

**SCHOOLS
HEBRIDEAN
SOCIETY**



1972

SCHOOLS HEBRIDEAN SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 1972

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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 have been possible.

EDITORIAL

Another year finds the Report under new management and with a slightly altered format. The "usual mixture of scientific research, artistry and complete codswallop" (1971 Editorial) has, as an experiment, been separated according to subject matter – though not under those headings! – as well as by expedition. The idea being that reports on particular subjects will be more easily found, and should, in theory, be more meaningful next to those of other expeditions on the same subject than under the old system where gems on 'Butterflies' might be found (or lost!) between thoughts on 'Silence' and facts on "Geomorphology". Another possible advantage is that it will induce us all to pay more attention to what was done on other expeditions, and may perhaps give a clearer indication of the overall character of the year's project work.

My apologies to all those whose work has been omitted or abbreviated. The quantity of work submitted once again exceeded the space available. However, I would stress that all material, whether published or not, will be filed in the Society's library of information which is being built up by Alan Fowler for the use of future expeditions and anyone else interested.

Well, what's new? As the Raasay and Lewis expeditions already know the Society has acquired eight of its own 6-man Icelandics and six brilliant orange fibreglass canoes, which were generally acclaimed as a great success. We also have on the publicity front, under the instigation of Peter Smith, a new Prospectus and a Poster – these should encourage us all to spread the S.H.S. gospel farther and wider.

And what's old? I need say no more than to draw attention to the small section at the end of the Report on "Boats". However, there is much behind-the-scenes activity here, and we may hope for developments soon.

Before closing, I must thank all those who have helped with editing of the Report, particularly Gavin, Paul, Roger, Alan and Ray, whose sub-editing and typing are largely responsible for the Report coming out when it does; and also Mr Lord of Bettaprint.

Now read on ...

ALAN EVISON

P A R T I

MUCKLE ROE (SHETLAND) EXPEDITION 1972

Members

Tim Bell, Paul Birchenough, Graeme Cottam, Mike Griffin, Chris Hix, Graham Holdup, Keith Howard, Rory Post, George Stanley, Mark Williams and Ray Winter (*leader*)

LEADER'S REPORT

'*Dispecta est Thule*' - so Tacitus claims the Roman legions to have espied the northern limits of their conquest. We saw it from the decks of the 'ST.GLAIR' as she nosed her way into a birth of Lerwick harbour.

An expedition of only eleven differed from the usual S.H.S. kind. For one thing, your turn at cooking came round sooner; for another, the weight of stores per head may have been relatively lighter. This did not strike us as so when it came to man-handling them!

Strictly speaking, Muckle Roe is not an island, being connected to the mainland by a bridge. This served to tantalise us with the availability of Brae's flesh-pots, a public telephone, public lavatory, and the shop. This last was our main supplier, but the Dock Strike had severely limited the stock, a situation which grew worse, rather than better, as time went on.

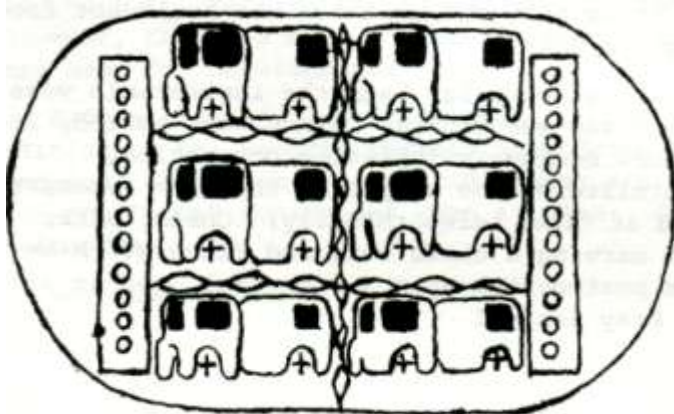
The site in the pleasant weather of our arrival seemed ideal. Our tents were soon grouped around the caravan which we had hired with the site. It turned out to be a hotel, providing warmth and light to us all, and to those who could not face sleeping in a 'bivvie', a bunk.

The cliff scenery was spectacular, and the innumerable voes provided rock-pools and sea-weedy bays. Birds were varied, if not plentiful; seashore ecology a full-time occupation. Graeme and Graham administered the camp from the dark recesses of their "office", and at times telepathically; Chris, after much joinery, took to carving a chess set, and fingers Mike supervised a gruesome post-mortem upon a cormorant, and we all wished the worst for Fray Bentos!

Within a fortnight the island had yielded up all its charms but for the stirring sunsets, scent of heather and the low-key rumbling of the sea in subterranean caves. Thus, the Morris Traveller came into its own. Travel it did, with parties to Flugga Mugga and the most northerly post-office in the British Isles, others to the extreme south, to Sumburgh Head; to the gannets of Unst, to the striking evidence of a thousand years of continuous settlement at Jarlshof. Keith, Tim and Rory made the journey to Foula, while others scoured the Mainland for cairns, cists and brochs. This led to a call at Vementry, an island opposite Muckle Roe, from which one can see the raw, red cliffs which give it its name; from where, too, the naval guns still point mutely into St Magnus Bay. The islanders took us into their lives with amazing grace! Invited to Barbeques, Dances, we were always made welcome. Our attempt to beat their invincible footballers failed in spite of reinforcements – a French Moroccan and some lady spectators! It was good to be able to be hosts to some twenty of the islanders on the last night and to put a 'spread' before them which a guest described as "a feast a good housewife would be proud of. ' We left with the spirit of the place drawing us back. Another delay was the loading of sheep onto the boat – the first cargo of animals for weeks. Our departure at 10 pm. put a severe restriction on certain social amenities aboard, which did not become available until we sailed, and were savagely withdrawn without extension. Perhaps the doctor was deprived in other ways. We know he had enough seasickness pills for an army, but on neither journey was there an excuse to use them. It is appropriate here to draw attention to the unhappy fact that the 'oil boom' is already changing the face of Shetland. One islander put five years between them and an unrecognisable clutter of derricks, drills and Dodge motorcars, bringing with them so much that is to spoil the islands and their people.

RAY WINTER

NOTE: The 'glyph' was found on the Muckle Roe campsite and is thought to represent the Ark, or caravan, of a neolithic SHS party!



CAMP ADMINISTRATORS' REPORT

Labouring under the impression that, sooner or later, everyone was going to have to do some sort of specific duty during our stay, we were appointed as Camp Administrators on the first night. As things turned out we were the only members to be assigned a definite task.

Our first job was to plan all the meals. This required an immediate stock-check which we hoped would tally with the lists composed by Rory many months before. However, Shaft's big score had not been adhered to and so all the menus had to be redone. To the delight of all we had six basic main meal menus, namely: Spam, - Fray Bentos steak and kidney puddings; Spam; Spam; mutton and Spam.

Similarly, desserts included the delights of peaches, peaches and pears or sponge pudding. The veritable variety of breakfasts was awe-inspiring: eggs, porridge or Weetabix.

Secondly, we had to make up a cooks' rota, in which everyone got their fair share of the cooking. After three weeks, as Ray-mondo pointed out in his final sermonette, we were all too aware of those who should, to put it bluntly, never go near a kitchen again, but also of those chefs destined for 'Cordon Bleu'. Standards of cooking varied from the 'haute cuisine' of the camp administrators (not a misprint) which was followed by the constant high standard of Keith, our witch doctor and Mark. At the opposite end of the rectum was the aptly christened 'Vomit Squad' of Thid [Tim?] and Brian P.H. Gastronomically, the food itself ranged from the exquisite Stuffed Eggs Provencal to the eggs which were boiled for only forty minutes one morning.

Other duties cropped up from time to time in which we had to make the decisions but we were both away on the day of the high-diving championships. Ray handled the financing of the car and everyone helped in the preparation of the farewell party which despite the drizzle was enjoyed immensely by all concerned, especially the football game with the girls of Brae.

Various unexpected problems arose, however, which we could do nothing about, such as the discovery of a hundred green sausages one morning. Indeed our own non-appearance during many of the days of the last week caused a few problems. Yet, as always, any mishap or confusion was met by the same good-humour that dominated the whole of our stay on the islands.

GRAEME COTTAM
and GRAHAM HOLDUP

REFLECTIONS ON A HOLIDAY

To my great surprise I did not see any palm trees; the brilliant hot sunshine which you come to expect from S.H.S. luxury tours was not as dominant as I was led to believe; the long golden, sandy beaches covered with basking female homo sapiens seemed to elude me; the hotel wasn't even under construction and I had the impression that I had been hoodwinked.

However, I did manage to gain yet another experience whilst I was on the 60° parallel and that was one of flying – well, maybe not exactly 'flying' but more plummeting over a cliff; this feeling whilst it lasted was sheer bliss and was only spoilt when I was fished out of the sea at the bottom. On a more serious note I must thank Mike and George for the efficient rescue operation if only so that they get their names in print even if this S.H.S. report is not the 'Shetland Times'.

Another thing that struck me about the Shetland Isles was that it seemed like another world – it's cut off from the affluence, decadence, acquisitiveness and social structure of England. This is when you realise that "true" living has been killed off by the power structure of the country. Up there you feel free, happier. The people go out of their way to help you, they always have a smile on their faces. It's to be hoped that these islands and their natives are never caught up in the 'rat race'.

CHRIS BIRCHENOUGH

SOUTH UIST EXPEDITION 1972

Leader: Alan Fowler

Camp Administrator: Jim Turner

Officers: Philip Brown, Peter Spours, John Wignall

Boys: Craig Roscoe, Ian Smith, Mike Reynolds, Gary Hewett, Steve Pope, Mike Hayward, Mike Landon, Tim Key, Richard Osborne (Ozzy), Steve Hill-Jones, Jonathan Seville, Chris Jones, John Benjamin, Nick Deeley, Steve Kane.

LEADER'S REPORT

If the world really were flat, South Uist would lie on its western brink, on the edge of the abyss. When the sun is shining the island is lit with pale marine and sky blues so that there is a great sense of space and remoteness. Storms bring a different feeling of isolation; one confined by whirling mist and the noise of wind and rain. The barren landscape is perpetually on the edge of life, prehistoric and unwanted.

