

**This year the summer season at the Nurse's Cottage ran from 1<sup>st</sup> May until 31<sup>st</sup> August.**

- We had 822 visitors
- About half the visitors filled in the Visitors Book as individuals or groups
- Visitors came from 17 countries
- May was the busiest month and August the quietest
- 50% of visitors came from England and Wales
- 30% came from Scotland
- 15% came from the Continent, most from France and Germany
- 5% came from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the USA.

#### **Some comments from the Visitors Book**

*Beautifully displayed, fantastic photos! Really interesting and informative. Loved it!*

*Full of memories.*

*Arrived soaking wet and could not have been better welcomed.*

*A happy couple of hours.*

*Fantastic history. Thank you for taking the time to chat.*

*I really liked the use of personal stories. It really draws you in.*

*Absolutely fascinating! A real treasure trove! Many thanks.*

*Just a wonderful museum. Such a lot of interesting information.*

*Thank you so much.*

#### **How to help**

You can support the Society by

- being a volunteer
- getting involved in a project
- becoming a member. Subscriptions are an important part of our income.

#### **The Story of the Eilean Bheàrnaraigh ferry**

Getting a car onto Berneray used to be no easy matter...



... until in 1982 the council started a vehicle ferry service. The Eilean Bheàrnaraigh operated between Berneray and the Otternish slipway on North Uist.

The ferry was operated by two men who had to stay on Berneray. The crew covered all the sailings, six days a week, but in 1988, when ferry traffic increased considerably with the construction of the harbour, the work pattern changed to two weeks on, one week off. There were up to seven crossings a day. The fare was £2 for a car and 50p for a passenger.



Rev Dr Roderick MacLeod drives off after the first crossing

There were personnel changes over the years, D A MacAskill was in the crew from start to finish. Farquhar MacLeod, Roddy MacAskill, Neil

## Thanks to all the Cottage volunteers:

Andrew, Cathy, Donald, Ena, Ethne, Gloria, who also managed the volunteer rota, Iris, Janet, Kirsty, Loriana, Lorna, Màiri Bhàn, Stuart and Thelma.

During the summer, the Cottage is open from 11am to 3pm from Monday to Friday and a volunteer covers one session, 11am to 1pm or 1pm to 3pm.

Meeting visitors to the cottage is very interesting and rewarding and new volunteers would be a most welcome addition to the team.

## Annual Membership

Annual membership, open to over 16s, is £10; or £5 for additional adults at the same address. Payment can be by cash or standing order.

Membership forms can be handed in at the AGM on 21st November, 7.30pm, in the Nurse's Cottage  
or  
at the Historical Society table at the Hall Sale, 7<sup>th</sup> December.  
or  
sent to Iris Steedman, Secretary,  
4 Rushgarry, HS6 5BQ

## Our Finances

Last year our income (donations, subscriptions, sales etc) came to £2420. However our expenditure (insurance, electricity, new stock etc) was £2436 so we made a small loss.

**Berneray Historical Society**  
Nurse's Cottage  
Backhill  
Berneray  
HS6 5BD

**SC047024**

[www.bernerayhistorical.com](http://www.bernerayhistorical.com)

MacAskill, Hugh MacIsaac and Robbie Steadwood were the other Berneray people who were in the crew at some stage.

In 1996 the Eilean Bheàrnaraigh was replaced by the Calmac ferry Loch Bhrusda which also provided a vehicle ferry service from Otternish to Leverburgh. The Eilean Bheàrnaraigh then moved south and operated between Eriskay and South Uist.

Following the opening of the causeway between Eriskay and South Uist in 2001 the council sold the Eilean Bheàrnaraigh.

The Eilean Bheàrnaraigh was bought by the Sons of the Most Holy Redeemer, a small Catholic order, who had a monastery on the tiny island of Papa Stronsay, Orkney. Papa Stronsay is less than one tenth of the size of Berneray and lies a few hundred metres from the larger island of Stronsay.



[bearatourism.com](http://bearatourism.com)

The Eilean Bheàrnaraigh then moved to the south west of Ireland where she is still in service. Now named Sancta Maria, she runs from Castletown-Bearhaven to Bere Island in County Cork.

## AGM

The AGM of the society is on Thursday 21st November at 7.30pm in the Nurse's Cottage. We'll be looking at how last season went and considering ideas for 2020. Everyone is very welcome.

Next year is Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters, a possible theme for our displays and projects in 2020.