Kell, Jeremy Marsden, Paul Masters, Sheila Nash, Melanie Prentice, Alison Redding, Rishard Skipper, Chris Smith, Sarah Walker, Steven Wallace, Douglas Warburton, Alison Webster, William Welch.

The telephone rang for the nth time that evening. "Hello, Simon, it's John Round. What are you doing this summer?"

"Well, I was planning on doing nothing for three weeks, and then going to Mingulay to continue doing nothing for another three weeks" I replied.

John continued: "We need to find a leader for the Harris Expedition as Steve Martin has had to withdraw. How about it?"

Four weeks later, I found myself driving a lorry up to Scotland with Steve Paynter and Ian Swann. The weather was unbelievable. Surely it would not be as nice for the next few weeks.

We found the Harris expedition basking in the sun at Uig, amid piles of rucksacks and the usual SHS flotsam and jetsam. The journey to Tarbert next day was uneventful. We arrived only to find the tide retreating and the boatman in a hurry to leave. The gear was transferred from ferry to fishing boat in double quick time, and petrol, paraffin, etc collected. Half the party went with the boat while the rest waited for the bread and then trudged the hard seven miles to Rhenigidale. This path is one of the best walks in the whole of the Outer Isles, but it is also quite tiring, especially with a heavy rucksack.

We on the boat arrived only to find that the tide was far too low to attempt unloading so there was nothing to do but wait. With nothing else to do, the crew and I set about emptying some of those well known red cans and a bottle with a well known gamebird on the label.

The tide had risen sufficiently at about the time the walking party arrived, so they were able to help unload (I bet they thought they had missed that pleasure). Eventually the marquee and other tents were up and assorted accompanying tanks completed.

After several days on site, I became even more puzzled about the weather. We were lacking those perennial gales, rain and midgets. What was wrong? In fact, throughout the whole three weeks we experienced only a few wet days and a handful of midget attacks. The temperature was often in the high seventies and perhaps once or twice in the low eighties.

Sunbathing and swimming became favourite pastimes, although many other activities were undertaken in spite of the hot weather. Canoeing was not particularly varied though we managed to explore Loch Seaforth, and many other places. Two canoe bivvies managed to find out where all the midgets had gone, but enjoyed their experiences despite them.

Many demanding walks were undertaken, notably those to the Clisham ridge and Sgoath ridge, while other less demanding trips were made to Toddun, the Uiseval ridge, Scalpay and Tarbert. Climbing was also popular. Including the unusual activity of abseiling into the P4 whilst being pelted with jellyfish.

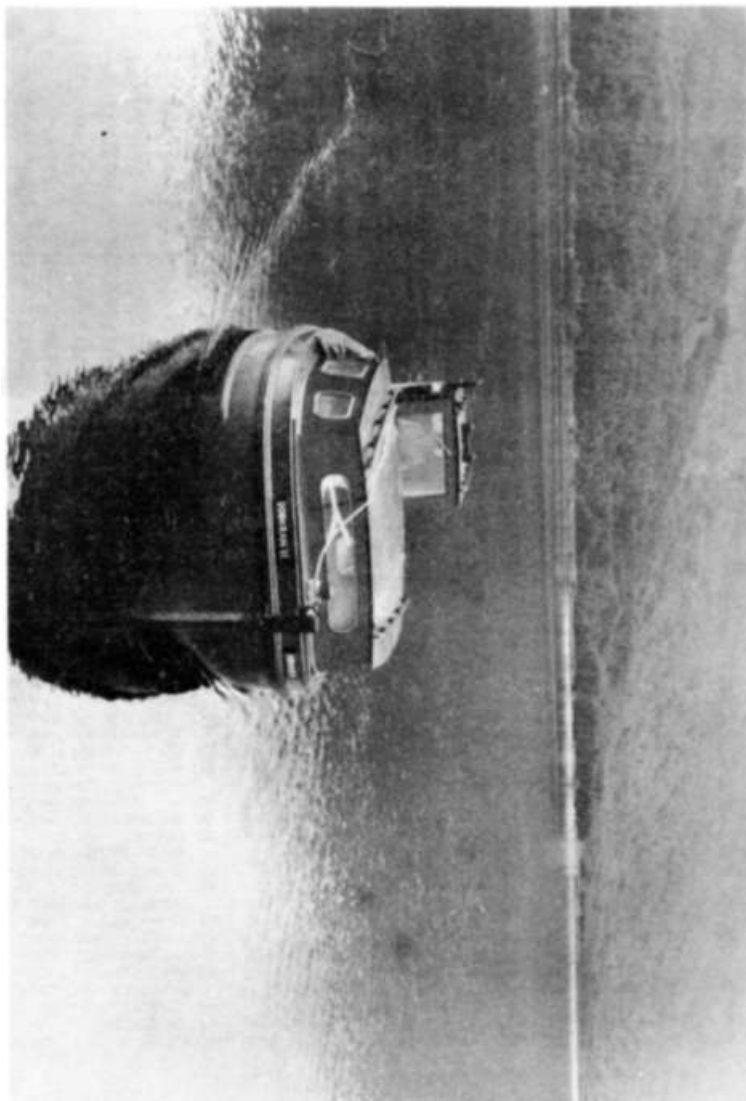
As well as the usual outdoor activities, Rhenigidale was to witness softball, soccer, cricket and a few less conventional games. Who did win? Was it the Hards or the Whimps? The highlight of many long evenings chasing various round objects was Bri singing Buddy Holly epics accompanied by a variety of musicians, including one professional. It was a pity that we had to burn the table with all the songs written on it. It was much better than the songbooks.

