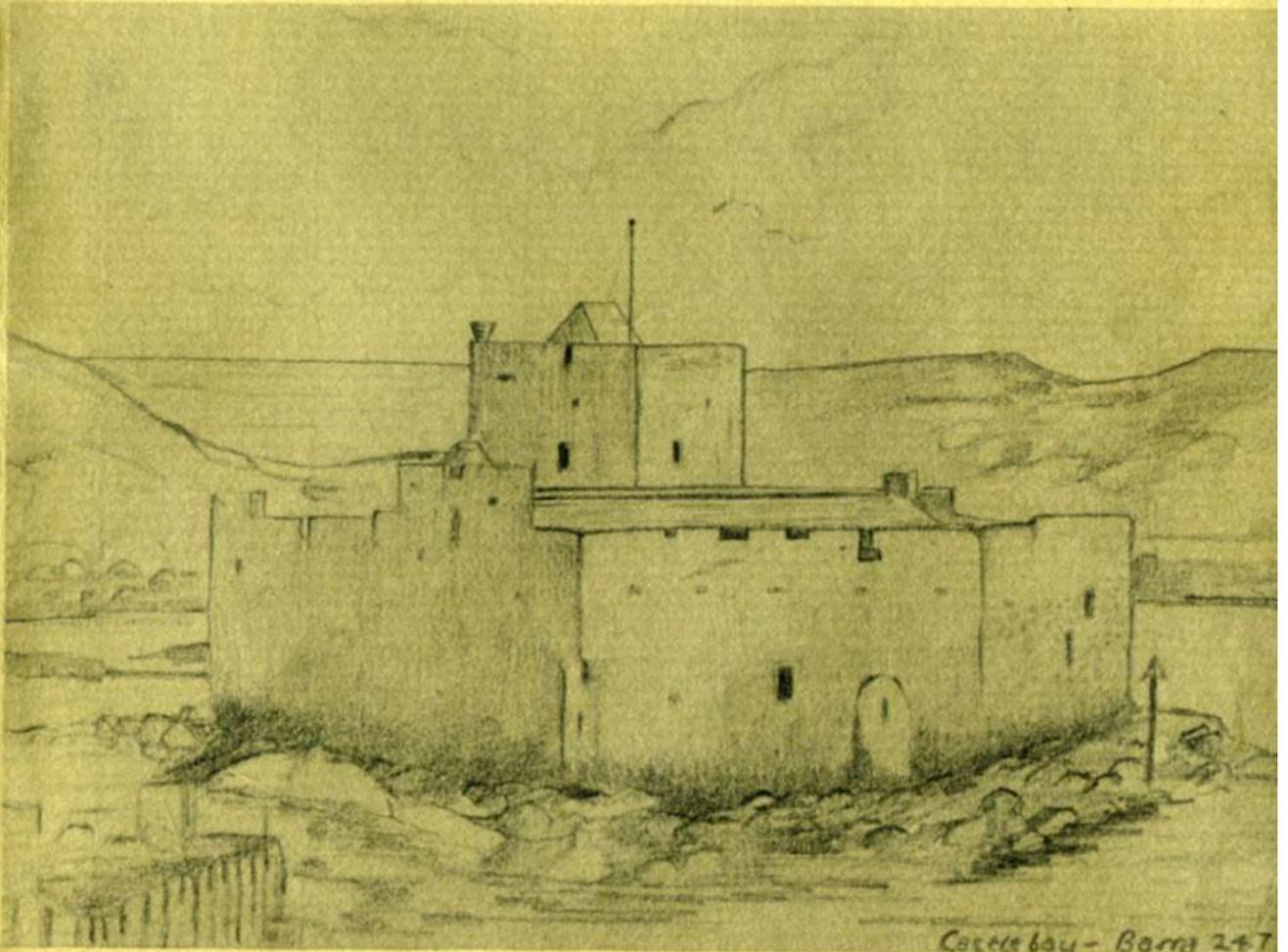


SCHOOLS' HEBRIDEAN SOCIETY



REPORT 1975.

SCHOOLS HEBRIDEAN SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 1975

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Jura	I. Hall
Raasay	G Macpherson

EXPEDITION LEADERS 1976

To be appointed by Conference	
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South Uist	
Rhum.	R Weatherly
North Uist	A Fowler
Lewis	P Caffrey

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every year the Society receives help from so many people, firms, and organisations that it would be impossible to mention them all by name. We would, however, like to express our very sincere thanks to all those people, without whose help our activities would not be possible.

EDITORIAL

The small parcel lay unopened in my hand. The postmark "Oldham" induced the smallest hesitation in my normally brusque actions. Taking a deep breath I slit open one end and out tumbled a green plastic eye shade with a small card. The card had those strange entangled arrows in the top left-hand corner, and announced in clear type "Verbalise the summer's adventurous peregrinations for the most diminutive sum of sterling feasible. Chairman". Just like that.

Thus after administrative gymnastics the dimensions of the Report shrank, the size of the print shrank, but in exchange for needing glasses to read it, it was possible to get more in than last year.

The task of reading all your contributions has been a pleasant one, and I think that from a veritable cornucopia of literary effort I have been able to put together a useful summary of the activities of this past year. But a summary is all that it is, and I was pleased to hear that some expeditions were putting together their own reports in more detail of the activities and work done by their own groups.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

When I went on my first SHS expedition in 1965 the fee was E20. In 1975 it was £44-50 and in 1976 it will be E49-50, with the possibility of a further surcharge if inflation continues at its present rate. The Society is a registered charity and as such is not permitted to make a profit. Consequently we run our expeditions at cost. Every year the Board of Directors cones up against the same problem of not enough money and too many pressing needs. This has been especially true over the past two years, yet despite this we have decided upon a policy which I hope will always be our first priority. This is that we should maintain the standard of service that we provide whether in equipment, length of expedition, or sites visited. In consequence we have always been operating en a shoe-string. At one time in 1975 The Society was working on a budget surplus of £5 on a turnover of £6,000.

One of the ways in which we have been able to continue operations has been by careful budgetary control, especially over administrative costs. However, all our efforts would have been in vain but for the very generous help provided by parents, boys, officers, and friends of the SHS in time spent on administration, in lending equipment, and in donations and deeds of covenant. I can assure you that it is deeply appreciated.

One other problem has arisen in recent years that is worthy of comment. This is the availability of sites for the expeditions themselves. Over the past fourteen years we have organised sixty three expeditions to twenty five different sites. Of those sites four are unsuitable for large expeditions, and three are very expensive to get to. A further eight are closed to us because of difficulty in obtaining permission. The reason for this is because visitors of any sort are unwelcome due to the large numbers now visiting the islands, and to the general disturbance that they have caused. This leaves the SHS with only ten sites that are both suitable and available. In addition four of these may soon prove less attractive following development nearby that tends to reduce the air of isolation and remoteness.

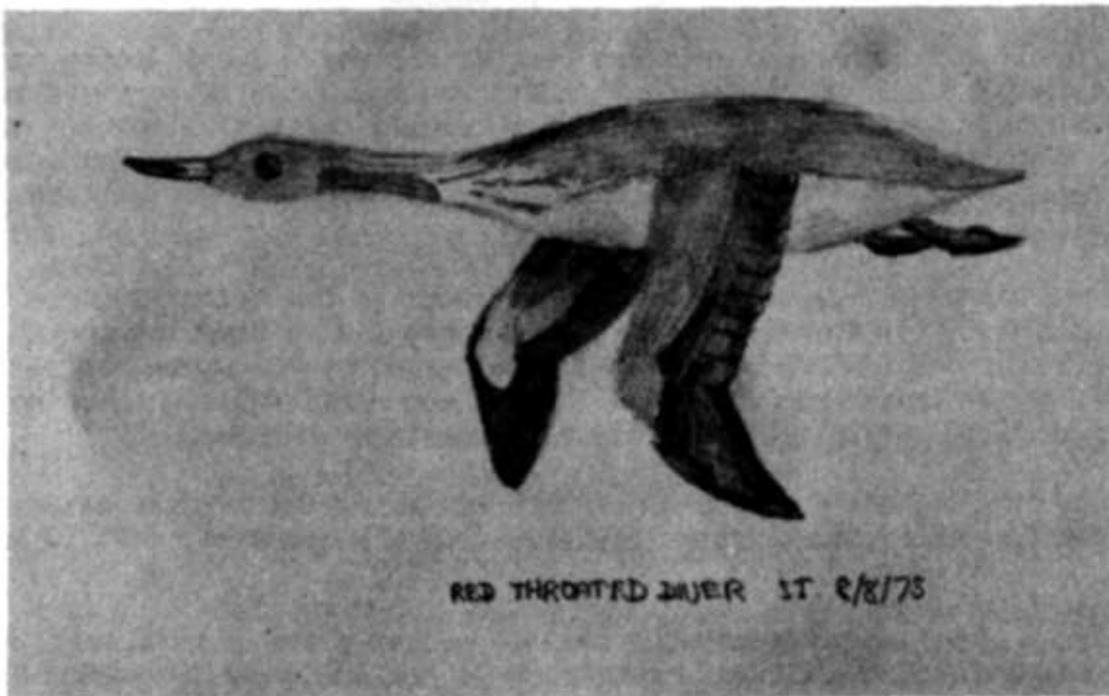
With better communication and the encouragement of tourism by the government the Hebrides has seen an enormous increase in the number of visitors in the last ten years. Thus Mingulay, the remotest site that we visit, now receives regular boatloads of tourists from Barra. A new car ferry terminal on Raasay means that visitors from Skye can drive to the site at Brochel and back to Skye in an after-noon.

The size of the expeditions to Rhum is now limited as so many groups now visit the island. The cottage at Aird Bheag on Lewis is now used as a summer home by the owner.

Having said that we must remember that we ourselves are only glorified tourists, and that the Hebrides are not only remote backwaters of peace and quiet. The islanders themselves need improved communications, facilities, and employment opportunities. We only visit the islands for three weeks in mid-summer, and the islanders live there the full hard twelve months. We cannot and should not expect things to remain the same.

We can play our part by interfering as little as possible with the environment that we go to enjoy, and by appreciating the islander's point of view. If we are not to find more sites closed to us we must always remember that a thoughtless action can so easily be misunderstood, whether this be an untidy campsite or a broken fence. Our reputation with the islanders is generally of the highest.... let us keep it that way. If we do not we may find our scope of activities limited in the future.

PHIL RENOLD



PART I

COLONSAY 1975

Leader; Phil Renold

Officers: Robin Dance, Philip Fawkes, Ian Gough, Mike Hayward, Dave Martin, Richard Ritter, Bruin Thompson.

Boys: Stuart Adams, Andrew Baker, Mark Banning, David Barker, Steven Barrett, Alastair Barton, Johnstone Bell, John Carey, Sean Dennien, Philip Edwards, Peter Fowles, David Frankland, Peter Gill, Ross Hamilton, Christopher Harper, Piers Hart, Paul Jeffrey, Graham Cramer, Wayne Lilley, Simon Lord, Scott Mac Donald, William MacDonald, Matt Myers, Tim Myers, David Nichols, Mark Samuels, Michael Samuels, Iain Scarborough, Matthew Scott, Peter Sleep, Nigel Stanton, Lance Stevens, Julian Suthers, Peter Wood.

Leader's Report

The 1975 'holiday camp' expedition to Colonsay had its ups and downs. As a Leader I am certain that the ups far outweighed the downs, but then all Leaders do. I certainly enjoyed it, and I am fairly sure that everyone else did too.

To begin at the end....As I got off the train at Preston I left behind the source of many memories in the form of a lot of good friends. If I was tempted to allow this afterglow to keep reality at bay the prospect of getting married only thirty-six hours later firmly brought me down to earth. It is only now after six weeks of married bliss that I can find the objectivity (and time) to look back at our expedition and examine the successes and failures.

