



NEWSLETTER 10

APRIL 1990

HEBRIDEAN HOSTELLERS AND GATLIFF HEBRIDEAN HOSTELS TRUST ACTIVITIES 1990

**Workparties - URGENT**

John Murdo Webb

We have tough deadlines for re-opening Rhenigidale by 1st July, and opening the new hostel at Garenin by 1st June. There are also maintenance jobs to complete at Howmore and Berneray. Are you likely to be available on these provisional dates? (or any others, especially in May/June and September?)

1. 28 May - 2 June ;
2. 16 July - 27 July ;
3. 6 August - 17 August

If so please contact me, John Murdo Webb, as soon as possible. I will update the schedule as volunteers confirm their available dates and can give you the latest situation.

25 or so members have already written to me volunteering for this year's workparties and I shall be writing to each of these 25 within the next fortnight.

In previous years large organised groups of 10 - 15 volunteers for two weeks at a stretch carried out the major renovations at Berneray and Rhenigidale. Also, individuals performed specialised or urgent tasks for those programmes and for routine maintenance. Now that the biggest jobs are over, we need an efficient and flexible approach to handle a variety of tasks. So we are planning for much smaller teams (of about 5 volunteers working for a week), plus specialists as before. This should afford individual Hebridean Hostellers more opportunities to join in when you can. Any of your friends with building skills will be most welcome too.

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- + The Executive Committee of the Gatliff Hebridean Hostels Trust will meet +
  - + at Newcastle Youth Hostel on 28th April '90, 10.00am to 5.00pm. Anyone +
  - + interested in getting involved in the running of GHHT and the Hebridean +
  - + Hostellers should contact Alan Busson for further information. +
  - + The 2nd Annual General Meeting of the Gatliff Hebridean Hostels Trust, +
  - + Urras Osdallean Nan Innse Gail Gatliff, will be held at a West Scotland +
  - + Youth Hostel in early October. The firm date and other details will be +
  - + sorted out at the GHHT Committee meeting on 28th April and individual +
  - + notices will be posted to members in September. +
- +++++

0All addresses are grouped together at the back of this Newsletter.

## HEBRIDEAN HOSTELLERS

The Re-thatching of Howmore Hostel, advertised in Hebridean Hostellers Newsletter No 9 for 1990, was actually squeezed in in the dying weeks of 1989. Amateur thatcher though he may be, Jim Souness displayed all the opportunism of a true professional in organising the rethatching of Howmore during a spell of calm, clear and mild weather that marked the first ten days of December. Hebridean thatcher, Donald McDonald from Iochdar, South Uist took charge of the work, Donald and Jim mustered 7 or 8 other volunteers (unfortunately anonymous) and in a few short but intensive days work, Howmore was given a new thatch of Bent. And so Howmore starts the 90's with a good roof fit to see out 2 or 3 seasons use. Anyone who was thinking of joining Jim in 1990 should still contact him (note Jim has a new address and phone number) as he may well have other jobs on his list.

### Cycling the road to Stornoway -

Bill Johnston

After 6 nights at Berneray, which included the Official Re-opening, I left the island on a misty morning heading for Harris. At sea, it was quite foggy and the whole journey was navigated by radar. In fact there was a diversion when the boat had to locate another island and take on board a man and woman who were stranded due to the fog. After the misty morning on land, the rest of the day turned out quite beautiful and instead of taking the shorter more difficult route via Rodel I took the flatter western route and made relatively good progress. On swinging into an easterly direction you then get the hills of Harris and stiff climbing. I found the turn off to Stockinish alright and a downhill run through a lunar landscape. There was another signpost to the left for Stockinish but I was so preoccupied trying to make sure that I did not run off this road that I missed it. When I arrived at a former tweed factory, now a fish hatchery of some sort, on the Rodel route I thought something was astray and had to turn back and eventually I found my way to Stockinish. I was told that a small party had been turned away because of no vacancies but as an individual I managed to squeeze in. The cycle shed at the Hostel was roofless as a gale had stripped it in February.

