

Bere Island Newsletter

Issue 83

Autumn 2022



Above: Looking down on Lonehort harbour



Above: The Wilson heading to Castletownbere

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Bere Island Heritage Week

Bere Island Projects Group held three events for National Heritage Week in August, two in person events and one online event. After two years of online events, it was great to be able to see people enjoying the island's heritage again. On Thursday 18th August we held a launch event for our oral history project Recording Our Bere Island History at the Heritage Centre, a presentation was given on the project and a montage of recordings played.

On Saturday 20th August we held a guided tour of Lonehort Battery for children and their families to mark Heritage Week's Wild Child Day which encourages children to learn about local heritage. We had a great turn out, and everyone enjoyed Barry Hanley's tour of the battery. As one of the key themes of Heritage Week was biodiversity we also included a guide to the wild flowers and plants to be found throughout Lonehort Battery.

Our online event was a guide to the flora of the Bere Island parkrun, this is still available to view on www.heritageweek.ie and on www.bereisland.net
(Submitted by BIPG)



Rural Transport Bus

The Rural Transport Bus which is operated, insured, and maintained by Local Link is an essential service which the island is very lucky to have.

The bus travels to Castletownbere on Tuesday and Thursday weekly. Tuesday it leaves the island on the 10am ferry and returns at 11:30am. Friday it leaves the island on the 10am ferry and returns at 1:30pm. On Sunday the bus brings people to and from 10am mass in Ballinakilla.

The bus can be used by everyone young and old, those with free travel can avail of it for free and everyone else pays €6 (return) along with the normal ferry costs.

Groups may also use the bus by pre booking it. For more information on booking the bus contact BIPG on 027 75099.
(Submitted by BIPG)

BIPG Office

Open Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.

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Bere Island Christmas Newsletter 2022

Bere Island Projects Group are compiling the Bere Island Christmas Newsletter 2022 and are looking for submissions. If you would like to include any family news or photos such as engagements, weddings, births, graduations, special birthdays etc, all are welcome. We would also love to include any stories on the island, updates from island groups, and obituaries for loved ones who have passed away during the last year.

The deadline for all submissions is Friday 21st October. Please note in order to meet print deadlines, this deadline is final, and nothing can be accepted after this date.

All submissions can be sent to Helen Riddell at bereconservation@gmail.com or dropped into the Projects Group.

Lonehort Battery - Autumn/Winter 2022 Please note that for the rest of this year, tours of Lonehort Battery are by appointment only. To book a tour please contact Barry Hanley 086 8845709 or Teresa Hall 086 1981541.



Oireachtas Committee

The Oireachtas subcommittee on Social Protection, Community & Rural Development and Islands visited the Island on the 1st and 2nd of September. A total of eight Oireachtas members travelled to the Island and included Denis Naughten TD, who chairs the committee and Eamon O Cuív who was asked by the committee to compile a report on Islands. A public meeting was held the Wednesday prior to the meeting to prepare an agenda and select people to speak on the different topics. An agenda was put together which included broadband, housing, piers, transport, jobs, childcare and climate change. All the issues were raised at the meeting and were well received. The group were brought on a tour of the island which included Lonehort fort, the Marina, and the boatyard. *(Submitted by BIPG)*



Active Retirement Group

The ARG Bere Island have been meeting continuously throughout the Summer for coffee mornings with a big push from our latest member Johnny Hobbs to increase numbers attending. The groups numbers grew with the many summer diaspora of Bere Islanders returning to its shores and catching up with locals. Well done Johnny Hobbs keep it up! New members are most welcome contact Tim on 75099 for information on activities.

