



HEBRIDEAN HOSTELLERS AND GATLIFF HEBRIDEAN HOSTELS TRUST ACTIVITIES 1992

The Gatliff Hebridean Hostels Trust is pleased to announce that

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 + The renovated Rhenigidale and the new Garenin hostels will be opened +  
 + +  
 + by Magnus Magnusson KBE, Chairman of Scottish Natural Heritage +  
 + +  
 + on Friday 3rd July '92, at 3.30pm at Garenin and 7.00 pm at Rhenigidale +  
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 + All Hebridean Hostellers are invited to join us for this happy occasion +  
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The Trust is obviously delighted that Magnus Magnusson is able to accept our invitation to perform the opening ceremony at these two hostels and to join Islanders and Hebridean Hostellers for afternoon tea at Carlway Community Hall (at 4.30 pm). A bi-lingual invitation has been sent all donors to the Rhenigidale Appeal, and all former members of the Schools Hebridean Society, as well as VIPs and local people. All Hebridean Hosteller will be welcome on the day.

Coach from Leverburgh to Garenin, via Tarbet

For the convenience of our friends & hostellers coming from Uist, Harris and Skye the Trust has laid on a coach [Harris Garage Coaches]. It will run to the following timetable:

Leverburgh	10:15 am	Arrive at Garenin	2:30 pm
Tarbet*	11:25 am	Return to Rhenigidale	6:00 pm
Rhenigidale	12:30 pm	Depart Rhenigidale	7:45 pm
Rhenigidale [Depart]	1:00 pm	Arrive Leverburgh	9:00 pm
(*via Stockinish SYHA on request)		Ferry to Berneray & N Uist	9:15 pm

If you plan to travel from and/or to North Uist could you let the ferryman, Donald Angee, know for the numbers - phone Berneray 230.

As a consequence of these arrangements, it has been necessary to postpone the GHT/Hebridean Hostellers AGM until early Autumn, and it will now be held on the mainland. Alan Busson will distribute the notice and papers during the summer.

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Claddach Baleshare - An extract from Travelogue by

W.C. Johnston

I now come to Claddach Baleshare where I got a great welcome from Mrs Tosh. My plans were for 2 nights there and I came equipped with pencils and paper with the object of studying and sketching the hostel from the same viewpoint as Crispin Worthington's drawing in the May 1989 Newsletter on my free day there. It turned out to be a wet and miserable day there which kept me mainly inside. The dorm then was a bit dark and miserable. Near sunset the sky cleared and it turned into a beautiful night and early morning. I did therefore get round to the other side of the inlet to take a photograph of the hostel, from which I have drawn my sketch [i.e. the drawing in this Newsletter - Ed]. Like others, I found that the flush toilet and wash-hand basin meets a longfelt want there.

On talking to Tommy, I found he was under the belief that back in time, the hostel building was somewhat longer as one can see what appears to be the foundation stones in line with the front and back walls. In my sketch I have indicated these two rows of foundation stones.

On waking up at the hostel on the second morning it was a magnificent looking day and I thought that I had anticipated the wind direction as promising to be good. I got as far as the Post Office and in the time I spent in there, the rain started. Climbing into my wet weather gear, I abandoned my plans of cycling up the west side and made it the short way to Lochmaddy SYHA hostel.

NWUSG reporting... In late September/early October '92, a group of volunteers from North Walsall Unemployment Support Group formed a workparty to tackle a list of tasks at Rhenigidale and Garenin Hostels. The team of seven, half retired and half unemployed (yes, the odd man is semi-retired!) had a full range of skills amongst their numbers - including literary, judging by the illustrated report received early this year. A good, and productive, time was had by all, but unfortunately extracts from the report would be over-long if they are to be given their proper context.

However, the following extract (written by Dick Worrall of NWUSG) illustrates the difficulties faced by the Trust in organising workparties:

**"Builder's Supplies - A Problem Area**

Dick Worrall

Four trips to Stornoway were made from Rhenigidale during the week for the purpose of getting supplies which had been ordered but not delivered, or which we found were needed but not ordered.

