

BERNERAY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Nurses' Cottage, Backhill, Berneray, North Uist, HS6 5BD

Tel/Fax: 01876 540214

Company No. SC 238574

Scottish Charity No. SC 034041

No.5 June 2005

News from Berneray Development Group

'Port of Entry Enhancement Scheme' at Ardmaree Terminal

BDG is managing this project on behalf of the Comhairle. The drystone walling work, which amounts to about 70 metres in total, is 95% complete and when the flowering tubs are added this will be quite an attractive Terminal. Berneray Development Group would like to thank the Comhairle for their support in this and the many other community improvement projects.

Toilet Maintenance Contracts

The Harbour and Ardmaree contracts continue to operate satisfactorily. A new portable toilet disposal point for camper vans has been provided at Ardmaree Terminal and to date this is operating well. This is one of just three such facilities in the southern isles, and we expect it to be well-used by visiting tourists.

Skip Loading Improvements and Storage Area for Recyclable Rubbish

This project was completed in February by MacIain Ltd. The contractor built a loading ramp designed to enable easier loading of rubbish into the skip. It seems this has been a success, and the works included tidying up the whole area, which hopefully is appreciated by those using the skip and harbour area. We would ask users to try to keep this area tidy. The five pens adjacent to the skip are for the storage of recyclable goods. These include 'white electricals' such as washing machines and cookers, as well as tyres and batteries. Please do not deposit any other general rubbish in these pens.

Nurses' Cottage Visitor Information

The Cottage opened for the season on 1st June and, thanks to the considerable commitment and support of five volunteers, we are able to stay open longer this year. Please call in and encourage your friends and visitors to call in any time from 11am to 3pm Monday to Friday.

Despite the mixed weather in June which has seen visitor numbers generally quite variable, the numbers calling in at the Cottage so far have been encouraging.

Historical Society Update

New theme boards were obtained for the walls of the Historical Society room in the Nurses' Cottage, and in the early part of the year work started on these, with volunteers responsible for different topics. These included crofting, the Morgan car, fishing, the Endeavour racing yacht, ancient monuments, nursing in the island, and community hall development from the Jetty Ballroom to present day. This all came together for the opening of the cottage on the 1st June.

The other major change this year is the granting of a lease of Loch Bhrusda for us to issue fishing permits. This is now up and running and although in its early days is proving reasonably successful. Permits are available from Ardmaree stores and cost the visitor £5.00 per day. The reports so far indicate rather large trout in the loch of between 3 and 5 lbs weight, and a report of 'the one that got away' of about 9lbs! For the first 12 months at least the fishery will operate on a catch and release basis.

Work is also in the pipeline to try to employ a temporary project worker in order to catalogue the items in our possession, and to do further research.

Copies of the Berneray guide continue to sell well, and the second print run of the guide is on order and should be with us any day.

John Forshaw (secretary)

Berneray School Commemorative Exhibition - 2-4pm and 7-10pm Tuesday 28th June. Ceilidh and buffet at the School 7pm Thursday 30th June. The Development Group has a tape of the programme which was broadcast on Radio nan Gaidheal on Friday 24th June. This features the reminiscences of a number of former Berneray scholars. Please get in touch if you would like a copy.

Letting Office/Space

No further enquiries. We did write to the Comhairle suggesting that the new post of Community Co-ordinator be based here in the cottage, but to date there has not been a response to this.

CSV Action Earth Grants

We completed three small projects and the grant money of £150 will almost cover the project costs. The projects were: erosion control at seal view parking area; planting of shrubs at cemetery car park; clear earth behind Nurses' Cottage, lay groundwater drainpipe and landscape with aggregate.

Berneray Tourist Information Leaflet

We are in the process of designing a general information brochure for Berneray. This will be for visitors and locals and we would welcome suggestions for any specific or business information to be included. In particular, suitable photography for inclusion is required. If you have any photographs which you think might be suitable, please let us know. Pictures of dances or other social activities in the Hall or of wildlife are especially requested. Funding for part of this project has already been secured. We are looking to produce this brochure before spring 2006, for distribution to tourist offices, hotels and so on both in the islands and on the mainland.

Crofting Communities Development Scheme

Work has now started on the stock-handling pens, situated to the south of the Community Hall. The pens are for the safe handling and loading of cattle and sheep. This project is the crofter element of a three part funding package and is a partnership between Berneray Development Group and Borve Township. Mr Alan MacIsaac is the building contractor.

Loch Bhrusda Fishery running well

The Loch Bhrusda fishery is now up and running - signs are now erected near the loch asking anglers to purchase their permits at Ardmaree Stores. However things did not start in quite the manner intended. As we were waiting for our Fishing Permits to come back from the printers, we decided that we would forego putting up signs directing people who were interested in fishing to the shop. This was a big mistake.

It had been our intention from the outset to operate on a 'catch and release' basis for a few years but unfortunately for us, a number of anglers from Lewis came down and kept what they caught, without permission. On the positive side, this resulted in unexpected publicity for us, as the catch was recorded on the www.fishhebrides.co.uk website, but the down side was that nine big fish were removed from the loch and therefore unfairly disadvantaged other anglers' enjoyment. With luck there will still be one or two left to catch.

Potential community use for school building under discussion

Berneray Development Group briefly discussed the potential of the school building as a community facility after it closes this week. The education department has indicated that it would be happy for a community-based organisation, or group of organisations, to take over running of the building. Further consideration of such a project will now be initiated by the Community Council.

Berneray base for popular Gaelic soap opera

During the month of August don't be surprised if you bump into film crews and actors around the island. The producers of the popular TV soap *Ran Dan* will be filming a number of episodes of the series on the island and using the Nurses' Cottage as a backdrop for some scenes.

Launch of Berneray Church Booklet at The School, 4pm Tuesday 28 June. All welcome.

According to the webmasters of the Isle of Berneray website, the site has just recorded its 50,000th hit. Visitors to the site come from many countries of the world and a number of email contacts have been received from the Nova Scotia region of Canada, where many people can claim Berneray ancestry. Letters of support have also been received from Alex Salmond, Nicola Sturgeon, Tony Blair, Jack McConnell and Prince Charles.

Berneray Development Group (BDG) was formed in October 2002 and is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status

The objects of the BDG are for the benefit of the general public in Berneray and the surrounding area, as follows:

- To provide facilities for recreation and leisure with a view to improving conditions of life.
- To advance education and promote opportunities for learning.
- To protect and preserve the environment.
- To promote the advancement of education by the study of local history and provide a base for the research and display of local photographs and documents.
- To relieve poverty.
- To promote the trade and industry of Berneray and surrounding area.
- To promote, establish, operate and/or support other schemes and projects of a charitable nature.

BDG Board members: Gloria MacKillop (Chair), Fred MacLeod (Treasurer), John Angus MacCuish (Secretary), Meg Rodger, John Forshaw, Andrew Ross