Comhdhail Oileáin Na hÉireann AGM

The Comhdhail AGM was held on Aranmore Island Donegal on the 2nd and 3rd of September 2022. The AGM started with a welcome from Máirtín O Méalóid Acting Chair, the Minutes of the 2021 AGM were read and adopted. The following reports were read out: Chairperson's Report, Secretary's Report, Report from Comhar na nOileán, Report from IIMRO, ESIN Report and the Auditors Report. Following this there was an Address by Minister Heather Humphreys, TD. Department of Rural and Community Development with responsibility for the Islands who spoke about the housing issue on the Islands, the lack of broadband and outlined her commitment to solving the issues to make the Islands better places to live in. After the AGM there was a conference on Island housing with the following speakers: Des Johnson Housing Planning in Ireland & the offshore islands. Cameron Anson Sustainable Communities: Addressing Depopulation in Rural and Island Scotland. Dr Elaine Desmond & Dr Conor Cashman, UCC, UCC survey work on Housing on the West Cork Islands and upcoming survey of Ireland's offshore islands.

(Submitted by BIPG)

Heritage Keepers Programme

Earlier this year Bere Island Projects Group were accepted onto the Heritage Keepers programme which is run by the Burren Beo Trust and The Heritage Council. Heritage Keepers is a programme for schools and communities which enables them to work together to explore their built, natural and cultural heritage through a 5-week online course and then initiate action plans for their area.

A group of seven from Bere Island (Eilis Duggan, Barry Hanley, Seamus Hanley, Paul Moore, Helen Riddell, Barry Sullivan and Chris Sullivan) came together to join Heritage Keepers and the group decided their action plan would be to record an oral history of Bere Island to preserve the stories and voices of the island's past for the future.

With funding from Heritage Keepers, the group were able to bring a leading oral historian, Dr Angela Maye-Banbury to Bere Island to facilitate a weekend of workshops in recording oral histories. Angela has previously recorded an oral history of Achill Island (www.achiloralstories.com)

An event was held to launch Recording Our Bere Island Stories during Heritage Week at the Bere Island Heritage Centre which received a great turnout with lots of interest and some more volunteers for the project. Separately, the Burren Beo Trust held an event in Corofin Co Clare during Heritage Week to showcase the work of all the community groups in the Heritage Keepers programme and we are delighted that Bere Island Projects Group were awarded a Heritage Keepers Special Recognition Award. To date the group have recorded a number of oral histories with more planned. It is hoped that the oral histories will be available online by early 2023 on a dedicated website. If you would like to participate in this project, either by recording your stories or helping with the recording or transcriptions, please contact Helen Riddell at bereconservation@gmail.com or on 027 75099.

(Submitted by BIPG)



Housing

UCC made a presentation to Comhdhail on the housing study. There is a lot of good recommendations including the need for assisted housing for the elderly, restructuring of the repair & lease scheme, appointing a vacant housing officer, the development of housing associations and gateway housing programme. The plan also included the need for the County Development Plan to include the need to define a target population to zone housing for islands. The plan also states that when housing is delivered there is a need for services e.g., broadband. The official launch of the plan will be held at the end of the year. *(Submitted by BIPG)*

Smart Village Training – starting next week. The link to register for the Smart Village Training is <https://forms.gle/PBEfAAZzTAe1FHyZ5>

There are separate dates for each area so if possible include the dates for your own area when spreading the news: Cork Islands - 22 Sep, 6 Oct, 20 Oct, 3 Nov, 17 Nov, 1 Dec.

Please share the link within your family and friends to disseminate information. Smart Villages concepts are a huge part of the next LEADER Programme 2023-2027 and now is the time to get the training done to assist communities in preparing a Smart Village Plan. The curriculum consists of six x 2-hour modules which guides participants through the process of creating a Smart Village Plan, which is compiled using a workbook that is completed during the course. The Smart Village Curriculum is a modular and sensible approach to local development where the community creates an interactive register for its local Assets, Stakeholders, Goals, Projects and Metrics. *(Submitted by BIPG)*



Above: Minister Heather Humphreys with members of Comhdhail Oileáin na hÉireann at their recent AGM in Aranmore Island, Donegal.

