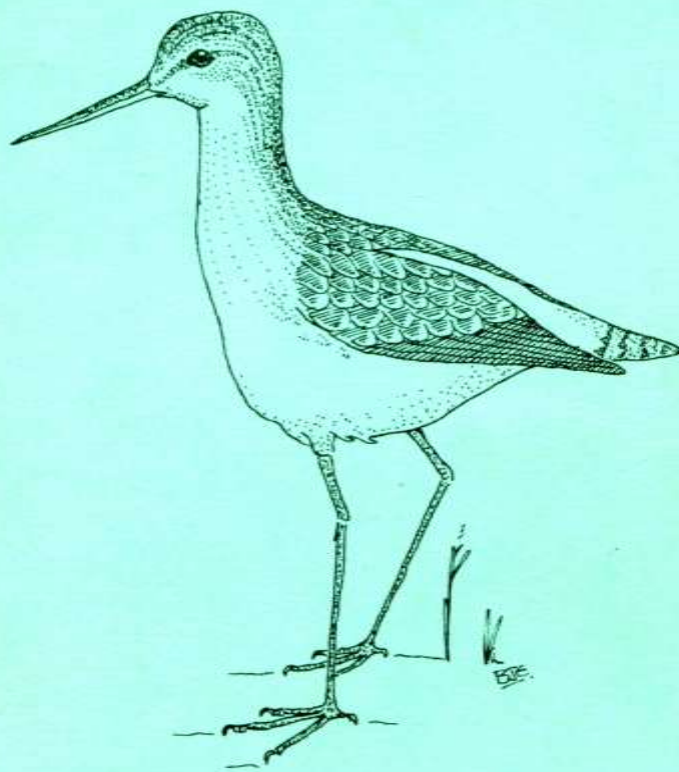


SCHOOLS'
HEBRIDEAN SOCIETY



REPORT 1974.

SCHOOLS HEBRIDEAN SOCIETY

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The Editor of the report is - PETER LIVER
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| Conference 1975 | D.Bradshaw |
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| Boats | Vacant |
| Equipment | Vacant |
| Secretary | Mrs .M.Jones |

EXPEDITION LEADERS 1974

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Outer Isles | P.Caffery |
| South Uist | J.Turner |
| Harris | J.C .Hutchinson |
| North Uist | J.Cullingf ord |
| Raasay | P.Carlile |

EXPEDITION LEADERS 1975

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| To be appointed by Conference | |
| Mingulay | |
| West Lewis | |
| Rhum | |
| Raasay | |
| Jura | |
| Colonsay | |

* * *

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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

If you are thinking that the Report is thinner this year you are correct. However, please do not think that the ranks of energetic contributors are thinning. Far from it - for this year the task of finding space for all the work you have done has been even more difficult than usual, as rising costs have forced us to reduce the number of pages. I apologise to those whose efforts are not included, but all the material will be displayed at the Conference.

I hope that the following pages give an impression of the variety and vitality of the Society's activities, and I even managed to extract a book review from a certain Leader.

My thanks go to all who sent me their work, and to Mary, Paul, John Round and John Cullingford, for all their help in searching out printers.

~~*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Since this is written just after the second General Election in seven months I felt it wise, like many politicians, to look back at what I promised in this report when I became Chairman on January 1st 1971- I am relieved to see that most of what I promised has in fact happened.

First and foremost I promised a reorganisation and streamlining of the structure of the Society, and at long last I feel that we are achieving this. In 1970 we were in serious financial difficulties. But now I am pleased to report that despite the current rate of inflation we are still in business and will be running six expeditions in 1975-

Without doubt this is due to my fellow Directors who have worked enormously hard on your behalf. It is heartening to

note that six of those on the Board in 1970 are still there. In the past year four Directors have resigned. Alan Fowler has taken on the responsibility of a new body, Associates of the Schools Hebridean Society (A.S.H.S.). John Houghton has gone off on an extended safari of Africa, while Alan Howard has left due to pressure of work. Last but by no means least Martin Child has resigned, having been on the Board since the beginnings of the Society in 1961. To all of these, on behalf of the Society I should like to say a heartfelt 'thank you'. In their places we have new blood on the Board in Paul Caffery, John Cullingford Alasdair Philips, Mark Rayne, and John Round. I hope they can stand the pace.

Most important of all for the expeditions themselves we have had a Director of Expeditions for the first time. Without denying that there were some hitches I feel that basic expedition organisation was greatly improved. With John Hutchison doing this job in place of myself in 1975 I am certain that things will go better.

I also promised improved boats and equipment, and this has largely been achieved. We still do not have a permanent store, but this is being studied once again.

If you have managed to read this far you may well be wondering when I will mention the actual expeditions. Suffice it to say that in 1974 they were a greater success than in any of my previous years as Chairman. This is largely due to the Leaders and Officers, without whose organisation, clear thinking, and hard work we could not survive.

The comment has been made that we do not listen to the remarks of the ordinary Society member. So this year we have published a Newsletter. Sadly very few people have written to Pete Carlile with material .If you have any suggestions or complaints it is up to you to voice them in the Newsletter, by letter to myself, or verbally at the Conference. We are not afraid to stand by what we have done, and what we are planning to do. But we do need your help and advice.

