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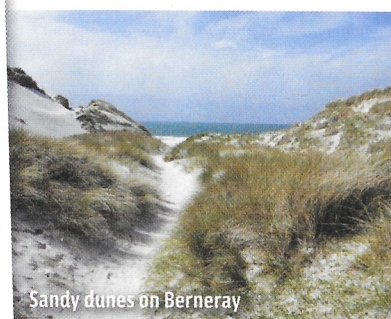
Balranald Hebridean Holidays, Outer Hebrides



Looking across to Eaval on North Uist



A rainbow at Balranald



Sandy dunes on Berneray

INFORMATION

Hougharry, North Uist, Outer Hebrides
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what3words: stiletto.meanwhile.began

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Cost: Two adults, pitch, electric £30

Open: Late March – end October

Nearest bus/train: 1.2 miles

Nearest pub/food: Five miles



The campsite

To reach the western edges of Scotland, we had taken a ferry from Ullapool to Harris and Lewis then a smaller ferry to Berneray. After exploring the dunes, machair and three-mile-long beach on Berneray, we crossed the causeway and idled along the single-track road to Balranald campsite that sits by an RSPB nature reserve on North Uist.

There were many reasons to visit this campsite on our trip through the Outer Hebrides. Not least was falling asleep as we drowsily listened to the repetitive rasping call of corncrakes.

Another was the excellent facilities. There are two spotless modern blocks with showers and toilets. The showers are £1 for an extravagant seven and a half minutes of continuous hot water, with

adjustable temperature. Washing up and laundry by reception.

The site has gravel tracks and is mostly level and well drained. It's peaceful, far from road noise, and the camping soundscape is those corncrakes along with the calls of curlews and lapwings and the occasional bellowing of cattle from the neighbouring farm.

The nearest shop is around four miles away, but the campsite has a cabin that sells hot drinks, sandwiches and cakes at lunchtime, and a 24/7 shop with vending machines selling local produce, drinks and sweets.

The circuit around the Aird an Runair peninsula, the westernmost point of North Uist, is between three and four miles. The sandy beach is

fringed with dunes. Out at sea, gannets dive for fish and the remote Monach Isles sit on the horizon.

Walking across the unique habitat of the machair, the fertile grassy areas found on exposed Scottish western coasts, there are wildflowers and birds galore.

In the golden evening light we walked up to the hillock and burial ground. Even this small elevation offers a panorama over the watery landscape of North Uist.

A shower scudded across and we sheltered in the ruins of a church until it passed over, and a full rainbow spanned the sky.



Carol Kubicki