ESIN AGM

The ESIN AGM was held on the Island of Kihnu, Estonia and started with a Conference on “Island policies and habitability”. Island Habitability is an assessment tool for viable island communities, and it started with a workshop on Habitability indicators that make you understand your island. This was a great event, which was very practical and got a good discussion going. This was followed by the Conference “Island policies and habitability” where we had a number of speakers:

- An overview of island policies around Europe / John Walsh
- National islands policies / All ESIN members (3 min / country)
- Estonian island policy: Urve Tiidus, member of Estonian Parliament
- Irish Island policy formation: Bríd Ní Chonghaile
- The Croatian Island law and its effect on the Croatian archipelago / Professor Nenad Starch
- Scottish Islands Act and its implementation / Camille Dressler, SIF
- The future of European islands / Ivan Matic

The conference was attended by 50 people from 9 countries and 22 Islands. All the speakers gave a very good presentation of their topic and a lively question and answer session started. The ESIN AGM followed and again a good discussion was held on the role of ESIN in Europe. A new Croatian member was welcomed to the board and Ivan Matic of the Croatian Island movement thanked everyone for the welcome. The election of officers was completed, and John Walsh returned as chair, Camille Dressler and Pia Prost Vice Chairs, Rhoda Twombly Secretary and Annette Larm Johansson was treasurer. The next AGM will be held on Bere Island next September 2023.



*Left: Kihnu women in traditional dress.
Above: Kihnu ferry. Below: Kihnu taxi*



REACH Funding

BIPG have made an application to Cork ETB under the REACH funding to hire an expert to carryout a feasibility study to look at the marine and offshore potential for the island marine businesses.

Bere Island Boatyard will work with BIPG on this and draft a term of reference will be done in the next two weeks.

(Submitted by BIPG)

BITE - The Bere Island Tourism and Environment Group held their AGM on June 13th and elected the following committee:

Chair: Gemma Hunt

Vice Chair: Rachel Harrington

Secretary: Maria Murphy

Treasurers: Caitriona Hanley and Barry Hanley

The group welcome new members to join them to work on various projects to enhance the island, including the Tidy Town's campaign, waste management and various tourism initiatives, if you would like to join the group contact a member of the committee or Helen Riddell in the Projects Group Office. The group have donated €1000 towards the Bere Island Hedge cutting fund.

The rubbish collection dates for the rest of the year will be on: Tuesday 13th September, Tuesday 11th October, Tuesday 15th November, Tuesday 6th December & Tuesday 20th December.



The lads at the recycling centre had a very busy summer. We ask everyone to bring clean recyclables please only to the centre and do not dump rubbish. The centre is a great asset for the island and should be used accordingly if we want to keep it. *(Submitted by BIPG)*

Bere Island Treaty Port Commemoration

In 1922 one of the conditions of the signing of the Anglo Irish Treaty was that Britain would retain three deep-water ports in Ireland, at Cork Harbour, Berehaven and Lough Swilly, which became known as the Treaty Ports.

To commemorate Bere Island's role as a Treaty Port, Tom O'Neill, facilities manager and historian at Spike Island and author of *Spike Island Republican Prisoners 1921*, will give two talks at the Bere Island Heritage Centre on **Wednesday 5th October.**

2.30pm

Tom will talk on the role of the Treaty Ports, the significance of Britain retaining the ports and the final Handover of all three ports in 1938.

7.30pm

In the year leading up to the signing of the Anglo Irish Treaty, an internment camp was in operation on Bere Island, Tom will talk about the prisoners and the links between the internment camp on Bere Island and the prison camp on Spike Island.

All are welcome to attend. For further details please contact Helen Riddell at bereconservation@gmail.com or on 027 75099. *(Submitted by BIPG)*



GAA Update (info: probereislandgaa@gmail.com)

Kid's football training is back! GAA games for primary school kids are taking place on regular Friday afternoons again at the Rec and Scoil Mhichíl Naofa.

