

# COMUNN EACHDRAIDH BHEARNARAIGH

## CHAIR'S REPORT 2025

We had a successful season with visitors from many countries visiting the cottage and lots of very positive comments written in the visitors book . This year we opened for a week at Easter and that was a success. The overall numbers were slightly down on previous years but that seemed to have been the trend through the islands. A big thank you to all the volunteers who gave up their time to be in the cottage all summer welcoming visitors and showing them around. We couldn't manage without them. Some days we were unable to open. If anyone knows of anyone who would be willing to get involved please get touch with us. Special thanks to Ruth for co-ordinating the weekly rota so efficiently mostly from Australia.

We received Crown Estate Funding through the Community Council which enabled us to purchase a hot water heater for the kitchen, a table and a big screen and stand to allow us to show photos and footage of old films including Duthchas .

In February Dr George Geddes gave us a very interesting talk on Archaeological surveys he had been involved in about the old settlements on the island of Pabbay and it was enjoyed by everyone who attended.

In early July Susanne Barding was staying on Berneray and joined us for a very interesting evening in the Cottage. She spoke about her book " What's Your Name " A comparative Study of Personal Names and Naming in the Outer Hebrides and the Faroe Islands.

In July as part of Berneray week we hosted a bi-lingual evening in Berneray Hall . Liam Crouse gave us a very interesting talk on lobster fishing in Berneray from 1850 to 1930. He spoke about the type of locally built boats they used and the methods used. He played some recordings from the Tobar an Dualchais archive of some of the fishermen fisher here in day gone by. He also sang some Gaelic songs composed by Berneray Bards about lobster fishing and a certain fishing boat.

In August a group from the Faroe Islands visited the islands looking for information on the Faeoese boat the “The Puritan” that was wrecked on Hermetray in 1920 with the loss of six lives and the two survivors being picked up by a Berneray fishing boat two days after the storm. A fish farm boat took them to Hermetray and I met them at Ludag and showed them the ruins of the house that the survivors overnigheted in on Berneray before starting their long journey home. They also visited the cottage and were very happy with the whole trip.

Donald McDiarmid continues to cut the grass around the Borve Crofting Centenary and the MacAskill Monument and also writes and circulates Newsletters to every local residence and we are very grateful to him for that.

I would also like to thank Mary MacLean for checking our annual accounts and Donald MacDiarmid for keeping us up to date at all our meeting with very accurate finance statements.

Donald MacLean

30/11/2025