This led to a substantial extra mileage for the minibus - unavoidable if the work was to be done - plus the loss of one or more often two of the team for the duration of each trip. We might be able to plan this a bit better next time, but feel that supply problems are largely unavoidable, and costs of driving up and down to get them need building in to project budgets."

**A Prince Among Islands**

Peter Clarke

Members of the Hebridean Hostellers are motivated by a love of the Outer Hebrides, the people, their culture and the unique environment of the islands. One sage advises, "the Outer Hebrides are a drug to be avoided at all cost, since addiction is bound to follow." How true; most of us are hardened addicts! After three visits to the islands this spring, and two more visits planned for later this year, I am glad I was unaware of that advice in 1973 when, by chance I made my first visit to Rhenigidale. I plunged into the world of the Gatliff hostels and, I am pleased to report, it changed my life.

To begin with the tranquil tempo and generous spirit of the Hebridean people impresses me; oh that I could emulate it. The co-operative nature of Hebridean Society is also worthy of wider application. It is impossible to walk along a

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Hebridean road, or go into a Hebridean pub or shop without someone passing the time of day with you. I wish that we could make mainland society so caring, so friendly.

These qualities came across in abundance during the TV programme *A Prince among islands*. It was especially pleasing to see Annie and Jessie (if they can take Prince Charles to task what chance have hostellers got?), Splash and Gloria, Angus and Mary and our many other friends.



The short glimpse of the hostel was excellent. After Prince Charles spent so long extolling the virtues of restoring thatched houses, it was good to catch a glimpse, albeit without commentary, of the only two restored thatched houses on the island. I am proud that our Trust has given so many young people the chance to stay in the traditional thatched black house and get to know Berneray.

The programme has made quite an impact. The following day I over-heard comment on the programme at Heathrow Airport; the other day, a business contact spoke to me about "the two sisters" on the "Prince's Hebridean Programme".

Good luck to the people of Berneray; they deserve their success.

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If *A Prince among islands* inspired you and you want to find some vent for this excitement, we would welcome your enthusiasm and energy. Your support will help us give others our unique insight into the islands, their lifestyle and unique environment.

The February '92 edition of the magazine *Which?* (published by The Consumer Association, London) carried an article 'How Green is your local Authority? Under the leader:

Many Local Authorities are undergoing a 'green' revolution. Are they trying to grab the green vote? Or are they taking sensible steps to improve the local and global environment?

Of the Hebrides, *Which?* writes

### Rural Blues

You can't get much more rural than the Outer Hebrides islands. But rural doesn't necessarily mean green. The major headache at the moment for the Western Islands Council, which runs the islands, is financial. But it has environmental problems too. The islands are extremely exposed and rubbish left out for collection used to be blown away, creating a serious litter problem. Introducing wheeled bins has improved this. But litter is still a problem in the towns. The council also has trouble controlling fly-tipping. To dispose of large items such as tractors, cars, or building rubble, some islanders have to travel 40 miles along single track roads to the nearest community waste disposal site. Consequently, some people end up dumping unwanted junk on more remote parts of their own land.

As for recycling, separated rubbish would need to be processed on the main land - a benefit currently outweighed by the cost, in both financial and energy consumption terms, of shipping it there. Plans for recycling centres on the islands have been shelved.

The article is accompanied by a photograph of an abandoned rusting Vauxhall Chevette car blotting a typically remote Hebridean landscape.

(Reproduced by permission of the editor of *Which?*)

I apologise for the late distribution of the enclosed Crofters Hostel Newsletter and this Hebridean Hostellers Newsletter. Printing of the Crofters Hostel Newsletter was delayed, awaiting the printing of the new Hebridean Hostellers Membership Leaflet which has been distributed with the Crofters Hostel Newsletter to non-members. Production and distribution of this Newsletter has slipped well past the late March target due to heavy work and domestic pressures. I'll try to do better in November!

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- Gatliff Trust

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