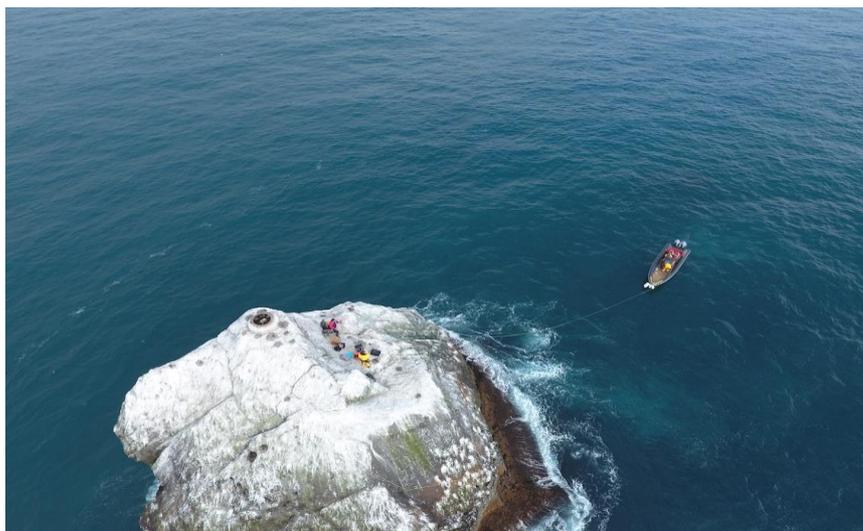


## **PRESS RELEASE from Scorpion RIBs Ltd**



Rockall Expedition 28/29<sup>th</sup> May, 2016

### **Lymington team reach the peak of Rockall.**

Neil McGrigor's climbing ambition was to reach the peak of Rockall. At 25m above sea level, this does not sound ambitious, but set 300miles out into the north Atlantic and described as the hardest island in the world to land on, the task is not so simple.

Over the May bank holiday 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> May, with the right weather opportunity, Neil lead his team of 4, of Charles Nicholson, Tim Kary and Tony Jenvey all from Lymington, in their open Scorpion 98 RIB, out into the North Atlantic and successfully landed on Rockall. Neil and Charles placed a new beacon on top of Rockall and then spent the night without protection on Halls Ledge 3 meters from the peak. To put this in perspective, more people have spent the night on the moon, than on Rockall.

Their 9.8m RIB named Rockall was built last year by Scorpion RIBs in Lymington, Hampshire, powered by twin Evinrude 300hp outboards. It was fitted with extra storage and larger fuel tanks, designed with the expedition in mind. However, to cover the 600 mile round trip, they carried extra fuel, packing the boat with 1,190 litres, climbing and safety equipment, include the obligatory bottle of Champagne, to be used in anticipation of success.

They averaged 38 knots from the outer Hebrides and reached Rockall in 6 hours and 50 minutes. Landing even in calm weather is a challenge, as is the climb, rated by the Commandoes as 'very difficult'. The combination of the Atlantic swell and shear rock walls, perilously slippery with kelp, was not easy to overcome with three of the team being washed in the water by the swell, but once on shore, Neil made the ascent laying a safety line for the others.

The following day they returned to Oban via St. Kilda, with the only companions being Killer Whales, dolphins and seals. They reached land with less than 100 litres of fuel left, less than planned, but 600 miles of open sea is never calm. Having fulfilled a life long dream, they then loaded the Scorpion on its trailer and returned to Lymington... Not your average Bank Holiday weekend.

**Scorpion RIBs Ltd** based in Lymington, build and sell their RIBs all over the world. The RIBs are all built to order entirely at Scorpion in Lymington. Scorpion RIBs are genuine off shore boats, and hold many records including London to Monaco and Around The British Isles. The Scorpion Serket 98 used for this adventure was built last year to Neil McGrigor's requirements, it is normally birthed at Berthon marina in Lymington.

**Rockall** is 25 metres wide and 31 metres long at its base and 19 metres high. It is constantly pounded by 3,000 miles of Atlantic swell. The world's largest recorded oceanic waves of 29 metres were recorded there in the year 2000; 6 metres higher than Rockall itself. Being in such an isolated location, over 180 miles from nearest land, (St. Kilda group of islands) the sea state can change in minutes, and as Rockall lies outside the air sea rescue zone, all of these conditions combine to make it the most difficult island in the world to sleep on. Only four people have ever slept on Rockall. Less than 100 have landed it.

Rockall is within the [Exclusive Economic Zone \(EEZ\)](#) of the United Kingdom (UK). Ownership of rights in the Rockall area beyond the EEZ of the UK is disputed between the UK, Denmark (for the Faroe Islands), Iceland and Ireland.

The nearest inhabited land to Rockall is Hirta and the nearest uninhabited land from Rockall is the island of [Soay, St Kilda](#) which is 301km away (183 miles). The UK and Ireland have signed a boundary agreement which includes Rockall in the UK area. As the UK own Rockall, ultimately they would need to establish human habitation or economic life on the island to benefit financially from said ownership as: "Rocks which cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own shall have no exclusive economic zone"

British Royal Navy Officer Basil Hall in 1811 is the first recorded person to have landed Rockall. A small ledge of 3.5 by 1.3 metres is named Halls Ledge after Mr. Hall. It is situated 4 metres from the summit on the rock's western face. It is the only named geographical location on Rockall.

In 1955 Rockall was claimed by the UK by [landing four men](#) from HMS Vidal via helicopter onto Halls Ledge. They fasten a tripod as a flagstaff to the rock and cemented a brass plaque on the Halls Ledge which reads:

*'By authority of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of her other realms and territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, and in accordance with Her Majesty's instructions dated the 14th day of September, 1955, a landing was effected this day upon this island of Rockall from HMS Vidal. The Union flag was hoisted and possession of the island was taken in the name of Her Majesty. [Signed] R H Connell, Captain, HMS Vidal, 18 September 1955.'*

They then raised the British flag and declared: *'In the name of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, I hereby take possession of this island of Rockall'.*

In 1985 Tom McClean lived on Rockall for 40 days to further establish the [UK claim](#) to Rockall.

57°35'48"N 13°41'19"W. The remains of a volcanic plug of an extinct volcano that has weathered Atlantic storms for millennia, it stands some 20 metres above the surface and reaches down to the sea bed 114 metres below. Formed from an unusual type of Granite, it is hardy enough to weather the Atlantic storms that occur all year. Waves will easily break over the top, much to the disappointment of its only semi-permanent residents of Gannets and Guillemots who sometimes use it as a resting rock.

The eastern side has horizontal shelf offering a small sheltered area called Halls Shelf offering the smallest of places for someone to spend time on the island.

End

**[Selection of photos, high resolution available](#)**