PHIL RENOLD

P A R T I

SOUTH UIST 1974

Leader: Jim Turner

Officers: John Round, Bill Hattersley Peter Liver, Dave Bradshaw
Robert Hood, Mike Standage Paul Chick.

Boys: John Adams, Andrew Dale, Michael Dodge, Robert
Ensch, Nicholas King, Keith Burgess, Neil Embrey,
David Fowler, Chris Jackson, John Lowes, Ian Dale,
Brinley Edwards, Victor Harker, Johnathen Lord, Calum
Mackenzie, Tony Bell, Steven Kear, Andrew Mitchell,
Bruin Thompson, Peter Cowley, Chris Barnacle, Martin
Frith, Paul Jaques, Steven South-worth, Richard le
Sueur, John Metcalf, Peter Schuller, Keith Tope,
Andrew Wright, Richard Young.

LEADER' S REPORT

The site of our camp on the shores of Loch Eynort was sheltered below the slopes of Bienn Mhor from the gales which can lash the island. But those who pitched their tents too near the stream had anxious moments when the trickle expanded over night into a raging torrent. On the surface the landscape of South Hist is one of contrast. But the same weather effects the whole of the island, so it can be bleak anywhere.

The West coast of the island is flat machair with long beaches of pale shell-sand, inland of which are scattered crofts and small farms. This side of South Uist gave members of the expedition with many walks and biwies, as well as haymaking and the subsequent hospitality of the farmer and his wife.

Just inland of the W. coast are numerous lochans with small islands. Past inhabitants built small fortresses, or duns, on these and, as our ramblings discovered, stones and submerged causeways provided safe access.

Running North-South through the islands lochans is the main road of S. Uist. It links Lochboisdale, the main sea port of the island, with Benbecular to the North, the airport serving S. Uist. We used this road from Lochboisdale (where we landed from Oban) to the camp site on Loch Eynort.

The Eastern part of the island is the oldest, and the mountains rise to 3,000ft being split into three clumps by sea lochs piercing through them half the width of the island. Loch Eynort is the largest of these and its mountainous setting afforded the opportunity for many activities. Fishing, sailing, and canoeing were popular (swimming seemed confined to the incompetent boatmen) and the shoreline provided the driftwood needed for furniture as well as interesting the waders.

Bienn Mhor, Bienn Corodale, and Hecla are the three highest mountains in the vicinity and were the favourite haunts of the ornithologists, biologists, and geologists among us. On the far side of these mountains lies Usinish where the Society once used a site, and where early inhabitants of the island lived. Members of this year's expedition found and mapped the underground dwellings of these early people.

At the end of the expedition we dined and entertained a few of the islanders who had helped us in many ways during our stay on the island. After the excitement of a cockle eating contest and the mirth of the knobbly knees show our guests departed over the hill with bemused expressions. Without them the expedition would not have been quite the same and we owe them much.

JIM TURNER

SIGHTING OF NOTE

On Thursday 22nd August a school of about 15 pilot whales (*globicephalus melaena*) were seen swimming South, then West, off Stoneybridge on the West coast. They were large and very dark with a dorsal fin, and a horizontal tail fin. About 10 or 11m long, they continually leapt out of the water as they went along. Their speed was very variable (15-20 mph?) and it was unfortunately impossible to see their head shape as they leapt.

