

Bere Island Newsletter

Issue 87

Autumn 2023



Above: Ardnakinna Lighthouse. Photo by Helen Riddell



Above: Autumn colours at Lonehort Harbour. Photo by Helen Riddell

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John Walsh leaves The Bere Island Projects Group CLG

Usually when you see a photograph of someone like this and hear that he is “gone to a better place” the first impression is that the person is dead! So let’s get that point clear and out of the way - John Walsh is not dead.

These brief few lines are not an obituary but rather a huge thank you to John who has been the main driver of the Projects Group in his role as Co-Ordinator for many years and who has made a huge contribution to the life of the people of Bere Island.

To list all the individual projects for which he has been responsible would require far more space and would definitely begin to sound like a litany requiring the readers to say “Pray for us” as a response after each project. By listing some I am solely culpable of omitting quite a few so apologies in advance if I am missing several.

An abbreviated version of the aforementioned litany would include the following (which by the way are not in any particular chronological order or importance):

- The restoration of the old school to the now Heritage Centre as part of an EU project called ISLA,
- Assisting the GAA with the building of the dressing rooms and pitch development,
- Assisting with the development of the walks scheme,
- Assisting with communities of Dursey & Whiddy Island to secure an office and Development Worker,
- Assisting the communities of Sherkin, Long & Heir Islands to secure an office and Development Worker,
- Developing the first Parkrun on an island in the entire country,
- Participating in an EU Grassroots project and developing the radio project,
- Developing the annual sailing weeks,
- Developing the playground in conjunction with Cork County Council,
- Being appointed the chairperson of the European Small Islands Network in 2019.
- Developing a remote training room,
- Installation of PV panels at the community centre,
- Installation of an EV Charger and organising the purchase of the electric bus.

When I was “volunteered” as Chairperson of the Projects Group in 2018 (by the way - thanks Colum!) I had no idea of the scope of work undertaken by the Projects Group, but John was a mighty Captain at the wheel of a ship which the Board and I were happy to be guided by, and we had full confidence in John at all times.

The list of his achievements outlined above speaks volumes for his enormous contribution to Bere Island and its people.

We are very sorry to see him move on as his role will be a very big ask for someone to follow.

On my own behalf, that of the Board and staff of the Projects Group and, if I may say so, on behalf of the entire population of the island I say a very big heartfelt thank you and would like to wish John and Sheila all the very best for the future.

EUGENE GLENDON
Chairperson.



EV Charger, PV Panels & Electric Bus

Steve Carter (photo left) was the first customer to use the new EV charging point located at the community centre. The EV Charger is available for use Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm at a small cost of 50c per KW. Just call into the office and we will get you started. The installation of the EV charger was part of a bigger project which included the installation of PV Panels at the community centre and the purchase of an electric bus (photos below). BIPG would not have been able to complete this project without the funding made available by the Department of Rural & Community Development under “Our Islands” Measure of the Clár 2022 programme and Cork County Council.

(Submitted by BIPG)



WANTED

Someone to help and learn to sow, grow, nurture, harvest and pack vegetables and plants. Half a day per week, any day, perhaps more later. Hourly rates. Suit school or college student.

Call Harriet on 086 1774657

The Hotel

Bere Island Active Retirement/ senior citizens Christmas meal will be held on the 16th of December with music by Michael Hyde.

Santa clause will be visiting the Hotel again this year. We will also have the annual Christmas darts and pool tournaments and music on New Year’s Eve.

Posters will be up closer to the time with dates and details... and keep an eye on Facebook page!

BIPG Office

Open Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Tel: 027 75099

Email: bipginfo@gmail.com

Website: www.bereisland.net



BITE – Waste Collection dates

Tuesday 10th October

Tuesday 14th November

Tuesday 5th December

Tuesday 19th December

(Submitted by BITE)

Trees on the Land

BIPG will be applying for 1000 saplings next week to the Trees on the land org which is a yearly application. There has been a lot of interest over the past few years, and we hope to expand this further, so if you are interested in receiving some please contact Tim on 0851679052 to discuss types of trees, how many are needed and to put together a basic plan for the site you intend to plant. *(Submitted by BIPG)*

Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN)

The Bere Island Projects Group CLG were one of the community groups from Cork County, who were selected to be members of the Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN) and launched their community archive websites at an event held at County Hall on Thursday August 24th in the presence of County Mayor Cllr Frank O'Flynn. The mayor credited all the groups in attendance for their work in preserving their local heritage. 'The work you are all doing is vital in protecting our heritage for future generations.' The four Cork groups were picked from over two thousand applicants to be part of the county's iCAN programme and along with BIPG included the Independence Museum Kilmurry, Kilshannig Heritage Society and Youghal Community Archives.

The Irish Community Archive Network was established by the National Museum of Ireland in 2008 to encourage and support communities to collect and share their heritage online. Working in partnership with local authorities, to date, iCAN has supported the creation of 28 online archives in Clare, Cork, Galway, Mayo and Wicklow, with eight more in development. Earlier this year The Heritage Council pledged their support of the programme.

