

# Bere Island Newsletter

Issue 85

Spring 2023



*Above: A view of Greenane. Photo by Helen Riddell.*



*Above: The Holy Year Cross. Photo by Helen Riddell.*

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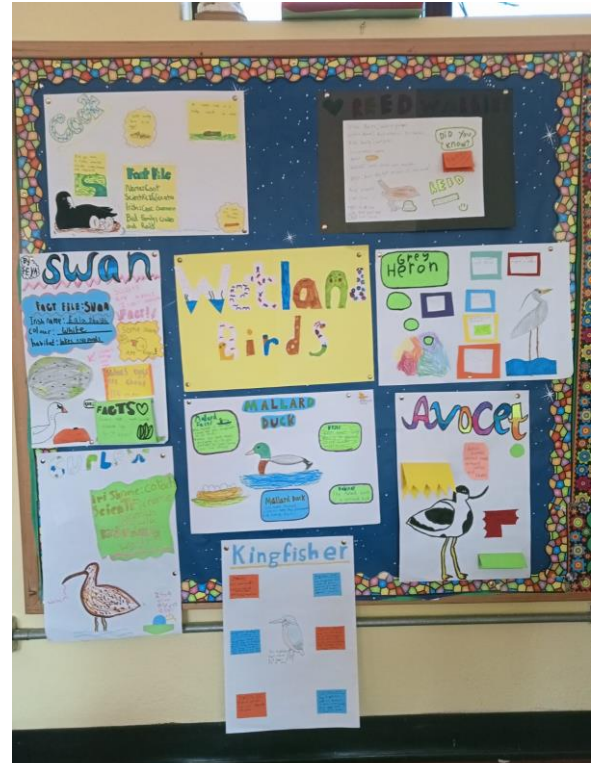
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### Projects in School

Ardnakinna class were busy learning about Wetland Birds and Oceans of the World. We each picked an ocean and a wetland bird and created projects on them! We found it interesting to learn about the different wetlands birds we have in Berehaven and their conservation status. Did you know the curlew is in the red zone and the grey heron is in the green zone? *By Rang Ardnakinna*



### Swimming Lessons

We went to swimming lessons in Kealkill every Wednesday for six weeks. We went on the ferry and the rural transport bus. We learned lots of different ways to swim, such as the breaststroke, front crawl, back stroke and dolphin kick. On the last day, all of us made a chain by joining our arms together. The first person was pushed in and then they would pull the next person in, who would in turn would pull the next person until everyone was in the water!! It was really fun and I hope we can do it with the school again. *By Jason Harrington*

### Frogspawn

Spring has sprung on Bere Island! We have frogspawn in our school pond. In spring, baby lambs are born, flowers bloom and frogs lay frogspawn. Everyone was very excited to see the frogspawn and we are looking forward to watching them grow into tadpoles!. In a month or two, they will be fully grown frogs.

Frogspawn is a see-through, jelly-like substance with black dots like eyes in the middle. We love nature and animals here on Bere Island!

*By Emily Murphy and Feya MacCarthy*



### New Shelter & Slide

Recently, we built a shelter and slide. The shelter was made of cut up logs, sticks, chipped wood and dead roots. The slide was made of a big pile of chipped wood and a black tarpaulin. It took us three days to build the shelter. It was so much fun!! Everyone made up fun ways of going down the slide, like 'Mario Cart', 'Rag Doll' and 'The Meabh'. We had so much fun playing! *By Meabh Hobbs*







### Pancake Tuesday

Pancake Tuesday was very fun. The Junior Room made the pancakes and Múinteoir Fiona flipped them really high! Múinteoir Fiona split us into groups to cut the fruit. The fruits were bananas, strawberries, oranges, and grapes. Some people brought stuff for savoury pancakes such as ham or cheese. There was also syrup. Some people put syrups on their pancakes. It was awesome!!!

*By Kyla Harrington and Marley Sloyan*

### New Activities in school

Last week, the whole school started learning the tin whistle. We learned how to play 'Hot Cross Buns' and 'Mary had a little lamb'. You only have to use three notes to play these songs. We still have lots of practising and learning to do, which we are looking forward to! It is really fun! Rang Ardnakinna also have started doing chess with Muinteoir Vicky. We are learning about the different chess pieces and moves you can make. We are really enjoying it!

