

Bere Island Newsletter

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Summer 2025



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Above: Sunrise at Cloughland. Photo by Helen Riddell



Above: Greenane Coast Line. Photo by Helen Riddell



Above: Lonehort Battery Gun

Tours Of Lonehort Battery

Tours of Lonehort Battery, Bere Island have now resumed for the summer season.

Lonehort Battery is the largest of seven gun batteries constructed on Bere Island in the early 1900s by the British Admiralty. The battery is owned by the Department of Defence who have granted a licence to Bere Island Projects Group to restore and develop it as a visitor attraction.

Throughout June tours take place on Saturdays at 1.00pm and in July and August tours take place on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays at 1.00pm. Meet outside the main gate ahead of each tour, the cost is €10 per person. Group tours are available by contacting Barry Hanley on 086 884 5709 and Teresa Hall on 086 1981541.

Bere Island First Responder Group

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 throughout the year to learn how to do CPR and use a Defibrillator.

Bere Island is lucky to have 6 Defibrillators as follows:

- 1 Oileain na gCaorach
- 2 Bere Island Community Centre
- 3 Wild Atlantic Glamping
- 4 Lawrence Cove Marina
- 5 Rerrin Post Office
- 6 Bere Island GAA Pitch

They are all always unlocked and accessible to everyone.

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



BICR at The All Islands Football, Inis Oirr.



BICR at The Michael Dwyer Festival, Allihies.

Bere Island Community Radio

Welcome to the report from BICR for the Bere Island Summer Newsletter.

We have been busy on the radio with our live show "Beara and Beyond" continuing to be broadcast every Sunday morning. We also have our recoded music programmes on a Sunday night from Paul Elphick and Tim Hanley.

In a new departure over the last few weeks we broadcast an audio drama/soap opera called "The Escape". This was a ten episode play which followed the challenges and triumphs of the Dillon family.

We were also out and about of course and had a very busy weekend at the All Islands Football tournament in Inis Oirr at the end of May. Fair play to all who travelled and reported so efficiently – Dominic Hallahan, Ted Sullivan, Johnny Jack and, of course, Paul Moore for his production expertise. This broadcast went out over the two days (13 hours of live broadcast) all matches were covered live and we had listeners literally all over the world.

Bere Island men and ladies did themselves proud! Again this year they were both in the final. Unfortunately for the second year the Ladies were beaten, this year by Inisboffin. They put up a great performance and had an excellent tournament and should be proud of their efforts. This year the Men performed excellently throughout the tournament and were victorious against Inish Mór. So well done to both teams for making their Island proud.

A couple of weeks later we were on the road again with a live broadcast from the Michael Dwyer festival in Allihies. This was a fantastic festival of Irish traditional music and we were delighted to be asked to be part of it. Still to come this summer we will be at the Eyeries festival on July 20th and of course on Bere Island on Sunday August 10th in Rerrin (outside Dessie's pub as usual) for the Bere Island Family Festival celebrations. We look forward to seeing everybody there.

That is most of the news from the radio for now.

Finally, as you know the radio was the idea of one man on the island, John Walsh, he took it and ran with it and got a whole team in behind him. If Bere Island Community Radio is to continue and to succeed it needs support from YOU. We are very short on both presenters and technical support so please think about coming on board as a presenter or behind the scenes. We are usually in the Community Centre on Sunday mornings from 10-1pm



Barefoot Baroque

Barefoot Baroque will be in concert on Bere Island on Wednesday 23rd July at 4.30pm in the Lecture Theatre (Camp Church), Rerrin.

The group features Katy Salvidge on baroque recorder, Justin Grounds on baroque violin, and Tess Leak on cello, as well as Camilla Griehsel and Gideon Wiech. The musicians are all local to the area, and regular collaborators on numerous musical projects. They have come together to bring the vibrancy and richness of 18th century music to audiences in unusual and informal settings, including the West Cork Islands.

Entrance is free, with a donation box on the door for the musicians.

This event is part of the Creative Places West Cork Islands project.

BAREFOOT BAROQUE



Active Retirement Group

The group continues to meet every Thursday for their coffee mornings between 11 am - 12 pm at the community centre. New members are always welcome to pop in for a coffee and a chat.