Speaking at the event in County Hall, Lorna Elms iCAN Development Officer for the National Museum of Ireland, referred to iCAN's mission statement which is to encourage and support communities in collecting, and preserving and making accessible their local history and said "this official launch of our Cork Heritage programme is the portal into a number of community archives developed by local community groups to showcase their local heritage, and it is a unique rich tapestry of all kinds of heritage, natural, built and intangible and cultural.

What is unique about iCAN is that we are all working together to protect our heritage, the National Museum of Ireland, The Heritage Council and Cork County Council, and our local communities and we are stronger together."

The Cork community archives can be accessed at www.heritagecork.org (Submitted by BIPG)



Above: Mayor O'Flynn with representatives from BIPG, Youghal Community Archives, Kilshannig Heritage Society and the Independence Museum Kilmurry.



BERE ISLAND CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2023

Bere Island Projects Group will be publishing the 2023 Christmas Newsletter and are looking for your contributions. We welcome all submissions of family news or photographs from the past year, graduations, engagements, weddings, births, christenings, special birthdays etc. Tributes to loved ones who have passed away in the last year, stories of Christmases gone by on Bere Island, poetry, short stories, all are welcome. All island clubs and organisations are also invited to submit any news on their activities over the past year.

The deadline is **Friday 27th October 2023**. All items **must** be received by this date. Items can be emailed to Helen Riddell at bereconservation@gmail.com or dropped into the Projects Group Office.

(Submitted by BIPG)



Beara Athletics Club (AC)

The first of the Beara AC Autumn Series was held in Glengarriff 2/9/23. A successful and well attended event in very hot conditions. The first in was Donal Coakley of Leevale AC. First male from the club was Gary O Driscoll and first female was Laura O Sullivan Fenton. Well done all!

The series continues with The Heart of Allihies 5 mile run on Saturday 23rd September. We hope this will be another successful race and kindly ask you to support it. The next two events are: Bere Island Sat 14th October and Eyeries Sat 11th November. All races start at 2:30pm. If you are unable to participate but are around to help at any of the events, we would be grateful for your help. Looking forward to seeing you there. A reminder adult training is Monday and Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm and underage training is held on Friday from 5-6:30pm

(Submitted by Beara AC)

Bere Island 5 Mile

The Bere Island 5 Mile race will take place on Saturday 14th October 2023 at 2:30pm. Bookings will open soon online, and the entry cost is €20. We need volunteers to help on the day with stewarding and traffic. Please contact the Projects Group office if you can help in any way.

(Submitted by BIPG)

Bere Island Watersports Club July and August 2023

We were delighted that we were able to run four courses again this year with seventy-five under sixteens and thirty-four over sixteens taking the opportunity to sail on the waters of Lawrence Cove. Over the two weeks, the weather forecast had small craft warnings in place for most of the fortnight but because of the nature of the sailing area that we use, we only lost one full day of sailing to the weather. There was always the opportunity to walk the east end of the island and appreciate the power of the wind and sea. For many it was an opportunity to practice tying knots! The rabbit comes out of the hole, around the tree and back into the hole again is the way most of us learned how to tie a bowline.

The sailing courses don't happen by chance and a small number of people put in a lot of effort to ensure that they can be run in well equipped boats with strong safety arrangements on the water. We want to thank everyone who helped this year.

Special thanks must go to Castletownbere Lifeboat who visited us on both Fridays. The first week they came alongside the pier and gave us the chance to see inside the boat. The second week they gave everyone who wished the chance to either climb up the scramble nets or be winched onto the boat. These are unique experiences for people to have and we are hugely grateful. We must also thank whoever arranged for us to be visited by a pair of dolphins!!

Until next year, stay safe and stay sailing.

(Submitted by the Bere Island Watersports Club)



Active Retirement Group

It was a busy summer of coffee mornings in the community centre as it was decided to hold the meetings every Thursday throughout July and August. There was a lot of Bere Island diaspora returning for the summer so a lot of catching up was done. A talk on solar panels was made by Paul Toolen who has installed the panels on the community centre roof. Theresa Hobbs and Mike McCarthy also gave the group an excellent presentation on signs and symptoms of strokes. Many thanks to Theresa and Mike.

A Beara Community Gathering to bring local Active Retirement Groups together will be held on Friday 13th October in the Golf Club Castletownbere from 12.30pm to late. A 3-course meal will be served followed by music from "One for the Road". Cost €10 per person. Please contact Tim on 02775099 to purchase your ticket before Monday 2nd October. Please specify if you have any dietary requirements at time of booking.

(Submitted by BIPG)



National Heritage Week

Bere Island Projects Group CLG hosted three in person events for National Heritage Week and one online event. We had a great turn out for all the events, a scanning day held at the Projects Group Office, a guided tour of the Defences of Lonehort by Barry Hanley for children and their families, and a talk on antique and vintage bottles by Chris Sullivan at the Heritage Centre. We would also like to thank the pupils of St Michael's National School Bere Island for their audio tour of Bere Island. *(Submitted by BIPG)*

Military Heritage Festival 2023

Bere Island Projects Group held their inaugural Bere Island Military Heritage Festival over the weekend of Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th September. The event was a great success and 200 attended the events over the course of the weekend. Thanks are extended to all the speakers, Ted O'Sullivan, Sean Boyne, Karen Minihan, Barry Hanley, Fachtna O'Donovan and Tom O'Neill and to all who attended all the events.