RICHARD YOUNG

GLEN USINISH IRON AGE SETTLEMENT

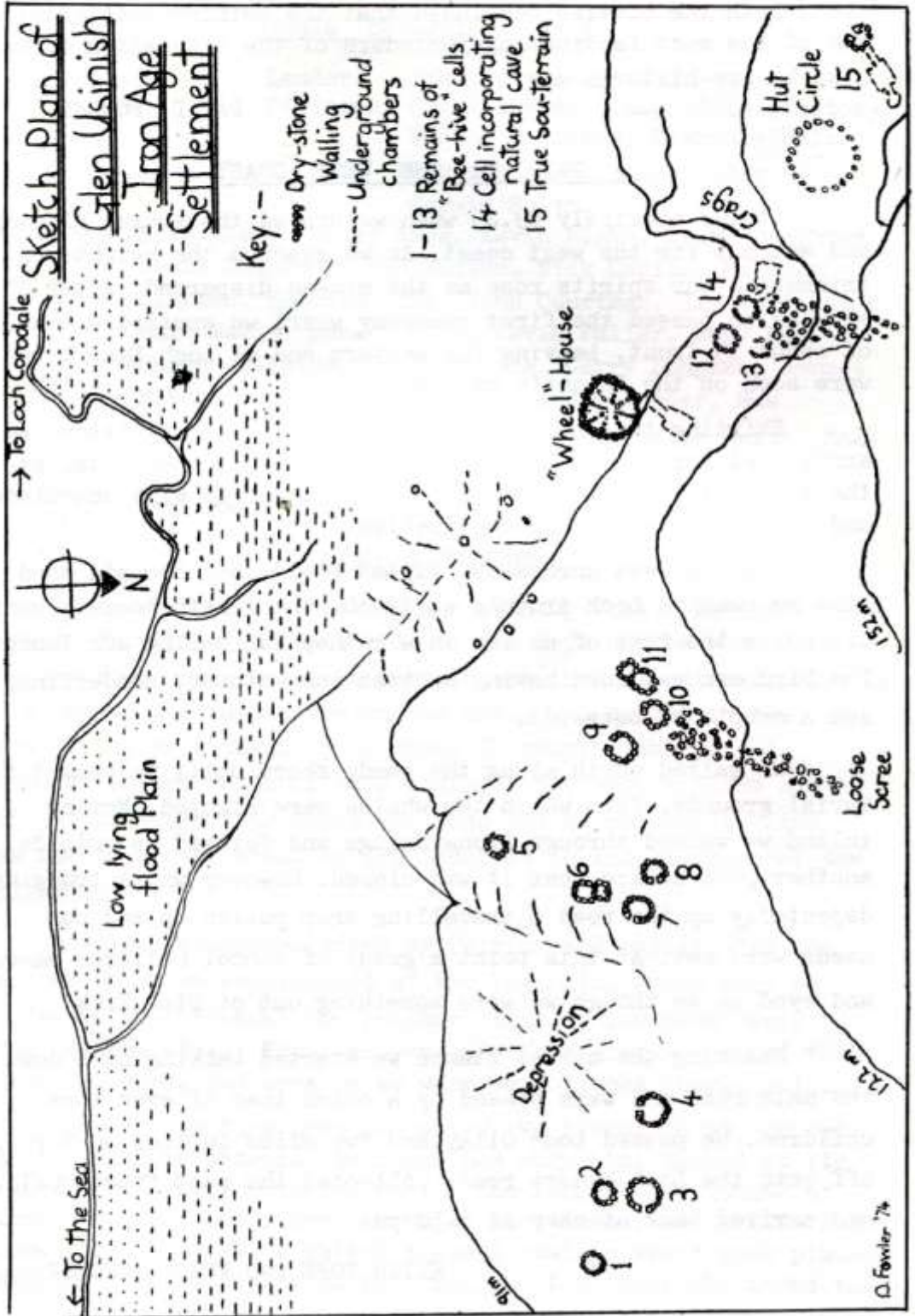
Two separate bivvies were taken to Glen Usinish this year. The first, under Peter Liver, spent the morning after their arrival at the old croft there investigating the prehistoric village on the North side of the glen. A rather disappointing search at the East end of the village revealed only the remains of bee-hive huts, circles of dry stone walling no more than two feet in height. These appeared to be grouped in threes with entrance on the East side, away from the prevailing wind. Ten of these huts were mapped before someone stumbled across the 'wheel house'¹. This was the most impressive of the ruins consisting of a circular perimeter wall (122ft across) with its interior divided into wedge shaped compartments by eight 'spoke' walls radiating from a centrally enclosed octagon. The best preserved section was the North side where the wall was built into the hillside.

-

Under the threat of approaching night the party hurried on to discover two more bee-hive cells further west near some loose scree. One of these contained a natural cave. On the crag above these two cells a hut circle 45 feet in diameter was located, and still higher lay a true sou-terrain. (muddy)

The following day Dave Bradshaw's bivvy arrived by lobster boat and made a fuller investigation of the Western end of the site, particularly in respect of the subterranean chambers. They explored further the true suo-terrain finding a second underground chamber beyond the first. A more intensive look at the 'wheel house' revealed a fifteen foot tunnel leading North then North-East into a seven foot high chamber.

Considering Usinish Bay from the point of view of a settlement study several factors make it attractive to pre-historic man. The site has habitable caves, easy access to fresh water, and is near to the sea for fishing. The settlement would appear to have spread down the valley towards the sea, the building becoming more sophisticated (ie smaller boulders) with less use of natural features such as caves.



Both the bivvies concluded that the Usinish settlement was one of the most fascinating reminders of the occupation of South Uist by pre-historic man.

DAVID FOWLER

A TRIP TO THE WEST COAST

It was precisely 09-45 when we braved the swarms of midges and set out for the west coast. As we reached the heights of Arinambane our spirits rose as the midges dispersed. After 35 minutes we passed the first causeway where we spotted a school of about 15 trout. Leaving the western end of Loch Eynort we were soon on the island's main road.

Skirting two rams having a head butting competition we arrived at Bornish 90 minutes after leaving the campsite. At the post office we left the mail and stocked up with chocolate and other mouth-watering consumables.

Heading west across cow filled fields and the odd sand dune we reached Loch Ardvule at 12.30. The ornithologists went off while the rest of us lay in a ruined dun eating our lunch. The bird men returned having spotted turn-stones, sanderlings, and a couple of buzzards.

We walked north along the sandy shore until we passed the burial grounds, from which two whales were sighted. Moving inland we walked through Stoneybridge and fetched up outside another post office, but it was closed. However while trudging dejectedly up the road a travelling shop pulled up and our needs were met. At this point a group of school children passed and eyed us as though we were something out of Star Trek.

Reaching the market stance we started walking back down the main road and were passed by a coach load of even more children. We passed Loch Ollay and two miles further on turned off onto the Loch Eynort road, collected the post from Donald, and arrived back at camp at 6.30 pm.

KEITH TOPE AND KEITH BURGESS

HARRIS EXPEDITION 1974

Leader: John Hutchison
Officers: Chris Bagley (Camp Administrator)
Duncan Davidson, Lawrence Hall
Roger Hancock, Alan Sagar
Gerald Smith.

