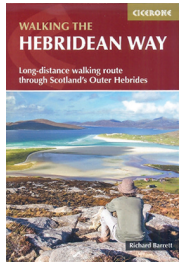


prominently. 'The food, introduced to the north by Elizabeth David as Provençal cuisine, smells of thyme and rosemary even if you are just thumbing through her recipes. Provençal days by necessity include sitting in a shaded café sipping *pastis* or a glass of crisp white wine while watching the locals playing *petanque*.' Who needs a tourist brochure?

Conspicuous features, architecture and the history add interest and of particular value are the photos, many being aerial shots taken by Lu from a large microlight. Literary figures mentioned tend to be English while military activists are Corsican, the rugged island contrasting with the mainland coast, initially flat then opulent.

A sixth edition underlines the fact that this is a standard work, unsurprisingly. It accompanies Rod's guide to the Danube and half a dozen of his other Mediterranean titles we have reviewed.

The Hebridean Way



Richard Barrett
Cicerone, 2 Police Sq, Milnthorpe, Cumbria
LA7 7PY
978 1 85284 727 2
170 x 120mm
186 pages, paperback
May 2017
£14.95

Although Richard Barrett is a sea paddler, his Hebridean guides are more about looking at the sea from the land, the sea never being far away in

the Hebrides.

His *Walking on Harris & Lewis* (Dec 2010, p53) and *Cycling in the Hebrides* (Nov 2012, p46) are now joined by a guide to the new Hebridean Way long distance footpath. As yet the route is incomplete, running from Vatersay to Stornoway, but details of a provisional route onwards are given to the Butt of Lewis. The future stages are expected to follow the east shore of Lewis while the existing route makes use of the west coasts of Eriskay, South Uist and Benbecula. In fact, the route is rarely out of sight of water and more often in a maze of lochans and inlets.

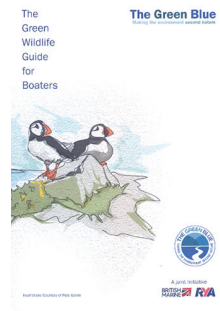
The Hebridean Way is a route made up of numerous unnamed footpaths, unlike the current trend of giving new names to waterways better known to most people by long established names.

Details of campsites, hostels, bus services and other sparse services are given. The long section on midges includes the interesting suggestion of sticking close to someone prone to getting bitten by them, reminiscent of the cheerful Canadian backwoods advice that you don't need to be able to outrun a bear, just be faster than your colleague.

Of interest 'is the roofless shell of a small stone hut on the right. This structure is distinctly odd, with a very low door and small window. Until someone tells me otherwise, can I suggest that it may have been built as a shelter for schoolchildren during bad weather? Or perhaps it was a hen house, as Hebrideans tended to keep them well away from their dwellings.' This is near the southern end of Harris. At the other end of the island, near the Butt of Lewis, the graves of pygmies were found at Luchruban, a name related to leprechaun, the location discussed at length in John M MacAulay's *Seal-folk & Ocean Paddlers* (Mar 99, p28). So there you have it, a leprechaun's house. While on the subject, the entrance to the souterrain above Port Chamuill on Loch Eriboll also looks a touch tight for any self respecting Pict.

Starting with the cover, it is a rare picture which does not have water in it. Read this book and be tempted.

The Green Wildlife Guide for Boaters



The Green Blue, RYA House, Ensign Way,
Hamble, Southampton SO31 4YA
A5
6 pages, paperback
2017

Marine wildlife is taken to include seabirds, whales, sharks, dolphins, seals and turtles although there is no identification guide here, just a few token sketches.

The booklet is pitched primarily at the users of larger craft with warnings about the effects of propellers, engine noise and chasing wildlife. However, there is acceptance that wildlife may approach boats instead. There is more than one reference to dolphins riding bow waves but no advice about how to respond when seals come looking for sandwiches, whether there is risk of being bitten. Indeed, as someone who has made a large detour on one occasion to avoid what I thought was a basking shark but might not have been, I would have appreciated advice on what wildlife is of danger to us.

Instead, at the back of it all are legal threats against anyone who does not put wildlife first.

Perhaps the section of most relevance to paddlers is shallow water. There is also advice on where to report encounters with stranded animals, more likely to be of relevance to paddlers than to the users of larger craft unable to get into locations which might see strandings.

There is scope for expanding this booklet with a second edition.



Weather to go

Temperate on 2nd, cold and cloudy on 8th, frost on 16th, cold and moist on 23rd and cold on 30th. These were weather forecasts for December 1590, the dates chosen because these were the times of the moon's quarters, given to the nearest minute in William Bourne's *A Regiment for the Sea*, the fourth edition published in 1581. The first edition had been published as what was, effectively, the first ever nautical almanac.

Bourne was not a meteorologist nor even a seaman although he had been a naval gunner. He was a Gravesend innkeeper who spent a lot of time talking to seamen waiting for the right conditions to go up the Thames or out into the North Sea.

Predicting the weather on set dates a decade ahead, without the benefits of a supercomputer, weather balloons, reporting stations or weather satellites would be asking a lot but I would be disappointed if his prognostications were not more accurate than the long range forecasts currently issued by the Met Office, which seem to be consistently inaccurate.

It is easy to forget that short range weather forecasting has improved out of all recognition over the last couple of decades. The shipping forecast now sometimes divides up sea areas, giving different forecasts for different parts of a single sea area.

Getting the forecasts is also much easier. I have stood in telephone

boxes in the past, trying to hear Marinecall over the noise of feeding in pound coins.

On land, it is easy to get an hourly forecast for the town of your choice from the BBC. If you want to know what the weather will do on a predetermined date for a competition or for a trip which has to tie in with booked holidays you can only wait and see. On the other hand, if you choose to go when the conditions are best, the rivers not too high or too low, the sea not too rough or the surf too flat, the weather not too windy or too cold, you will watch the forecasts closely.

Trying to predict the movement of weather systems has been described as like trying to determine where a googly ball will go. If you are interested in one location on one particular day, the predicted weather might arrive a day early or a day late; it may veer a bit to one side or the other, the accuracy increasing with decreasing time to the day in question. I have tracked predictions before several dates of interest to see how they have changed, forecasts from both the BBC, prefixed by B on the chart, and by the American Accuweather, prefixed by A, as a check. Other forecasts are available. I also used to use the Weather Underground until they dropped wind details. In an ideal world the sources would agree with each other and would not change significantly but I have found they are not too good at predicting when a run of settled weather or unsettled weather will end.