We suffered from some very mediocre weather for which I can accept no responsibility. It was what the islanders call 'soft' weather. This means misty and damp -very damp on occasions! However, this did not curtail our activities too much and it did tend to keep the midges at bay. It also filled the marquee with damp clothing to such an extent that we had to construct a rather oddly shaped drying tent out of one Icelandic, no pegs, and the wrong poles.

Dave, our resident 'gnome' (Camp Administrator to the uninitiated) worked hard to keep us all fed and watered, but he had to contend with some interesting methods of cooking. Bruin's spaghetti Bolognese is without doubt the worst meal I have ever tried to eat on an expedition. The dull thud of the stuff falling into the slops bucket is a sound that will haunt us all for some time to come.

For many of the lads the main experience was being involved in catering for forty two people. In fairness I must say that they did extremely well... most of the time.

Certainly, when we did eventually arrive on site after a seven hour wait at Oban and a night in the Stathcona's boathouse at Scalasaig the boys must have been wondering what they had let themselves in for. Yet, with the erection of the marquees and sleeping tents, and the digging of the gash pits, matters soon sorted themselves into sane form of order. Then it was not long before we paused, looked around, and began to explore the Island. Apart from acquainting everyone with the area this was done to collect drift wood for furniture.

The amount of wood that we recovered from the surrounding beaches enabled us to build tables and benches of elephantine proportions. Good furniture can make all the difference to the comfort of an expedition and in this respect at least we were off to a good start.

Each of us will have treasured memories, but those that stick in my mind are of the Harvey Wallbanger swooping over the Atlantic swell with all sail set -a sight all too infrequent since Ian was not blessed with the right weather to indulge himself as much as he would have wished. Canoes were to be seen on, and sometimes under, the water in front of the campsite, but we did not go on any long trips. However, everyone did a capsizing drill and learnt the rudiments of how to paddle in almost a straight line.

There are memories too of Robin and his motley crew clicking cameras and developing film late into the night. The results were excellent despite various sarcastic comments.

As on previous expeditions we challenged the islanders to football, and alas we lost - not once but twice. On the second occasion we were leading 3-0 at half-time, but their stamina and size ten boots proved to be too much for us. We lost 3-4. However, we suspect that their last goal was scored after full time. I wish future expeditions the best of luck - the honour of the Society is at stake.

A very major part of the expedition was the ornithology project under the expert guidance of Bruin, Phil Fawkes, and Dave. Due to their unstinting effort we were able to identify eighty six species, a new Society record. These included knat,(knot – Ed) honey buzzard, and red headed bunting (from Siberia).

Mike acted as our M.O. and part time minstrel. At all events he claimed these roles, and I am not sure at which of them he was worst. But his orienteering was unanimously agreed to be horrific - not helped by the fact that it began to pour down just as the event started.

Also on a sporting theme, we organised an Olympic Games consisting of the 82½ yard dash, hurling the pebble, and lifting and sometimes tossing the caber. Associated with this was the lifting stone near the campsite reputed to weigh two and a half hundred weight and used in years gone by to prove a young islander's masculinity. After repeated attempts some of the officers managed it. The most noteworthy feat was when Ian demonstrated his prowess by lifting the stone waist high and holding it there. Even our visitor, Paul Caffery, managed it so perhaps it was not so difficult after all.

A survey of the campsite was carried out by Richard, and Robin organised some drawing in addition to his photographic activities. We did some rock climbing and much walking and general exploration. As the reader can see we were far from idle. Nearly everybody had a go at nearly everything.

A measure of the success of the whole expedition was that nearly everybody fell fast asleep on the train going south.

PHIL RENOLD

WATCH OUT THERE'S A BIKE ABOUT!

This chapter of the expedition was unintentionally opened by Philip F who had throughout our stay (and no doubt beyond it) aspirations towards the fairer sex on the island.

"Can you hear a bicycle coming," I asked Phil one night as we walked past the Colonsay Hotel on our way down to the pier one wet night. The next moment brought a crash and the dimly seen tableau of a pile of wriggling bodies underneath a bent cycle.

Two young ladies had like us come to meet the boat, and again like us they did not have lights. The predictable had occurred halfway down the hill with an impressive utterance of Scottish and Hampshire oaths. I had no chance to produce an Oxfordshire gem because the lads had chosen to lay into Phil leaving me untouched by their Celtic fury.



Photograph by Sean Dennien

Injuries were slight, which was lucky as Phil had stopped a well loaded bicycle (you can imagine the impact of TWO ladles) dead in its tracks with his left leg.

Naturally a spate of rumours about our activities were propagated by the carp sparked off by reticence coupled with Injuries. But in fact the doctor had looked the Injured parties over and pronounced ever/on* whole, then delivered the participants hone thus closing this somewhat unexpected encounter.

IAN GOUGH

SHS v COLONSAY

The time was 4.00 pm and Philip Fawkes, the referee for the match, blew his whistle. The Kick off was taken in front of a crowd of forty people, twenty five sheep, and one horse.

The first few minutes were kick and run football with the SHS attacking and defending well. In the twelfth minute the angel of football must have smiled on us for a loose ball came to Dave Nichols who, beating a defender, slotted the ball neatly between the goalkeeper and the posts. Our supporters went crazy and the islanders clapped their appreciation.

The game continued with the SHS attacking with heart and fire. With sixteen minutes now gone Dave Nichols loosed another thunderbolt upon the Colonsay goal front eighteen yards, and scored. With the score at 2-0 our team played tightly and the Colonsay forwards were unable to penetrate our defence. A further six minutes of tension and Bruin the Thompson powered a drive from fifteen yards to score our third goal.

We simply could not believe our luck for it was beyond our wildest aims to be 3-0 up at this stage. But Colonsay pressure was not long in coming and they seemed set to score after another minute. It took the old Grandad himself (Phil Renold) to clear the ball off the line. Tension then ebbed as Philip Fawkes blew the whistle for half-time and a welcome respite.

We kicked off and within one minute Colonsay pressed an attack with one of their forwards shooting the ball over our goal bar from three yards with only our goal keeper to beat. Colonsay continued the pressure and the SHS weathered the storm until a snap shot from the left beat Peter Gill in the SHS goal. We were then kept on the defensive trying to stem the tide of Gaelic vigour, but the inevitable happened in the 71st minute when another Colonsian shot whistled between cur posts. Worse was to come. In the 83rd minute a loose ball came to Ian Gough who calmly sliced it into his own goal.

Disaster had struck, and we all felt a bit disheartened. However, there were still seven minutes left with no time to feel sorry for the loss of our considerable advantage. Aggressive play continued reaching a climax in the last two minutes of play when the last goal was scored. To the delight of the jumping islanders it was one for Colonsay.

The final whistle blew leaving crowd and teams exhausted and happy. But I wonder what the twenty five sheep and one horse thought of it all.

ANDY BAKER

THE ORANSAY BIVVY

Members: Steve Barrett, Pete Fowles, Chris Harper, Mike Hayward, Scott MacDonald, Tim Myers.

For some reason, which always escapes me, my bivvy bag bivvies inevitably go wrong somewhere along the line. It all began with one boating personality (who shall remain nameless). I really thought he would know when low tide was; instead although I did not know it at the time) I got an approximation which was correct to the nearest three hours.

We left camp just after lunch with the leader in a very light hearted mood, having distributed all the heavy cooking utensils and tinned food in the boys' rucksacks. Having observed the delights of arctic ernu being chased in a bay south of Tobar Fuar by a rampant haggis with short arms and long pockets, we made our way eastwards to that magnificent piece of shoreline, "The Strand". Now according to my calculations it should have been full tide - thus giving us time to have an early meal at a nearby lake before crossing over to Oransay in the early evening. As it was, I sat on the sand saying "It won't cone in much further lads" for the next three hours - feeling like Canute as they had to move their rucksacks back another 20 yards.

The tide having turned eventually, it was 8 pm when we, wined and spammed, reassembled en the shore. Although the tide was on the ebb, there was still a good half-mile of water between us and our bed for the night. Dusk was quickly falling. Having read the instructions on his inflatable leaders kit, ye intrepid leader did most nobly wade half-way across to test the depth. Having found that, even in the deepest places, the sea was only just above his knees, it was decided that Tim and Pete would just be able to keep their necks, if not their rucksacks, above water. Twenty minutes and several amusing photographs later (sorry Bide) we arrived at the calm on the opposite side. After drying toes, unrolling trousers and putting on boots and socks, a fairly rapid ascent was made to a suitably sheltered coll on Beinn Oransay.

After a reasonably comfortable night we paid a visit to the priory before breakfast. (Who said SHS members can't function in the morning without their ration of beans.) Then on to the south west tip of the island in the hope of seeing seals. Perhaps if we had had longer to sit and watch we might have been lucky. However, having measured my length once on the wet, slippery rocks, I decided that we were not going to have enough time to clamber over half a mile of them and still catch the low tide. The return journey was not half so exciting - fancy being able to walk across without getting even your big toe wet, not to mention the Strand being turned into a Hebridean MI as one of the islanders drove across on his weekly food trip to Scalasaig.

Bivvies are full of new and wonderful experiences; damp sleeping bags, soggy sponge pudding, aching muscles and glorious night skies. If these five lads remember this event as well as I can still remember sleeping out for the first time on the slopes of Hecla, then all will have been worthwhile.

JMH

BOATING REPORT

The camp-site on Colonsay looks on to the most suitable bay that the Society visits. A gently sloping sandy beach did mean a lot of pulling to bring boats up at low tide, but this drawback is outweighed by the safety of the land-locked bay.

The weather early on was not suited to dinghy sailing, so the Harvey Wallbanger was used for fishing and minor wood collecting - or at least she would have collected wood had the outboard motor behaved properly.

Once out of the bay, sailing was extremely enjoyable. This was the Atlantic, a world of large breakers, powerful swell and at times the most exciting place on the expedition. With an east wind blowing, the next port of call in that direction is somewhere in Canada. This awesome thought inspired me to safe sailing. Of course safety was always borne in mind, with a watch from camp, a motorised rescue boat and a set of distress flares.

About a dozen boys had their first taste of sailing and thoroughly enjoyed it. The wide expanse of sea (often not so blue), the powerful wind and impressive views of the island added up to a most, exhilarating experience.

We did have one or two opportunities to burst our gastric ulcers, such as the occasion when we were closely examining the underside of a friendly Royal Navy helicopter and nearly got entangled in the fishing nets of a trawler.

Plans for a boating bivvy were blocked by bad visibility and unreliable wind (those plums.) so she, namely Harvey Wallbanger, was used only near the camp-site but this was quite enough to keep us busy.

One evening Bruin, David Nichols and myself went out for a sail and had what must have been the best yet for all of us. The sea was very manageable but had a heavy swell which, when combined with a healthy wind, gave us speeds of up to about fifteen knots for short bursts. This was unforgettable and made a perfect end to the sailing, for although three days were left, the weather was not suitable. In all, a very successful part of the expedition.

IAN GOUGH

QUEST FOR THE CHOUGH

We had decided to go to the north of the island, to look at the Golden Eagle and search for Chough which, we had been told, were living on the cliffs. On the way up we were treated to the sight of a Honey Buzzard - a rare sight so far north. Phillip Fawkes and Bruin Thompson both noticed the long tail, unusual for a Common Buzzard, and distinctive honey coloured head; the bird was similar in size to a Goshawk.

After setting up the bivvy, Phillip went with a few other members of the group to have a closer look at the Golden Eagle eyries, leaving Bruin, myself and two others to prepare the meal. All were rewarded with magnificent views of an adult Eagle practising food passing with a young one. Both landed quite often on the largest of the eyries.

Having had dinner we went to the cliffs on our westward side. In a field was a flock of forty three Canada geese and a Barnacle goose. The islanders believed that the Barnacle was injured on migration and had adopted the Canada geese until its own flock returned. After successfully cramming six of us into one bivvy whilst the officers, Philip and Bruin, slept outside we eventually went off to sleep.