Boys: Nick Aleck, Peter Amos, Kevin Blake, Bruce Bompfrey
Jamie Bompfrey, Ben Buxton, Nick Caplin, Malcolm
Clayton, Malcolm Cobb, John Courtman, Ian Darlington
Mark Davis, Hans Dobson, Kevin Puller, Andy Hayes
Chris Jeffries, Quentin King, Garry Longden, Dermot
McRoberts, Philip Parsons, Graham Reeder, Huw
Reynolds, Edward Rose, Glyn Savage, Nick Smith, Mark
Taylor, Mike Thirkettle, Patrick Thompson, David
Trevena, Clive Tucker.

LEADER'S REPORT

After all the preparation and panning what a relief to get away to Rhenigidale! Two thirds of the boys had been to Jura the previous year, but this venture was such a contrast. Firstly this was in the ruggedness of the area, and second in that we were living in a township of about 12 people. Rhenigidale situated on the mouth of Loch Seaforth has been visited by the SHS on three previous occasions, and yet we managed to find new facets of the area. We are indebted to the kindness of the villagers.

Despite assurances given by Patrick and myself that the weather which we experienced at the beginning could only be described as 'showers' the southern diaries recorded heavy rain, storms etc...! This and Duncan's late arrival marred the first few days, but even so we were established fairly quickly.

Much of our time involved water. We fished in it, canoed on it, tried to measure its range and currents, looked at its plants, and dinghy pottered on it. The landlubbers looked at birds, flowers, buildings, animals, sand dunes, and a line for a new road. Most of us walked a great deal to visit such places as Molinginish, Scalpay, Luskentyre, and for those who found the

break from town life too much to bear, Tarbert1

Modestly the expedition must claim its records. Because of the absence of drift wood we became the first expedition to take its own furniture material, and after the installation of the 'Trans Bhenigidale Pipeline' (1200 ft) the first expedition with water on tap in the marquee. Lawrence's personal feat must be recorded, viz replacing the previous record to Tarbert of 1 hr 17 mins by one of 55 mins, and an astounding 1 hr 51 mins for a jaunt from the marquee to Tarbert pier and back.

Our projects enjoyed varying degrees of success. Biology and botany were slow off the ground because of Duncan's late arrival but flourished afterwards. Our work at Luskentyre sand dunes for the Nature Conservancy Council received a setback when, on returning home, we found the film had not been exposed and we had nothing to show for the visit. Our study of a possible route for a road to Rhenigidale was successful and a report has been sent to the Highlands and Islands Development Board.

We will remember the happy times; the great evening Ceilidhs and the party for the villagers on the last night; the football tournament when the Leader's undoubted Goal was disallowed; the Sunday service when we sang 'The Lord's my Shepherd¹ to the tune of 'Amazing Grace', and how Mrs MacInnes was moved by this old Gaelic psalm tune; the 'tents' bivvy and Lawrence's bread consumption. We will remember the times which we thought were sad or difficult but on reflection were times of unity; striking camp in such rough weather; the bus accident on Skye and Alan's prompt actions; on a wild night carrying a villager, Angus Campbell, to the boat en-route for Stornoway hospital; Gary's suspected appendicitis and Gerald's accident with the irony of its circumstances. Gerald is fit again, and his main concern being the sudden end to his expedition. Thanks to everyone who helped at those times.

We each cherish our memories knowing we have benefited from our experience, returning home with a better understanding

of other people and ourselves. By living in the township we learned of the difficulties of life there. Most people helped by laying the pipeline to the hostel, digging for the septic tank, demolishing the old building which will form a new byre, and cutting and drying peat. We hope that we have partly repaid the villager's patience with these things.

Thanks are due to so many people. To Sir Hereward Wake and Roddy MacInnes for permission to use the site; to my wife for her tolerance, to the splendid group of officers whose ability and energy made my job easier, and to the boys whose enthusiasm made everything worthwhile.

Lastly thanks to the villagers of Rhenigidale. " Moran taing airson bhur coibhneas agus tha dochas agam air faicinn o choinn ghoraidl"

JOHN HUTCHISON

HARRIS FISHING REPORT

The sea fishing on Harris was very exciting and fish such as Rock Cod, Pollack and Mackerel were abundant, many being over the 2 lb mark. The biggest fish was a 2f Pollack caught by Bruce Bompfrey.

A fishing trip was arranged with the village boats and it was the villagers who introduced us to the shallower shores at Molinginish, easily the best spot for fish. A fishing bivvy ventured to Noster on Loch Seaforth, and over two days many fish around 2 lb were caught.

No trout were caught on the hill lochs, eg Loch Mor, Lochan an Fheoir, etc.. although some attempts were made. On the whole the weather was good enough for fishing, and nearly everyone who tried caught something.

PATRICK THOMPSON

CEILIDHS ON HARRIS

The expedition was lucky to have a competent range of musical talent, catering for most tastes. Roger Hancock proved to be the mainstay of the nightly musical sessions. Of the songs themselves; Duncan taught us sea shanties such as 'Haul

Away Joe', and of his other songs 'The Mingulay Boat Song' proved popular. Gerald's song sheets proved invaluable with modern folk songs like 'Streets of London' and 'Blowing in the Wind'. The Beatles song book was well used for pop songs.