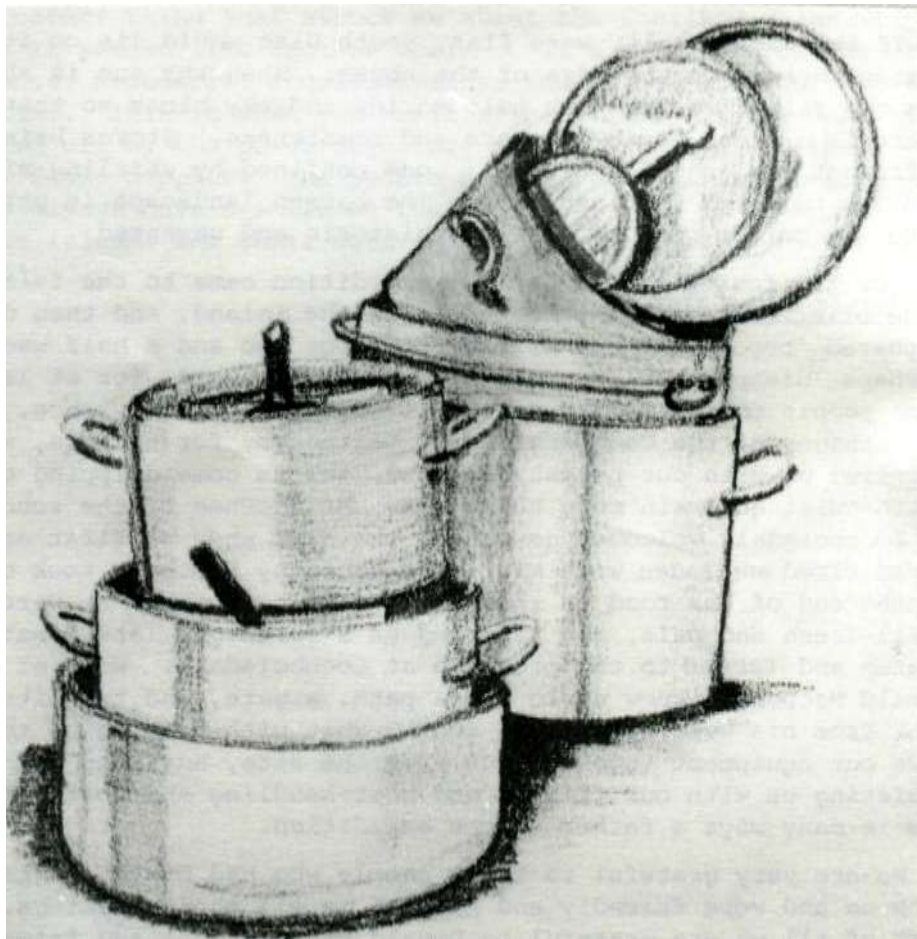
For the fourth time a Society expedition came to the island, made brief contact with the people of the island, and then disappeared 'beyond the end of the road'¹ for two and a half weeks. Perhaps 'disappeared' is not quite the right word, for at least four people on the island were well aware of our existence. The manager of the Co-operative at Daliburgh, for example, who supplied us with our perishable food, saw us come dripping out of the mist and rain more than once. Mr MacPhee of the school in Lochboisdale welcomed us out of the dark when we first arrived tired and laden with kit. The Macaulay Brothers took us to the end of the road in their lorry and coach when we were still fresh and pale, and returned us a fortnight later weather-beaten and tanned to the pierhead at Lochboisdale. Most of all, Donald MacDonald knew us to lie a path, a gate, and two bits of moor from his ever-open front door. What with helping us to move our equipment into and out from the site, advising and assisting us with our fishing and boat-handling and post, he was in many ways a father to the expedition.

We are very grateful to these people who had direct contact with us and were friendly and helpful in all their dealings. Most of all we are grateful to Donald and his sons and friends for their assistance and tolerance

of our amateurish ways!

What did we do while we were in isolation? Undoubtedly the most prominent activity was walking and, apart from the miles some members clocked up on the way to their sleeping tents and back, most of the rugged east coast of the island was explored this being some twelve miles of rocky mountains, deep glens and precipitous cliffs. The west coast, consisting of windswept machair and grey sandy strands, was visited on three occasions, and two groups of members travelled to the extreme north of the island and on into North Uist – not entirely on foot, but still an interesting achievement.

After the first three days the weather was generally bad, and this goes a little way to explaining the lack of project work done compared with other expeditions to this island. In spite of this, some good work was done – notably in the field of



botany by Ian Smith and company; in ornithology – a solo effort by Gary Hewett; in geomorphology by Phil Brown and company; and in meteorology by John Wignall and company.

Readers may draw a little more enlightenment from the list of prizes which I am now able to publish. A general prize for catching your leader by surprise and amusing his wife goes to the entire expedition (just wait till the Conference, you lot) The prizes for sharpness of wit and accurate location of water at all times both go to Chris Jones – an unusual combination (and even they were out to dry) . I was undecided whether to award a prize for the largest or the smallest total catch of fish, and I feel that the contestants themselves were a little undecided about this, too. On reflection, however, the prize goes to Mike Reynolds (well endured, Mike!) The prize for the best turned-out, nearly-genuine Scotsman goes to Tim Key, and his sole rival, Phil Brown who plaid it by ear (ouch! - Ed.), must get a mention. This is the same Phil Brown who is remembered (in different ways in different quarters) for the construction of the Gnome Canal and the detonation of the Chairman. We shall henceforward hold a fireworks celebration on the night of 10th August during which toadstools should be thrown onto the bonfire.

The departure of the half-past midnight boat from Loch-boisdale at half-past four in the morning wound up the expedition in familiar style. We left behind us some bleached grass and muddy patches, and some wisps of smoke from the end of a fire. In a year the land will have forgotten us. How long will we remember our experience?

ALAN FOWLER

IMPRESSIONS OF SOUTH UIST

As I write this I am sitting perched high on a hill overlooking the campsite. My nostrils are filled with the smell of the heather and my ears with the rush of the streams which tumble far below into Loch Eynort. To my left, silhouetted against fluffy white clouds, is the craggy expanse of Beinn Mhor. And in front of me, silvery in the sunlight, is Loch Eynort, with its complicated conglomeration of islands.

South Uist is an island of contrasts. To the east lies a deeply indented coastline resembling the coast of the Scandinavian Peninsula. This coast is fringed by thousands of small islands. It is extremely hard for seamen to steer a straight course through the maze of inlets. There is no better way to explore the lochs than by canoe.

The waves break against the bow of the canoe, the wind lashes against your face. Overhead, seagulls and oyster-catchers screech out their harsh cries. You are one with the sea. The canoe responds exactly to the movements of your body. It is also interesting to walk along the shores of the lochs, clambering over stones and seaweed and watching the ebb and flow of the tide etching patterns round the rocks.

Rising steeply from the shores of the loch are great mountains displaying all the features of glacial erosion – great corries, hanging valleys, knife-sharp arêtes, striations and U-shaped valleys – which combine to provide both breath-taking scenery and interesting climbs.

Further inland the land surface changes. Here is an area of peat bogs, numerous lakes, and a long sinuous spine road which extends, with its attendant telegraph poles, in an almost straight line for mile after dreary mile. Here, marsh plants abound and great docile red-brown highland cattle may be seen.

Towards the west the island becomes flatter and flatter until we reach the Atlantic coast. You can walk for miles along the light grey, shell-sand beaches without seeing a soul. The beach is flat with wave patterns of a darker grey along its length. It is strewn with seaweed and fringed by a long line of fertile sand-dunes where wild flowers are in evidence. This area is known as the 'machair'. At intervals lines of rocks stretch out to sea upon which seals may often be seen. Here, also, are masses of rotting seaweed – kelp – which give a most pungent smell and add to the beach's strange atmosphere.

To appreciate South Uist properly one must stand on the summit of Beinn Mhor or Hecla and when there is a break in the swirling cloud one can see the rugged coast to the east and the lakes and sandy beaches of the west at the same time. Only when one has seen both worlds can one really understand the great love that so many people feel for South Uist. Its haunting beauty makes it a prince among islands.

JONATHAN SEVILLE

'OPERATION TIDE-POLE'

This piece of fiction is a true account of human endeavor versus the elements, five men's stoic refusal to give up against the relentless pressures of wind, tide and camp food.

It was the joint idea of the four of us to erect a device capable of monitoring the rate of the tide in Loch Eynort.

The superstructure of the 'tide-pole' presented grave problems. To resist the terrifying pressures and currents (not to mention the incompetence of us nailing it together) a material like carbon or glass-fibre was considered. After very little thought we compromised with some hunks of driftwood inside which we inserted cores of plutonium laminate for rigidity and incredibility.

The three of us were well aware of the likely possibility of sabotage by political activists, neither did we rule out espionage by a gnomish intelligence. This was to be the team's ultimate blow to success.

Inherent in the pole's design (apart from certain failure), was a mass of advanced British technology plus some wizard carpentry. Its outward simplicity belied its fiendishly rigorous planning and wind-tunnel testing. Security was at a premium and this meant the thorough brainwashing of all camp cynics as to its real purpose. The common opinion was that it was a radio aerial or a ladder for sea fairies. Several times a suspicious gnome-like figure was seen, obviously photographing for a gnomish spy ring.

There were only two in the team from the beginning so it was natural that we should install it ourselves. Instantly, I knew we were in for trouble. The dual semi-double modular cantilevers had been sabotaged and there was a piece of string missing.

As I, the sole developer of the project, lowered the pole into place, the timber snapped and the nuclear core exploded in a mass of mud and seaweed. The two-inch solid tin nails simply buckled under the strain. Slowly and majestically the pole crumpled and vanished into the mud of Loch Eynort with a hiss of nuclear steam. The gnomes had beaten me, but there will be other would-be tide-tamers in the future. (Fools).

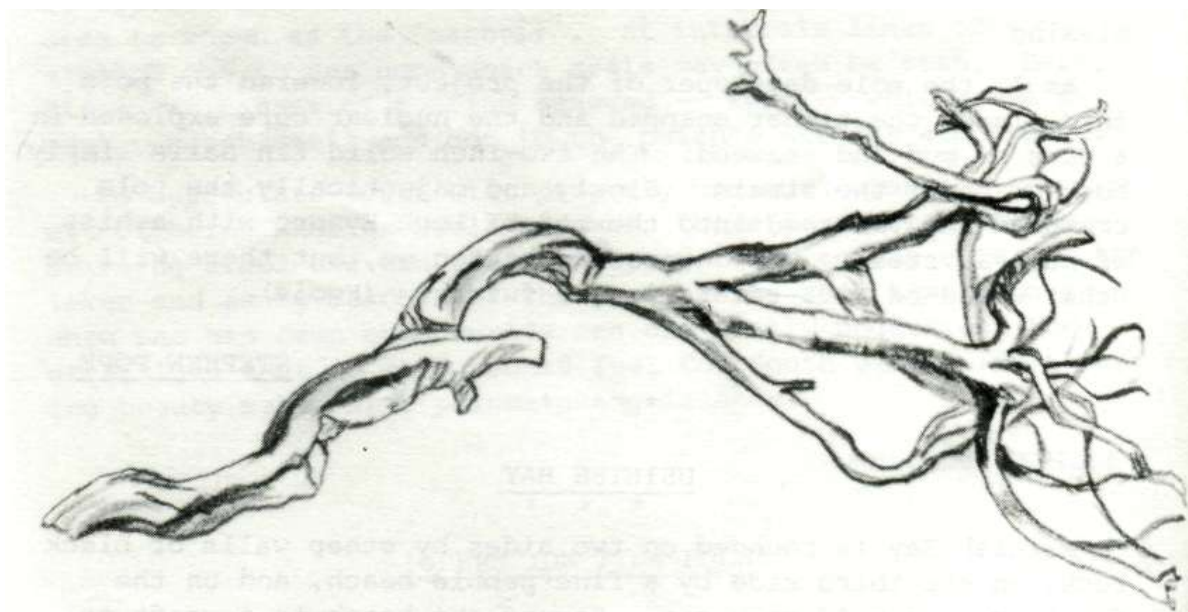
STEPHEN POPE

USINISH BAY

Usinish Bay is bounded on two sides by steep walls of black rock, on the third side by a fine pebble beach, and on the fourth by the cold grey sea. Beyond the beach is a croft or, to be more precise, a 'shieling' or dwelling place for shepherds. The building is low with thick stone walls and a corrugated-iron roof. It has only one small window but a roaring fire in the large hearth provides plenty of light for the living half of the building (the other half being for livestock). Around the walls are flat wooden benches for sleeping on.