In the morning we went to the Northeast point of the island. On the way we saw a red-throated diver in flight and a black guillemot as well as Eider. On the cliffs were perched a few fulmar nests with well developed young in them. The young fulmar would be ready to fly in a week. In one nest there were four fulmar, two chicks and two adults, which is unusual as the laying of two eggs is rare. Further along the cliff we made the additional discovery of a raven's nest made of twigs and jammed into a ledge.

Fortified by a late breakfast the party attempted to flush out a Pipit with no white outer tail feathers. Thus engaged we spotted a red-headed Bunting. It was a male and the general opinion was that it could have escaped from an aviary. We asked the wife of a farmer close by if she had an aviary. She hadn't and thought that no one else on the island kept birds other than Budgerigars and Canaries. It might have come from the mainland or another island, but one wonders if it would have had the strength to make such a flight.

In all it was a remarkable bivvy rewarding us with the sight of uncommon birds some of which have been seen only twenty times in Britain. Despite the fact that we did not see the Chough it was a trip that all of us will remember.

GRAHAM KRAMER

SURVEYING THE CAMP SITE

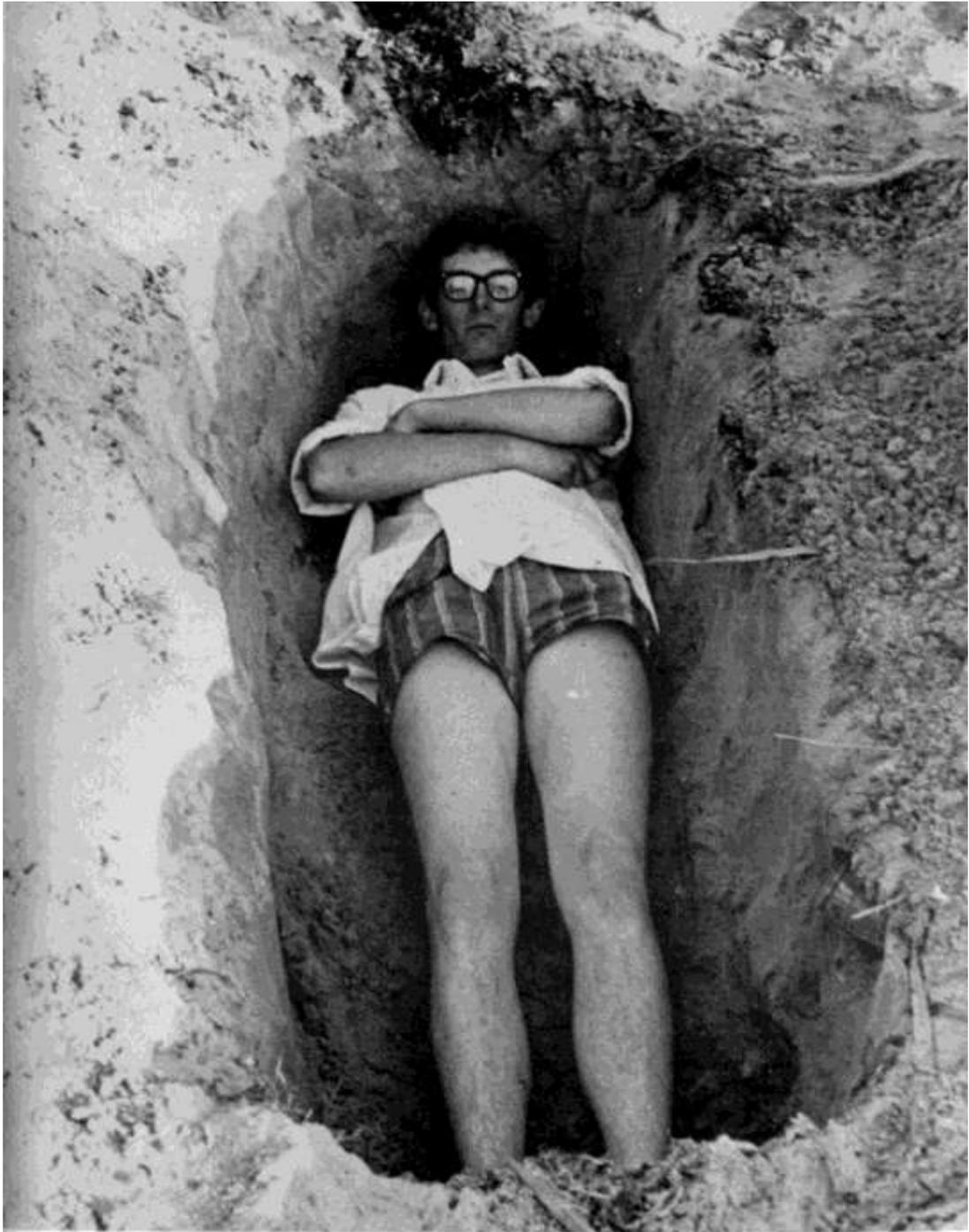
What a surprise it was when it was suggested that I do surveying. This idea follows on from my illuminating discovery on the 1972 Lewis expedition that 170° make up the sum of three angles of a triangle. What rashness to trust me with the undertaking of such a venture.

I must say that I was exceedingly doubtful about whether I would finish or not. A very heavy cold had laid me low for almost half of the expedition. However, a start was made and of course it was a windy and dull day. It was not the best set of conditions for surveying and matters were to get worse as I progressed.

The weather did not improve and by lunch the surveying party gave up with only three of the triangles needed complete. The last of these three triangles produced an interesting result. The sum of the angles came to 190° . For the next two days strong winds and rain lashed the camp discouraging all movement. But after this interruption the last three triangles were completed. This left two days to finish and draw up the survey.

Pressed for time the odd part of the survey might have just been done with a free hand. But in the end it didn't look too bad although the Ordnance Survey might not have agreed. Anyway thanks are due to those who did all the work. They are:
Johnstone Bell, T-Bar, Wayne Lilley, Mark Banning, Paul Jeffrey et al.

RICHARD RITTER



Photograph by Wayne Lilley

THE PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

When we rounded the last bend and the broad glistening bay came into view, I realised that the efforts to carry the fragile equipment and chemicals to Tobar Fuar had not been in vain. However, the bright weather in which we arrived only lasted a few days, and by the time the project got underway grey weather had set in and remained with us almost until the end. The obstacles put in our way were countered by the high morale and enthusiasm that the worsening weather brought about. Not many days passed without a group going out to explore with a camera. Using our very own folding darkroom (a photographic black bag) and a developing tank we processed the first film out on the grass. It's always exciting to do this for the first time, and more so in such unique and beautiful surroundings. Each time we developed a film the tension built up, and the final opening of the tank was always accompanied by the expectation of a row of blanks. However, nearly all the pictures taken came out with the results improving each time.

Each film had to be washed, and this was done by immersion in a nearby running stream. David Barker claimed it was a pity that the stream was not polluted, for he had heard of a man who had dipped his colour film in a local polluted stream and hey presto! ... the pollutants in the water developed the film.

Other members of the expedition expected us to produce large colour prints, and seemed quite disappointed with our small black and white negatives. It may be possible on a future croft based expedition to set up a darkroom to make prints, but under canvas with no power it just is not possible.

It was wonderful to explore the Hebrides through the medium of photography, and we saw many things that we were unable to get shots of, such as the human skulls at Oransay, and the large group of seals that we attracted to within twenty five feet by lying on the beach seal fashion and singing.

I was delighted with the enthusiasm of all who took part and would like to thank in particular Sean Dennien and Peter Sleep whose patience throughout helped make the project a success. Some statistics;

Total number of cameras on expedition: 33 (over half Instamatic). Total number of pictures by all members: 815

ROBIN DANCE



Photograph by Nigel Stanton

RAASAY 1975

Leader: Gavin Macpherson

Officers: Stewart Booker, Keith Broadbent, Allan Foreman, David Harding, Mike Standage, Dieter Wyroll.

Boys: Jeremy Barlett, Michael Biddulph, Patrick Biddulph, John Bostock, Andrew Buchan, John Cherrington, Gary Dunlop, Boz Earley, Antony Evers, Jonathon Harper, John Hudson, Nick Johnstone, Hugh Lorimer, Gary Marshall, Steve Marston, Simon Medhurst, David Moxley, Richard Perton, Jonathon Reeves, Jock Stevenson, Michael Woodruff, Nicholas Woodruff.

LEADER'S REPORT

Looking back through previous Reports the SHS seem to have many happy memories of Raasay. Now, after Raasay '75, it has some more. For this, above all else, was 'a happy and rather carefree sort of expedition. Our main achievement was that we enjoyed ourselves, and if we acquired a reputation for throwing stones into the sea, why, that was because we enjoyed throwing stones into the sea.

The great advantage of Raasay as a venue for an expedition is the island's variety. Within its length are high craggy peaks, soggy peat bogs, fertile farms and wooded valleys, shingle beaches and high cliffs. It is an island of infinite interest, and my only regret is that two weeks is not enough time in which to do it justice. Yet from our camp below Brochel Castle we managed to cover most of the ground, and even explored a little bit of Skye.

The establishment of the camp proved to be complicated. A combination of late running trains meant that our arrival on Raasay was delayed by several hours, and pitching the tents was a race against the darkness. We also found ourselves without water for the well close to the marquee was unusable following the long dry summer. For much of the expedition we had to carry our water from Fred Hohler's tank several hundred yards away up the hill.

However, the expedition was soon in full swing. We grew used to the lumps in the ground beneath the tents, we furnished the marquee, and we chalked our names in the hut alongside those of Carcas and Limpet. Most people did a fair amount of exploration southwards to Inverarish and Dun Caan, northwards to Torran, Fladday and over Beinn na h-Iolaire, or just up the road to Ardnish and into the forest. The Avon dinghy was constantly in use for fishing and exploring, or even collecting coffee tables from up the coast. The outboard proved to have a mind of its own only choosing to work when it felt like it, until the fault was diagnosed as an incorrect mixture of two stroke.

The project work was interesting, but not particularly serious. There was great excitement the day that the ornithologists found a golden eagle, although it then managed to elude various search parties. We gathered different species of edible seaweed - horrid. We admired the road to Ardnish, largely built by Callum MacLeod, and eventually met its builder. Surveying was a little limited since the Society's tapes had gone missing before they reached us, and the only measuring device that we had was a one foot ruler. Improvisation, using a hosepipe, marquee poles, Silva compass, and Broadbent's theory of error distribution failed to provide an accurate plan of the camp site.

Bivvy parties went to the old iron ore workings near Inverarish, and a climbing bivvy left for Skye, only to return due to rain, but more particularly because they forgot the climbing rope. We all sampled the delights of a day trip to Inverarish, and were fascinated by Raasay House. It was strange to picture it as it must have been in all its splendour before the desolation of desertion set in.

Back in camp Mike dashed out beans, beans and more beans, and occasionally gave us a sausage to go with them. Stewart cooked better porridge than anybody else, and went on to serve luncheon meat in such a way that even I went back for seconds. We invented Raasay cricket, a highly dangerous version of the Headingley variety. The wind blew from the Southeast, as it always does when the Society goes to Brochel, and demolished the bog-tents and part of the marquee. Keith played his guitar in the evenings, and Steve told ghost stories.

Nearly everyone went orienteering, but hardly anyone found any of the stations. The prize for being lost, however, went to the lone yachtsman we found wandering round the north end of the island on a very wet and windy day looking for a telephone box. We reckoned that he was fifteen miles from the nearest.

The expedition had moments of madness, like the evening everyone rushed out of the marquee and into the sea, or the time that Dieter did a solo on the non-electric foot pump for the Avon inflatable. There was Steve running all the way to Inverarish, and Keith striding out manfully beneath his rucksack.