In June, the group enjoyed a wonderful lunch in the Bakehouse, followed by a great trip to Whiddy Island and a shopping trip to Bantry.

After School Club

The after school group have enjoyed plenty of activities such as arts and crafts weekly. After School club is on Mondays at the community centre between 3 pm - 5pm and is open to all primary school kids. We wish all the kids the very best for the summer holidays and we will see you all in September.

We would especially like to send our best wishes to Abbie, Erica and Feya who are leaving us this year. We will miss you all and hope you have a great time in secondary school.

Heritage Week

National Heritage Week will run from August 16th to 24th. Bere Island Projects are organising a full programme of events on the island which will be announced shortly. Keep an eye on -

<https://www.bereisland.net/heritage-events/>

BIPG

EV Charger

The EV Charger located at the community centre is open for use to the public during office hours (Monday – Friday, 9am – 1pm & 2pm – 5pm) for a minimal fee of 50c per KW. Please contact BIPG for more information on 02775099.

BIPG Office

The Bere Island Projects Group Office is located adjacent to the Community Centre and is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Closed for lunch from 1pm to 2pm.

Michael McCarthy

We would like to welcome Michael McCarthy as the Project Co-Ordinator with BIPG. Michael commenced work on 31st March and has been busy working on many projects and we wish him well for the future.

Teddy Sullivan

We would like to wish Teddy Sullivan all the very best in his retirement. Teddy has worked at the recycling centre under the Rural Social Scheme since 19th March 2007 and we would like to thank him for the wonderful work over the years and his contribution to the community. We wish him a happy and healthy retirement.



Rural Social Scheme (RSS)

Comhar na nOileán have vacancies on the islands through the RSS. The aim of the RSS is to provide:

1. Certain services of benefit to rural communities by harnessing the skills and talents available among low income farmers and fishers
 2. Income support to low income farmers and fishers who are in receipt of specified social welfare payments.
- Applications are open to farmers and fishers who meet the eligibility criteria.

For more information contact BIPG on 02775099 or Comhar na nOileán on 09975096/ fios@oileain.ie

Community Employment Scheme

There are vacancies on the Community Employment Scheme. The Aim of the Community Employment Scheme is to enhance the employability of disadvantaged and unemployed persons by providing work experience and training opportunities for them within their communities. For more information on eligibility criteria please contact Tadhg O Sullivan on 027 73218 / 086 8565361.

Update from Project Coordinator BIPG

Oileán na Gcaorach

The proposed development of the pier at Oileán na Gcaorach is progressing, albeit at a slower pace than anticipated. In accordance with the government's infrastructure guidelines for capital investment projects, Cork County Council (as the owner of the pier) is required to apply to the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) for funding and approval to carry out a strategic assessment of the development options. This is the first step toward the preparation of a preliminary business case for any proposed works. The Bere Island Projects Group (BIPG) contacted Cork County Council to follow up on this matter and was informed that the required documentation has been submitted to the DRCD. BIPG has since reached out to the DRCD to confirm receipt of these documents. Once confirmation is received, the strategic assessment phase can formally commence.

Potential housing development in Ballinakilla.

BIPG contacted Councillor Danny Collins with regard to the proposed housing development in the field owned by Cork County Council at Ballinakilla. Councillor Collins said that this project had now been added to the agenda for Cork County Councils quarterly housing presentation, he also said that the feasibility study for this project was underway, and that discussions between the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the planning authorities are ongoing.



Lonehort Battery

During a recent communication between the Bere Island Projects Group (BIPG) and Cork County Council, we were informed that Cork County Council and the Department of Defence have been in contact regarding the potential transfer of Lonehort Battery to the Council. It appears that both parties are in agreement, and are now working towards developing a plan to progress this initiative, with the aim of transforming the site into a tourist attraction. To support and advance this process, BIPG has approached a local politician to assist in moving the project forward.

24hr nursing cover for Bere Island

Bere Island Projects Group (BIPG) recently sent a letter to the Minister for Health regarding the lack of 24-hour nursing cover on Bere Island. In our correspondence, we outlined the significant risks posed by the absence of continuous nursing support and emphasised the many reasons why 24-hour nursing cover is essential for the wellbeing and safety of the island's residents. We are currently awaiting a response from the Minister's office and will provide an update once we receive further communication.