*By Lena MacCarthy*



### Texaco Art Competition

In school, everybody drew something for a Texaco art competition that we entered. I drew lots of different animals. Erica drew a seahorse and Lena drew a cat. Emily drew a toucan and Meabh drew three different coloured jellyfish. Also, Abby drew a panda. The junior room also drew lots of colourful pictures. We posted them last Friday. We all had lots of fun! *By Amelia Harrington*



**After School** - We have a full complement of local school children for the weekly after school this year. The kids were baking cookies with Belinda and Silvana recently and promised to do the washing up afterwards. Right!



### The Irish Language on Bere Island

Long after Irish declined as the language of Bere Island and also of other parts of Ireland its influence on the spoken word of the people remained particularly strong. Many Irish words and phrases became so much part of how people communicated that they became part of the natural way people expressed themselves and to a lesser extent still do. In fact, many people would be surprised that many commonly used words came from Irish.

This influence greatly enriched the spoken language and allowed people to express themselves in a rich and eloquent variety of English known as Irish English, with its own words and grammar, quite different to the English spoken in other places. The strength of this link with the native language is quite remarkable but can possibly be explained by the fact that many of these words and phrases are associated with the everyday lives of the people and are strongly connected with the life at the time. In this way they may give a valuable insight into island life in times past.

Margaret Harrington and Sile Harrington are hoping to collect as many these words and phrases as possible to document this important part of Bere Island's oral history before it is lost and forgotten. A list of all collected phrases and words will be published online and passed to the Bere Island Heritage Centre for their archive collections. If you would like to participate in this project please email [biwords@outlook.com](mailto:biwords@outlook.com) or drop any items into the Projects Group Office.



**Clothes bank** - Over 30 large sacks of good quality clothing were taken off the island and picked up by the operator of the clothes bank. Revenue from the sale will go to the Tourism and Environment Group.



**The white electrical goods collection** was a great success with a large number of items taken off the island on the 20th of February last. The items will be dismantled and recycled for use helping towards the country's renewable aims rather than being dumped in landfill or left to rust around the island. Well done to everyone involved.

#### Heritage Keepers Programme

In 2022 Bere Island Projects Group joined the Heritage Keepers programme which is facilitated by the Burren Beo Trust and The Heritage Council and devised a plan to record the oral history of Bere Island. The project, 'Recording Our Bere Island History,' was launched during Heritage Week 2022, and to date a number of islanders both at home and living away have recorded their stories. By recording an oral history of Bere Island we are aiming to preserve the stories of the island's past for the future.

These recordings will be available online over the coming months. If anyone would like to record their story or get involved in the project, either by helping to record interviews or transcribe them please contact Helen Riddell at 027 75099 or [bereconservation@gmail.com](mailto:bereconservation@gmail.com)

#### West Cork Islands website

has been updated during January and every Island business that is listed on the site has had their information updated. There have been 23 events listed on the events page and the calendar and programme has been updated. We would ask that all Island businesses would review the site and come back to us with any updates or changes.

#### BIPG Office

Open Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Tel: 027 75099

Email: [biginfo@gmail.com](mailto:biginfo@gmail.com)

Website: [www.bereisland.net](http://www.bereisland.net)

## Bere Island Theatre Troupe

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the Bere Island Theatre Troupe was formed in October 2003. In early 2003, Bere Island Projects Group invited Agnes Walsh, Artistic Director of the Tramore Theatre Troupe, Cape Shore, Newfoundland to come to Bere Island to pass on her skills and to assist in setting up a theatre group on the island. With funding from the Ireland Newfoundland Partnership, a cultural collaboration was put in place between Bere Island and the Tramore Theatre Troupe.

Following on from an initial meeting in October 2003, seven islanders, with no previous acting or production experience came together, and with assistance from Agnes, just a few weeks later, on November 11<sup>th</sup> staged their first performance 'In the Shadow of the Glen' by John Millington Synge to a packed house in the Lecture Theatre, Rerrin.

Following on from the success of their debut performance, a further performance of In the Shadow of the Glen was held at Beara Community School in December 2003.

In January 2004, the Troupe started work on their next production, another Synge play, 'The Tinkers' Wedding', with the opening night held on March 17<sup>th</sup> 2004, again performed to a packed Lecture Theatre, and the play was performed on the island a number of times throughout the summer of 2004.