Continuing north I spent one night at Tarbert and set off on the Stornoway road experiencing bright periods and showers. Some of the showers were quite heavy and with no shelter I just had to keep moving. It is quite a climb up the pass from West Loch Tarbert. After one heavy shower I arrived at the road to the right dropping sharply away to Loch Seaforth and then snaking and climbing up over a ridge which I presume goes to Rhenigidale. This must surely be a severe route for a cyclist and as a cyclist I have not yet managed to make use of this hostel.

Just a short distance further I noted that there was a red car lying down a slope battered and dented by rolling and overturning over the rocky terrain. I assume in that location one just writes off such an event. A little further on and a number of years ago there was a small teahouse on the left hand where I was able to obtain refreshments but today it was closed and deserted. All I could do when I came to a small township was to go into a small store and then make up a lunch by the roadside.

With the wind in my favour, two miles beyond Laxey, I felt my left foot was rather peculiar. I got off and found that the bicycle pedal was drooping at an awkward angle - the threads in the crankset were stripped and it was no longer safe to continue. I called at a house to ask about B & B. The folk already had visitors but phoned around and got me a place 2 miles back. My bicycle was put into a shed where they had a knitting machine and I was taken by car to my accommodation. Next morning just after breakfast the milkman called at the end of his run and offered a lift to where my bike was, where he waited and then

## HEBRIDEAN HOSTELLERS

delivered myself and bike to the cycle shop door in Stornoway. A new crank lever was fitted and in two days I was able to continue my tour.

My thanks to Bill Johnston, from Larne, Co. Antrim, for providing an account of his wandering on a bike around the Hebrides, of which the above is an extract. Bill also commented "With respect to Claddach Baleshare the flush toilet and hand basin have been a vast improvement". Thanks also to Bill for this Newsletter's illustration of Berneray Hostel.



Berneray Hostel  
Lynn Colquhoun  
1989

### The Road to Rhenigidale

The road to Rhenigidale, mentioned by Bill Johnson above, has been of interest to Hebridean Hostellers almost since Rhenigidale was opened. It has been a matter of life and death for the village of Rhenigidale for just as long.

*The road to Rhenigidale opened on 20 February 1990!*

This is of great delight to the Gatliff Hebridean Hostels Trust. Extensive coverage was given in *The Stornoway Gazette* of 23 February and those interested can, I presume, obtain back copies from the Editor (*The Stornoway Gazette*, 10 Francis Street, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, PA87 2XE). It is undoubtedly due to Roddy MacInnis (Warden and owner of Rhenigidale Hostel from 1962 until his death in 1986) and Kenny MacKay, still resident in Rhenigidale, that the road was built. Let's hope that Rhenigidale enjoys and thrives on its new found access.

The Rhenigidale Appeal is almost there, Pam Moncur's task is nearly done. £9730 was needed when Newsletter 9 was produced. In four months, £9268 has been raised. The donations have been many and varied, the full story will be told in the next newsletter. Meanwhile please help Pam find those last few Pounds.

Bibles for the Hostels

The Executive Committee has accepted a gift of Bibles for the hostels from the Church of Scotland Presbytery of Uist. Peter Clarke accepted the gift, on behalf of the Committee, on a recent trip to Uist when he met the Secretary to the Presbetary the Revd Dr Adrian Varwell BA BD. The bibles will be placed in the Hostels by the Church of Scotland Minister local to each of the Hostels.

BOOK REVIEW - What is a Midge?

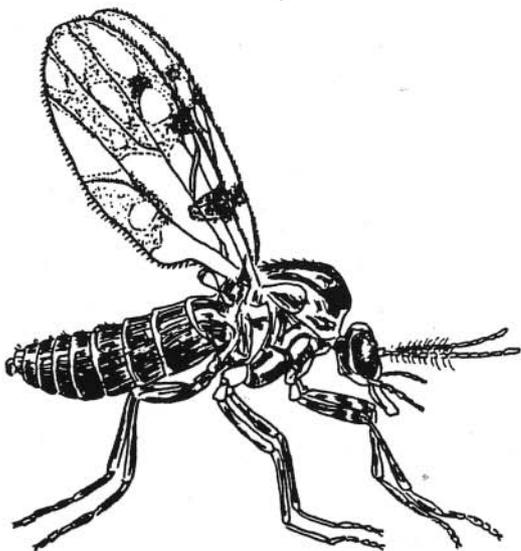
Peter Clarke

*Midges in Scotland*, by George Hendry is published by Aberdeen University Press, price £3.95