Funding announced to support capital works on Ireland's offshore Islands.

Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary TD, has recently announced a funding package of €828,000 to support capital works across Ireland's offshore islands. As part of this allocation, specific funding has been designated for improvements on the West Cork islands of Bere Island and Dursley.

The funding will be used to carry out a range of essential works, including:

- The overlay of Department of Defence (DOD) roads.
- Road resurfacing.
- Installation of new signage and white lining.
- The realignment and reduction of a dangerous bend on the Cloughland roads on Bere Island.

The money will also be used to install an animal pen at the pier on Dursley Island.

Men's Shed

The Men's Shed continues to meet weekly on Thursday's events at 7.30 pm at the community centre. The group is currently involved in a number of community projects. New members are always welcome so pop in and learn more about the exciting plans for 2025.

The Men's Shed have been busy this year with two projects in particular. The first was making acoustic panels for the community centre. These have greatly improved the sound quality for the Bere Island Community Radio who broadcast every Sunday from the centre. It was a privilege to be able to assist another community group.

Secondly the Shed has been very busy with the refurbishment of the toilets for the church located next to the health care centre. A completely new disability accessible toilet has been fitted out and will soon be open during mass times. We would like to thank Fr Spring for supporting this project and it's been a privilege to help the church and community.

Re-turn bottles and cans

The Bere Island men's shed are running a fundraising campaign to raise money that will go towards building their own shed. There is a yellow bin located at the recycling centre where people can donate bottles and cans with the re-turn logo on them. We would like to thank everyone for their continued support and donations.

We would like to thank the community for all its support so far with this fundraiser, your kindness has been amazing, and we are so grateful for all the support. The money raised will help the Shed with running classes for the community during the winter months.

Bere Island Water Sports Club

We look forward to welcoming you on our courses from 21 July and 28 July.

There's a lot of work to be done between now and then to get everything ready so if you have any time to spare, please contact Proinnsias 0851740751 or Mike 0861663083.

Please remember that all of our instructors are volunteers taking their holiday time to introduce you to a sport that we love. We look forward to welcoming you.

What to bring for the sailing courses.

1. Wet suit
2. Footwear – old runners or sailing boots
3. Buoyancy aid
4. Suncream
5. Hat – tied on
6. Rash vest to wear under your wet suit
7. Windcheater or Kag- worn over the wetsuit and especially useful on windy and wet days
8. Towel
9. Warm clothes to change into
10. Bag to bring wet clothes home in
11. Chocolate – sailing is always an excuse for chocolate
12. Money – if you plan to go to the shop/café after sailing
13. Glasses and/or sunglasses – tied on.
14. Your sense of fun and adventure!



Bere Island Family Festival

The Bere Island Family Festival will take place this year from Tuesday 5th – Sunday 10th August. The Festival Committee have a jam packed schedule planned this year including some new exciting family friendly activities. If you would like to volunteer your help for any event please contact the office – 027 75099. Even volunteering for just one hour makes it possible for this fantastic festival to take place.

FIT UP THEATRE FESTIVAL RETURNS TO BERE ISLAND

The Fit Up Festival will return to Bere Island again this summer staging four performances in the Lecture Theatre, Rerrin during July on August.

On Saturday July 12th Paddy -The Life and Times of Paddy Armstrong is a one man show starring Don Wycherley as Paddy, the play is inspired by Paddy's memoir Life After Life, a Guildford Four Memoir.

On Saturday July 19th The Handy Man, written, directed and performed by Seamus O'Rourke tells the story of Hugh Spotten, the local Handyman, he's the man who gets things done – caretaker, tea maker and grave-digger (with his own crow-bar) and he's about to receive an award for his contribution to the community... but now, that's all about to be taken away from him, as he's being ousted, but Spotten's not one for taking it lying down. He has to make the world see sense! The Handyman is hilariously funny, yet a poignant, poetic look at small-town life in rural Ireland.

On Saturday July 26th Mary's Hopes and Dreams, a comedy about life in a rural community. The story unfolds with a large cast of colourful characters including cattle dealers, tennis players, greyhound trainers, 80's Pop Stars and the much loved Two Mary's.