Usinish Bay croft is a good place for discussions. It is miles away from any habitation and this inevitably means that humans living in it feel more drawn together than they would elsewhere. Our party spent hours sitting in the small smoke-filled room, staring into the flames of the great driftwood fire and discussing various subjects in great depth. Ideas came to us that would not previously have done. All of us, from varying backgrounds and with differing interests, suddenly stopped in our tracks and had a good long think about many subjects relevant to present-day society – ecology, pollution, technology and so on. This, to my mind, illustrates the most important result of the Schools Hebridean Society's expeditions. A visit to the Hebrides gives one time to think – sit down and reconsider Man's progress and position in the world, and this is a most satisfying experience.

JONATHAN SEVILLE



WINDCHILL

John Wignall carried out further observations from which windchill will be calculated for twenty different points on a traverse across the south-east facing ridges and glens of Ben More. It is hoped to relate these to the terrain and weather conditions of the day, to cast some light on the windchill experienced by a person moving over rough ground and frequently changing both altitude and exposure. This work makes a great addition to that done on South Uist in 1969.

There is room here for a carefully studied and prepared investigation into the use of an index of cooling by hill-walkers. A great deal of very technical research has been done for the benefit of high-altitude and arctic explorers, and this we probably cannot hope to emulate. A good deal has been done to prepare an index known as the 'windchill' factor. So far as I know, nothing has been done to relate windchill variation to British hill terrains, or to the subjective impressions of differently-clothed people passing through the same windchill conditions, although there is probably work published on specific factors (ie. wind, or temperature, or humidity) and their bearing on clothing and British hill-walking.

THOUGHTS

I sat on a rock this evening
And watched the clouds heading firmly
Moving east inland, and I thought,
What of it all?

I saw the sea moving, and the tide
Dancing, around the rippling rocks.
The seaweed heard, and I thought,
What of it all?

Then I looked down the island coast,
I saw the cliffs - Screapadal,
Rising solid from the great green head,
and I thought, I understood.

PETER FORSAITH

LEWIS EXPEDITION 1972

Leader: Gavin Macpherson

Officers: John Cullingford, Alan Evison, Ken Hunter, Peter Smith, Peter Tatham and David Vale

Boys: Mark Baker, David Barney, Rupert Bates, Alan Beaney, Derek Brown, Tony Carnwath, Adam Courlander, Rodney Fawcett, Dickie Friend, Julian Garrish, Paul Gowland, Dick Green, Mark Hall, Nick Hanson, Richard Hellier, Tim Jeans, Peter Jeffries, Neil Jones, Howard Lucas, Stephen Middleton, Robert Morrison, Colin Moss, Chris Parsons, John Parrett, Richard Ritter, Ray Snook, Jeremy Stock, Jeremy Turff, Julian Upton, Barry Watson, Richard Williams.

LEADER'S REPORT

It is surprising how quickly one manages to reorientate oneself about one's surroundings. In two weeks, Aird Bheag which, when we arrived, had seemed like the very end of the world, had become quite like home, a centre for the surrounding country that had become our world.

I don't suppose that many of us will forget our arrival for a long time to come. One goes to the Hebrides in the full knowledge that the weather is not exactly reliable, but on that day it turned on us with all its fury. A Force 8 gale blew in from the Atlantic, driving the incessant rain hard against the island. We were all soaked by the time the 'GOLDEN CHANCE1 was loaded at Amhuinnsuidhe, cold as well when we boarded the launch at Husinish, and getting tired and, in some cases, seasick, when at last we reached Aird Bheag. Then followed the toil of carrying every item of food and equipment up the steep 400-yard path to the campsite, a path which for much of its length was 6" under a torrent of water. But we made it, and by ten o'clock that night the tents were up and we were fed. One thing was certain: conditions could only improve. And now it is all over I'm sure the expedition was all the better for its hard beginning.

Conditions did improve, but only slowly. For a week the mist hardly rose off the loch, and we had to content ourselves with damp sorties into nearby hills, or braving the seas of Loch Tamanavay in the 'MAY' or the canoes.

But then the sun came out, and Lewis was there in all its splendour. Beauty for me could well be defined as standing on the rock over the camp watching the sun set behind the dark hills, the red sky reflected from the stillness of the loch.

In the end, after the weather had done its worst, we achieved a lot. In particular, we found what may well turn out to be a megalithic stone circle on the point not half a mile from the campsite. We made a comprehensive survey of the bird life in one particular 10 km grid square to tie in with a national survey. We collected plastic bottles from the seashore with writing in German and Russian and surprisingly little English. Aird Bheag was surveyed, using theodolite and tape, with tent poles for survey stations.

We spread our net far and wide, and most people bivvied out at some time or another. Parties visited the Standing Stones at Callanish, and built sand-castles on Uig Sands. The climbers went across the loch in search of new climbs, and spent a night there, whilst the ornithologists were away twice to see the birds in the early morning.

It was after one of these bivvies that we were able to put our emergency procedures to the test. The party was overdue, when smoke was seen on the far-side of the loch, and whistles were heard. The 'MAY' was dispatched, and made a record crossing, and brought back one member of the party and all their equipment. Fortunately, there was nothing seriously wrong, but it proved we could rescue someone from two miles away in under an hour.

It was a great nuisance not to have an outboard for the 'MAY', desperate efforts having failed to find a replacement for the damaged one we should have had. Nevertheless, there seemed to be no lack of keen oarsmen, and she spent much of her time on the loch. Our other water transport – the canoes – were universally acclaimed as a great success and were in use on almost every possible occasion.

A friendly spirit of competition existed between officers and boys! The officers, of course, always won, but sometimes we had to disqualify the boys in order to do it! The officers, however, are prepared to concede victory in the rowing race provided that our tactical triumph in the tug-of-war is acknowledged. Football provided the most closely fought contest, particularly in view of the natural hazards of the pitch – like the stream across the middle of it. After several postponements, the orienteering was eventually run between four teams. We even managed to find a cup to present to the winners.

The evenings provided what was, I believe, a most successful innovation. Each night one person was allowed to choose a subject, and asked to read or say a few words about that subject. And afterwards, discussion was allowed to develop. Sometimes, such discussion went on for an hour or so, and sometimes it broke quickly into a good round of singing.

And then suddenly we ran out of time. On the last night there was Fifi Pops and Birthday Cake and Cabaret. We had intended to start clearing up on the last night but we were too busy, so we did it all, plagued by midges, in the morning and were almost ready to go when the 'GOLDEN CHANCE' came in at half-past nine. The journey back was the exact opposite of the journey out. The sea was calm, the sun shone, the air was so clear that we could see St.Kilda jutting out of the Atlantic nearly fifty miles away. If the expedition had started on an all-time low, then it ended on an all-time high.



I will remember so many things about Lewis that it is hard to pick out just a few to mention. The tug-of-war team sitting in mystified confusion after the officers let go of the rope must come high on the list (unkind, though it is). There was the view across Loch Resort, and the one stag that came on us unawares and stood, confused, not thirty yards away. There were the evening talks, and the guitar and the singing. There was Hebridopoly, a gallant attempt to counter the spread of the Bridge disease. There was mackerel and floats and, of course there was custard.

There was the day it got so wet that we had to bale out the marquee with buckets, and the day it was so dry we had to walk right away from the camp to get our water. There was Donald and Danny from the head of the loch. There was the Service on Sunday with almost 100 per cent, voluntary attendance when we sang 'Lord of the Dancel and 'Were You there?'

There are many people we must thank. First of all, of course, there is Andrew Miller Mundy, who allowed us to use Aird Bheag and who transported us there and back. Once again, we must be grateful to George and Sheila Newhall for the use of the Scout Hut in Stornoway, and for all their help and hospitality. Thank you, too, to all the S.H.S. organisers, to Roger and John and Alistair and Phil and Richard and all the others who put in so much time and work so that we could enjoy ourselves. But most of all I would like to thank the 31 Boys and 6 Officers of the expedition. The work you put in, the spirit with which you tackled a difficult and exhausting experience, and the enthusiasm you showed throughout really made my job very easy indeed. I hope you enjoyed it all as much as I did.

GAVIN MCPHERSON

AIRD BHEAG SURVEY

"Hands up all those who want to do surveying today," said Gavin. Seven people raised their hands. What a good response he must have thought he had got. It turned out that within 15 minutes of starting there were only three people left, including Gavin. The two others were Barry Watson and myself - due to the fact that we had hogged everything to ourselves.

We took six points from A to F and formed a series of triangles. The angles of the triangles were found with the aid of the theodolite. The four triangles formed covered most of the campsite, and went halfway down the path to the jetty.

It was then that I made a most interesting discovery when we came to plot the triangles: one of them had only 170° . This, of course, proved that the law that the angles of a triangle always add up to 180 degrees is wrong. The mistake was soon rectified.

The buildings, streams, walls, fences and footpaths were plotted within and around the triangles, by measuring the distance to the nearest line. When all this was plotted, we extended the survey down to sea-level, to take in the path and the jetty. The whole survey, which included many of the obligatory surveying breaks (tea breaks, rest breaks, sleep breaks &c.) took about six days.

RICHARD RITTER

CLIMBING ON LEWIS - '72

This activity was hit rather badly by the absence of Dick Light who broke his leg three feet up on a climbing frame in Brighton a week before the expedition. However, keen interest was shown by over half a dozen boys. Initial instruction in bowlines and belays was given on the wall behind the marquee; then armed with the 1969 Report we advanced towards Loch Teal-savay. Owing to navigational errors, we ended up sheltering under Beethoven's 5th - promising to return. Just round the corner, at 033187, a short climb of fairly difficult standard was found. The standard was dramatically lowered when a large but delicately balanced boulder was dislodged, resulting in a sixty foot hard difficult called Bouncing Boulder.

Three climbs in the area of 033190 were also ascended. Their exact nomenclature is difficult except to say that it is remarkably unlikely that the author would have led any climb harder than 'v. diff.' standard and lived to tell the tale.

A party of six was taken on a bivouac to the crags at 008200. This proved extremely disappointing, the only crag of any consequence, containing a large cave and several strenuous overhangs. However, in spite of this, the two days were enjoyed by all, especially the Midges! My thanks to all those intrepid 'tigers' who were fool enough to attach themselves to the other end of the nylon. My gardening wasn't really that dangerous to those in crash hats!

PETER TATHAM

ORIENTEERING

The orienteering course was set out over a widespread area from Aird Bheag to North, South, East and West. The gallant officers who made the course possible to run were Peter Smith, Big Al (Alan Evison), John Cullybags, Gavin and Peter Tatham. The teams consisted of 3 or 4 people, and 13 people took part. Three teams ran in the first leg, scoring 290, 283 and 272, each using their own devious methods. At the end of the first day Dickie Friend and his faithful followers Tim Jeans, Jeremy Stock and Mark Hall (alias Geordie) were in the lead with a comfortable score. After the return of Groper Rupe and Ray 'The Brain' Snook from their glorious bivvy, a new partnership arose with a Parrett (Butch). Henceforth, the Aird Bheag Bog Runners were seen as a threat to Dickie's superiority.