All good things must come to an end, and so I left them all to it, by departing the day before they did. A wet but memorable trip in the P4 to Tarbert, followed by a superb sunset and a long hot shower on the ferry. Would the weather on Mingulay be as good?

My thanks to all members, ALs, management committee, the board and in particular the islander who made this expedition possible. My particular thanks go to Roddy MacInnes who made it all so easy and so pleasurable, particularly in the evenings. Will my liver ever recover?

Simon Atkinson

N.B. What happened to all those reports you were going to write? Only Jude lost her apathy long enough to fulfill her commitment. Thanks, Jude. (Amen - Ed)



WEST COAST BIVVY

Participants: Jude (Grandma) Pielou, Richard (Skip) Skipper, Mark (Shirtsleeves) Johnson, Alison (Otle) Webster, Paul (Hard) Masters, and Chris (Superman) Smith.

Memories of superb sandy beaches on the west coast of Lewis persuaded me to take a bivvy in search of similar beaches on Harris. We decided to go to Luskentyre, a vast expanse of immaculate sand at least two and a half inches long on the map. After struggling up the infamous zig-zag path with full packs, we stopped at Tarbert (to buy some eggs - who mentioned the pub?) before setting out along the road to Luskentyre. (Well, it's a long way to walk, and it was very hot. Honest) About 1½ miles down the road Paul and I were passed by Alison and Chris waving from the back of a car. A few seconds later, the same car backed down the hill, and soon all four of us were squashed in the car with a very friendly and obliging couple - they went miles out of their way- and took us all the way to Luskentyre. We then waited by the phone box (take note Richard and Mark) and ate our spam sandwiches. About two hours later, along strolled Richard and Mark, Mark with both shirt sleeves mysteriously torn off at the elbows. They'd arrived earlier and decided to wait elsewhere - intelligence. In the meantime, Mark, as happens to most of us at times, felt the call of nature, and as the loo roll was in someone else's rucksack', he resorted to using his, yes you've guessed it, shirtsleeves.

We then turned our attention to erecting the Keb bivvy tent-on the sand dunes by the beach. This is definitely the weirdest and most complicated tent I've ever seen and it looks like a lopsided green limpet. It would probably sleep three in comfort, but sleeps six in extreme discomfort. After successfully sorting out the intricacies of the tent, the harder members went for a swim, whilst some of us danced around at the water's edge in various states of undress. Next came the intellectual part of the bivvy: building sandcastles and attempting to dam the sea - silly idea! The details of burying Mark in the sand are too obscene to be reported here. Look at the photos, if you can get hold of any.

Evening meal consisted of Irish Stew avec le Smash et Sponge Pudding a la Midge. A mobile food shop arrived shortly afterwards and was instantly invaded. I can't think why. There's nothing wrong with SHS food, is there?

After more fun on the beach, we retired to our luxurious quarters for the night. Thanks to a certain person's snoring I got a total of about four minutes sleep (ta Richard). Mark got up at some ridiculously early hour to photograph the sunrise, which he missed.

At breakfast time we decided to have an emergency, and ate our chocolate.

Then, after deciding to have lunch in the pub. we ate all our lunch as well. We then walked/hitched back to Tarbert. Paul and I were transported in the back of a van by a local who certainly didn't hang around - he covered eight miles in around five minutes.

After some real food in the pub, we struggled back along the seven up and down miles to Rhenigidale in hot sunshine (yes, hot sunshine) and on our return to camp I braved the jellyfish and dived into the sea for a swim. All that sunshine must have affected my brain.....

Judith Pielou

A LITTLE LOCAL DIFFICULTY

Though I say it myself, travel was organised in good time this year. By mid-June everything was ready.

And then Ray Buckton and Sir Peter Parker had their little disagreement. The railwayman came out on strike. A fortnight before the first expedition was due to leave, we had to think the unthinkable: what happens if there aren't any trains?

In a crisis, of course, one needs a Committee. So John Round, Director of Expeditions and a stickler for the correct procedure, summoned Hugh Lorimer and myself and the three of us became the Transport and Travel Sub-Committee. Future historians will doubtless find our many volumes of minutes of considerable interest.

Transporting the equipment was Hugh's problem. 10 tonnes or so - everything from plastic mugs to P4 inflatables, from baked beans to loo tents normally travels from Leeds to Fort William in a rail wagon and is then broken into smaller loads for distribution round the islands. Now it all had to go in a fleet of self drive lorries. Every member of the Society over 21 with a clean driving license was pressed into service. Even so, we fell foul of the tachograph laws (the what? as Peter Forsaith said to the policeman). We got away with a warning.