And so the expedition passed. In the end it rained as we carted the black boxes up the hill to the road, and it rained more as we raced south to the school house. There we shivered in wet clothes until the lorry for the equipment arrived, and we were able to change and cook sane supper. It was still raining in the morning when the "Eigg" left Raasay for Portree, and we sailed back to reality, which in this case was represented by John Cullingford and Jim Turner who were waiting at the quay to meet us

We are as always indebted to very many people. To the islanders who extended their hospitality to us, and particularly Callum MacLeod and John Parker of Ardnish. To Mrs Rutherford whose welcome at the school house as we trudged in from the rain was appreciated by everyone. To Peter Gillies who ran backwards and forwards up and down the island on our account.

We must also be very grateful to members of the SHS who put in so many work hours in order to make the expedition possible. Thanks go particularly to John Hutchison who co-ordinated the entire mammoth effort. I personally would like to thank Keith, Mike Stewart, Allan, David, and Dieter, and the twenty two boys of the expedition, for it was your work and enthusiasm that in the end made the expedition as successful as it was.

GAVIN MACPHERSON

THE OFFICERS

GAVIN: Gavin was expected to be a six foot hairy Scotsman (without baggy trousers) and with a six inch long bushy beard. He turned out to be a short, stocky Sassenach with a never ending supply of yellow jumpers and khaki baggy trousers. He tried to get rid of the beans by eating them. Nice try, Gavin.

MIKE The C A: He tried to mix beans in with everything so that nobody would notice them. Another nice try. Mike was also the man who explained the ticket situation to every man with a British Rail hat that came within fifty feet. Well done, Mike.

ALLAN: The man of many accents: His culinary skills proved very interesting when he provided us with such concoctions as Pepper and asparagus soup. When people tried to throw the food away, they were tapped on the back by Allan who would then offer to eat it for them.

DIETER: The man in the dirty old man suit: Dieter looked American, spoke with a Welsh accent, and turned out to be German. But he wore an Edwardian beard and

taught English.... how about that! He told great stories and was a great bundle of fun. Fantastically done, Dieter.

DAVE The successful bivvy man: Dave was a bit of a bird man, who went mad with excitement when he saw any bird of prey. He imagined that he was a great orienteer. But he came last claiming that someone had stolen his clues. He seemed to have lost his razor somewhere along the line.

KEITH guitar player extraordinaire: He could also sing and the idiot walked eight miles with a sixty five pound rucksack full of books, maps, and old SHS reports. His brain also gave him a lot of trouble, but he would insist on using it.

STEWART: This was the man who expected to deal with blisters, and didn't. The only medical operation that he performed was putting one stitch in one nose. Stewart, an averaged sized man, was about six inches too broad for the black ski trousers he wore.

PS: Mike also seemed to have lost his razor and would insist that he was a superhero.

STEVE, LAZY DAVE, BOZ I & BOZ II

HAVE A NICE TIME IN THE HEBRIDES

The newly washed day,
Returning from the all-night laundrette.
The birds rise,
The clouds drift,
The gulls dip for their mackerel
As the power flows.

The laughs,
The jokes.
The burnt sausages with coffee.
The directions are followed,
The plans are carried out.

The movement of the world
takes over the momentum of the day.
The feelings are felt.

The splashed rainbow hues bring
The end of an experience,
That you can't really write about.

HDW

CALLUM

The islands have a reputation for unusual people, and ranking high amongst them must be Callum MacLeod. We first met him carrying a large creel of peat for burning, and his voice carried the familiar Highland lilt.

He lives at Number 2, Arnish, and he and his friend together with their wives constitute the total population of Arnish. They farm a croft in a small valley, using only a rake and a scythe, although he does have a tractor and Landrover.

He does not have the all-pervading television, and spends the long winter evenings reading about religion, Raasay, and about the Wars. His scope of

knowledge is unbelievably wide. His wife has chronic arthritis in her left leg and a disabled right arm, but she manages to cope amazingly well in the small croft. The post van visits twice a week, and also delivers groceries. Everything else is home grown.

We were given some turnips and cabbage which made a pleasant change from the usual beans and carrots. Callum was quite happy to give us food, but was quite surprised when we didn't want him to pay for some SHS stores that were left over.

A lasting memorial must be his two mile road built as a holiday job using only a barrow and spade.

NICK JOHNSTONE

MIDNIGHT DIP AT HALF PAST TEN

The wind had been blowing quite fiercely all day long, and the sea was getting quite rough producing some good surf. Dieter was telling us about his surfing capers when he shouted "Ste, get your wetsuit, I'm going in." Everybody present told him that he was mad as he waded into the sea and disappeared under a wave. He then started telling us how nice it was, but we still laughed at him until we saw what fun he was having. Ste jumped into the tent, got his trunks on, bounded down to the beach and vanished into the surf. Suddenly there was a rush and people began to emerge from the tents in swimming gear. Jock stripped off his shirt and jumped in with his jeans on. By this time half the people in the camp were in the water and riding the breakers. Boz came down to the beach and Jock threw him head first into the biggest wave he could find. Dieter quickly explained the technique of surfing to Ste and threw him a cupboard door. But alas Dieter didn't explain well enough and Ste landed on the beach head first, thrown by a six foot wave.

It was a great experience, even though the water was a bit wet....and there was the consolation of coffee and biscuits afterwards for the great surf riding pioneers of Brochel Castle.

STEVE MARSTON & BOZ EARLEY

THE SKYE DISASTER

(Or how not to go on a bivvy.)

"Yes I'll go" was the answer to Gavin's question about a bivvy to Skye. It was uttered by myself (village idiot in charge), Jock (the noo), Boz, Steve, and Sam. Three days away from baked beans.... who could ask for more? The morning came and, full of confidence, we left the site at 11.30 am to make the 3.30 pm ferry. A mile out of camp we were facing a force 12 (well it felt like it) gale along with plenty of rain. By the time we came upon Inverarish we were wet, cold, and fed up, but still making silly jokes. Steve and Boz's memories were working very well at that stage we had forgotten the climbing rope! Points rating for that one..minus 27.

At Portree the first thing that we did was to cheat, and buy ourselves a salmon roll and a cup of tea. Points rating minus 12. The general level of feeling was extremely low, and it was decided to try and get to the Memorial Hall and attempt to dry out. Good old Mr MacIntyre...thanks for the key. As we changed we were accompanied by an American, complete with Scottish gear, and his daughter, playing the bagpipes. It was a practice for a competition to be held down the road. They soon became fed up with us squelching around, and decided to return to the other hall muttering something about humidity. Points rating..minus 10.(Bivvies are NOT held in Memorial Halls.)

Cooking on a primus stove... a word of advice. Paraffin mixed with meths does not work unless you are really trying to make a bomb. Points rating, minus 166 for not knowing how a primus works. But we came on an electric cooker half functioning, so we had luke warm sausages, toast, (burnt thanks to Boz) and coffee. You did say it was coffee Sam!

A trip to the 'phone boxes. "Hello, Mum. Help! I'm turning into a baked bean." Whilst the Post Office were being flooded with transfer charge calls I must admit to having a regulation pint of Guinness in double fast time. Points rating, minus 20 (You do NOT drink pints of Guinness on bivvies.)

Back to the hall and into the sleeping bags with high hopes for the next day. Then footsteps and a lighter woke us and a six foot six hairy voice asked us what we were doing. Steve answered "Do you want to borrow a torch?" Minus 126 points.

7.30 am... Rise and.... Big boots woke us again. They needed chairs for the Highland Games, which due to a force 9 gale (Weather's better, lads.) and rain was being held in the hall. "Must be using a small caber." So we beat a hasty retreat to the ferry at 9.00 hoping to be back at Brochel soon. Inverarish never looked so good. An extension to the day's activities was called to visit Raasay House. Amazing. Could not the SHS offer its services to stop the place falling apart? But by now the sudden departure without breakfast was being felt, so in the courtyard a first class fire and fry-up was held. Points rating..25 for real boy scouts stuff. Allan and his group found us, and after an offer of steam pudding was declined, Boz did the proper thing and acted as guide. "This is the lounge. In 1770 Johnson stood on this very spot" while Steve, Sam, Jock, and I enjoyed the steam pudding.

A complete return was achieved at about 8.30 pm. The last few miles were a real effort. But thanks to Rules 1,2,3,4,5, and 6, and Gavin now being called Sheila with everyone else as Bruce, plus the lumberjack song, we made it. It was my first bivvy and perhaps a failure, but I enjoyed it. Sorry it was a bit of a flop Sheila..er Gavin, but it's the thought that counts. Final score: For 25 Against 361

DIETER WYRWOLL

ORNITHOLOGICAL REPORT

During the two week expedition seven of us managed to notch up 44 species of birds. The bird which attracted most attention was the Golden Eagle, although in the two weeks we spotted it only twice. We even went long walks on the hills where they were reputed to be, but only saw a few snipe. We did see other birds of prey during our stay, and these included a hen-harrier, a honey (rough-legged?) buzzard, many common buzzards, and the occasional sparrowhawk and goshawk.

Nearer the camp site, and just over the bay, lived gannets, cormorants, and shags, along with five common species of gull. In this area we also spotted a kitty-hawk [kittiwake? Ed] and a little gull. On the water itself were a great northern diver, a puffin, and several black guillemot.

One day we were out on the moors and it was foggy. We came upon a half dozen red grouse that were too wary to come very close. Very few passerines were recorded and I must admit we did not take much notice of them until the last few days. Gary Dunlop saw a blackcap, and I saw a stonechat and a whinchat. In the forests of the island we observed longtailed tits and wrens, and in most places we came across chaffinches.

We were fortunate in having two 'ornithological' officers who helped us. I was personally very grateful for their help. I hope that next year Rhum will live up to its reputation for birds, and give me some more enjoyable bird watching.

HUGH LORIMER



SOUTH UIST 1975

Leader: Alan Evison

Camp Administrator: Humphrey Southall

Officers: Peter Foulkes, Gyles Glover, Stephen Mack-Smith, Clive Martin, Andrew Todd, Jeremy Turff.

Boys: Nicholas Allen, Andrew Brewer, Jeremy Butcher, Nicholas Caplin, Mark Davis, David Deeley, David Denham, Hans Dobson, Colin Gilbert, Nicholas Green, Mark Hopwood, Neil Hyde, David Jardine, Andrew Jeanes, David Laming, Paul Medhurst, Richard Owen, Stephen Paynter, Christopher Price, Nicholas Ryan, Nicholas Showan, Graham Smith, Nicholas Smith, Michael Thirkettle, Patrick Thompson, Christopher Venning.

LEADER'S REPORT

I kept telling myself that if things were going wrong beforehand the expedition itself would go off without a hitch. And things certainly were going wrong, My reconnaissance trip in April had uncovered a mix-up over our going to Rhum, making it necessary to switch islands to South Uist. When that was settled the officers withdrew, and ten days before the expedition was due to leave I had a supporting cast of just one. However, Roger Weatherley and John Cullingford got to work, and by the time we set off there were no less than seven - and as good a crew as any captain could wish to have.

Well, fortunately I was right. There were no serious hitches. Apart from missing high tide on the first day, and having to lug the black boxes a quarter of a mile along the coast to the site, the fates were kind to us. Moreover we were blessed with some really glorious weather towards the end of our stay to make up for a rather damp and foggy start.

Thanks are due initially to Donald and John Joseph McDonald for helping us in so many vital ways, such as ferrying our equipment to and from the site, receiving and sending our mail, and always being available for a friendly word or piece of advice. Without their help the expedition could not have come to Loch Eynort.

I think any lingering feelings of disappointment at not going to Rhum were dispelled when we first saw the site. It lies at the foot of Beinn Mhor, surrounded by hills, looking out over an enclosed, island studded sea loch, and struck one as a special place. It belonged to a different realm from the one of 'telegrams and anger' that we had just left.