On a sultry Monday afternoon the Bog Runners set off with four hours ahead of them in which to amass as many points as possible by collecting cards with marks on. Three hours later, they had returned, having clocked up 410 points, thus beating their nearest rivals by a cool 120.

RAY SNOOK, JOHN PARRETT and RUPERT BATES



LEWIS EXPEDITION: 'Sun, Sea and Sand'

* * *
SUN, SEA AND SAND

On a cold and wet Thursday morning, John Cullybags' bedraggled bird-watchers return to camp and soon afterwards the S.H.S. Chain-Gang set off. The party consisted of Angel Face Evison, our leader, Adam 'Call-Me-Intelligence' Courlander, Grupe the Rupe, Big Dick Green and, last but not least, Ray-Mush Snook.

Six hours after we left we stumbled upon civilization, and soon afterwards reached the shop at Ardmoil. As the main objective of the bivvy was to locate Grupels friend, Jock Mackenzie, we started to enquire after his whereabouts and were shocked to discover that his lodge was over twelve miles away. Alan hit on the idea of telephoning him.

After some trouble with the telephone, Rupe got through, and we were surprised to hear that John, one of Jock's sons, had invited us to tea and was coming to meet us in his land-rover. An hour later, we were sitting at proper tables eating eggs and bacon and real tomatoes.

After some discussion, John suggested that we spend the night in the Scaliscro Lodge Hotel.

The following morning, with a large breakfast inside us and clean after having hot baths, we accepted a lift offered to us by a kind lady. This took us to the turn-off at Uig and from there we walked along the road until we reached the golden Uig sands, under the now blazing sun. After a quick swim, luncheon was served. The lads then set out to build a sand-castle under the direction of Big Al. After two hours' building, they had run out of sand but the castle was finished!

The third leg of the journey began, and yet again the Famous Five had a lucky break. This time they were picked up by Dave Vale, in Ken Hunter's car, and taken as far as Brenish where they spent the night.

On Day Three, we were homeward bound. We stopped opposite Mealista beach to have another lightning dip. We arrived back at camp as the sun was setting, exhausted but happy.

RUPERT BATES, DICK GREEN and RAY SNOOK

* * *

THE BEST RECIPES for ...

THE BEST BROWN BREAD

Ingredients: Prewett's or Allinson's PLAIN wholemeal Flour (81% or 100%) dried baking Yeast - Salt - Sugar and Water 10oz.(roughly) flour; 8oz. warm water; 1 teaspoonful salt; 1 dessertspoon white sugar(pref. caster); 1 teasp. dried yeast; these quantities make ONE Loaf (multiply according to demand) Put flour and salt into bowl. Add sugar and yeast to the water (heated to blood temperature). Leave both in warm place until yeast has turned frothy (10 mins). Make sure all yeast and sugar is dissolved in the water, and then add water to the flour and salt and mix until all the water is absorbed. (No need to knead!) Divide dough into tins (greased) and leave to rise for half an hour in warm place. Bake in oven (regulo 7 for 35 mins. ordinary oven; 1 hour at least with two gas burners for S.H.S. ovens).
Note: a measuring jug wanted on every expedition.

HEBRIDEAN NETTLE BEER

Ingredients: 2 lb. young Nettles (leaves and stem but minus the roots)
2 lemons - 1 lb Demerara sugar - 1oz. Cream of tartar - formula 67 yeast - 1 gallon water.
Rinse and boil nettles for 15 minutes. Strain into a bowl containing lemon peel (no white pith) and juice, sugar and cream of tartar. Stir vigorously together and when hand-warm add heaped teaspoonful yeast. Leave it in a covered sweet jar in the warmest place available for 3 days; then pour into another clean sweet jar and seal by screwing down top over a folded handkerchief. Keep for one week before drinking.

JOHN CULLINGFORD

* * *

SELECTIONS FROM 'AIRD TIMES' Editorial Policy

Any resemblance or relationship to the truth is regretted; persons mentioned can consider themselves lucky.

Sports Special

It was a tense moment as the whistle blew at Tamanavay Park to start the 'Friendly' between Moss's Mashers and the Courlander Choppers. A forceful thrust down the left wing from Tyke, cleverly deflected by the bank, and passed to a blue and white striped boulder playing for the Choppers, landed the attacking Mashers in deep water. But picking themselves out of the stream, the Mashers quickly chalked up a goal. After the ensuing fight, it was the Choppers' turn to score, the delirious crowd down at the Gas-cylinder end being treated to a close-up demonstration of the famous Courlander Bog Roll. At one point, the crowd invaded the pitch and at another the players invaded the crowd. The final score was 3-2 to the Choppers, or 15 - 0 to the Mashers who were playing rugby.

Thoughts for the Day

Show us what you're made of, but don't step in it.

(J. PARKETT, Esq.)

Spaghetti Bolognese is just another form of pull-through.

(A MILITARY MIND)

Ken Hunter is only a form of preventive medicine.

(MANY PATIENTS who miraculously forgot they were ill)

These boots can't hurt - they've got cushion souls.

(THOUGHTS OF TYKE, Ch.1 p.1.)

A new Scottish firm has been set up to combat Evo-Stick:

-Hunt-a-Porridge (with salt) - (S.MacMIDDLETON, Esq.)

Births, Marriages and Deaths

To the late A.M. Idge, a wife and 37,323 children

Officers Almost Win

Timekeeper can't tell the time

By a fairly unbiased competitor.

The Officers today almost scored a record 20-minute victory over the boys in the annual May Day boat race round the loch. They wuz robbed by incompetent refereeing, a timekeeper who couldn't tell the time, and the fact that the officers, being thoroughly kind-hearted, generous, good sports went to Scarp on the way round the buoy. The crowd, incensed by the unfair defeat of their favourites, immediately invaded the loch, hurling abuse and plastic squash bottles at the course officials.

The Aird Bheag Rowing Committee, chaired by Peter 'Why-does-this-oar-keep-hitting-me-in-the-chest' Smith, is expected to reverse all decisions of the referee later tonight, and to award a 20-minute victory to the officers.

Index:

- p.24 - 'Aird Up' by our Financial Correspondent
- p.27 - 'Aird Lines' by our Railway Correspondent
- p.32 - 'Aird Tack' by our Naval Correspondent
- p.34 - 'Aird Nut' by our Boxing Correspondent

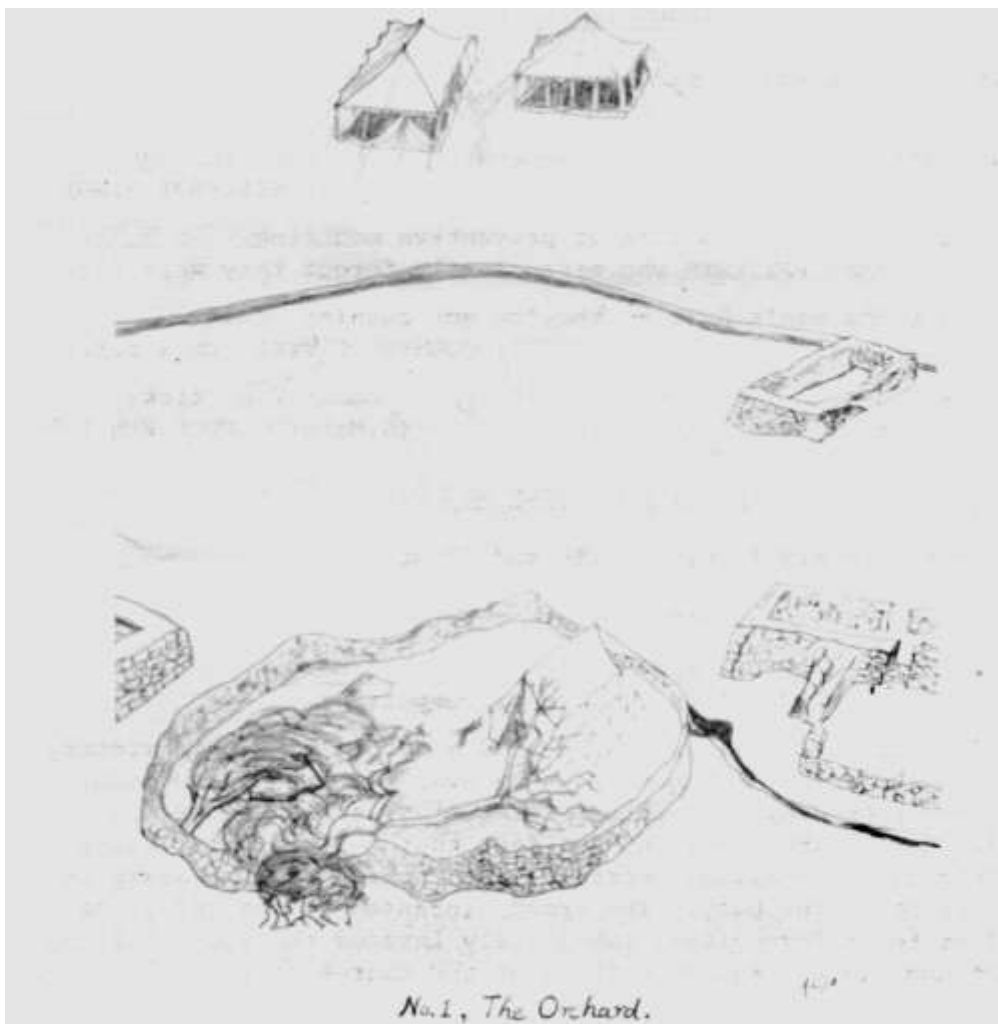
Personal

FOR SALE - Itinerant bridge-player, good running order, for quick sale as owner wants peace at meal times -Offers.

WANTED - Seagull, should be used to towing leaky boats.

FREE TO GOOD HOME - One Rupe, pleasing temperament, quiet, especially when asleep.

THE NEW WAY - to learn to Swim - Go Canoeing.



RAASAY EXPEDITION 1972

Leader: Paul E. Caffery
Camp Administrator: Peter Carlile
Camp Doctor: Simon Street

Officers: Bill Dickinson, Peter Guest, Andrew Howard, David
Bradshaw, Peter Forsaith

Boys: John Adams, Donald Gillies, Gregory Watson, Ian Bolton,
Howard Davies, Michael Skinner, Andrew Dale, Clifton Snaith,
Nicholas King, Jeremy Wood, Charles Millar, Andrew Simpson, Brian
Hopkins, Simon Hampton, Paul Smart, Bruin Thompson, Andrew Wright,
Dean Rook, Jonathan Lord, Brian Harrison, Steven Wilson, Tony Bell,
Michael Dodge, Charles Anderson, Oliver Dow, Stephen Southworth,
Calum MacKenzie, Charles Rahder, and Philip Williams.

LEADER'S REPORT

After an exciting start in which we had succeeded in losing one officer for the complete duration of the camp, and made attempts at calming the Vicar (Peter Forsaith) after he had spotted a Great Western Syphon 'G1 at Inverness Station, we finally all assembled on the pier at Kyle of Lochalsh. Here, Bill Dickinson and his merry team of advanced party members, Jonathan Lord, Calum MacKenzie and Tony (Tinker) Bell were working like Trojans to load equipment onto the 'LOCH ARKAIG'.