A game for all the family! Bere Island GAA is looking to start a Rounders team. This is a game for young and old, of any gender, and no experience is necessary - we're looking to set up family focused Rounders games for kids and adults at the Rec. If this is something you're interested in learning more about contact Oscar Daly on WhatsApp +353 86 377 8792

Wear your Bere Island colours! The Bere Island club shop is open - go to oneills.com - and search for "Bere Island" in the club section to see what's on sale!

Stone wall festival

BIPG were allocated funding for a stone wall building/ festival and we plan to get a stone mason to come in and teach people how to build stone walls.

A specific area could be picked to build a wall, and this could be done over a weekend. For this to happen we need a few people to come together to plan it, so if you are interested in learning to build with stone drop your name into the office.

(Submitted by BIPG)



Culture night - A scríocht night has been organised for Friday 23rd September from 7-9pm in Dessie's bar. John Greene C103FM will MC it and the radio will record it. Refreshments will be available on the night, and everyone is welcome. This is a family friendly event. If you would like to sing, recite, or tell a story please come along.

Community shed - If you are interested in getting involved in developing a community shed on the Island, please contact the office on 027 75099.

Parking in CTB - The area along Barrack Quay has been closed off by the Department of Agriculture to make a safe access route for pedestrians. This area has now become an amenity area with picnic benches and flowerpots. BIPG had contacted the Department officials and to make up for the lack of parking there, 6 parking spaces have been allocated to islanders outside the wall in CTB.

(Submitted by BIPG)



Summer Camps

Children's summer camps were well attended in July and August of this year. We were blessed with amazing weather for the two separate weeks. The kids had plenty of opportunities in T shirt design, mask making, clay figures, beach combing along with the fun games. Over 100 children attended and left the camp with smiling faces. We would like to thank everyone who helped out and volunteered to make these weeks a success.

(Submitted by BIPG)

School News

Sailing - The sailing week this year started on the 18th of July and went on until the 29th of July, there were two weeks Monday to Friday. Week one was the 18th to the 22nd and the second week was the 25th to the 29th.

Jason went for 1 week and Lena did both, it was really fun learning to tie knots, rig the boats, sail, and meet new people. On the last day the R.N.L.I came, and we got dropped in the water not far from the boat and they would rescue us and then we jumped off and swam back to our boats. After sailing we would be cold, but it was worth it.

By Lena MacCarthy and Jason Harrington

Cúl Camp - In the summer we went to Cúl camp. We were in the same group there were lots of people from all different places. We played rounders, hurling, floor is lava, bulldog, steal the bacon and football we really enjoyed it we are looking forward to next year. From Feya MacCarthy and Erica Murphy

International Dot Day - Thursday was 'International Dot Day'. We made apple crumble, and we drew dots with chalk and made lots of other dot art. A lot of parents and visitors came, and we picked apples and made our own apple juice. It was such fun!

Amelia Harrington.



Harvesting & Baking - On the 8th of September we harvested our apples and sorted them for the winter. By putting one layer of hay and one layer of apples and so on. Then we picked some cooking apples and went inside to bake. We baked Rhubarb and Apple Crumble and Apple and Blackberry Crumble. For the Rhubarb crumble we used our own rhubarb and our own apples, for the blackberry crumble we all picked blackberries and used our own apples from the school garden. Emily and Lena chopped up the apples, Abby and Feya cut the Rhubarb, Erica and Jason washed the blackberries and Amelia and Meabh measured the ingredients. It was such fun and I wonder what we will bake next?

By Abby Harrington And Emily Murphy

Bere Island 5 mile will be held on 15th October on the usual route from the village, up the high road and back the lower road. Volunteers are needed and if you are free for 2 hours on the 15th of October between 2 to 4 pm please contact the office on 027 75099. (Submitted by BIPG)