

# Welcome to Shenavall and the Gruinard Estate

**The history of Shenavall begins on a raw November morning in 1891 with the arrival by boat of a crofter named Colin MacDonald with his wife, child, trunks, bedding and wheelbarrow.** The stonemasons had only quitted the site the day before, but within days Colin and his father, a skilled stalker attached to the Dundonnell estate, had plastered the walls with blue clay and by the next spring, wooden wall linings and floorboards had been fitted and upstairs bedrooms added to the house that for the next ten years would be home to the MacDonalds' growing family.

It was a hard, self-reliant life, and one that for crofters living in the small and remote community would remain largely unchanged for the next half century. After the Second World War bothies such as Shenavall were principally used for the lambing and stalking seasons, and yet for a crofter, shepherd and stalker like Angus Urquhart, life would have been similar. The Urquhart family raised a family of three young boys in the nearby Achenegie House between 1949 and 1955 with a regular weekly visit of a school mistress who would ride out on a pony on Monday morning and stay with them until Friday.

Bothies across the Highlands will have similar histories and all are owned by the Estate on which they are found.

**In 1965 the Mountain Bothies Association came into being, and Gruinard Estate became one of the first to enter into an arrangement with the MBA that allowed walkers and climbers to use Shenavall as a shelter.**

All maintenance work is carried out by MBA volunteers with a helping hand from the estate and with the ever increasing numbers of walkers such a cooperation has become more vital. This is especially so during the deer cull, or stalking season, which runs from early September to 20 October, and plays an important role in the life of the estate. A wilderness such as Gruinard no more manages itself than does a more domesticated landscape, and the estate works closely with Scottish Natural Heritage, a government body, to achieve an essential balance between deer numbers and the health of the natural flora.

Although there are bothy guidebooks available they are not always accurate and the best information is to be found on the **Heading for the Scottish Hills** website (Approved by the Scottish Parliament in July 2004).

Information on stalking activities is available on the website all year round or daily during the stalking season on the gate at the beginning of the Corriehallie track. We would be grateful if walkers, for their own safety, could avoid the areas where stalking is taking place that day or stick to the paths. At any time of the year, however, there are simple obligations, enshrined



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in the **Scottish Outdoor Access Code** that we all share: respect for the interests of other people, care for the environment, and responsibility for our own actions.



With these basic principles in mind, we, the MBA and Gruinard Estate hope all who visit Shenavall and the surrounding hills, rivers and lochs will enjoy and help protect and nurture the beauty of this magical place.

MBA, Gruinard Estate.