After crane-loading Carcass onto the boat and trying to shout instructions to Andrew Howard who, while waiting for 'VINGA' to be brought aboard by derrick, was floating around in her in Kyle. Waving goodbye to Andrew Howard, who was still floating around in 'VINGA', the 'LOCH ARKAIG' slowly moved away bound for Raasay.

It was an omen that at the moment we all assembled the clouds parted and the sun shone through. This is how it was to be for the next few days. Because of the good weather there was an extreme shortage of water. The streams had dried to a trickle and the well had stopped running, but thanks to the hard work of Simon (Doc Argentine) Street, Peter (Hot Lips) Guest and Jonathan Lord the water was encouraged to run in a most professional way.

Brochel is a most interesting site, being that of an old fortification facing the mainland across the Inner Sound. The island offers such a variety of subjects for study that it would be impossible to become fully acquainted with it from just a two-week visit.

Our camp was a happy carefree one. The first few days were spent in sunbathing, hole-digging, timing the speed of caterpillars and throwing the beach into the sea. Jeremy Wood was appointed head carpenter and did us proud with some really permanent furniture, ably assisted by Bill Dickinson and Hot Lips Guest.

Andrew made an attempt at beating the record Brochel to Inverarish, a supreme 5*3 hours (only 3*s hours over the record). He returned by sea with 'VINGA' helped by Donald Gillies and Steve Wilson. The record of 1hr.50 mins. finally fell to Steve Southworth in 1 hr. 20 mins. the following day on a breadrun. Closely lumbering in hot pursuit were Carcass, Oli and myself in a steaming 2 hr. 3mins. Meanwhile back at camp Hot Lips Guest was showing Bill Dick's mighty fossil party the delicacies of accurate navigation on hands and knees, in Clegg Forest.

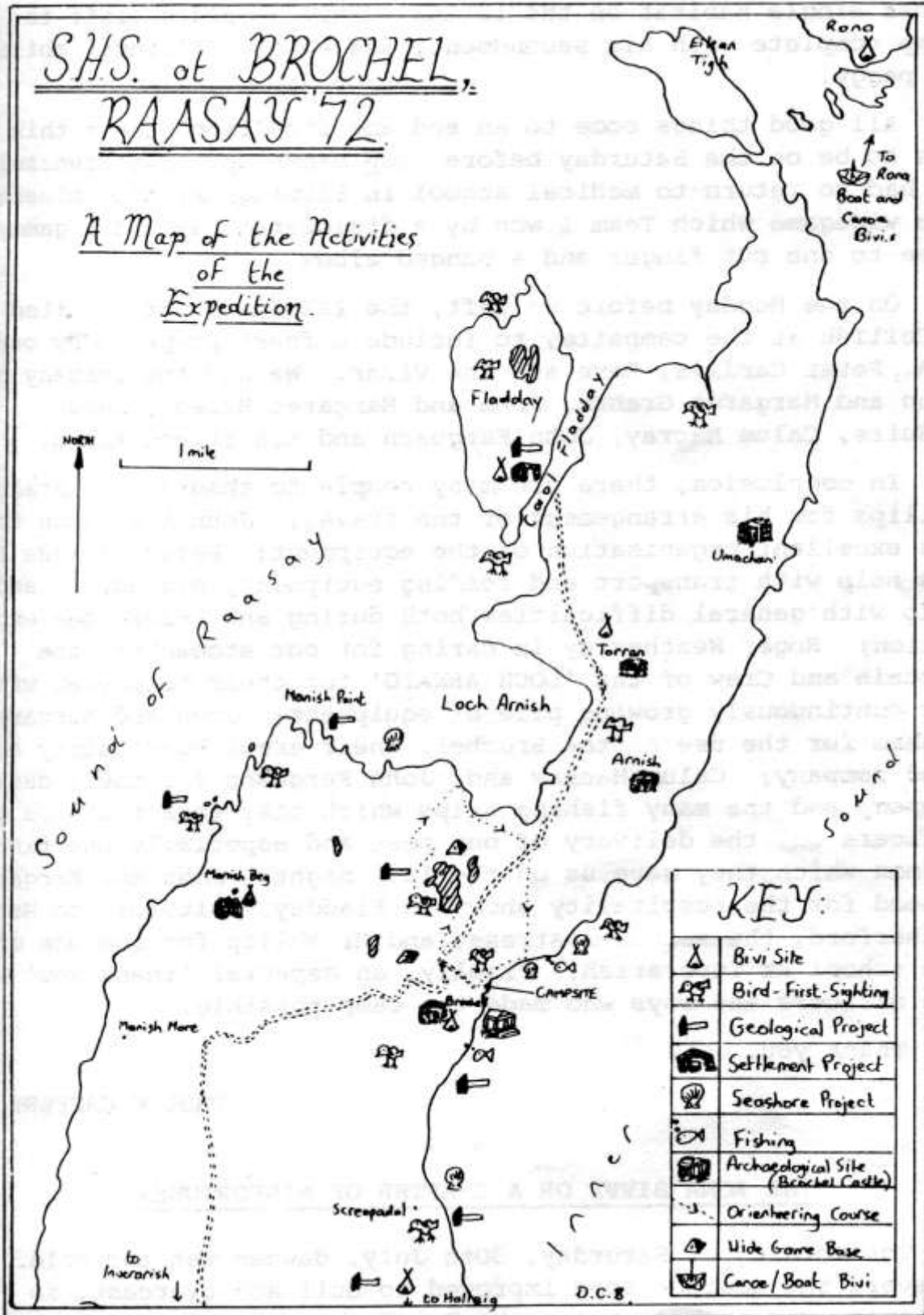
The camp was not short of its visitors and that well-known personality of the very wide screen, Raquel Squelch, paid us several short 4-hour visits.

We did eventually start project work: Bruin and Calum's fantastic bird survey; Dave Bradshaw and Bill Dick dragged willing volunteers up and down the island in search of rocks and fossils; Carcass started digging holes in and around Brochel; Peter Guest sent us wandering over the countryside looking for pieces of brown cardboard with red diagonal stripes on them; Doc Argentine paddled into the sunset on his canoe bivvies (I believe the Society's first), and completed the first canoe circumnavigation of the Isle of South Rona; the Vicar led numerous walks over to Fladday to map the crofts on the island, where he was fortunate to sample the unlimited hospitality of John and Margaret McLeod; the Vicar also treated us to the delights of his culinary skills, most memorable of which was his Hebro-Danish Small-Grass-Board; Andrew took 'VINGA' to Rona with a bivvy and returned by way of Fladday without 'VINGA1 and a considerably defunct engine; Simon Hampton and Dean Rook spent a good deal of time fishing, while John Adams, Notlob and Steve Southworth (when he wasn't breaking records) dug holes.

Other highlights of the camp include a visit to the church Service at Inverarish. Carcass's bog tent bivvy. Seven people trying to sleep in two 2-man tents on the Bradshaw Super-bivvy. The fried seaweed luncheon. Steve Wilson's spontaneously combustible sleeping-bag.

S.H.S. of BROCHEL RAASAY '72

A Map of the Activities of the Expedition.



Carcass's sleeping bag which was estimated to contain more varieties of insect life than any other single habitat on the island. Phil Renold's visit to camp complete with his secondment, and Philip Williams' ability at peggy.

All good things come to an end and for Simon Street this was to be on the Saturday before camp broke up. Unfortunately he had to return to medical school in Birmingham, thus missing the widegame which Team 1 won by a dislocated jaw and a gammy knee to one cut finger and a banged elbow.

On the Monday before we left, the Islanders were invited to a Ceilidh at the campsite, to include a feast prepared by our C.A., Peter Carlile, Dave and the Vicar. We had the company of John and Margaret Graham, John and Margaret McLeod, Sarah McGuire, Calum Macray, John Ferguson and his friend Angus.

In conclusion, there are many people to thank: Alaistair Philips for his arrangement of the travel; John Hutchison for his excellent organisation of the equipment; Peter Gillies for his help with transport and loading equipment, his advice and help with general difficulties both during and before the expedition; Roger Weatherley in caring for our stomachs; the Captain and Crew of the 'LOCH ARKAIG' for their help even with our continuously growing pile of equipment; John and Margaret Graham for the use of the Brochel, their great hospitality and good company; Calum Macray and John Ferguson for their daily company and the many fishing trips which they took the boys and officers on, the delivery of our post and especially the fine salmon which they gave us on the last night; John and Margaret McLeod for the hospitality shown to Fladday Visitors; to Mrs Rutherford, the school-mistress, and Mr Philip for the use of the school at Inverarish. Finally, an especial 'thank you' to the officers and boys who made the camp possible.

Thank you.

PAUL E.CAFFERY

* * *

THE RONA BIVVI OR A CHAPTER OF MISFORTUNES

The morning of Saturday, 30th July, dawned wet and cold. However, the weather soon improved to dull and overcast, so equipment was packed up for the Dry Harbour Biwi which was due to start in 'VINGA' at about 11 o'clock. Eventually the equipment was loaded and the five of us - Andrew Howard, Clifton 'Checkmate' Snaith, Calum Mackenzie, Ian 'Notlob' Bolton and myself set out only to turn back after 20 yards when we discovered that we had left the billies behind (no names mentioned). Again we set off and this time we went through Caol Rona.

THE OFFICERS



T.C



CARCUS
RAASAY



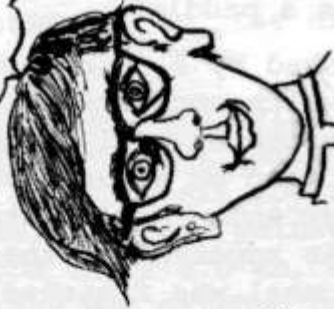
LIMPIT



PETE



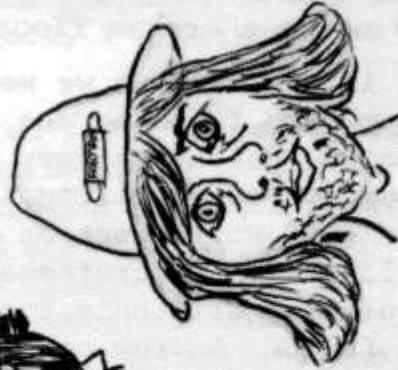
DAVE



FANNY



BILL



ANDY



SIMON

Just after passing through Caol Rona we entered Big Harbour where we had some lunch and a cup of coffee, the coffee taking rather long to brew as Notlob managed to tip the primus over twice, then we returned to the boat to find it hanging from its mooring ropes, half out of the water. (Notlob's fault again for taking so long in knocking the water over). We set out again after re-fuelling but the engine failed and would not start. We paddled the one mile to Dry Harbour, using one canoe paddle operated by me sitting on the sharp end and two 16 ft. oars being used in multifarious ways by various people. Clifton Snaith assisted by using a broken floorboard as a paddle.

Landing in Dry Harbour we were attacked by a 6-inch crab. We set up camp and I cooked the supper which consisted of rice and beefburgers, which was very good despite several off-putting comments from Notlob. Clifton left his food on a bench of S.H.S. 1968 vintage with Notlob sat on the other end. Notlob stood up and the skill of S.H.S. craftsmanship was apparent as the bench tipped up spilling Clifton's food. The meal was finished off with tinned fruit. Andrew now led us astray looking for nonexistent caves, and when we got back we went to bed.