Thank you also to our funders, Cork County Council's Commemorations Grant Scheme 2023, The Heritage Council's Heritage Capacity Fund 2023 and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

We would also like to thank the Department of Defence for the use of the Drill Hall and Raphael McCarthy, Donal Harrington and Pat Hurley for their help in facilitating the use of the venue, and Paul Elphick for helping to set up the display.

We plan that the Military Heritage Festival will be a yearly event commemorating all aspects of Bere Island Military Heritage. *(Submitted by BIPG)*



Summer Camps

Over 50 children enjoyed the summer camps that BIPG held at the GAA pitch over 9 days in July and August. The weather held out and the kids enjoyed designing their own T shirts, arts and crafts, lots of games and visits down to Cloughland Strand. A big thank you to our FAS and RSS workers Silvana, Belinda and Paul for their support without which the camp could not operate.

(Submitted by BIPG)



Bere Island Community First Responder Group

are on call through the National Ambulance Service 24/7, 365 days a year. We provide emergency response to fill the care gap between an incident and the arrival of the National Ambulance Service. We also provide free courses and training for our island community to learn how to do CPR and use a Defibrillator. Upcoming course dates are 30th September and 4th November. Please contact 02775099 to book.

Bere Island is lucky to have 6 Defibrillators at the following locations:

Oileáin na gCaorach
Bere Island Community Centre
Wild Atlantic Glamping
Lawrence Cove Marina
Rerrin Post Office
Bere Island GAA Pitch

They are all always unlocked and accessible to everyone.

We are constantly looking for Responders to join our group please call 086 1621803 to receive free training to become a Community First Responder.

(Submitted by Theresa Hobbs)



School News

This year, we welcomed 3 new students to Junior Infants, Olivia, Noah and Roan. Since beginning our new school year, we have been very busy. We have gone blackberry picking and made yummy smoothies using the blackberries, apples from our orchard here at the school and other fruit. We have been learning songs as a whole school Rattlin Bog, Ireland's Call, Circle of Friends and The Apostles song. We have a sweepstake for the Rugby World Cup. Each child has been given a team to keep an eye on throughout the tournament. The child who has the winning team at the end will win a prize. We have some lovely sunflowers growing in our school garden.

Swim Week took place the week after we got our summer holidays from school. The younger children swam at Cloughland, and the older children swam at the pier in the village. Our instructor's name was Enda. The younger children learned the basics of swimming while the older children also learned how to save people, do CPD and use an AED.

Cúl Camp took place the week after swim week. It took place for 4 hours everyday Monday - Friday.

We learned skills associated with football and hurling. We played lots of games and completed drills. There were lots of people helping to train us.

During **sailing week**, they put you into different groups randomly. There were 4 different types of boats: the Oppey, the Topaz, the Feva and the Squib. Sailing took place from 10am to 1pm.

We had great fun during **Bere Island Regatta** this year. There were water sports at the pier including: slippery pole, pillow fighting, raft racing, kayak racing and swimming races. At the Hotel, there were lots of activities also including: go kart racing, egg tossing, hang tough, wheelbarrow races and a dog show. *(Submitted by Scoil Mhichíl Naofa)*





MS Island Sky Cruise Ship visit

On Monday 11th September the cruise ship MS Island Sky docked at Dinish Island Castletownbere, the first cruise ship to dock at the new quay. The passengers were transported to Bere Island by Bere Island Ferries Ltd where a fleet of buses brought them to the Heritage Centre and then onto Rerrin Village. In the village the passengers enjoyed talks on the island's heritage by local tour guides and a performance of traditional music by the Allihies Trio. The passengers thoroughly enjoyed their time on Bere Island, and we look forward to hosting more cruise ship visits. Thanks to everyone who helped in anyway to make the day possible. *(Submitted by BIPG)*



Book launch

On July 8th Ted O' Sullivan launched his book "Bere Island Internment Camp, 1921 Nora O' Neill's Autograph Book". There was a great turnout for the event in which Ted went into great detail about the life of Nora O' Neill and her autograph book. We also welcomed Nessa Harrington Nora's grandniece and her family who generously presented the Heritage Centre with Nora's autograph book (photo left) which will be on permanent display here. Barry Hanley as Chairperson accepted the book on behalf of the Heritage Centre. Ted's book is on sale at the Heritage Centre and online. Contact 027 75956 or biheritage2@gmail.com *(Submitted by the Heritage Centre)*



Bere Island History Chats

On Wednesday 9th August a large group of people gathered (See photos below) at the Heritage Centre to listen to John Joe Sullivan, Gerald Orpen and Ted O Sullivan in conversation with Barry Sullivan. There was a great discussion on island life, local customs and history. Thanks to everyone involved in organising this event.