Leader John played jigs and reels, and his Scottish Nationalist songs raised a few eyebrows and laughs, along with a most unusual version of (would you believe) 'Old MacDonald'.

GARY LONGDEN

THE OFFICERS. BY IAN P. DARLINGTON.



CLIMBING REPORT

Practice crags on Harris were few and far between, and what there were seemed far from difficult. The best crags were only a mile or two away from camp after an uphill walk.

Under the guidance and instruction of Gerald we were taught basic knots, hand holds and foot holds. The first few days on Harris were wet and whilst up a crag we were often confronted

by squally winds and torrential rain, thus making climbing very difficult indeed. Much 'gardening' was needed to clear many small ledges of heather and grass.

However amidst all our difficulties we did manage to execute some really memorable climbs during our stay.

One particular climb presented a rather above average challenge. It was about 40 ft high of sheer grey rock, which disappeared into a very wet, black, pungent bog. A formidable sight to the bravest of climbers'. Gerald and Hans and myself were surveying the climb from above, whilst Nick was preparing to abseil down. With the weather conditions as bad as they were, slight drizzle and a stiff breeze, the climb was now very difficult. Nick abseiled down extremely well for a first time effort, but on his return climb he spent twenty minutes on the last ten feet avoiding a boulder-cum-overhang. One slip would have resulted in the free air climbing technique'.

Although not quite Everest type climbs, the boys and officers enjoyed themselves, gained experience, and a number of promising climbers emerged.

GLYN SAVAGE

HARRIS; WEATHER REPORT

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Total Rainfall | 12.7 ins |
| Daily Average Rainfall | 1.27 ins |
| Maximum Temperature | 63 F (19 C) |
| Minimum Temperature | 50 F (10 C) |
| Wind Variation | Force 1-3 (Beaufort) |

The readings were taken over a ten day period from 26 July to 4 August using a wind vane, max/min thermometer, ventimeter, and rain gauge. There were two weather stations at first but thanks to the sheep and the wind this soon became one. It was unfortunate that the last day was the most spectacular from the meteorological point of view as our equipment was packed¹.

GERALD SMITH, KEVIN BLAKE, ANDY HAYES.

15

NORTH UIST 1974

Leader: John Cullingford

Officers: Nigel de Berker (Camp Administrator) Keith Broadbent, John Bromley, Giles Cullingford, Sean O'Brian, Dr Peter Maslin, Dick Light, William Warin

Boys: Peter Barber, Christopher Barry, Paul Baxter, David de Berker, Patrick Biddulph, Michael Biddulph, John Cherrington, Ian Clay, Paul Clowes, Boris Earley, Philip Edwards, Gordon Freat, Alistair Hughes, Stephen Hill, Andrew Ivy, Trevor Jones, Garry Marshall, Steven Marston, Leslie Marston, Paul Medhurst, Simon Medhurst, John Morgan, Stephen Muller, Christopher Price, Hugh Robinson, Tim Stott Gordon Stevenson, Tim Weschenselder, Chris West, Ian Yallop.

LEADER'S REPORT

It really began at the Conference - that pool of Hebridean expeditionary stimulus. By April we had 15 boys and Keith and myself as officers. However, this was the end of the passive stage, and I shall now try and describe how the expedition came to life.

A good expedition depends on good officers - and camp administrator. When Nigel said he would come we could face the inevitable problems that are associated with food. I knew that the boat side of things would be fine when Will agreed to return from Norway to take charge. My thanks here to John Round and his friend Chris who spent a lot of their time preparing the fleet. The engines worked, the inflatable inflated and the canoes canoedled.

Knowing Sean from the pleasant peace of Somerset I was still unaware of our gain in letting him loose on the Hebridean environment, and when Dr Peter Maslin first loomed large in the lanes of Somerset I knew he would look well striding over the heather with a string of boys behind him, and he did.

The expedition also came to life due to the careful record Roger Weatherly kept of the last visit, and the friendship that we received from Lord Granville, David Shaunessy, and Ewen Nicholson.

Once on the island we had a cottage to live in - three rooms, kitchen, store room, and drying room. The small marquee was used for meals and washing up. From this secure base we looked out East across an estuary of pools at high tide and islands at low tide. This beautiful setting gave us the assurance to wander far and wide secure in the knowledge that we had this homely spot to return to.

We tried to balance our activities and projects with bivvies away from camp. In both areas John Bromley was a vigorous contributor. He procured Beveridge's mighty tome on archaeology on the island and was always on the look-out for duns and other reminders of by-gone ages. Other special activities were the visit to an agricultural show and a football match.

Because we were such a mixture we came up against those people, things, and ideas that we would not normally have met. Boys from different backgrounds, adults with unusual opinions and skills, the island people and island ways, prayers, rugby songs, home-made bread, yak stories, God, heather tea, Nigel's cake, socialism, sea weed, and fish gut were our environment. In varying degrees we managed to get on and make friends and this for me holds the clue to one of the unwritten aims of the SHS, that within a challenging environment we learn to make friends, not just with people, but with ideas, with objects, and with situations.