Through no ones fault not a great deal of project work was done. (Except by the standing army of ornithologists). Most of the officers had been recruited a few days before the expedition, and had not had the time to prepare themselves. Nevertheless work was done on seaweeds by Steve MackSmith, and a botanical project was carried out by Peter Foulkes with assistance from Paul Medhurst. Nick Showan and Nick Smith mapped the loch above the camp site; Humph did a Settlement Studies project; Gyles (apart from performing his duties as camp doctor, -very ably) gleaned local history between cups of tea; and I did what could be very loosely described as a sketching project. Then there was "Private Eynort" our camp newspaper.

However, as I have hinted above, the most substantial work was done by the ornithologists. Two groups went on bivvies to Balranald R.S.P.B. reserve on North Uist; others visited Loch Druidibeg; David Jardine made bird-song recordings; whilst the rest spread themselves widely over the surrounding countryside with binoculars, telescopes, and telephoto lenses. Before four days were up more species had been recorded than on any previous SHS expedition to the site. Perhaps most remarkable of all was the Snowy Owl spotted on Benbecula.

More energetic activities included climbing (under Clive's capable instruction), canoeing (watched over by Jeremy), hill walking (watched over by Beinn Mhor, orienteering (Just because I won they said it was a fix), and murder-ball. Various activities of which I claim to have no knowledge included the cockle-boiling sweepstake, 'jump the fire', very coarse fishing, and not trapping non-rats. More civilised pleasures included sand-castling 'boggles' to the west coast, bathing under a waterfall above the camp, and eating Gyles's and Andrew's food parcels (sent at regular intervals by anxious parents.) Gyles also claimed to have another project on the go, which consisted of collecting as many bones of as many mammals as he could lay his hands on. In spite of having to leave behind part of a whale's skull (weighing the best part of a hundredweight), he came away with a substantial sack full, containing bits of sheep, cows, porpoises, and possibly, Humphrey.

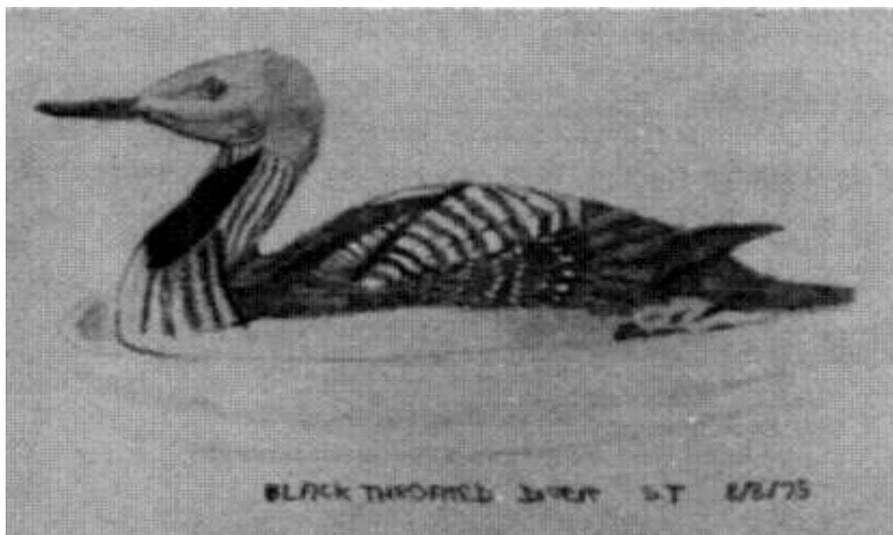
I shall have many vivid memories of our fortnight on Loch Eynort. In particular I shall remember the Bible readings and prayers a few of us took part in on top of the little hill overlooking the camp one Sunday evening. I shall remember the vast catch of mackerel which fed us all so well for a dinner and a breakfast (what a change from Baked Beans). I shall remember the sudden alarm one night as the stream rose and threatened to flood four tents pitched beside it. And above all I shall remember the mirror-calm of the loch that last morning as we were being eaten by the midges - a memory decidedly more pleasant than the real thing.

Most of us, I think went on at least one bivvy. And I'm sure for many of us the bivvy will be the high-point of the expedition. Each has its private memories.

I felt proud to lead such a pleasant group of people. The general mood of the camp ranged from good-natured to hilarious, with humour both quick and quite unprintable. Thanks everyone, for being such good company - I, at least, enjoyed myself.

Thanks are also due to Mr MacKinnon for letting us stay in the Schoolhouse in Lochboisdale; and once again to Donald and John Joseph.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to all the backstage workers who made the expedition possible: to John Hutchison for directing the expeditions; to the executive officers; to Mary; and to Kathy for helping with the typing.



CENSORED EXCERPTS FROM "PRIVATE EYNORT"

I had the idea of editing a camp newspaper - I envisaged a witty light-hearted production full of humorous articles, cartoons and poems - something to warm the hearts of the weary walkers and bring a smile to their lips. Little did I realise what was to come when the editors of "Private Eynort" first met and the newspaper was born.

Like the hapless Doctor Frankenstein I had loosed on the world a monster, a deformed mirror image of a real newspaper.

THE EDITOR

Private Eynort - The Loch Boys' Daily

"A paper that consists of synthetic spun yarns, but tastes like a real newspaper."

From the special Festival of Light edition:

A CAMP ADMINISTRATOR'S DIARY. Stardate 05 August 1975

09.55: Drew the curtains of my four-poster in my suite at the Lochboisdale Hotel. Looked out of the windows and saw other members of the bivvy party standing soaked outside leaking tents. Looked as if they had had a hard night..must see hotel manager about letting them camp on the lawn.

10.00: Went down and had a light breakfast, devilled kidneys, kippers, sugarpuffs and poached salmon. No baked beans, must mention this to the manager. Marmalade becoming boring, need another food parcel from Mummy.

11.30: Invited bivvy party for a coffee in the lounge. They said that they must get on with my measuring - good fellows. Asked the hall porter to hail me a taxi to take me to the bank.

11.45: Taxi not arrived. Fine morning so walked the 100 yards to the bank. Walking boots Mummy recommended excellent, no blisters yet. New bank manager who used to fag for pater at school. Decent sort of chap, bit provincial. Transferred a few Mint Cake futures to Rearguard Fund; learned I had been right to sell Baked Beans as bottom falling out of the market.

17.00: Private helicopter back to the hill behind the camp site. Must keep up image with the boys. Walked into camp - still no blisters.

20.30: Dinner foul. Tired after long journey so went to bed early.

24.00: Pleasing epigram came to me - "There are lies, damn lies, and camp newspapers."

ODE TO AN URNU. By the Rev. Percy (the Skylark) Cohen.

The Sun shone brightly all the day
The Loch was still as glass
I sat upon the mountain top
And watched the Urnu pass

They flittered by me all the day
Their wings all gleaming white
But from my darkness each in turn
Would turn unto the light

"Oh Urnus" I remarked "I wish
That I might with you roam
To make the sky my resting place
The billowy clouds my home"

But no, these birds with easeless strength
Their purity maintain
And sinful mortals like myself
Apart, in night, must wane

And so I called the Sun so bright
The rain, the wind, the sea
To purify my inner self
That I might spotless be

A day, a night they purged me
Until at last clean through
From time and space I flew with grace
A blissful pure Urnu.

CLIMBING SCORE

Deaths	None
Broken Limbs	None
Other serious injuries	None
Spectacular climbs	One
Useful learning climbs	Plenty

Unfortunately the rock on South Uist was in the main unsuitable for belaying owing to an absence of protruding belay points, and the presence of loose rock. This meant that a considerable time was spent evaluating useful pitches before real climbing could begin. One fairly spectacular climb was made up onto the Bienn Mhor ridge. However, when a climbing bivvy returned to the area no suitable climbs were found. I consider the Bienn Mhor crags as too severe a prospect for teaching purposes.

Most of the climbing activity this year took place on pitches on Ben na Hoe, about one mile from the camp. As most of the climbers were beginners this area provided the most suitable crags with good belay points, and a variety of routes up to each belay.

With more time to take a good look at the area, and to exploit the climbs available this could be regarded as the main climbing area for SHS expeditions to South Uist, with the more formidable Bienn Mhor crags being left to more experienced parties.

CLIVE MARTIN

CANOEING REPORT

Despite one canoe arriving with five cracks in it, a paddle getting crushed on the quay at Lochboisdale, and an officer who didn't like getting wet, canoeing did take place on South Uist.

As the Avon inflatable, which acted as a safety boat, was used a good deal for transport duties the amount of canoeing was limited to some extent. The main activity was short trips out into the loch. One long loch length trip was made in an attempt to find a route for an overland canoe bivvy. But the amount of portage that was revealed as necessary forced the abandonment of the idea.

Capsizes were fortunately rare, this being the only expedition on which the writer has failed to capsize a fibreglass canoe. However, one unmentionable person tried practising rolling his canoe in the stream, and was surprised when his head hit the bottom.

My condolences go to Humph who was just too big to fit into a canoe at all.

JEREMY W. TURFF

CAMP ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

.....AND WHY NOT? We are, after all, what we eat. (But who looks like Harris' Beef Mince?) First a big hello to Gyles' Mum; it's all untrue. The bread ration was at least two slices a day.

RESEARCH RESULTS: The essential problem with camp cooking is that, inevitably, most of the food is tinned or dehydrated, and so lacks both texture and flavour. Also the cooking facilities available discourage experimentation. Yet, as a few brave souls showed, camp food need not be boring. Particularly worthy of commendation are the Section who, on their own initiative, made a shepherd's pie. Below are two recipes which proved excellent to eat while remaining relatively easy to prepare. All ingredients were available in the store on S. Uist.

RICE PILAF (SORT OF)

3½ lb. long grain rice (i.e. ½ packet)

½ cupful dried onion (optional)

½ lb. margarine (i.e. ½ tin)

4-6 Oxo cubes..add to taste (Chicken Oxo cubes the best)

Water in quantity directed on rice packet

Directions: Put water on to boil (or use patent SHS water boiler). Take a large sauce pan big enough to take all the water and place on double burners. First melt all the margarine in the bottom of the pan, and then add the onion. When this has softened add the rice and fry. Turn constantly. Meanwhile mix the Oxo cubes with little of the hot water. When the rice is 'golden' add the rest of the boiling water to the Oxo mixture and pour on to the frying rice....very spectacular. Bring to the boil, then cover and simmer for twenty minutes. The rice should absorb all the liquid. Serves approximate 34. This involves only a little more effort than boiled rice and tastes much better.

The next recipe is a variation on white sauce, which tastes superb and yet is simple to make. The principle is one of developing a ubiquitous sauce that can envelope anything to some advantage. Read on:

SPAM AUX CHAMPIGNONS

6 oz margarine.
6 oz flour
3 pints of milk (6 cups)
1 cupful dried onion (optional)
¼ - ½ tin of Chesswood mushrooms (2-3 lb) Alternatively pick your own.
10-11 cans of pork luncheon meat (i.e. camp ration for the meal) and add savourings to taste.

Directions: Melt the margarine in a saucepan, then sift the flour using a sieve and avoiding lumps. Stir the flour into the margarine, and then stir in the milk. At this point add the onion. Cook the sauce, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes. One might possibly add pepper but not salt. If the sauce is too thin add flour, if too thick add milk. Taste the sauce intermittently as a guide.

Cut the Spam into small cubes. Now.. once the sauce is cooked add the diced Spam and the mushrooms. Heat thoroughly, but not for too long as flavours blend. Taste and add salt now if required. Serves 30 plus.

N.B. The Management accepts no responsibility etc.... But done correctly they DO taste good, and were tried on the expedition. The author makes no great claims to competence (ask Gyles' Mum), but a little ambition is far more important.

