

THE GATLIFF TRUST

Registered under the Charities Act, 1960

Trustees:

Herbert Gatliff (Chairman), Roger Clifton, Frank Martin, Bernard Selwyn, Robert Wickenden
Malcolm Campbell (Hon Secretary), 98 Agar Grove, Camden Square, London, NW1 9TL

April 1977

Dear Hosteller,

Crofters' Youth Hostels - 15th Annual Newsletter

1976 RESULTS Following the record overnights and visitors in 1975 the figures for 1976 were somewhat down. Was it the economic climate or the protracted sunshine on the mainland which tempted travellers to stay and not cross the Minch? The figures for the past five years are:

Overnights:	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Howmore, South Uist	515	665	508	680	514
Rhenigidale, Harris	350	486	214	569	530
Total visitors (to both hostels):	226	220	181	333	308

RHENIGIDALE It is the first year that the hostel has done a larger number of overnights than Howmore and the encouraging result is full justification of the improvements carried out by the Warden, Roddy MacInnes, in 1974/5. Further work needs to be done in replacing equipment and to the fabric of the building, especially the roof at the rear.

HOWMORE This year it was the turn of Howmore to have piped water and WC installed. This should make life easier for the hostellers and for the Warden, Mrs C MacSween. Archie McCullum, a regular visitor, was re-united with May, who he had met at the hostel eight years previously. They are now engaged - best wishes to you both. We hope you keep in touch with Howmore.

GATLIFF TRUST Both hostels are provided with financial assistance from the Trust to enable and encourage young people to visit this remarkable windswept landscape and its live Gaelic culture. The logbooks at the hostels are full of accounts of visitors showing their appreciation of the opportunity to explore the Western Isles. From the Howmore logbook:

"I took a walk up Beinn Mhor. It was a great climb and I was rewarded with the sight of the eagles - four in the sky at once. On the way down the lower slopes I stumbled and an eagle took fright and flew away. It must have been only ten feet away. The wingspan was huge and the brown colouring very beautiful."

TRIBUTE The Trust has received a donation of £70 from his parents in memory of Andrew Megson. This is to be spent on making Rhenigidale hostel more comfortable and the Trust are mounting a map of the whole of the Hebrides at the hostel as a memorial. Rob Wightman wrote this in the logbook:

"Four years ago Andy (Megson) and his friend arrived here via Orkney. Andy was a great person and both coming from Lancashire we became close friends and over the next three years walked and explored the Pennines and Yorkshire Dales. He always wanted to come back to Rhenigidale and really liked this place, but never came back. He died in August 1975 aged 22 years and about to go to Aberdeen University to do a PhD. His friend Rob is at college in London doing a PhD on some Essex marshes, and we keep in contact."

SCHOOLS HEBRIDEAN SOCIETY The Gatliff Trust makes modest annual payments to the SHS, which organises expeditions for young people to various places in the Hebrides. John Bromley, the leader of the Harris expedition, and his wife stayed at Rhenigidale earlier in the year. The camp prompted this comment by Jackie and Jaqui in the logbook:

"Now its even more rainy and we watch with sadistic delight from our warm, cosy, dry hostel as the circus from Bradford draw in their tents. They're a good crowd really but an addition of 29 to this quiet place is rather a shock and the hills have become quite crowded."

HOSTEL ON BERNERAY One of our Trustees, Roger Clifton, visited North Uist with his fiancée, Janet Ferguson, last year. Resulting from their visit the Trust opened a hostel on Berneray, off North Uist, from 16 April. The hostel is on the east of the island, near Risgary (grid ref 932814). There are ferries from Newton Ferry (North Uist) and Rodel (South Harris). These are small boats so you may be delayed in getting on or off Berneray.

Please tell your friends of these small, very simple and friendly hostels. If you have suggestions, comments or offers of help the Trustees would like to hear from you. Their Annual Report and Accounts will be available soon; please send a stamped, addressed, foolscap envelope if you would like a copy.

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm Campbell
Hon Secretary