What is a midge? Only the naive would ask this question or someone who has never walked across a Hebridean bog in June, July or August. Now you don't have to admit to lack of knowledge, you just quietly buy George Hendry's book *Midges in Scotland*.

In case there is any doubt take a look at this:

This is a midge!



"Not to be discussed in front of the tourists" we are told but Hendry thinks it is time that this humble beastly took a bow. Indeed, the beastly is the subject of many a lament in hostel log books.

Now there is no excuse for being ill informed. This amusing and methodical little book will tell you all you do and do not want to know about midges, all 97 varieties.

Unfortunately, whilst Hendry is generally lucid, he leaves the reader lacking one vital bit of information. He gives us no means of detecting let alone recognising the pregnant female midge in flight. This is a pretty important omission because a midge has to be pregnant before it has any interest in biting. A blood meal is an essential ingredient of a successful pregnancy.

Biting happens between mid-June and the end of August. By mid-September all the randy midges have b\*\*\*\*\*ed off and we humans can get about our hiking and hostelling unmolested.

But how can the innocent be protected (from being bitten)? Here Hendry is not so reassuring, but at least his work serves to focus our minds on the matter. Yet do we, ardent hostellers, really believe in killing the midge? It would certainly encourage tourists to wilder parts of Scotland!

Before a furious correspondence starts around this question, let me say the prospect is, according to Hendry, a long way off. Besides look what happened to the rats. They actually grew to like the rat poison and grew into super-rats.

## HERRIDEAN HOSTELLERS

### Pay Up! Pay Up! - 1990 Subscriptions

Alan Busson

It's that time of year again! Your 1990 membership subscription is now due. The minimum membership subscription is still £3.00. If you have already paid your 1990 sub. (by cash, cheque, Standing Order or Direct Debit) then ignore this reminder. If you do not have a Standing Order or Direct Debit, then you can pay your subscription by sending me (Alan Busson) a cheque/postal order made out to 'Gatliff Hebridean Hostels Trust'.

Deed Of Covenant - whereby you agree to pay to GHHT a fixed amount per annum (your sub. or sub. + donation) for a period of at least four years. You must be a tax payer, and the advantage to GHHT is that we can reclaim from the Inland Revenue the tax that you have paid on that annual payment. Presently this is £1.00 additional to every £3.00 you pay. I do the reclaiming. All that you have to do is to complete the Covenant form and Standing Order form which are both attached to the membership form and send them off to me, and to subsequently fill in and return a second form that I send to you. A copy of your Covenant, Standing Order and my letter to your bank will be sent to you for your records.

Deposited Covenants - this is a variation on the above, where you pay the four 'instalments' all at once. It is therefore suited for larger donations - for more details write to me.

Give As You Earn/Payroll Giving Scheme (GAYE) - your employee may operate a GAYE scheme. As a charity, GHHT can accept payment by this method.

### NOTES ON COVENANT PAYMENTS

With the advent of Independent Taxation for husbands and wives, make sure that the covenanting spouse has sufficient income to enable basic rate tax to be deducted at source. The husband is no longer automatically the tax payer.

Please ensure that the date you sign the Covenant is before the date you make your first covenanted payment and please write in the important phrase 'adopted as holograph' (meaning - 'treat this document as being hand-written').

Covenants and Deposited Covenants are very useful to GHHT because they provide a guaranteed income over a period of years and enable us to plan ahead. It is also mutually satisfying to think that every pound contributed by you by these methods is boosted by 33p from the Inland Revenue!

