

## Orkney's Unique Tastes at the West Manse Westray

Beremeal bannocks. Never heard of them? That's not surprising for they are only made in Orkney. They are today's surviving link to what was once the staple barley grain throughout Scotland: bere (pronounced 'bare'). And beremeal bannocks are not the only distinctively different food to be found on Orkney.

At the West Manse on the island of Westray, food writers **Catherine Brown** and **Liz Bowie**, will celebrate the rich variety and unique historical tastes of the Orkney larder at supper on **Tuesday 12** and at mid-day dinner on **Wednesday 13 June**.

To reflect the way the island people ate in the past, the supper will have as its focus the beremeal bannock, both modern with leavening, and historical, without. You can also learn how to make it. There will be Orkney farmhouse cheeses, local pickles, jams and seafood delicacies from the island's fishermen as well as fattie cutties. Never heard of them either? The local bakers will explain.

For mid-day dinner, the focus will be on broth made from North Ronaldsay sheep that live on the shore eating only seaweed. There will be clapshot, a mutton tasting with mealie tatties, as well as a seafood platter and other surprises. At both meals there will be Orkney drink: beers and whisky and of course home-made wine made with the rhubarb which seems to grow everywhere on the Orkney Islands.

And what of the venue – The West Manse? Built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century it has stood on a south west headland looking out towards Nova Scotia on one side and down over Mae Sands and the Westray Firth on the other. Recently restored by Sandy and William McEwen after many hard-working years, at last, the Manse has a purpose, a future and another loving family to tend and care for it. A major part of the McEwen's Manse Plan is to establish a 'Cooking School' with a difference: a place where all are welcome to experience the true taste of Orkney and the beautiful Island of Westray.

**Catherine Brown** is the author of *Broths to Bannocks* (John Murray) which has a chapter on Orkney's unique foods. Among her recently published books is *Classic Scots Cooking* (NWP), *Scottish Cookery* (Mercat Press) and *The Taste of Britain* (HarperCollins) with co-author Laura Mason. [www.foodinscotland.co.uk](http://www.foodinscotland.co.uk)

**Liz Bowie** is the author of *Teach the Bairns to Cook*; *Teach the Bairns to Bake* and *Teach the Bairns Scottish Vegetarian Cooking* (Scottish Children's Press), all of which feature Orcadian recipes; *Snappy Snacks – Easy Healthy Recipes for cooks of all ages* (SCP) and *Stir in a Smile* a compilation of coohtie stories and recipes from her newspaper column in the Northern Scot. Email:- [lizashworth@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:lizashworth@tiscali.co.uk)

For more information see [www.millwestray.com](http://www.millwestray.com)