



NEWSLETTER 24

MAY 1997

HEBRIDEAN HOSTELLERS AND GATLIFF HEBRIDEAN HOSTELS TRUST

Well, it is great to be at the start of another summer and if you live anywhere near me then it looks like being a hot one! There seems to be more and more happening in the islands each year both for tourists and locals alike which is great news for the hostels. Don't forget Berneray Week this year where we are trying to keep the 'It's a Knockout' trophy in the hostel for yet another season. This year it will be from 14th to 21st July.

Our records show that there were nearly as many overnights by visitors to the hostels during 1996 as in our record year in 1993. Since 1997 is the 100th anniversary of the birth of the founder Herbert Gatliff it would be great if we could break all records for visitors to the islands and hostels.

It would appear that some members are still not aware that membership dues have risen to £5.00 per annum and anyone who hasn't adjusted their banker's order could they please do so or apply to the membership secretary for a covenant of four years.

Graham McDonald joined the committee last year and was elected Treasurer commencing 1st January of this year. Many of you who visit Berneray will probably know Graham as he usually visits the island about four or five times a year and always during Berneray week for the 'It's a Knockout' contest and the ceilidh's!!

Another new member to the committee is Fran Paxton and she has taken over as Membership Secretary from Jim McCulloch who had to step down due to work commitments. Both Graham and Fran have been warmly welcomed to the committee.

Yet another addition to the workforce associated with the GHHT is Hilary who is our administration assistant. Hilary is based in Tiree and keeps in contact with the rest of the committee by 'phone, computer and letter! She commenced working for us in March of this year.

Those members who are in receipt of the Crofter's Newsletter will have read about the sad passing away of Marion McInnes who was warden at Rhenigidale hostel together with her daughter Katie for several years.

Harris Tweed Centre

To celebrate the history of one of the world's most famous textiles, there are plans afoot to develop a Harris Tweed Interpretive Centre in Tarbert on the Isle of Harris. The area's development agency has given £152,750 towards the sum of £1.7m needed for funding this project. The centre will tell the story of the woven cloth from its beginnings through to the modern day and is designed to attract 40,000 visitors a year.

Suas leis a'Ghaidlig (Up with the Gaelic)!

There could soon be a few problems for moving around in Scotland for overseas visitors and some natives alike - when the local councils are given the go-ahead to change their regional names to Gaelic.

The law was welcomed by then-Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr Michael Forsyth who commented 'Suas leis a'Ghaidlig' which means 'Up the Gaelic'! This will help the endeavours of the many remaining Gaelic speaking areas to promote everyday usage of Gaelic as a living language. However, there is an escape route for councils in case problems arise, the new act allows them to change the name back into English by resolution.

Gaelic Funds Boost

Ten years ago Gaelic was considered a dying language and yet today it is receiving hundreds of thousands of pounds from various projects and schemes to keep the language alive and kicking.

The funding is used to create better facilities and learning aids for Scotland's 8000 Gaelic learners and to develop facilities for younger people. This is hoped to increase the number of children in Gaelic playgroups, thus raising the chance of survival of the language.

Funding received over the past 12 months has seen nearly 90 jobs created in Gaelic business and projects. More than 120 businesses use bilingual signs and ScotRail has agreed to install bilingual nameboards on all stations on the West Highland Line, which is now referred to by Scotrail as 'Rathad Iarainn nan Eilean' - The Iron Road to the Isles.

There is already a European-wide recognition of the value of lesser-used languages and that is how CNAG (Comunn na Ghaidhlig) is pursuing the case for enhanced official status of Gaelic.

Highland Festival 1997

A treat is in store for visitors to the islands during the first weeks of June in the form of this festival which opened at the end of May.

A theatre on board a ship, a new stage version of the 1940's comedy classic 'Whisky Galore' and a bronze sculpture touring the area on a lorry are among the highlights of this event.

Organisers of the 1997 Highland Festival are presenting a varied programme of music, theatre, dance and ceilidhs in areas from Inverness to Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides, and from Thurso to Oban and many villages in between.

The massive bronze sculpture went on show yesterday on a 3.5 tonne truck in Nairn. This was the first stop for 'A Blow for Freedom' by artist Michael Sandle, before the much acclaimed work leaves on a 1200 mile tour of the North.

Meanwhile, Britain's only touring theatre ship the MV Fitzcarraldo, docked at Stornoway as part of a tour of northern ports, which will take her to Portree in Skye, Oban, Fort William and finally Inverness.

Winter Blues for South Uist

Caledonian MacBrayne have decided against a proposal by the Western Isles Council to sail direct from Oban to Castlebay and Lochboisdale each week during the coming winter months.

At present there are three direct sailings a week from Oban to Barra but only one to Lochboisdale in South Uist. The council are now going to try and get funding from the Scottish Office for an additional vessel for the company because they feel that CalMac are trying to serve too many islands with the one vessel.

Garenin

A warm welcome to our new warden Mr MacLeod, whose house and loom shed is adjacent to the car park above Garenin village. Many of you will probably already know him or have seen him (or heard him) at work. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Pat and John MacGregor for being wardens at Garenin hostel for nearly six years

During the April inspection of the hostel it was noted that there still seem to be teething problems with the new stove that was installed, so the blacksmith is going to have a tinker and try to sort it out.

Rhenigidale

Neil Pinkett one of our regular hostellers has been commissioned by the Chairman to write a booklet of walks around and from the hostel. This will hopefully be published some time this year and will prove invaluable to first-time hostellers and regular visitors alike.

Neil has also been visiting all the hostels and sprucing up the paintwork for us during the Spring.

You will be pleased to know that the shower cabinet has now been rebuilt and is similar to the one at Garenin hostel - and it works! The outside of the hostel has been given a facelift and a specialist is to visit the hostel to see if the 'green mould' in the kitchen is due to bad ventilation or otherwise.

Berneray

Due to problems encountered with the new CalMac ferry which travelled between Leverburgh, Otternish and Berneray regarding shallow tides, there have been alterations to the arrangements. Now, the new ferry only sails between Leverburgh and Otternish carrying vehicles and passengers. The small ferry that used to travel between Otternish and Berneray has been reinstated until the Causeway is built. The only disadvantage is that on some sailings the small ferry sails before the

big ferry arrives! Check with CalMac if your schedule is tight. Word on the island has it that the Causeway has been put back out to tender again, so it could be a long wait!!!

There is now a storage heater in both bedroom annexes.

Howmore

Whilst we are still waiting for the additional funding to start work on the old hostel building, the new building is still being used for sleeping accommodation. So, in April a joiner visited the hostel and tried to ensure that the 'Cycle Shed' is draughtproofed.

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It would nice to see some members attending this year's AGM if possible and helping decide on issues and possibly putting names forward as volunteers or giving ideas for publicity or input for the newsletters

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M	Next AGM to be held at	M
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A	SYHA HOSTEL, PARK TERRACE	*
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A	Saturday 14th June 1997	*
G		A
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Useful Names and Addresses

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