Next morning rain was heard and it was not until 10.15 that we got up and cooked breakfast, took down camp and left for home in 'VINGA'. We went via Fladday where we had lunch. We looked over the engine on Fladday and found nothing wrong with it. In the last three days we had tried to start it 291 times.

Then Calum fell into the sea while trying to get a sea-urchin by following Notlob's instructions about footholds. Andrew and Calum went to see John and Margaret Macleod who were staying in their croft on the island. They called down to us and gave us all some coffee and cake, after which we took our equipment out of 'VINGA' and started off by road to the campsite at Brochel. We arrived while Paul and Pete were just putting emergency precautions into action.

The next day Andrew H, Steve Southworth and myself walked over to Fladday and managed to start the engine. We started back to camp which we reached after going through a 8 ft. swell.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from this account is that the reason the Bivvi was a complete disaster was ... Guess who? Notlob.

GREG WATSON

* * *

THE THIRD WISE MAN

There is one non-event of the expedition which should not really pass unchronicled. At the time some of us thought it amusing until I tried to immortalise it in verse; a task at which I failed; after that the whole episode was regarded as rather silly and too boring.

The facts of the case are these. The master-fiend Carlile had arranged to lead a super-bivvy for a quiet and uneventful graunge, to get away from the bustle of Brochel, to the first suitable site which presented itself up the track, and was out of sight of the camp. Slack, you will agree, and even by my standards. Certain of us were not prepared to let this pass by unmolested and so, the night before, I unearthed the spare bog-tent
. . . .

Pete Guest (enjoying his first taste of camp life) , the irrepressible Paul Caffery (alias Lewisian Gneiss or Ulva Vul-garis, and Bramhall and South Stockport Seaweed Champion 1970), and myself (roused painfully and unwillingly from sleep) left camp soon after 2.0 am. with one disadvantage; we had no idea where they had pitched camp. However, our unfailing bloodhound sniffed out the trail (plugs) soon after Arnish, and we pressed on at great pace past Torran and nearly passed them (scrogs) a few yards on. They had put their tents on a small piece of parkland all of three feet from the road.

It was really rather dull. We proceeded in dead silence, no-one woke up, and the pitched brawl we had counted on failed to materialise. Leaving three tents where we had found only two, we turned to walk the three miles back to camp as the dawn came up.

We all agreed that the escapade was worth it, merely for the walk - moonlit there and dawn back - and for me these were the most refreshing moments of the entire two weeks. The full extent of S.H.S. ethos was demonstrated the next day when, to our surprise. Carcass and the crew carried the thing back, with only the slightest hint of any displeasure.

PETER FORSAITH

TOURIS-MA RAASAY

It is an unarguable fact that S.H.S. expeditions survive and are successful due to a great deal of co-operation from the Hebridean people. But never before have I been prompted to write an article on two of the most marvellous people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting and who, to all intents and purposes were members of our expedition - namely John (Fergy) Ferguson and Calum Macray.

Such kindness and generosity I have never before experienced and I certainly will never forget. Between them, they helped us in a whole multitude of ways, from explaining the more difficult quirks of certain members of the island, to showing us the best places to fish for mackerel in the bay. They loaned the expedition their boat and didn't raise an eyebrow when I grounded it at Screabadel one sunny afternoon; they introduced us to the gentle art of lobster-pots and salmon fishing. They promised that next time we met them they would have learnt to swim or bought life-jackets; they gave the expedition a very close connection with the Island and a 9 Ib. salmon! But most of all, and what really meant something, they did all of this naturally. We were a "great bunch of lads!" as Calum once said, and we were pleasing them in enjoying and appreciating their Island. Words fail me in their cast: "Touris-ma Calum and John," we will meet again soon.

PETER CARLILE

A WALK BEFORE EVENSONG

On a dismal Sunday afternoon, seven teams of three set out in search of that jewel of the East, the Mysterious Orient. I had spent most of the two previous days setting the course, aided and abetted by my two faithful lap-dogs – Philip Williams and the mighty Oliver Dow.

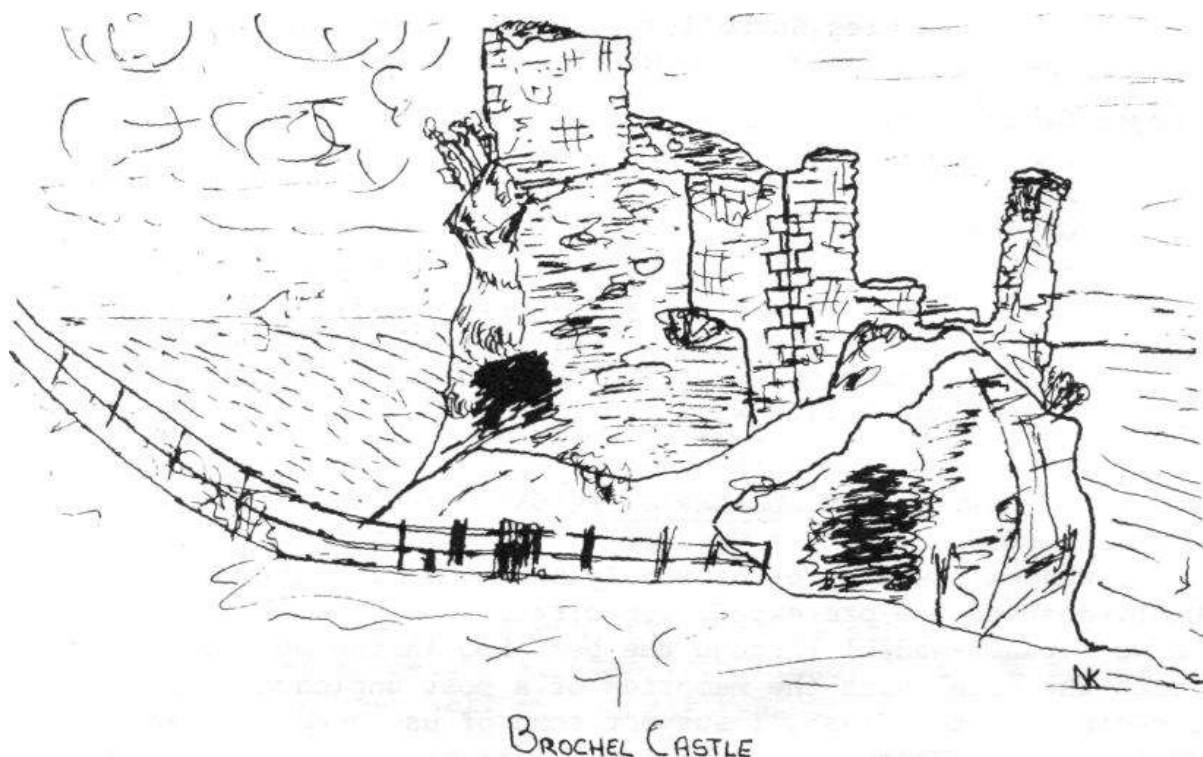
The six Markers were conspicuously placed with the exception of the fifth, which was so skillfully concealed that even I was unable to find it again. The course was roughly circular and spanned the north-western corner of the island. Despite rumours to the contrary, it was only some five miles in length, although one officer took flight and sped to Rona, ostensibly in charge of a bivvy. Peter Carlile protested the agonies of sore feet and graciously offered to act as timekeeper; Paul Caffery went to sleep.

The actual run did not present many problems; only one team, Simon Hampton, Andrew Dale and Mike 'Abdul' Skinner was lost and headed far east towards the distilleries of Skye. The officers' team, led by Bill Dickinson and Dave Bradshaw, attempted to gain an unfair advantage by spending more time in looking at other teams than their map; their only success was to lose each other.

First home were Steve Southworth and Jonathan Lord, led by Peter Forsaith, with God on his side, after only an hour and three-quarters.

They were closely followed by Andy Simpson, Nick King and Bruin Thompson half an hour later, cursing both the rain and me. Peter seemed especially pleased to repeat his Colonsay victory, resting his success on his own imaginative leadership and the fact that it was a Sunday.

PETER GUEST



THE CAMP SONG

Sung to a slowed-down version of 'My Old Man's a Dustman'

Chorus:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>S.H.S. at Brochel
Raasay '72
Camping to the familiar tune
of "Where's me 3 x 2."</p> | <p>3. Simon is camp doctor
to Rona he has been;
got to leave on Friday night
back to the Argentine.</p> | <p>6. Andrew sailed to Rona,
"We'll be OK," he said.
he ended up on Fladday
and spent next day in bed.</p> |
| <p>1. Caffery is our leader,
he wears a silly hat,
he acts a proper Charlie,
and he answers to Top Cat.</p> | <p>4. Last night's tentless biwi
was led by officer Bill,
all the way to Dun Caan,
to search for his fossil.</p> | <p>7. David comes from Oldham
he inspects your rocks,
You know when he's getting close
when his hammer knocks.</p> |
| <p>2. Carcass's trip to Torrin
was really quite a slog,
He woke up in the morning
to find a brand new bog.</p> | <p>5. Tramping on the island
is Pete, our orienteer,
he knows where we're going,
but we've got no idea.</p> | <p>8. Pete Forsaith's our padre,
he's partial to his tea,
he really is quite gentle,
so kind to you, and me.</p> |

NORTH UIST EXPEDITION 1972

Leader: Roger Weatherly Camp Administrator: Mark Rayne

Officers.- Peter Booth, Peter Carey, Andrew Creese, Stephen David, Gareth Firth, Ed Mitchell, Greg Surrell.

Boys:- Simon Anderson, Jeremy Barnett, Bruce Bompfrey, Jamie Bompfrey, Roger Butler, Nicholas Caplin, Charles Carey, Malcolm Clyaton, Malcolm Cordner, Ian Crombie, Barry Gallagher, Mark Jacob, John Kalish, Richard Lander, Allan Marshall, Julian Parker, Philip Parsons, Murray Partridge, Christopher Price, Graham Reeder, Michael Rees, Peter Rogers, Alex Ryba, Tony Shaw, Nicholas Smith, Patrick Thompson, Hugh Thorburn, Nicholas Turner, Max Whitby and Philip Whyman.

LEADER'S REPORT

I wonder how many of us really knew what to expect on North Uist, despite the pre-expedition circulars and duplicated maps? As we "brunch-waded" through the peat bog in the pouring rain to reach the site, with the memories of a most unpleasant Minch crossing all too fresh, I suspect some of us thought themselves quite crazy. What was the infectious spirit which moulded us into a community from this soggy start? - The magic of the Hebrides!

The site, at the foot of Ben Eaval, was the one the Society used in 1970. It is very remote from roads and settlements - by far the most isolated ever used for a Junior expedition. As town-dwellers (and most of us were) it was a unique experience to live for a while in this primaeval (sic) place. A favourite song in the evenings pointed out the contrasts:

*'Let me take you by the hand and lead you
through the streets of London,
I'll show you something to make you change
your mind.'*

We were indebted to the islanders, and especially to Ewen Nicholson and his friends. They ferried our heavy equipment

from Baymore and brought over our mail and bread when the dreaded 'ROCK BOTTOM' and 'VINGA' misbehaved. Despite Peter Carey and Gareth's attentions, both boats were barely serviceable and our seaward excursions were limited. We did a good deal of boating on Loch Obisary however, in a boat kindly loaned by the Estate, and the fishermen found these trips very rewarding. The new canoes were great value, and even the leader ventured out once. There were long trips across the lochs, and the hydrographers used them for survey work.