To further their links with Newfoundland, The Bere Island Troupe travelled to the area in July 2004 visiting Cuslett in the Cape Shore area, which was settled mainly by Irish emigrants, and where Agnes Walsh's theatre company is based. The Tinkers' Wedding was performed twice in Cuslett and at a teachers' conference in St John's, Newfoundland.

In November 2004, The Bere Island Troupe began work on their next production, 'Translations' by Brian Friel. The play is set in Donegal in 1830 and tells the story of a small community on the brink of irrevocable change. This play required a cast of ten, and new members from amongst the island residents joined the group.

The next production the Troupe undertook was Sive by John B Keane in March 2006, which was directed by Troupe member the late Michael McLoughlin and saw more islanders becoming involved in the production.

Over the years the Troupe also facilitated a number of visiting theatre groups to Bere Island, which have included performances by The Abbey Theatre, Dublin, Flush Ink Productions, Canada and Aidan Dooley staged his award-winning performances of O'Sullivan Beare and Tom Crean at the Lecture Theatre. The Troupe also hosts the annual West Cork Fit Up Festival.

Due to work/life commitments the Bere Island Theatre Troupe haven't staged their own performance for several years, however, to mark their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary the group are hoping to reform and stage a short production. Any original cast members, who would like to take part or new members who would like to join the Troupe are asked to contact Helen Riddell at [bereconservation@gmail.com](mailto:bereconservation@gmail.com) No experience required, just enthusiasm!



**Bere Island Theatre Troupe's cast for Translations by Brian Friel.** Left to right:  
Back row: Michael McLaughlin (RIP), Tony Murphy, Jimmy Walsh, Robert Falconbridge, Oscar Daly.  
Front row: Pauline Hanley, Carol Murphy, Mary Sullivan, Eugene Glendon. Missing from photo Derek Harrington.



**A Manual Handling & Abrasive Wheels course** was held in community centre in January 2023. The trainer Gerard O' Donoghue, who is also a local paramedic delivered an in depth training session for 9 local islanders who are working in the boatyard, RSS and farming.

### **Presentation on Island housing to the Oireachtas committee on Islands.**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of February representatives from the West Cork Islands and UCC travelled to Leinster House to make a presentation to the Oireachtas committee on Islands. The event was held in the audio-visual room in Leinster house on the invitation of Denis Naughton Chair of the committee. The group updated the committee on work that had been done in the past to change housing policy for Islands which went back as far as 2002 with the Bere Island conservation plan, up to more recent times when a submission was made by the West Cork Islands community council to the National planning framework 2040. Siobhan O Sullivan from UCC gave a presentation on the research and recommendations from the housing report, followed by inputs from the Islanders and Martin from UCC. Following the presentations there was a question and answer session where the politicians were trying to find ways to help the Islands access proper housing. It was agreed by all that mainland housing policy does not fit Islands.

### **Bere Island Conservation Plan**

Bere Island Projects Group has been awarded €20,000 under the Heritage Council's Heritage Capacity Fund 2023 to undertake further actions as part of the Bere Island Conservation Plan.

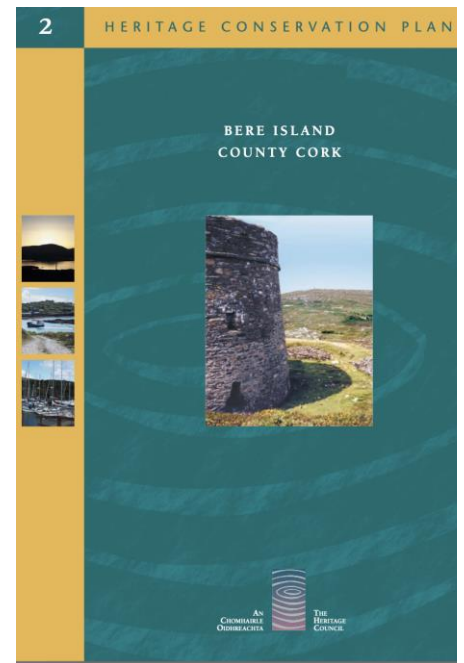
This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Bere Island Conservation Plan, which was officially launched in 2003 by Éamon Ó Cuív TD. In 2001 islanders formed a partnership with The Heritage Council and Cork County Council to seek a way to ensure the sustainability of the island community and a way to protect the island's landscape and heritage. Conservation Plans first came to prominence in Australia as an instrument to restore and preserve a designated area's landscape, wildlife, built heritage and ancient monuments. It was felt that Bere Island was an ideal candidate for such a plan, with its location and landscape serving as one of its main attractions to visitors along with a rich history, and its strategic role in European and world military history.