If you have any queries or require Membership Forms, Covenant Forms, Deposited Covenant Forms or guidance please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to receiving your Subs. soon. *Thank you for your continued support.*

Next Issue : November '90, contributions, especially, artwork by 31 October please!

Hebridean Hostellers - Providing beds in places other forms of accomodation cannot reach!

### Addresses, continued from page 6

Rhenigidale Appeal - Pamela Moncur, 28 Rosetta Road, Peebles, EH45 8HT.

Workparties - John Murdo Webb, The Old Swan, Dunkerton, Bath, Avon, BA2 8AW, (0761 33251).

Thatching work - Jim Souness, 44 Flora Terrace, Innerleithen, Peebleshire, EH44 6LT, (0896 831181).

Newsletter Editor - Richard Genner, 42 Lamberton Court, Pencaltland, East Lothian, EH34 5BL, (0875 340044).

### Gatliff Trust

Chairman - Frank Martin, 20 Cornwallis Avenue, Bristol, BS8 4PP, (0272 292350).

## HEBRIDEAN HOSTELLERS

Is there a doctor in the Hostel?

John A. L. Macleod, GP.

Muck and magic has been banished from Hebridean medicine for many years but for the Hebridean Hosteller, illness or injury has the added ingredient of total unfamiliarity with the N.H.S. as set up in the Hebrides. Dr John Macleod, a G.P. on North Uist, Secretary to the Western Isles L.M.C. and Hebridean Hosteller explains the situation - but we hope that you don't need the information.

### Illness on Holiday

One of the unfortunate things about being on holiday is that you can become unwell or have an accident just as if you were at home. Anything of that sort is made worse by the fact that you are away from the Doctors and Nurses to whom you would normally turn for help. Primary care i.e. the first point of contact for you, is given in the Western Islands by the General Practitioners and the Community Nurses. The Lewis, Lochmaddy, Daliburgh and St. Brendans Hospitals do NOT have the sort of Casualty Department that you may be used to going to.

General Practitioners are distributed throughout the island chain and if there is a reason for you to feel that you need medical help, then it is with a G.P. that you should make contact. The hostel (or house or hotel) in which you are staying will be able to guide you to their usual Doctor. If you are on the move, camping or in a boat then someone at any house, shop, Tourist Office or Post Office will be able to guide you to the local service. If possible take with you any tablets that you may have been prescribed and remember to tell the Doctor if you have any allergies or have been shown to be hypersensitive to any particular drug. At the Doctor's surgery, you will be required to sign a form as a 'Temporary Resident' and on this you will need to give the name of your doctor at home and your date of birth. It is helpful but not essential, if you have your Medical Card or your N.H.S. number with you.

Please, please, if at all possible, attend the Doctor's surgery in his advertised consulting hours. Remember that Doctors in this area have wide areas to cover, have lots of visits to do and also - like most other people locally - have a commitment to the land and water.

So even if you are near his house or surgery outwith consulting hours and your problem does not require immediate medical attention, then please just take a note of the times and attend then. Do not drive a distance to the Doctor's surgery 'on spec' with a non-urgent problem - save yourself the drive and ring his number for advice or for information about the next surgery. If you are on one of the off-shore islands, you can contact the Community Nursing Sister for advice and she will make contact with the Doctor if that is appropriate. If your complaint requires more diagnostic or treatment facilities than the General Practitioner can provide, he will arrange your ongoing care.

Have a good holiday and keep healthy!

Addresses (See also bottom of page 5)

### Hebridean Hostellers/Gatliff Hebridean Hostels Trust

Chairman - John Joyce, 2 Beaumont Road, Upper Norwood, London, SE19 3QZ,  
(01 653 8376).

Vice-Chairman - Peter Clarke, 264 Alexandra Park Road, London, N22 4BG,  
(01 888 2449).

Secretary - Alan Busson, 4 Sambre Road, Ridgeway View, Chisleton, Swindon,  
SN4 0JB, (0793 740124).

Treasurer - Roger Clifton, Colerne, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 8DF.

Rhenigdale Organiser - Arthur Meaby, 33 Stratford Close, Colwick, Notts,

N64 2DL.