HUMPHREY SOUTHALL

IN GLEN HELLISDALE - "FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD"

What impressed me most about the Hebrides was the isolation and the silence. What will stay in my mind are the wide open spaces of barren but beautiful land with few traces of development, and yet within the confines of the over-developed British Isles.

Admittedly at Loch Eynort we knew that the Post Office was only a few miles away to provide us with a few human comforts if we wanted them, and that there was a tarmac road within half a mile. But on this bivvy to Glen Hellisdale it was the first time that I had been able to go for a walk and know that I would come across no roads, buildings, or any sign of modern existence. Never before had I known for so long that there was just us and creation..even if this did include rain and overcast skies. Escapist I might be, but even as I write this at home I am reminded of the need to escape as I hear jets drone overhead every few minutes with the continuous hum of traffic in the background.

The bivvy included Neil Hyde, Nicholas Allen, Chris Venning, and myself. It was originally intended to be a climbing bivvy, but it turned out to be a much more relaxing two days. Clive Martin had gone to Glen Hellisdale the previous day, and had set up a camp with four others who returned to base camp the day we set out. We met Clive at the bivvy camp in the glen at about three o'clock in beautiful weather - an exception on this expedition.

The loch and the open sea at the foot of the glen were enticing, and the heat discouraged us from doing anything more demanding than trekking down to Corodale Bay and back. This was the first time that I had been right down to the east coast and I found it breathtakingly beautiful. Mountain ridges ended abruptly as they dropped steeply into the sea, and the deep valleys of Glens Corodale and Hellisdale ran straight down to the shore. Silhouetted against the sun in the west towered Bienn Mhor, and to the east the sea disappeared into a blue haze.

Down on the shore we found a small shingle beach. The water was crystal clear and extremely calm, and we could not resist going in for a swim. After the dip we walked out onto Rhuba Hellisdale, a small peninsula where the grass was green, short and springy. "Just like the Downs." commented one of the group. Time was forgotten, and we explored the rocks, watched the birds circling, and lapped up the view. The sheep ignored us, the gulls sat on rocks off the shore, and the oyster catchers circled around us making their characteristic call. No sign of human life was to be seen anywhere. The coastline stretching to the north and south was deserted.

We trudged back up the glen to the tents and prepared supper. I was impressed by the beauty of the valley for other valleys in England and Wales usually have at least a footpath running up them, if not a road with settlements on it. But here was a valley unknown to the tourists, and forgotten by the rest of the world. The 1000 ft col at the head of the valley blocked out all civilisation leaving only us to appreciate its grandeur. The only sounds to be heard were the crackling of the fire lit to keep off the midges, the rushing of the stream, and Clive trying to light the primus.

The following morning we woke up in a thunderstorm. So we decided to return to the main camp without doing any climbing. We moved at a gentle pace, contouring around the east side of Bienn Mhor at 1100 ft. On the way the weather cleared up and we stopped for a long time at Bealach Crosgard overlooking Loch Eynort before dropping down to the camp site.

Looking back I am glad that we stopped to enjoy the fresh air, sun, and silence rather than race up mountains as I often tend to do. There is no doubt in my mind that being away from everyday life in such a magnificent setting has a healing effect. All stresses and strains are far away, and one has time to think. I am convinced that we all need time off now and then for refreshment, and for the appreciation of nature in somewhere like the Hebrides.

GRAHAM SMITH

A BIVVY TO THE RSPB RESERVE AT BALRANALD, NORTH UIST

At ten o'clock on the Thursday morning six of us set off on a three day bivvy. The six included Alan Evison, Jeremy Butcher, Nick Ryan, Steve Paynter, Nick Green and myself. After a mile of cross-country walking we came to the road running along the north shore of Loch Eynort, which we followed as far as the junction with South Uist's main road. Our journey continued by island bus service to Benbecula Airport, changing there to the Post Office minibus. Bulging with hikers, rucksacks, and islanders this vehicle snaked, rattled, and rolled its way to the island of Grimsay (between Benbecula and North Uist) where our party disembarked allowing the other passengers to unfold a little for the rest of their journey. Alan was known to the inhabitants of Grimsay Post Office from previous SHS expeditions, and so we were warmly welcomed by Mrs Nicholson, who invited us in for a much needed cup of tea.

Leaving the Post Office after half an hour we walked over the causeway to North Uist. Moving away from the main road we followed a track for a mile or so until we found two of Alan's friends, Stephen and Ellena, whom he had previously arranged to meet. They had been camping on the edge of the loch-studded moorland, and we all decided to move into the centre of the moor to pitch tents.

Once encamped in the lee of a small knoll it really felt as if we were in the middle of nowhere, with Eaval, North Uist's only mountain, the sole visible landmark.

The next morning, Friday it was an early rise to enable us to catch the Post Office van. This entailed a two mile trek from where we had camped to the nearest point of the main road. The van took us all the way to the bird reserve at Balranald (on North Uist's west coast) where we left Stephen and Ellena. A very successful afternoon's bird watching was had by all, with the best sighting being a corncrake. This was rendering its distinctive rasping cry very close to the party. There were gannets, manx shearwaters, and eiders out at sea; sanderlings, turnstones, and dunlins on the shore; and corn buntings and twite in the fields. The reserve covers fertile machair (where a great variety of flowers were blooming), sandy beaches and rocky headlands. Our only disappointment was in failing to see the red-necked phalaropes, of which there are said to be several breeding pairs on the reserve. All in all Balranald was very rewarding.

In the early evening we pitched our three tents about a mile from the reserve by a snail loch. Alan once again cooked sane excellent food, and with no rain at all our camping here went very well. The next morning we struck camp and walked to the Tigharry Post Office for the GPO minibus. The bus twisted and turned all around the farm tracks of North Uist before reaching Benbecula Airport. At the airport we waited two hours before changing to a Macauley Bros bus that took us back to the crossroads at the head of Loch Eynort. From there we walked four miles back to camp revelling in the glorious sunshine.

Vie all felt that we had had a most enjoyable bivvy, and for me it was one of the high spots of the 1975 South Uist expedition.

DAVID DENHAM



JURA 1975

Leader: Lawrence Hall

Officers: Paul Chick, Geoff Horton, Jim Loring,
Nigel Masters, Colin Moss, Greg Surell, Martin Turff, and Roger Weatherly. Boys: Brian Barnes, 'Daz' Bottomley, John Broadbent, Austin Brown, Chris Buckley, Ian Carr, John Chasemore, Dave Clarke, Ian Clay, Jonathan Ford Alex fobs, Roger Hyde, Philip Jones, 'Lofty' Lambert, David Lewis, David Mallinson, David Nichols, David Perritt, Tony Ormston, Jonathan Ramsden, Sandy Robertson, Nicholas Simcn, Charles Stewart, Robert Thorburn, 'Fred' Thomas, Simon Thomas, Richard Thompson, Mike Tonkin, Mark Wickstead, Ian Wolstenholme, Jonathan Wood.

LEADER'S REPORT

The SHS is certainly no stranger to Jura. Ours was the fifth expedition to the island in ten years. On the ferry to Islay during my Easter visit I met Jack Paton who had vivid memories of 'all the lads and clobber' we brought in 1971 and 73. On Jura itself our fame was widespread! From Lord Astor's housekeeper's memories of fifteen people sleeping in her front room to Kate Nelson's tale of riding her horse through the '71 camp site, to the estate keeper's painful remembrance of the 'Harvey Wallbanger' winning the Jura Regatta of 1973.

A glance at the map of Scotland shows Jura dangerously close to Glasgow Central Station - a mere 60 miles. Fortunately the fear of tourists visiting our Cruib camp site was entirely without foundation. Jura is still in its infancy as far as tourism is concerned, and the visitors to Cruib can be counted on one hand. Cruib Lodge, a refuge in bad weather for deer stalkers, was an idyllic setting for the expedition. The views across lonely Loch Tarbert to the distant curves of the Paps are a scene of wilderness and beauty. Our activities were carried out in a totally uninhabited region. At Ruantallain, its western limit, the only habitation to be seen is that of Scalasaig 12 miles away on Colonsay. From this remote headland the nearest road or resident is at least five hours hard walking away.

It is difficult to portray an expedition in such a short space, but certain aspects stand out in my mind. Perhaps our expedition will be remembered most for its numerous bivvies... no less than thirteen. By a strange quirk of SHS freight transport we were supplied with an extra Icelandic tent which was usefully erected at various points on the banks of Loch Tarbert as a semi-permanent bivvy site. This made some bivvy trips less arduous as not only was there a tent waiting, but also calor gas burners and food supplies. The traditional backpacking and footslogging bivvy was not completely axed as the bivvy party to Corrieveckan found out to their cost (12 hours walking each day.)

The general atmosphere and makeup of the expedition was so very much more than the mechanics of organisation and planning. Leaping rivers in spate, orienteering in mist, filtering and piping a water supply, sighting 80 bird species, camp fire sing songs on the beach, Sunday services, a terrifying evening electric storm, herds of deer and goats, the list of contributory experiences is a long one.

In retrospect the hard times were the best, and the disasters become the most humorous anecdotes. The bread fiasco (6 loaves instead of 60), the lack of a ferryman when needed, the unbelievably irritating can openers, and a shortage of petrol did as much to make the expedition a success as the unexpected breathtaking view, and the enjoyment of the activities.

I think that the most important, and hopefully the most lasting, aspect of the camp was the unconscious unfolding of peoples' characters. One cannot put forty



people together in such a location without them learning something of the pleasure of being able to live together, and work together.

I could write a great deal more just to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the expedition - society directors and officers, islanders, and yourselves; but this would be tedious, if sincere. So I will just thank the goats, deer, stone-chats, and adders for sharing their hone with us.

LAWRENCE HALL

A TREASURE ISLAND

We have found
Deep solitude in a wilderness adder rich
Great dolerite dykes stone staggery raised beaches
The softly textured Tarbert even
Pap-silhouetted still

We have discovered
Peace of mind in the quiet, a sense of life force millennia-tempered.
Unity in some rich elusive warmth no questions, but seeped in us
Humanity not torn by urban business
not furrowed

We have received
Brief weeks unfathomable
new depths of independence.
A Cruib spirit, camp fire familiarity
a measure of concern
Maturity has raised us fresh in cemented friendship

Can we translate This Treasure Island
take back our Jura store
Have we been fired?
From us to whom so much is given
some may be required.

ROGER WEATHERLY

FIRST TOE IN A CANOE

On a cold and damp morning I made up my mind that it was high time that I had a go in a canoe. I obtained permission from Jim, collected a canoe, and placed it at the water's edge. I then proceeded to enter the small craft; my right leg was in, but somehow the canoe slipped away from under me and into the water I went. Annoyed, I tried again, success, I was in! As I was paddling into deeper water Jim shouted that he wanted a photo of a capsized, so in I went again, only to find he was not looking...in again. That is why I applied for the Jura pneumonia award.

NICHOLAS SIMON

S.H.S ORIENTEERING - JURA 1975



The orienteering was carried out on two separate days to give everyone a chance to enter if they were mad enough. The course was one of nine stations over a distance of about 2.5 miles which does not sound a marathon, but was quite tough because of the difficult and hilly ground.

The first day was humid and slightly misty but, undeterred, groups of intrepid (and crazy) orienteer's set out from the marquee at five minute intervals. A certain amount of "unfair play" took place and one of the markers got "lost". The fastest time was 76 mini, by Daz, John (Broadbent) and Mike. But as they had got one of the numbers in the wrong order, and missed one of the stations, their position was disallowed. Daz still claimed that he would have won had it not been for the lack of a pencil and a short memory. He was overruled. The winners of the first day were proclaimed as Chris and David (Nichols).