The Heritage Council committed to the plan following its launch by providing funding to implement a list of key actions which were drawn up. These now form the basis of a yearly workplan.

Bere Island Projects Group will use the funding to work on a number of actions in 2023, including furthering their work to document and digitise the heritage of Bere Island, the continued restoration of Lonehort Battery, launching a new military heritage festival, and holding an event to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Bere Island Conservation Plan which will feature all that has been achieved over the last twenty years.

### **Strategic Plan**

The strategic plan on the marine and offshore potential for the island and Beara marine businesses is nearly finalised. The consultant has met all the stakeholders involved in the marine industry in Beara and the final plan will be available shortly.



### **Bere Island Active Retirement Group**

The ARG are now meeting weekly every Thursday at 11am in the community centre. The group is growing with a recent push from our retired skipper Johnny Hobbs to encourage new members. So if you are over 50 and would like to pop in any Thursday for a cuppa and a pudding you would get a warm welcome and enjoy our lively debates and stories.

### **Bere Island Arts Festival**

The inaugural Bere Island Arts Festival will take place from Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> to Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September with the official launch taking place on Culture Night, Friday September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The festival is supported by Bere Island Projects Group and is being led by a steering group of islanders and will feature a number of musical events, exhibitions, author readings, writing workshops, live theatre and much more. The festival will also showcase the rich cultural and artistic traditions of the island community. We are delighted to confirm among those performing at the festival will acclaimed Irish writer Donal Ryan and the traditional music supergroup ZoDoMo featuring button accordion master Máirtín O'Connor, fiddle player and singer Zoë Conway and guitar and bouzouki player Donal Lunny.



### Comhar na nOileán

**ETB hours** for courses has been applied for, contact Jude Gilbert with course ideas.

**Blueway consultation** will start soon with the successful tenderer customer service excellence Ireland. They are undertaking desk research now.

**Joe Curran** has taken on the role of the Rural Recreation Officer since January, and he will be visiting the Islands to meet communities about the walk scheme. Jude Gilbert is available for Business support and training.

**Leader** - Consultations will start soon with communities on the Leader local development strategy, we will give an update when we hear when.

### Tourism

The West Cork Islands community council were offered a stand at the holiday world in the RDS at the end of January. The last time the Islands attended this event was 2019. It is a great way to meet people and showcase the Islands. There was 30,000 people in attendance over the weekend. There was a team of volunteers on the stand for the 3 days and we would like to thank Caitriona Hanley, Deirdre Humphries, Michael Killen and John Hanley for representing Bere Island and the West Cork Islands at the show. Thanks also to Cork County Council and Pure Cork for inviting us to attend.

### Education and Training courses

BIPG will hold a pottery course with Catherine O Riain of Cape Clear Pottery. The course will be held over 2 weekends on the 28/29 of April and the 19/20 of May. Hal Dawson will run a fish filleting and handling course in April, places are limited. Brian Boss will run an arts course in March for adults. Stone wall building course in April. Computer classes for beginners and advanced for March. All courses are subject to numbers, and we need a minimum of 10 for them to go ahead. To book call the office on 75099.

### Lonehort Battery

In late 2022 Bere Island Projects Group were awarded funding of €17,158 under the LEADER 2014-2022 Programme to undertake a Restoration Plan for Lonehort Battery. Following a tendering process, JCA Architects Ltd have been appointed to undertake the Restoration Plan.

The Restoration Plan will include a full condition survey of all built architecture on site and when complete will allow Bere Island Projects Group to prioritise the restoration process on each structure as we work towards having the entire site open for public access.

### 2023 Events

A list of events for the year has been put together. Please see [www.bereisland.net/events](http://www.bereisland.net/events) for more

### Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation

IIMRO are working on their production and marketing plan that they must complete as they are a producer organisation.