Passengers presented a different problem. Unfortunately, a hundred and fifty members of expeditions tend to come from a hundred and fifty different places. For several days, my office in Sheffield seemed to be solely concerned with finding the best way to get from Enfield to Loch Shiel or from Lochboisdale to Oldham. The permutations and combinations were endless.

With a great deal of help from National Travel in Yorkshire and the Scottish Bus Group in Glasgow, we solved the problem. The Leeds-Oldham-Manchester-Glasgow shuttle became part of the SHS, complete with connections to Oban, Fort William, Sconser and Uig. Wellington Street Coach Station in Leeds can surely never before have witnessed anything quite like the return of the Harris Expedition in the middle of the night, and Manchester's Chorlton Street seemed quite unused to dealing with a huge pile of rucksacks outward bound for Raasay.

We did have one piece of luck. By the time the time the expeditions left, the trains were running again. Most people were already on their way by coach, but without them, the Loch Shiel Expedition would have walked from Fort William. On the whole, the exercise saved both time and money. And I was able to add some more unforgettable moments to my store of SHS memories.

Gavin Macpherson

PAST EXPEDITIONS OF THE SHS

<u>Expedition</u>	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Expedition</u>	<u>Leader</u>
1962		1968	
Gometra	John Abbott	Vatersay	Phil Renold
1963		Lewis	David Cullingford
Rhum	John Abbott	South Rona	Chris Hart
Gometra	Tim Wilcocks	South Uist	John Cullingford
1964		Colonsay	Alan Bateman
Mingulay	Martin Child	1969	
South Rona	John Abbott	Shetlands	Chris Dawson
Rassay	Richard Fountaine	South Uist	John Cullingford
Gometra	James Emerson	Lewis	John Hutchison
1965		Rhum	Chris Hart
Harris	John Abbott	Colonsay	Roger Trafford
Jura	Johnny Ker	1970	
Rassay	Clifford Fountaine	South Uist	Geoffrey David
Morvern	Jim Hardy	Shetlands	David Vigar
1966		Fladday	Mike Baker
Lewis	Roger Dennien	Lewis	Alan Howard
Harris	Alan Bateman	North Uist	Phil Renold
Jura	Andrew Wilson	Ulva	Alan Fowler
Colonsay	Chris Dawson	1971	
Dingle	John Houghton	South Rona	Roger Weatherly
1967		Rhum	Phil Renold
Mingulay	Kenneth Huxham	Jura	Charles Hooper
Rhum	John Dobinson	Colonsay	Alan Howard
Harris	Andrew Wilson	Mingulay	Hugh Williams
Lewis	John Abbott	1972	
Colonsay	John Jackson	Muckle Roe	Ray Winter
		South Uist	Alan Fowler

<u>Expedition</u>	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Expedition</u>	<u>Leader</u>
1972 (cont)		1977	
Lewis	Gavin Macpherson	Lewis Uig Sands	Nick Deeley
Rassay	Paul Caffery	Jura	Dave Harding
North Uist	Roger Weatherly	Colonsay	David Lennard-Jones
1973		Lewis Mealista	Phil Renold
Harris	Phil Renold	Knoydart	Craig Roscoe
South Uist	Alan Fowler	Loch Shiel	Peter Liver
South Rona	Jim Turner	1978	
Rhum	Mark Rayne	Rassay	Roger Weatherly
Jura	Dave Bradshaw	North Uist	Simon Atkinson
Colonsay	Alan Howard	South Uist	Dave & Angie Crawford
1974		Rhum	Humphrey Southall
Rassay	Peter Carlisle	Knoydart	Jim Turner
Harris	John Hutchison	1979	
North Uist	John Cullingford	Islay	Roger Weatherly
South Uist	Jim Turner	Jura	Stephen Paynter
Outer Isles	Paul Caffery	Lewis Mealista	Pete Weston
1975		Lewis Tamnavay	Tony Ingleby
Colonsay	Phil Renold	Rhum	Mike Hayward (Chris Venning)
Jura	Lawrence Hall	Loch Shiel	Alan Smith
South Uist	Alan Evison	1980	
Rassay	Gavin Macpherson	Colonsay	John Round
Mingulay I	Nick Deeley	Mingulay	Nick Deeley
Mingulay II	Nick Deeley	North Uist	Stephen Paynter
1976		South Uist	Simon & Rose Atkinson
Lewis	Paul Caffery	Harris	Jonathan Orr
Harris	John Bromley	Knoydart	Ian Arrow
South Uist	Mike Hayward	1981	
North Uist	Alan Fowler	Colonsay	Chris Venning
Rhum	Roger Weatherly	Lewis Mealista	Gavin Macpherson

Expedition

1981 (cont)

Jura
Lewis Tomanavay
Rhum
Loch Shiel

1982

Raasay
North Uist
South Uist
Loch Shiel
Harris
Mingulay

Leader

Roger Weatherly
Peter Fale
Alan Smith
Stephen Paynter

Chris Venning
Hugh Loriser
Richard Young
Simon Lord
Simon Atkinson
Ian Arrow