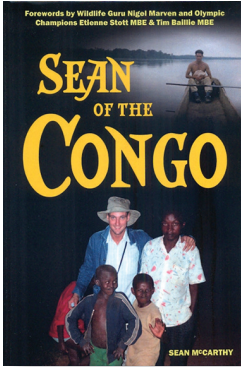


# BOOKS

## Reviews of new books and publications

### Sean of the Congo



Sean McCarthy  
978 0 9532724 3 3  
240 x 160mm  
212 pages, hardback  
2017

[contact@seanofthecongo.co.uk](mailto:contact@seanofthecongo.co.uk)

Back in 1989 Sean McCarthy was 23 and his mate, Shaggy, a couple of years older; 'full of beans, we were resilient young men trying to realise an audacious rite of passage. In paddling part of the Congo, I like to think we may have achieved it.'

The planned journey was from Kisangani to Kinshasa, shortened for compelling reasons explained in the book. The mode of

transport was dugout pirogue, challenging at the best of times, more so on a river up to 16km wide, especially when the participants had never paddled anything before.

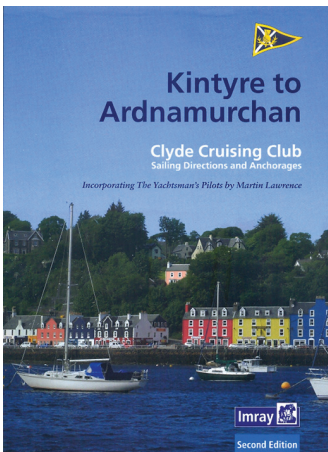
In fact, the time on the water accounts for only a quarter of the book. The greater part of it is the getting there, highly informative reading on a range of problems and dangers of an economy trip to a Third World country. The dangers included life threatening episodes with animals and humans yet it is not just stumbling from one crisis to another. Sean was clearly moved by the scenery and sunsets on other occasions. While walking through the jungle at night, something against which they had been advised, the concern was not the animals but three men with a motorbike staking them out, an incident which looked increasingly nasty and was only interrupted by good fortune.

He wrote the first seven chapters when he got back, then left it for nearly three decades before completing the book. The join does not show, which is surprising as the tone is decidedly laddish. Apparently it has been toned down a bit but is still raucously unPC. Auntie would find plenty to bleat about here.

Several pages of coloured photographs in the middle are joined by the occasional black and white ones among the text and by a useful map at the beginning of each chapter to record progress. Forewords include one by Tim Baillie and Etienne Stott and the list of acknowledgements is long and interesting.

For anyone wanting to travel off the beaten track and not to spend too much money doing so, this book is a real eye opener.

### Kintyre to Ardnamurchan



Edward Mason  
Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson,  
Wych House, St Ives, Cambs  
PE27 5BT  
978 184623 902 1  
300 x 220mm  
214 pages, paperback  
2014. 2nd edition 2018  
£32.50

'The Scottish west coast, between the Mull of Kintyre and Ardnamurchan Point offers some of the best and most varied sailing that can be found anywhere in Europe.' So begins the introduction and it is equally applicable for sea paddlers. Aimed at yachtsmen, quite a lot of the

text relates to anchorages but there is much information we can glean. There are many chartlets, each with a scale although many of these are

non standard. The book draws attention to Antares charts which are informative, a visual index to relevant ones being included. The book is heavily illustrated, the many aerial photographs being particularly useful, showing subsurface rocks. It is largely a pilot, descriptions being given from seaward, with less than might be expected of features of interest along the way but there are frequent cross references to *Cruising Scotland* (May 16, p35), which contains the relevant information.

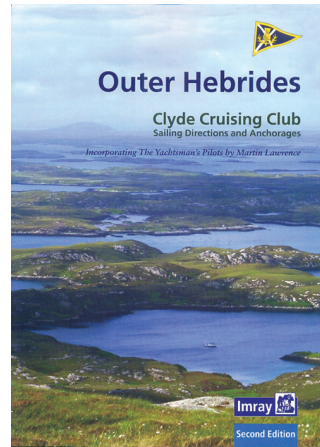
Maps, lights, tidal constants and tidal streams are listed. Not only are the movements of the complex tides of this area fully detailed but the reasons for them are explained well, invaluable.

The code of practice for use of Oban Bay is given in full, including showing the Large Vessel Channel which should be avoided and drawing attention to the use by seaplanes, also to be avoided. It includes a paragraph for paddlers.

Paddlers are shown on Loch Sween and it is noted that the leading lines on Jura's Loch Tarbert were established by Blondie Hasler.

Wire binding allows the book to be folded back on itself without damage.

### Outer Hebrides



Outer Hebrides  
Edward Mason  
Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson  
978 184623 903 8  
300 x 220mm  
172 pages, paperback  
2012. 2nd edition 2017  
£32.50

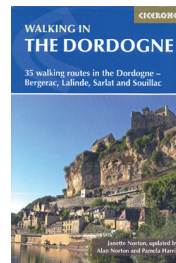
This is another pilot for yachtsmen but on a couple of occasions the route is left entirely to sea kayaks, a tidal rapid on Loch Seaforth and the Gunwale or Ranga Channel, suitable only for boats 'without any underwater appendages'.

Some UKHO charts are based on surveys undertaken in the aftermath of the 1745 uprising. The book promotes Antares charts which are much more recent and informative. The book is extensively illustrated. Just a glance at the cover shows how informative these pictures can be.

There is a table of facilities including shops and restaurants and it spells out where they are or, more to the point, where they are not. That includes a map of where VHF reception is poor.

Coverage is predominantly (82%) of the more sheltered east side of the Outer Hebrides but the exposed storm beaches facing the Atlantic are covered briefly with the Flannans and St Kilda included for those who want the full experience.

### Walking in the Dordogne



Janette Norton, Alan Norton & Pamela Harris  
Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss,  
Oxenholme Rd, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7RL  
978 1 85284 843 9  
170 x 120mm  
262 pages, paperback  
2004. 2nd edition 2018  
£14.95

Although a guide to walks in the Bergerac area, particularly in the vicinity of rivers, it is made clear that some places are best seen from the water, implying trip boats. You will not be alone. 'The river at Bergerac is wide and gentle, flowing lazily through the town, its waters now the home of ducks, swans and canoeists.' The Dordogne downstream of white water sections and the Vézère below the 2022 WWR world championships course at Treignac are the rivers most frequently visited but other placid rivers are included. It is not all flat touring water, the Saut de la Gretuse rapids on the Dordogne being shown, bypassed by the Canal de Lalinde.

Photographs are limited in size and number but frequently show dramatic river scenery although, strangely, they nearly all lack people and vehicles. While this is a rural area, all is up to date and what we might call cart tracks are here described as jeep tracks.