The second session of the three pairs set off in warm, fairly dry conditions. Robert and myself set off first and started off at a sprint. This slowed down to a trot and finally a leap after the first two hundred yards. We found the first station quite quickly and followed a compass bearing to station two. Suddenly my partner rushed off with shouts of "Lets follow the stream", and after fifteen minutes of slogging through bogs, we hit upon station three. We had been following the wrong stream. Station four was then easily found, but station five was a different story. The clue was "the summit". However, as there were about ten of them to choose from, we ended up on an aimless search. After half an hour of searching in thick mist we found station six, and so gave up on five. We followed a compass bearing towards the campsite, and as we descended below the cloud I had a shock when I saw that my bearing, by chance, was correct. We arrived at the camp to find that our rivals had faired just as badly; Jonathan Wood and Austin had to be shown the first station after an hour's search, and Alex Foss and Nic finished after about two hours, having been shown stations five and six.

The final results were:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1) Chris Buckley and Dave Nichols | 1-22-02 |
| One control missing:
Daz, Mike and Broadie | 1-16-52 |
| Two controls missing
Mark and Jonathan Ford | 1-51-10 |
| Brian and Ferrirtt | 2-23-00 |
| Three controls missing
Charles and Robert | 1-33-54 |

Kendal Mint Cake.

- 1) Oh! The dreaded K.M.C.
It is famous 'round the world;
It has even been on Everest
Where no men hardly dare.
- 2) Oh! The dreaded K.M.C.
It has been both far and near;
But for all I care
You can stuff it in your ear.
- 3) Oh! The dreaded K.M.C.
We have it on our expedition
Why will the S.H.S.
Not give it an extradition.

Ian Wolstenholme.

Fishing Report.

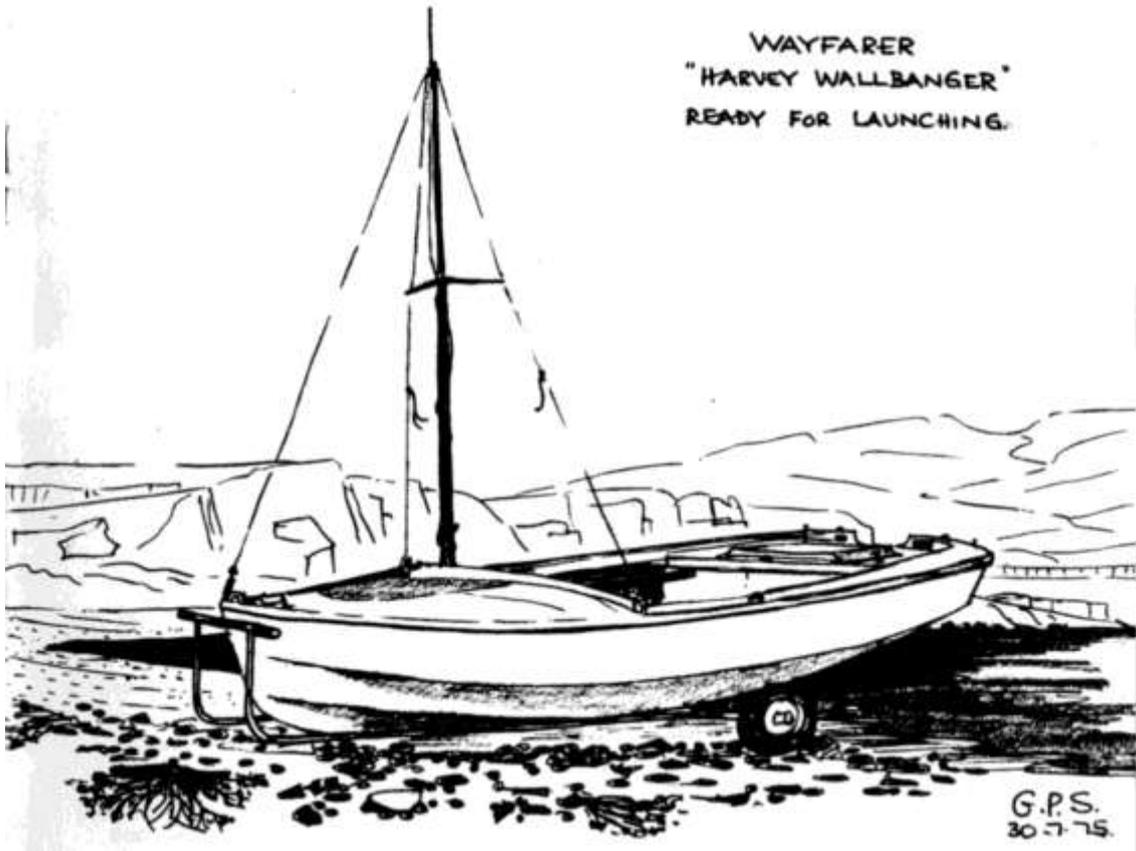
Due to the fact that none of the officers fished- it was rather difficult to do much fishing in the freshwater lochs. There were two fishing expeditions, both to the same loch - Loch a'Gharbh-uisge. It was about one and a half miles from Cruib Lodge and in a very nice setting - it was the nearest of a large network of lochs.

The first time we went there were two of us: Simon Thomas, using a spinning rod, and myself using a fly rod. It was just for a couple of hours while Lawrence led a map reading party nearby. It turned out to be very good weather for fishing; misty with a slight drizzle. Simon caught two brown trout and I caught one. That sounds really successful, but they were all too small to be worth keeping. Yet, it was an encouraging start.

The second time I went to the loch with Jonathan Ramsden and David Mallinson, who both used spinning rods. We fished for the whole day, but unfortunately it was a beautiful day, and for some reason which I do not know, trout tend not to bite when the weather is bright. Because of this we had no success.

Judging from the amount of rises I saw the first time the loch is fairly full of trout, and with more time, I think we may have caught some fair sized ones.

WAYFARER
"HARVEY WALLBANGER"
READY FOR LAUNCHING.



Climbing.

The Rock at Cruib:

The rock is very hard quartzite of pre-Cambrian type. Many of the climbs were difficult due to the rock formation producing overhangs. Lichen growing on rock made some of the holds rather difficult as well. Very often, to find safe holds, it was found necessary to clean the rock with a brush. We found the rock quite sharp, and therefore tough-going for the feet and hands. There were considerable amounts of loose rock, which made the progress slow and tended to put off beginners.

Belays:

Because of the loose and flaky nature of the rock pitons were judged by the two officers, Colin and Geoff, not to be sound enough. Artificial chock stone techniques were not used at all, because any cracks which would have otherwise been suitable were just gaps between two loose rocks. On one climb we used a large boulder as a belay, but for the majority of climbs near the camp site, we were forced to take marquee pegs and mallet. Dave Perritt joked "I'll just go up and put some pegs in" and went off with the marquee mallet in his piton hammer holster.

Report:

We climbed in two areas - within a few hundred yards of the campsite (the best of these being to the east) and on the imposing cliffs at Ruantallain. The majority of the climbs which we did were fairly easy but some were not, and verged on the severe category. On one clijib everybody fell off at one stage, and Ian Carr and Colin were the only two to conquer it. Everybody else, inclining two beginners, Ian Clay and David Lewis, had a good attempt. Three days before the end of the expedition, we all went to Ruantallain for a day's climbing. We walked there, and were ferried back in the Harvey Wallbanger. We completed two climbs and everybody was successful on both. One slight difficulty arose when Dave Perritt was tied on at the top and was belaying Ian Clay - a two foot long adder appeared close by him and he 'froze' until it had passed before continuing with the belaying.

Ian Carr, Brian Barnes, David Perritt.

When I made an initial survey, I thought Climbing was going to be a non-starter due to loose and unreliable rock for holds and belays; matters were made worse by the presence of heather half way up some of the routes, and also lichen frequently smothered the rock. However, Geoff, the C.A., took a mallet and three marquee pegs to the top of the cliffs around the camp site to make belays, and we found short but interesting routes there. Abseiling was also in demand, and was made more enjoyable by Brian Barnes' descendeur, which he let us all use.

More climbing was found at Ruantallain thanks to our obliging and hardworking boatman Paul, we were ferried out there for a day which saved carrying the equipment too far. Here it was possible to find rock belays, but we were still limited to some extent as to the climbs we could do. The routes here were slightly longer than those at Cruib and some were very much more demanding, as Ian Carr and Dave Perritt (Bullet) testified - when asked what they thought of the best climb we did, they both replied "impossible".

Dave makes up for his diminutive size by borrowing Brian's 'sit-in' harness, and when the going gets too difficult he does a 'traverse' (a-hem.) by deliberately falling off the rope and swinging around 'Tarzan fashion' to a place where the climbing was easier.

Altogether climbing on this expedition turned out very successful after an unpromising start. At one time or another we had ten people on the rocks, and I think they all enjoyed themselves - I certainly did.

Colin Moss.

The "Cup Mark" Bivvy.

The idea of the bivvy was to find cup and ring marks, which are designs carved on rocks by prehistoric man between 1,200 and 1,800 B.C. The 1971 Jura expedition had searched from Tarbert southwards along the east coast as far as the headland on which Ardfernal stands. The campsite was chosen by the leader by the side of a graveyard at Keils which was to lead to unforeseen complications. Keils is a crofting village just south of Ardfernal, and therefore next in line to be searched for cup marks. This part of Jura has always been the most highly populated, and several other points of archaeological interest were included in the bivvy activities.

On our way to the campsite we stopped at Tarbert to look at the graveyard and standing stone there. That evening we visited Craighouse, and saw our only cup mark which John Mercer, a resident archaeologist, had told us about.

The second day turned out to be the hottest on Jura for 150 years. Nevertheless we walked two miles to Knockrome, with a break for a swim, to see the standing stones there, and went to visit an abandoned village at Ardfernal. There are a few sinner visitors, however, and one of them very kindly told us about Tobarchie, a remarkably pure and fresh well which was formed by rain water draining through cracks into a hole. He also told us about the history of the village and about Samson's Stone, a boulder weighing about two tons which was reputed to have been thrown over from the mainland. The so called finger marks can still be seen.

That night our supper was interrupted by pregnant cows. Our worst fear was that one of the heavily laden beasts would trip over a guy rope (which one did) and give birth (but she did not). Later on in the evening noises were heard from the graveyard. We were sent to sleep with thunder, lightening and rain.

The following day we found out that somebody had died and that a grave had been dug and that a burial was due at noon. Not wishing to have an S.H.S. Icelandic tent present at the funeral, we left as quickly as possible. We spent much of the day watching the rehearsals of the Jura Festival Company (a group of young travelling actors) at the hall in Craighouse where we later met up with the main party to spend the last night before leaving the island.

Members: Nigel Masters, Austin Brown, Jonathan Ford, Alexander fobs, Robert Thorburn.

Alexander Foss.

MINGULAY I 1975

Leader: Nicholas Deeley

Members: John Adams, Simon Atkinson, Tim Ball, Tony Bell, Ben Buxton, Peter Cowley, Mike Dodge, Brinley Edwards, Pat Fox, Calum Mackenzie, Craig Roscoe, Andy Simpson, Ian Smith, Ian Wright.

LEADER'S REPORT

The next time you meet one of those people who would have you believe that Paradise is a Utopian dream, a state of perfection unobtainable to mere mortals, nod sagely and turn away, for far too many people know about Mingulay already.

Mingulay is perhaps one of the remotest sites that the SHS visits, and this character of isolation, together with the variety of scenery there, make it one of the best. I was not leading an activities expedition however (as any member of the party will tell you) , but one where the primary objective was to enjoy ourselves. For many of us this meant the opportunity to do some original project work.

The origin of the expedition was the conference where I met many of the people who were to eventually come. Yet each expedition has also a spiritual origin, and I suspect that this had been developing in us for several years prior to the conference. After all the skills of living together are not easily learned and I was glad to have so many members who had been on expeditions for the past five years.

The events which led to the delay in getting to Oban could fill this report by themselves. However, when we finally arrived with all the food and equipment we added further confusion to that normally present on Oban pier. The food was hurriedly unpacked and then loaded into one of those red MacBraynes boxes and labelled to go... to Tiree! I could see it was one of those days.