The final performance this year takes place on Saturday August 2nd Ham Sandwiches and Disciplines includes mummies' sideline screaming, batty umpires, manic pundits, Tayto eating in Croke Park and teenage club socials, as it delves into what makes GAA a national tradition.

All performances start at 8.00pm with doors open from 7.30pm. Tickets are €15 and available on the door.



Bere Island Women Create

Bere Island Women Create have received €981 from Cork County Council's Local Enhancement Programme to purchase a tabletop printing press and an interlocking sewing machine. In March and April the group held classes in lino cut printing facilitated by Madeleine Dunne and with support from the West Cork Islands Creative Places Programme. The group will be resuming craft classes and also their monthly book club in September.

If anyone is interested in taking part in classes, please contact the group at bereislandwomencreate@gmail.com



Bere Island Tourism and Environment Group

Bere Island Tourism and Environment Group have been awarded €1280 in funding from Cork County Council West Cork Islands Community Funding Scheme 2025 towards purchasing equipment for their Tidy Towns projects.

As this is now Tidy Towns judging season, the group are asking everyone to help keep the island tidy and litter free. Bere Island has won the island award of the Tidy Towns Competitions for sixteen consecutive years, and hoping to continue their winning streak.

If you would like to help the Tidy Towns volunteer team on the island, please contact the office on 027 75099. Help is needed in maintaining the flower planters around the island, and other planting areas.



BERE ISLAND ARTS FESTIVAL

SAVE THE DATE



BERE ISLAND ARTS FESTIVAL

The third Bere Island Arts Festival will take place from Thursday 18th to Sunday 21st of September 2025.

You can look forward to a wide variety of events that will have something for everyone. Firm favourites like the amazing long table lunch and the lively dancing at the crossroads as well as the pop up Gaeltacht will make a return this year.

Experience one of Ireland's best live bands, Stocktons Wing as well as renowned performance artist Amanda Coogan and the celebrated poet Paula Meehan to name but a few. All tickets are currently on sale at www.bereislandartsfestival.ie

Follow us on Facebook - Bere Island Arts Festival and Instagram - [bere_island_arts_festival](https://www.instagram.com/bere_island_arts_festival) . We would appreciate a like, follow and share.

New volunteers always welcome.

Looking forward to seeing you all in September

Bere Island Arts Festival Committee

Military Festival

Bere Island Projects Group held their 2025 Bere Island Military Heritage Festival over the weekend of Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd June in the Drill Hall, Rerrin. Now in its third year, there was a great turn out to all the talks and thanks are extended to all our speakers, tour guides and all those who attended. Speakers at this year's festival included Bere Island historian and author Ted O'Sullivan, Noelle Grothier of the Irish Military Archives, Dr Rory Finnegan Professor of Military History and Strategic Studies at Maynooth University, Michael Hall, author of *The Untold Story of O'Sullivan Beare*, Dr Owen Foley lecturer at Galway ATU and Fachtna O'Donovan from the Beara Historical Society. The festival also included a guided tour of Lonehort Battery by Barry Hanley.

Thanks are also extended to the Department of Defence for the use of the Drill Hall and to Pat Hurley, John Butler and Donal Harrington for their help in preparing the building and to Paul Elphick for his help in putting up the photo display. A special thanks to the pupils of St Michael's National School for their fabulous display of Martello Towers for the festival.

The military festival was funded by The Heritage Council's Heritage Organisation Fund and Cork County Council's Commemorations Department. Save the date, next year's Bere Island Military Festival will be held on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st June 2026.



All Island Football Tournament Bere Island Men's and Ladies Teams.

Conservation Plan

Bere Island Projects Group have been awarded €24500 from The Heritage Council under their Heritage Organisations Support Fund 2025 to undertake further work on the Bere Island Conservation Plan.

The Conservation Plan came about as a result of consultations held with islanders, Cork County Council and The Heritage Council in 2000, in a bid to halt population decline and work to document, and protect the island's archaeological, built and cultural heritage, and to protect its biodiversity. The Conservation Plan was officially launched in 2003 by Éamon Ó Cuív TD and serves as a blueprint for the future development of the island and for preserving, it's culture, heritage, natural landscape and marine environment.