Some other projects were ornithology (including the discovery of two Golden Eagle eyries), soil analysis, sketching, settlement and archaeological mapping, meteorology, a pollution survey, geology, a stream survey, climbing, a loch survey, and peat stacking. Everyone spent at least one night away from camp on a bivvy. We had parties to Baleshare, along the 'North Uist Circular' to Sidernish and Loch Eport School (where David Vale and David Mark were always hospitable), Langass, Lochmaddy, and two fishing bivvies to the islands on Loch Obisary. Rumour has it that we caught over 80 pollack, though not so many trout. The following pages will contain reports on some of these activities, but here I must single out sketching. Greg, Ed, Roger Butler and Ian Crombie were those mainly involved though others tried their hand, too - the results were excellent. We also compiled a survey of bird life for the B.T.O. which will be used in the Bird Atlas of Great Britain, and our pollution work will be passed on to the Conservation Society.

The food was well received, through the efforts of Mark Rayne, a leader's ideal C.A. The traditional feast on the last night but one passed well - in all respects!

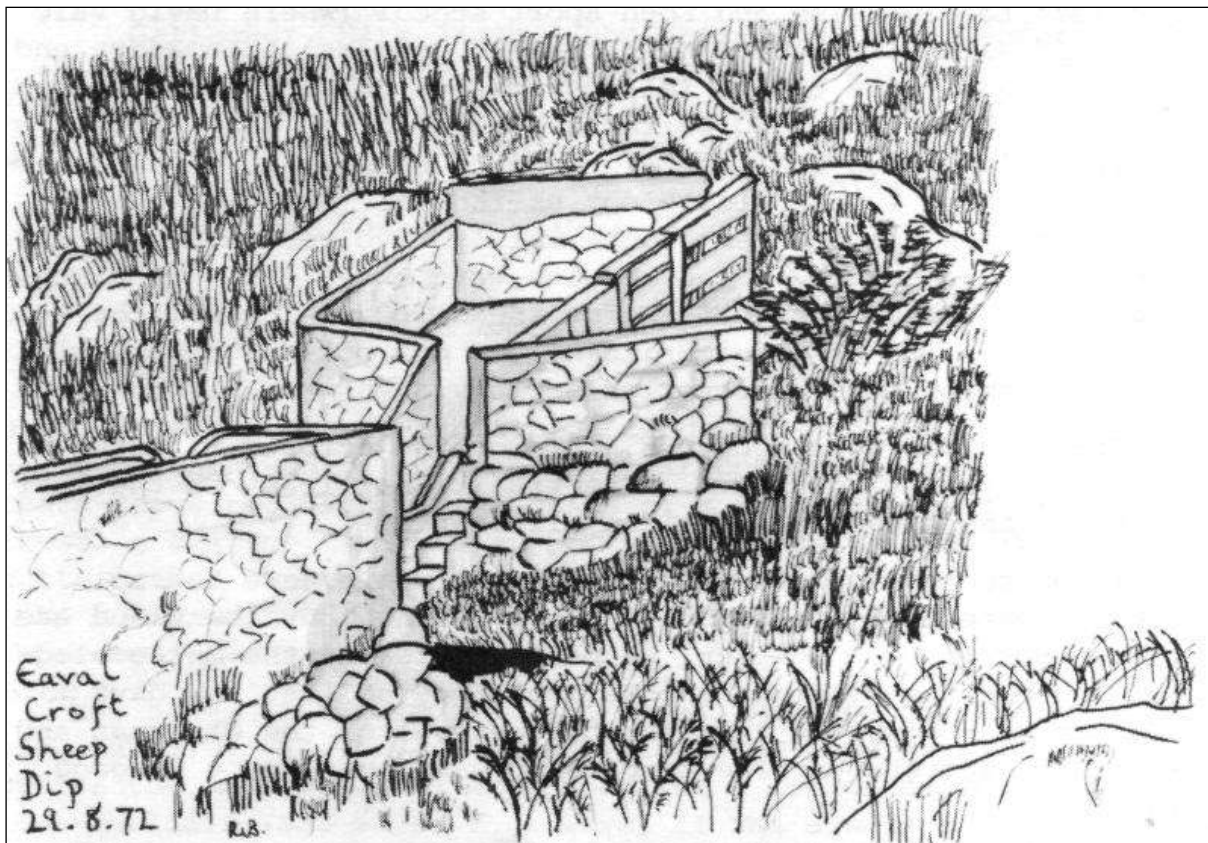
The weather was disappointing on the whole. We had no storms, apart from the night of the crossing, but low cloud and drizzle persisted. However, we partly defeated the meteorological depressions with our enthusiasm, and the last few days were much better - just in time for the arrival of the Chairman and Membership Secretary. The Membership was found to be in good heart.

MUSIC - that elusive ingredient of a good expedition - was much in evidence, though we found an evening meeting rather uncomfortable sometimes; the cottage at Eaval was not built for 39. The terrain made pitching a marquee impossible while the weather and the midges combined to make outdoor meetings hazardous in the evenings. Peter Booth and the North Uist male-voice choir (?) did well to maintain interest. Mark Jacob's musical offerings will not be forgotten either!

To provide an opportunity for everyone to visit the whole island,

we arranged a coach trip for a complete day near the end of our stay. This was a great success – we visited the R.S.P.B. Reserve at Balranald, the 'dig' at Udal, and spent time shopping in Lochmaddy. What happened to the leader in the peat bog on the outward journey must pass unrecorded, but it gives me the opportunity to thank the Estate Factor, Mr Shaunessay, and his wife, for their hospitality and help throughout our stay.

A visit one evening from Mr Rick Sibson started some geological prospecting. Mr Sibson had been studying the ancient fault-lines of the Hebrides, and made the journey to the site specially to outline to us the geology of our area. We learned we had a Tertiary dyke by our waterfall, and that 'fossil earthquakes' could be found on Ben Eaval.



I must also thank many other people for their assistance. The Earl of Granville kindly agreed that the expedition should take place, and we thank him sincerely. Mr MacLean accommodated us in his coach with remarkable good humour, and Mr MacIvor towed us home when 'BOTTOM'S1 engine failed. Most of all Ewen Nicholson and all his friends gave us unfailing hospitality and help. Truly, without such help an expedition is impossible, and we are all more grateful than we can say.

Finally, a 'thank-you' to all the officers. I felt each one contributed everything he had to offer, which is all a leader can ask. And the 'boys'? (hateful term). Thank you for being the expedition and making it all worthwhile. One of you wrote after the expedition:

"I am sure almost everyone returned more fit, more knowledgeable and more independent than when he set off..."

If that was so (and I hope it was), can we ask for more? Haste ye back!

ROGER WEATHERLY

EAVAL COTTAGE

Eaval is a small cottage, the present building being about 100-years old, although the site has probably been used for many hundreds of years before this, situated as it is at the foot of Ben Eaval (1138 ft), and at the head of a large sea loch. We attempted to show in this survey, and in a corresponding map which will be on show at the Conference, why the original building was built in this situation.

It is clear from our map that the cottage is on a comparatively high plateau of land surrounded by lower, often marshy, land. It is conveniently placed for bringing in supplies by boat (there are various jetties marked on the map), and for collecting a water supply from the burn which flows down from Ben Eaval and which is joined by a burn which flows down from nearby Loch Dun an t-saimain.

Over the hill beside the cottage there is an easily drained plateau which has at one time been used for either peat digging or cultivating crops. Remains of drainage ditches show up on the field.

The cottage itself is used nowadays in two sections, one as a sort of barn, the other as living quarters. However, the fireplace, chimney and windows in the barn suggest that it was at one time used for living in. Behind the cottage are various pens and a modern sheep dip, as well as remains of former pens and dykes.

Today, the cottage is used occasionally by Mr Nicholson to mark, count and dip his sheep, and also, of course, by the S.H.S. thanks to the kindness of Lord Granville and Mr Nicholson.

IAN CROMBIE



EAVAL COTTAGE

"Have you got the mess-tins, Pete?"

At 11 o'clock on Sunday morning six of us – Mike Rees, Charles Carey, Alex Ryba, Philip Parsons, Ed Mitchell and Pete Booth – set out on a bivvy, hoping to visit cairns, old settlements, do a few sketches, and to see a different part of North Uist. We proceeded across bog and marsh, over fences (which at times was painful), round numerous lochs and hillocks, resting occasionally.

Lunch was eaten after a unanimous decision, when we saw the seemingly endless bank of Loch Caravat. After lunch, the going became more difficult. Even the tallest members of the bivvy were wading waist-deep in heather, and at times Alex entirely disappeared! At last, having crossed over Craonaval we reached the first chambered cairn. Then we went on to the next cairn, jumping over bogs and streams and generally getting soaked in the process. We then looked for a very evasive stone circle and in the end abandoned the search.

At about 6 o'clock we pitched camp near Loch Eport school. It was six hours since we had eaten and we had walked about 7 miles since then, so obviously we were very hungry.. At last we were ready to cook a meal. "Have you got the mess-tins, Pete?" "What mess-tins? You've got them!"

Ed had forgotten the mess-tins. He got out his own canteen but we discovered that to make a meal for six we would have to cook it eighteen times at 20 minutes per time. Which meant we would still be cooking at midnight . . .

Suddenly a figure appeared from the gloom. It was David Mark, the gamekeeper, who was living at the schoolhouse. He offered us the use of his kitchen and we gladly accepted. The flush toilet and the basin with peaty water seemed a luxury. We left the schoolhouse at about 10 o'clock and spent a peaceful night away from the noise of the main camp.

The next day we went to a shop to get some provisions and found out how hospitable the islanders could be because, after buying the provisions, the elderly lady who owned the shop invited us into her house for tea. After this we slowly made our way back to camp via the summit of Burival and round Loch Obisary.

ALEX RYBA and MIKE REES

THE BURIVAL BIVVY



Originally our bivvy was intending to go to Rona, a large mountainous island south-east of the campsite. However, due to the poor state of the boats it was found to be too dangerous to make the crossing, as the outboard engine could well falter and stop.

Instead we arranged a bivvy up the east coast of the island as far as Loch Eport, taking up the last weekend of the holiday. On the Saturday we set off, rucksacks loaded, and headed for Ben na h-Aire, a hill east of the cottage at Eaval. Here we stopped for lunch at 1.00, and we had a good view of all the lochs and of the campsite. From here we set off for a cave marked as being on a cliff on the map. After an hour's walk and much searching we eventually found it. It was very disappointing, for it was only a bit more than ten feet long! However, there was evidence of bird-roosting (rock doves) and the cave was a few feet thick in guano – a South American word for bird droppings. Above the cave we found what we thought was a peregrine's eyrie.

After tramping through heather and bog for a short while we reached Loch Surtavat, a long stretch of water. In the distance we could see the second cave we were aiming for. This one was an ancient dwelling cave, and had been artificially flattened. We stayed there a short time before making the final stretch to our campsite. We chose a small patch of green grass on the shore of Loch Eport, but only a few yards from Loch Crogavat, a freshwater loch which we used for drinking water and washing. We lit a fire with driftwood to keep the ever-appearing midges at bay and cooked our evening meal over a small calor-gas stove. That night the sunset almost blinded us and we had no idea how the weather would change overnight.