JOHN CULLINGFORD

THE OTTERS

After our Leader reported seeing otters amidst the early morning mists of the sealoach, near our boat mooring, some insomniacs braved the early morning crispness to see for themselves. Philip has written the following graphic record of his worthwhile vigil.

"The day was fast approaching, and from where I was sitting on the edge of the loch, I could see the sun as it gradually rose above the ridges of Ben Eaval. I heard a splash and looking round saw ripples spreading over the loch with a trail of bubbles leading away from them. Then an otter climbed from the water onto a flat rock. It yawned and then sniffed the air but did not detect anything. Its long, powerful body gleamed in the sun. It had small black eyes that peered from above the long stiff whiskers on the sides of its head, and its strong rudder was stretched out behind. It began licking itself but suddenly lifted its nose high into the air. the fur on the back of its neck stood on end and after a few seconds it slid almost silently into the water, moving away with only its small head visible."



HEBRIDEAN LAMENT

About the middle of summer
there came a happy band
of thirty little scoundrels
with officers to hand.
Soon they will be squabbling
on this fair and pleasant land
Up in the Hebrides
the land with no trees.

Away from civilisation don't
even know the time. Eating
tinned potato and Silver
Weed is fine, playing a game
called BUNDLE and swimming in
iced-brine Out in the
Hebrides in rain, with a
stiff breeze.

Go on you little horror
you really ought to go.
It's good for you to do things
your Father never knowed.
Return and you will work for me
because I love you so.
Off to the Hebrides
with its midges, ticks, and fleas.

The purpose of our mission
is nebulously clear;
it's not just for endurance
yet no holiday camp up here.
To taste, to smell, to live again
away from all that's near
Up in the Hebrides
but I crave me chips and peas.

BUFF [JOHN?]CULLINGFORD

A SHOCK DEFEAT

On Friday 2nd August the SHS fielded a football team against a local team. The match was played at Bayhead school at Paible, the pitch being an uncut mixture of grass and heather growing to shin height.

At the start of the game we thought ourselves the natural favourites. But after about ten minutes of gruelling play, and finding the ball in our own net we were not so sure. Yet we played on using all our skill and energy.....to find the ball in our net again. Undaunted by this 'beginners luck' we strove to even up the score. However, losing control of the ball in the long grass the opposition planted another goal firmly into the imaginary netting. The whistle blew for half time.

At the beginning of the second half, having decided that the locals had enough goals with which to lose gracefully, we brought on our big guns in the form of various officers who we felt sure would scare our opponents away. Primed with a pep talk from our manager, John (the shankly) Cullingford we attacked through mid-field, putting more and more pressure on the defence, until we scored with a long shot.

Play continued with our back line defence holding off their attacks, and their defence holding off ours. Despite us getting equal possession of the ball my dim recollection is that they managed to reach our net again.... three times'.

The game finally came to an exhausted end with the score standing at:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| ISLAND ALLCOMERS | 6 |
| SHS ALLSTARS | 1 |

I mention no one for outstanding play as everyone played very well..... although our referee played better than theirs

GORDON FREAN

RAASAY EXPEDITION 1974

Leader: Peter Carlile

Officers: Nicholas Deeley (Camp Administrator) John Burgess, Ian Gough, Clive Martin, Mike Hayward, Shaun Wainwright, Launcelot Fleming.

Boys: Mark Banning, Daz Bottomley, Dave Clarke, Brian Clegg, David Eaglesham, David Frankland, Crispin Gill, John Grossart, Neil Hyde, Roger Hyde, Lofty Lambert, Jim Oliver, Tony Ormston, James Outhwaite, Dave Perritt, Ian Scarborough, Charles Stewart, William Stage, Richard Thompson, Mark Wickstead, Ian Wolstenholme.

LEADER'S REPORT

Looking back at our two weeks on Raasay the predominant memories are happy ones; nobody drowned, nobody fell down a mountain, or not that I noticed, and it seemed that everybody had a great time.

We were fortunate enough to have the company of the Rather Reverend Dean of Windsor (whose kindness was only exceeded etc.) during the first week; we will remember his 'half naked'¹ ambles up the road, and his tea parties during the orienteering course. His interesting talk on his expedition to the Antarctic was one of the high spots of our expedition and those who were fortunate enough to attend his Communion Service will want me to thank him on their behalf; the expedition's success owed a lot to his presence.

An expedition's success also depends a great deal on its officers, and while Nick Deeley didn't hit the magical '5 foot' on S.H.S. soya beans, his work as Camp Administrator was very gratefully received and his efficiency made my job in particular a lot easier. Mike Hayward fortunately was never called upon to use the Society's stomach pump or the 65 tins of Plaster of Paris, but as a camp doctor we had the utmost confidence in himdidn't we? And who could forget the sight of Ian Gough's knee-caps before breakfast or Clive Martin's naked

torso in the sea after breakfast supervising capsized drill. If any of the boys had shared a tent with Shaun Wainwright they would have appreciated the marvel of his singing voice and wondered at his unwaterproof waterproofs; and will John Burgess' section ever forget getting up at three 'o'clock in the morning to wash cocoa mugs? Oh, the joys of camping.