A workplan is put together each year by BIPG and The Heritage Council to implement a number of actions based on policies in the Conservation Plan, this workplan is implemented by Helen Riddell. In order that the plan is kept relevant, reviews are undertaken on a regular basis. BIPG, in consultation with The Heritage Council are undertaking a review of the plan in 2025.

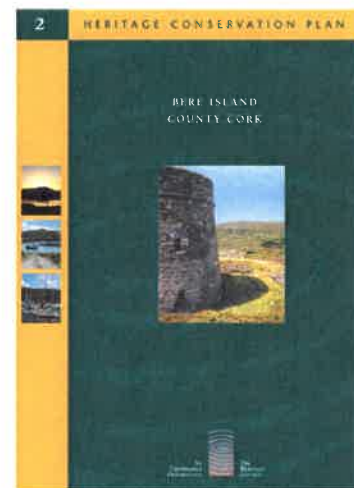
As the initial plan was put together with support from the island community BIPG has always ensured that the community has input into the plan. The Conservation Plan can be viewed online at:

<https://www.bereisland.net/bere-island-conservation-plan/>

Hard copies are also available from the office. A public meeting will be called after the summer to discuss the policies in the plan and any changes or additions to the plan so that it continues to be relevant and support the island community and protects our island heritage and biodiversity.

If you would like to view the Conservation Plan or discuss its policies please contact

Helen at bereconservation@gmail.com or on 027 75099.



Above : Congratulations to Aidan, Isla and James on receiving their First Holy Communion

Left Top : Visit to The Granuaile

Left Bottom : Spring Clean 2025



Bere Island National School

Military Heritage Festival

In the past week, everyone in the senior room made a model of either the Martello tower or the gun in the barracks. It was so much fun! We were the only two who did the army barracks, everyone else did the Martello tower. Today they showcased the models in drill hall 'Twas fun.

Leo and Amelia

RNLI Water Safety Talk

RNLI stands for Royal National Lifeboat Institution. We had a visit from Marc from the RNLI lifeboat in Castletownbere who came over to teach us about water safety. It was very informative and interesting. It is a very important topic, especially coming up to summer.

By Jude and Elliot

School Tour

On the ninth of June we went to Muckross house in Killarney for our school tour. It was a 2 hour drive to get there. When we arrived there we got split into two different groups and got a tour of the house. After the tour of the massive house, we went to the petting farm. We went into little traditional Irish cottages and got to try homemade bread and butter while we walked up to the petting farm. Outside all the cottages, there were different animals like pigs, chickens, donkeys and more. When we got to the petting farm there were five rabbits, one calf, two lambs, two donkeys, two pigs, one peacock and a bunch of chicks and chickens. We all had fun petting and feeding them grass. Our favourite was the calf. The calf was licking and eating everything. After that we saw a blacksmith in a cottage. Then we walked to the playground. After we left we walked back down to the bus and drove to Supermacs and all got pizza and chips and could dip them in garlic mayonnaise if we wanted. The food was amazing. We ate it all up. After we finished all the food, we drove back to Castletownbere and got the ferry back to Bere Island. We got to Bere Island by half six. We all had so much fun and enjoyed it all so much.

By Feya Maccarthy and Kyla Harrington

Sciath na scol

On Monday the 19 of May the big room went to Sciath na Scol in Adrigole. When we got there we went to the bathroom then went to the pitch to play. We played against Urhan, Cappabue and Dromclough. We lost the first two matches and won the last! When we got back to the ferry Múinteoir Aoife got us ice pops. It was a very fun experience and we hope to do it again next year!

By Anthony Murphy and Abby Harrington.

Eyerics Athletics Day

We went to Eyerics sports day on the 12th of June. We went on the 10 o'clock ferry then we got on a bus to Eyerics sports day. We got off and went to the field. We went over to our age groups and got ready for the races. First, the Junior Infants went, then the Seniors, all the way to 6th class. There were three races for each class but we left after the 2nd. No one in our school won. Then we went back on the bus to the ferry.

By Erica and Cillian

Looking for Work

A lady is available on the island for cooking, cleaning etc. English is limited but google translate can be used to explain. Please text 085 775 2601 if you have any suitable work.