We woke up to see a wind howling across Burival, a rocky hill just north of us, and visibility down to almost nothing. However, we managed to get a fire going and cooked our breakfast very well. At almost 11.30 we had cleared away the tents, put out the fire and packed our rucksacks. The mist was still around and we set off trudging through wet heather and bracken until we reached the north end of Loch Obisary. Here, we lost our way somewhat, but thanks to Barry Gallagher's positional sense we found the west side of the loch.

At 1.15 we stopped for lunch, but we could only sit still for a couple of minutes because the 100% humidity brought the midges out in swarms, and for once we were happy to be on our way. Altogether we stopped another three times on the journey, but we eventually arrived back in camp – in sunshine – at 4.0 pm, after enduring midges, peat bogs and hard walking for two days.

ROGER BUTLER, JEREMY BARNETT, BARRY GALLAGHER,
ALLAN MARSHALL, HUGH THORBURN, ROGER WEATHERLY

* * *

EAVAL ROCKS:

Music on the Island

Anyone who came on the North Uist expedition and previously thrilled to or owned records with such tunes as 'Midnight Special', 'Rock Island Line', 'Sleep John B', 'Wild Thing' or 'Heart of Gold' will have now smashed those records into worthless pulp.

And for why? – Well, it's all due to the Mark 'I-can-relegate-any-rhythm-to-one-mindless-chord' Jacob Blues. All the Rock-starved young S.H.S. members were fed on was to-do-do-de-do-do-do of 'Sleep John B', and 'Wild Thing's' three banal chords. All this crazy looning and madness and musical talent combined with audience participation, was fused three nights before the end of camp in an extra wild spontaneous concert.

Sadly, serious music never attracted everyone together except on one evening when everyone sang old trad, songs unaccompanied. We did have two good chord bashers on the trip however, in Pete 'we-didn't-know-you-wore-contact-lenses-till-you-asked-us-to-find-them-for-you' Booth, and fair-eyed, vivacious Andy Creese. Pete played an excellent 'Streets of London' and 'Ennis-killen Dragoons' as well as bashing out nearly every tune requested. Andy, whose guitar-playing has apparently seen better days, did manage a fine 'Universal Soldier'. Nor should Nicholas Turner's 'Where have all the flowers gone?' be ignored. Who said that?



The Camp Site
River Landing
Mount Rainier
Mt. Rainier Expedition 1972
J. M. G.

Finally, I must thank all those who presented me with clods of earth and dead pollack during my concerts.

MARK JACOB

* * *

SKETCHING ON NORTH UIST

The opportunities for sketching and drawing were exceptional this year, due to there being so many different sorts of landscape, whether it be sea, moor or mountain. One regret I did have was the weather, which on so many occasions made sketching impossible. The obvious choice for many people was Eaval cottage itself, and there were several different aspects and angles from which to study it. There was the front with rushes and reeds, and the back with the tents and the view out to sea. You could draw it from high on the slopes of Ben Eaval, or low on rocks when the tide was out. Greg Surrell actually went inside the cottage and drew the kitchen and the store-room. Perhaps this is something an expedition here in future years could continue.

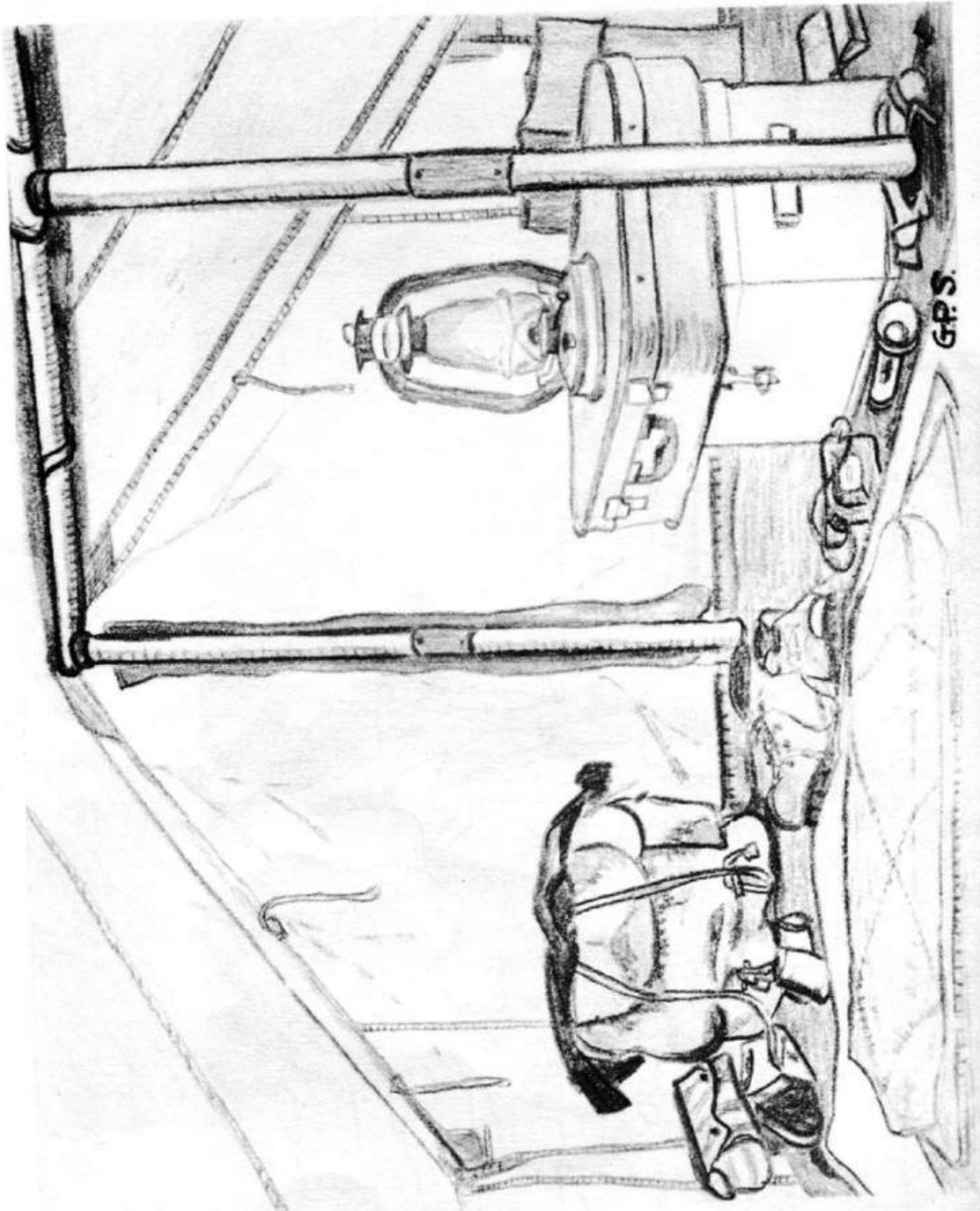
Then there were the landscapes – the glistening freshwater lochs around the cottage, and the high tops of Ben Eaval, often coated in layers of mist. Much of the art work should be on show at the Conference, where perhaps it will be possible to compare sketches from other expeditions.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Greg Surrell and Ed Mitchell for the way they helped everybody interested in drawing.

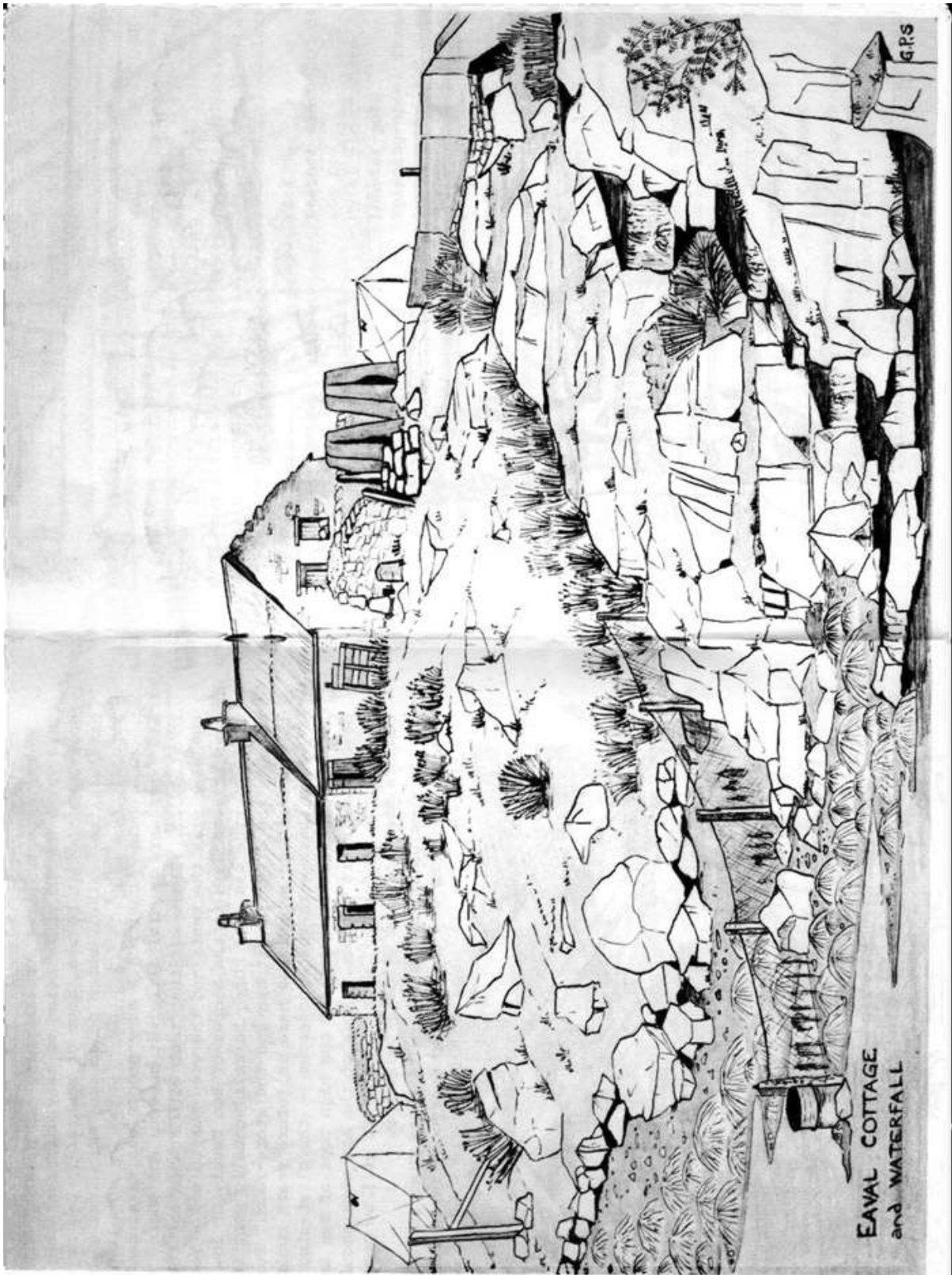


EAVAL CROFT STOREHOUSE - SHS North Uist Expedition 1972

ROGER BUTLER



'THE TENT' - SHS North Uist Expedition 1972



S.H.S Report 1972

Part 2 (Picture from centre spread. Greg Surrel)