But what is an expedition without the boys? (Probably very enjoyable.) Also will Daz ever recover from the emotional distress of seeing his craft, S.H.S. Sinkfast, do just that on its maiden voyage; and will Cleggers recover from the passing away of his pet baby sharks? Thanks are due to Richard who ran the ornithological project, to John G who taught his Leader an educational version of 'Barnacle Bill'¹, to Dave Clarke who sharpened my axe..... three times a day, to Crispin who wrote my letters and Lofty who read them and proceeded to blackmail me over dinner one day, to Dave Eaglesham for enjoying himself, and to everyone else who made my job impossible.

Finally one must mention our friendly Fred who not only fed the officers on occasions but also did a lot for us in many different ways. Thanks also to Mark Rayne for the travel arranging, to Chris Hood for his mangy carrots, and to Phil Renold for smoking my cigarettes at board meetings prior to the expedition. None of us will forget Raasay 1974 for a long time; thank you all.

PETER R CARLILE

CLIMBING REPORT

Three sites were proposed for climbing, of which the volcanic plug supporting the Brochel remained unclimbed. Various faces of North Sreapadal and the coast to the north of the Brochel were used.

The Sreapadal expedition spent a day at the rocks, but largely due to the unsuitability of the faces only managed to put six people through three climbs. However, enthusiastic failures found time to re-attempt their climbs gaining extra height and gratification in the process. Needless to say the

real climbing began on the walk back around the coast, which cannot be passed round easily even at low tide.

Three expeditions up the coast enabled more people to partake of the pleasures of climbing, and enabled the enthusiastic to do more, and harder, climbs. On two occasions we set up abseils and tried to persuade people to try them. Several did, and Charles Stewart is especially remembered for his spectacular somersault while making a rapid descent.

Overall, this activity was highly successful in that many people found out what it's all about, and a smaller number discovered that it really agreed with them.

CLIVE MARTIN

ORIENTEERING ON RAASAY

As with the expedition I went on last year we had a day set aside for the ritual of sending twenty-two boys round six miles of bog searching for eleven red and white painted beer cans - at least that is how it might look to a sarcastic on-looker. In reality it provides some chance for the expedition members to see how good they are with a map and compass when left loose on their own.

Admittedly the boys were using 1:10,000 O.S. maps which most of them had never seen before the expedition, but I bet that the mistakes would have been repeated if they had been using the I" map. The first part of the course was relatively easy; a track junction, a hill summit, a fence bend, a tree outcrop, a valley, and a road bend. However, the second half proved more difficult, mainly because the lads set off in any direction that they thought was vaguely the right one instead of looking at their maps. I was manning check point number 8, and from the vantage of this hill I was able to watch through my binoculars a little trail of people all scratching their heads. Once four people had collected in the wrong place they acted like the Sirens in Greek mythology and attracted even more people. To cap it all the loo tent, which was one of the points, was missed

and I can only think that by this stage of the expedition some people were rather constipated¹.

The fastest time was Neil and John's 2 hrs 10 mins, with Dave Eaglesham and Useless Eustace coming second with a time of 2 hrs 33 mins. Well done anyone who completed, or who really tried to complete, all of the course.

As usual there were funny incidents. Daz's map suffered when he was taken by a call of nature whilst half way round the course, and the markers had to compete with other attractions such as an empty camp with a full food tent; not to mention "having lunch with the Dean of Windsor".

For anyone wanting to learn how to use a map and compass there is a limited chapter on this in a book called "Back - Packing" by Peter Lumley. (Teach Yourself Books) This a book that I would recommend as pre-expedition reading for the two younger groups. But no amount of reading can make up for practise, so out with your map and compass before next year you lot!

MIKE HAYWAED

Landing on Scalpay Jetty.



FISHING REPORT

We had the use of the rubber inflatable dinghy for sea-fishing trips which entailed chugging out to sea by outboard then drifting slowly with the currents back towards the camp. Amazingly the first time we went out we caught two quite large pollack. So the next time I said that there was a fishing trip everyone wanted to come and try this easy business. But they were disappointed because we were not quite as lucky for a while.

A big boost to morale came when Fred lent us his net saying that we could keep all that we caught except salmon of which he wanted every other one. This seemed extremely generous and the thought of salmon in the bay was almost as exciting as hearing the cry "There's a seal in the bay!" Sadly we caught no salmon but did catch some more pollack of up to four pounds - and very tasty too. Even Pete admitted they were better than when he had last tasted pollack. The biggest fish caught by line were a pollack by Charles and a codling by Richard. We didn't catch a single mackerel despite several twilight attempts.

Moments worth remembering include Launcelot's fish identification sessions in the marquee with half a dozen jolly fishermen, and his solemn announcement to a dubious gathering after his first mouthful that the pollack was really awfully good and that the kindness of the chef was only exceeded by his etc . . . ; and Lofty's discomfort at getting his line snagged by someone else for at least the fifth time in half an hour.

IAN GOUGH

OUTER ISLES (LEWIS) EXPEDITION

Leader: Paul Caffery

Officers: Denise Whitworth (Camp Administrator), Mike Anderson (Camp Doctor), John Gibbison, Dick Light, Dave Whitworth.

Members: Michael Aitken, Mark Baker, Richard Bregazzi, Philip Davey, Patrick Fox, Johnathan Harper, Peter Jeffries, Colin Moss, Richard Williams, Peter Wright.