In contrast the tranquillity on Barra was delightful, although as the Sound refused to calm down we were delayed. Eventually we left Barra and crossed to Mingulay, and, with the food and equipment moved from the landing site to the Priest's House, two days of activity and Inventiveness began. Furniture was built, pits dug, water laid on, and a flag devised to signal occupancy of the lats.

But what of Mingulay itself? There is little that can be added to this description by Donald Campbell written in 1967:

"A green grazed bowl, sand blown ruins, and a shingle sheltered bay at the centre of a semicircle of barren hills which soon end in superb precipitous cliffs and the Atlantic. Above all the lingering sense of its history of violence, poverty, and disease - of man fighting a losing battle against the elements - that is Mingulay."

Soon the days were flying by filled by the Mingulay Test Match, the 180 yd assault on Hecla, whaling in the Campari, - all were high spots. But we managed to find time to work as well, Ian on botany, Craig on animal behaviour, Tim collecting and recording the fungi, Si on marine ecology, and Ben mapping the village. Brinley drew while Calum and John did their best to catch small mammals for a survey. Tony did his best to catch larger ones for rabbit pie. I hope all our work will be on display at the conference where we should have enough space to set out our studies fully.

There is perhaps one activity that should be documented further. For the first time in over a century Mingulay saw the brewing of homemade beer. For several days the whole camp was devoted to seeing that it was kept at a high enough temperature to allow it to ferment. Amazingly fermentation was complete in six days and the brew bottled. After about ten minutes the first tasting session took place and it was declared utterly awful, earning the name 'Pooh juice' which it justly deserved. Attempts to persuade challengers to come forward to take part in the great "Pooh juice" drinking contest were not over successful. However, there was nothing in the rules to say how long the juice had to remain drunk. Peter Cowley was duly awarded the prize for managing a pint in about six seconds. It's not that he wanted to drink it that quickly you understand, but it is not wise to take longer over it than can be helped.

Very many thanks must go to Craig for doing an excellent job as Camp Administrator. His hard work meant that I could spend much longer in bed, and we did have faith in him, didn't we? I must also record my sincere thanks to Ian as medic, for his general assistance and common sense was vital to the expedition. Finally thanks go to the SHS administration for their work that made Mingulay I a success.

All good things come to an end as did Mingulay I, and four of us were to remain while the others departed. Well I remember watching so many new friends waving frantically from the rail of the 'Iona' as she steamed out into Castle Bay. A strange feeling of loss came over me and I stopped waving...because my arm hurt.

NICK DEELEY

ON TOP OF CARNANFOR

Lighthouse beams glide across the opalescent sea
Swept on by endless motion of the streaming cloud
that gives them life.

A streak of gold lies on the horizon
Strengthening momentarily as the sun dips
To blind me with the lurid ghosts of a hundred
incandescent spheres
As it bursts forth downwards only to slip away again
Leaving a glowing fading footprint as its only souvenir.

JOHN ADAMS

THE MINGULAY CRICKET CLUB

With such an interesting and eventful test series being played in England against Australia how could we on Mingulay be left out. As some clever person, I forget who, had the sense to bring a rubber ball with him, cricket was suggested as a useful way to remind our bodies what it was like to move after lying in tents or on the beach. A pitch was marked out and the wicket cut. Unfortunately tents, streams, bunny holes, and John Adams provided an array of obstructions. A paraffin container formed one set of stumps and a convenient rock the other. An old plank became the bat that had to contend with balls tending to move across the pitch due to the slope from left to right.

After Lancashire and Somerset v Home Counties match, in which the Lancs and Somerset side trounced the other side, a disaster took place. Another match was in progress and the opening batsman belted the ball to the boundary.

Brinley Edwards

went to retrieve the ball, and once found, he hurled the thing with a mighty movement of his arm a good ten feet in front of him where it rolled down a rabbit hole. We dug the hole out but no ball. Brindley however is no fool?... and soon he made another ball out of cork, brillo pads, cotton wool, and plastic tape. It was a ball that was never round, and suited one or two of our bowlers. Cricket was soon in full swing again.

Notable performers included:- Peter Cowley for some superb fielding at silly mid tent, Pat Fox for some extremely dangerous bowling, Calum MacKenzie for nearly breaking his ankle, and Andy Simpson for his cooking. But THE outstanding performance of the MCC season was that of our dearly beloved Leader who bowled the most unbelievable pea-roller in all the club's history. Nick had paced out his run up, turned, and fallen over. Then hurling his body in the air he threw himself to the bowling crease...the action was perfect and the follow through was superb. The ball pitched half way up the wicket but well wide. It bounced once or twice and began to roll down the slope. The batsman was taken completely by surprise and was bowled out. A truly Leader-like performance I am sure you will agree.

Special mention should be made of Craig Roscoe, who hit out at six balls in succession only managing to hit one. This one nicked the edge of his bat and went on to hit his wicket. Craig obviously-has a good eye for the game. Finally I would like to thank all the members who played in this truly magnificent club and on that superb ground.

S.J.F.A.

BLACK HOUSES

Black Houses are the traditional dwellings of the Outer Hebrides. They are rectangular single storey buildings with thick dry stone and soil walls. They have a door but no proper windows to let in the light. They also had no chimneys to let out the smoke from peat fires - hence the name black houses.

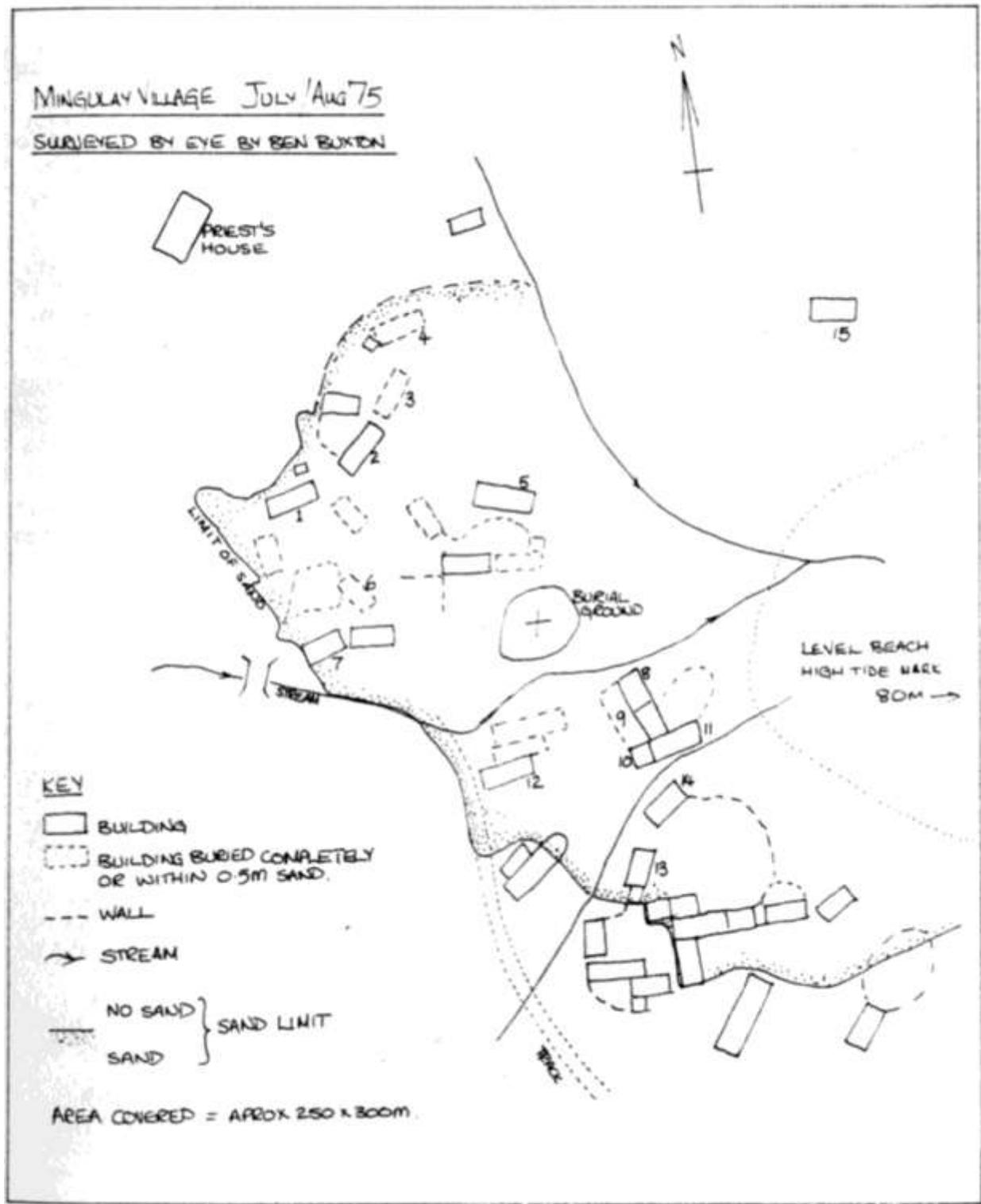
In recent decades chimneys and windows have been added to those that survive. But there are not many of these now. Of those that do remain the largest are about 20 metres long and are to be found on Lewis. Most islands have sane, and many shells can be found dotted all over the Hebrides, for once the roof has gone they have proved to be virtually indestructible by nature. The size of these buildings tends to be smaller towards the south of the island chain of the Outer Hebrides. The smallest are in Barra and South Uist where many are still inhabited. These are now, strictly speaking, 'white houses' as they have proper chimneys, windows, and mortared walls. The thatch rests on the outer edge of the walls giving them a rounded appearance.

The buildings of the deserted Mingulay village are all of different ages, sizes, and degrees of sophistication making it impossible to generalise about them too much. A considerable number, however, were of the basic 'Black House' construction, although a few in the north half were poorly built and have not lasted well. These were probably built as byres for storage and domestic animals. It is easy to pick out the more recent ones that date most likely from the 1860's to the 1880's, when the population rose more than three times over to 150. These were solidly built with mortar lining the inside. Many are in surprisingly good condition despite the ravages of sheep, rabbits, tourists, and SHS members.

An interesting feature of the village is the number of groups of three or more buildings. Possibly they were family units. The largest buildings are about 7-8m long and 2-3m wide on the inside. Most walls are less than 1.7m high and are at least 1m thick. Referring to the map No 1 is a 'modern cottage' with gables and thin mortared walls.

MINGULAY VILLAGE JULY/AUG 75

SURVEYED BY EYE BY BEN BUXTON



The sand blown from the beach covers all but the SW corner of the village so that there are very few original surfaces left uncovered. The map shows the northern half to be the next severely affected, so that every building is at least partly buried. The sand above these is about 1m thick.

Numbers 3 and 4 are almost totally buried in sand and short tough grass, and although these were probably the first to have been covered they are the highest in the village. (12 m) Elsewhere about half the sand amongst the buildings is covered by silverweed, nettles, thistles, and marram grass. Exposed walls to windward have been left clear and therefore are their original height. The end walls of Numbers 8 and II axe still about 2m high, while the East wall of number 5 is 2.3m above ground and 0.7m below. Of some interest are the remains of a mortared path, visible along the southern side of number 11.

The burial ground is partly covered with sand on the Northeast side, but the original turf remains. Crude tombstones and crosses still stand. Like the rest of the village it is riddled with rabbit holes which speed up the process of erosion.

The Priests House is a large, solidly built two-storied building standing above the village. It was intended originally when it was completed in 1911, that the lower storey should serve as the priest's house and the upper storey, reached by an external stairway, should serve as the chapel. Unfortunately, the building is now open to the elements, and has deteriorated considerably.

The school house, on the track from the village to the landing place, is still in good condition and is kept in reasonable repair by the shepherds who use it when they are on the island.

BEN BUXTON

