

## Secretary's Report

In Gaelic Week 2025, which took place between 24 February and 2 March, two Gaelic classes were organised by Berneray Historical Society and a successful Gaelic Coffee Morning was held on the following Saturday. This was attended by native speakers and learners alike. It is hoped that the Gaelic Coffee mornings will continue in the coming year.

Also that week Dr. George Geddes, from Historic Environment Scotland, delivered a very stimulating talk in Berneray Hall, on the archaeology of Pabbay and the island's connection with St. Kilda. It was well received and followed by a lively question and answer session.

Donald MacLean has continued working on an Admiralty Chart of the sea around Berneray which we hope will accompany Donald MacKillop's book *The Sea Names of Berneray*. He has now located and marked on his chart the vast majority of the skerries, reefs and maritime features mentioned in the original book. It is hoped that a smaller book will be produced with relevant sections of the nautical chart, allowing readers to use the original book and the nautical maps together.

Work has also continued on the Lochportain Project which is researching the migration from Berneray, in 1923 and 1924, of around seventy people, men, women and children, who moved to new crofts in Howbeg, Cheesebay and Lochportain, North Uist. Hopefully this work will culminate in a display at the Nurses's Cottage which will describe, who left the island, why they felt compelled to move, what life was like there then and what became of the early settlers.

In July BHS hosted two events. The first was on 9 July when Susanne Barding author of *Bearnaraigh na Hearadh 'Tis fifty Years Since'* presented a slide show looking at photographs from her book. Susanne is a Danish anthropologist who spent a significant period of time on Berneray in the early seventies, studying every aspect of the Berneray community and the crofting way of life. The photos generated animated discussion and stories about the people who featured and that era in Berneray's history. The event was well attended, mainly by locals people.