**IIMRO PO Membership** - We have updated our payment system to handle direct debit payments as requested by some members. The new link is at <https://bit.ly/iimropomember> For those that need to pay select the correct number of crew before entering payment details. Again, thank you for your continued support. We will be in touch shortly with an update.

**Spurdog Fishery** - The spurdog fishery which has been closed for a number of years is due to reopen. Following IIMRO's work at the quota management advisory committee (QMAC) they are trying to get an idea of the number of island boats that would be interested in taking part in this fishery. If you are interested contact Jerry Early on 087 8054246

**Brexit Enterprise Development Fund** - IIMRO & BIM held an online information meeting for members on the 30th of January. There was also an information evening in Castletownbere on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January at the BIM fishery college. Further information on the scheme is at <https://bim.ie/fisheries/funding/brexit-blue-economy-enterprise-development-scheme/> There is 50% funding available, up to €200,000, for eligible businesses with suitable projects.

### The Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN)

was established by the National Museum of Ireland in 2008 in a bid to encourage and support communities to document and share their local history online. In 2022, Bere Island Projects Group were one of four community groups from County Cork who were accepted onto the project. Since then, BIPG have been working with iCAN to design an online archive for Bere Island's heritage collections which will include the oral history recordings, the graveyard mapping and the archive photograph collection. The archive site will be accessed directly at [www.bereisland.heritagecork.org](http://www.bereisland.heritagecork.org) and also via [www.bereisland.net](http://www.bereisland.net) The site will have a soft launch and go live in the next few weeks, and an official launch will be held in May with all the community groups involved in the project.

### Grants for home energy upgrade

The National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme provides grants to upgrade the energy efficiency of your home provided your home meets an energy efficiency rating of B2 or above when works are complete. The scheme is administered by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and a private company known as “One Stop Shops” manage the work for you. If you only want certain home energy upgrades and want to manage the process yourself the SEAI also provides individual energy upgrade grants or for those on low incomes there is the free home energy upgrade scheme.

**How does it work?** Once you use a “One Stop Shop” they will manage the project for you by:

- completing an initial energy assessment of your home and advise on the upgrade you need to bring the house to a B2 BER rating or higher.
- Applying and accepting the SEAI grants for your home
- Assigning a contractor to do the work on your home
- Managing the works on your home ensuring all works are up to standard
- Completing a final BER assessment when works are completed

The One Stop Shop will deduct the grants from the cost of works in advance, therefore you only pay the outstanding amount. Finance options are available by some operators.

**Who qualifies?** To qualify you need to:

- Be the owner of the house built and occupied before 2011 for insulation, heating control system and renewable systems grants
- Have a BER rating of B3 or lower before you commence work
- Reach a BER rating of at least B2 after works are completed and have a BER improvement of 100KWh/m<sup>2</sup> per year
- Not have already received a grant for the same energy upgrades
- Use a “One Stop Shop” registered with the SEAI to manage the process, work and application

**What upgrades are funded?** You can get grants for:

Attic insulation, Rafter insulation, wall insulation including cavity wall, dry lining and external insulation, floor insulation, heating controls, solar thermal solutions (solar hot water), solar PV panels, heat pump systems and central heating system for heat pump, new windows, new external doors, mechanical ventilation, air tightness, home energy assessment and project management.

**How much are the grants?** The grants vary depending on the type of home you have. The “One Stop Shop” will assess your home and recommend the work needed to bring your rating to a minimum of BER2 rating.

This is a list of some of the grants available. For full list visit <http://www.seai.ie>

	Apartment	Mid-terrace house	Semi-detached or end of terrace house	Detached house
Attic insulation	€800	€1,200	€1,300	€1,500
Rafter insulation	€1,500	€2,000	€3,000	€3,000
Cavity wall insulation	€700	€800	€1,200	€1,700
Wall insulation – internal dry lining	€1,500	€2,000	€3,500	€4,500
Wall insulation – external	€3,000	€3,500	€6,000	€8,000
Floor insulation	€3,500	€3,500	€3,500	€3,500
Heat pump systems	€4,500	€6,500	€6,500	€6,500
Central heating system for heat pump	€1,000	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000
Heating controls upgrade	€700	€700	€700	€700

**Who do I contact to apply?** Contact an SEAI registered “One Stop Shop” on <http://www.seai.ie> or contact BIPG on 75099 if you need further information or help.