LEADER'S REPORT

An old and now mostly forgotten Hebridean poet and wit once said, "If the sun shone in the Hebrides there would be nowhere more beautiful in all the world." For our first week this was just how it was, miles of silver white sands, blue-green seas with white topped breakers, and clear blue skies. It was a real fairy land (not that we saw any, but there were comments about nice officers.)

As an outdoor pursuits expedition we climbed, canoed, surfed, walked, and lay in the sun. At the end of the day there were the magnificent sunsets, games of volley ball, and quick rounds on our own golf course.

Every expedition has its characters, but it seemed that our characters had an expedition. There was the Gibbison commission into marital harmony. (We still await the results.) Also if we were not being entertained by Jo, Charlie, and Rich, it was by Colin and his habit of hole digging.

Dick mashed us pots of delicious steaming hot Sassafras and Clover tea and hit us with an activity called orienteering. He even led a brave party out to Aird Bheag to establish once and for all where the most voracious midges live.

But what of the Camp Administrator? Despite having the least rewarding job (especially when there is a shortage of food) Denise fulfilled her task with untiring energy even finding time to come out climbing with us.

Exceptionally high tides caused us to re-pitch several of the tents, and Colin, never doing anything by half, removed his tent to the top of a nearby hill. He ended up so far from camp that every time he went to bed he had to sign out in the book.

There are always so many memories of an expedition that they are too numerous to mention, but we will remember the blow hole, Barny our friendly bull, the great Burt Brutons, John's contact lenses, Mark Bakers' inventions, Dick's mouth organ, the nude swims, Mr and Mrs Morrissons' accurate weather forecasting, the collapsing marquee, and the evening talks on occultism and socialism.

The time comes when I must thank people for contributing to the success of the expedition. Thanks to Ross and Cromarty County Council for providing the loo caravan, and thanks to George and Sheila Newall for the use of the scout hut in Stornaway as well as for their assistance with other problems. Thanks must also go to the Sutherland family at Brenish for their refreshing cups of tea and coffee on our many visits. Good luck to Mrs Sutherland in her new venture of creating a local pottery industry on the island.

Last, but by no means least, thanks to the backroom boys of the Society for food, travel, equipment, with a special thank you to John Hutchison for last minute emergencies being dealt with. Finally thanks to all the expedition members.

PAUL E CAFFERY

A BIVVY TO STROKE ULLADALE

Dick Light, Pat Fox, Pete Jeffries and Richard Williams.

It was on a Friday afternoon that Dick (Red under your Karrimat) Light and the rest of the crew set off in Mike (I'll take the car) Anderson's Saab on this intrepid bivvy. We were given a lift to the end of the road and began the hard slog up into the pass that leads to Amhuinn Cheann Chuisil.

Three hernias later we reached the top, where recovering from altitude sickness we had a fantastic view of the Flannan Islands, and in the distance, St Kilda. With time getting on

we had to make camp by a Loch several miles from our destination. We lit a fire first to drive away the legions of midges and then to cook our imitation meat, the dreaded Protoveg. Finally we went to sleep to the sound of a stream and the cry of oyster-catchers in the night.

The next morning we were awakened by the sound of rain on our tents and the screams of Dick as the midges reached their second course. After breakfast (ours) Pat and Dick headed off into the torrential rain. Pete and Rich started out for the SHS camp site at Aird Bheag once the weather was more to their liking. Passing Pat and Dick returning to the bivvy they were warned of the dangers of crossing a swollen stream, and eventually made it to Aird Bheag which was much as they remembered it from their last visit in 1972, only the old boat was much decayed.

The following day we set off back to the main camp without managing to reach our objective, but the best was yet to come. On the route back we passed Loch Suainaval, a mysterious five mile long loch which is apparently bottomless. Arriving there at midday there was not a cloud in the sky and the loch looked gorgeous with its flashing dark blue water. It so drew us that Dick decided to take a swim while we watched from a rocky ledge. What a glorious end to a bivvy.

ANON

THE UIG FLOOD

The campsite this year was an expanse of flat ground (part of which, believe it or not, was converted into a golf course by our doctor) bordered on one side by Uig sands and on two others by a river. When we arrived, the sea was at least a quarter of a mile away from the camp at its nearest point.

We pitched the marquee, three sleeping tents and a store tent fairly close together. All went well for about eleven days, when a force 8 gale blew up and heavy rain set in. Soon after this the tide rose by several feet and started to come in fast.

When we saw the water so close we got ready to move the nearest tent, John Gibbeson's own three man Alpine. When the water was only about a foot away, we decided the time had come to take action and moved the tent to slightly higher ground.

From then on things moved fast; the Peewits were emptied of gear, walls built up, and all the food piled into Dave Whitworth's tent. The water eventually stopped about five feet from, the marquee, although water several inches deep covered the space formerly occupied by John's tent. (My tent, by the way, was quite safe - thirty feet up a hill, about a hundred yards away¹).

With a lot of difficulty in a howling wind we managed to erect a tent for everyone to sleep in, and put all the gear in the marquee. However, soon after the tide went down the rain returned; we had got the gear under cover just in time!

COLIN MOSS

