

After a long winter and a very late spring the weather has at last improved enough to make the prospect of a summer programme of activities seem feasible. We are now into summer opening hours at the Museum, this means we are looking for members to volunteer for relief custodian (door) duty. Ellen's days off are Sunday (afternoon) and Monday (two shifts, morning and afternoon). In addition there are the days of booked holiday. All help is gratefully received, we cannot function without it. Rotas are pinned up in the office so calling in to sign up, phoning the Museum (505067) or contacting Dawn (504429 or secretary@butemuseum.org) are ways you can offer your services. A big thank you in advance. For those of you who do not attend meetings at the Museum there are two very important announcements.

Transactions: The new edition of the Transactions has now been published. For those on island, or who are regular visitors to the island, you can collect your copy from the Museum during opening hours. Should you wish to have your copy but are unable to collect or arrange for collection from the Museum copies can be posted to you. However because of the increase in the cost of postage we would prefer it if you let us know that you do wish to receive a copy by post. You can let us know either by calling the Museum during opening times (01700 505067), by letter to the Secretary, Bute Museum, Stuart Street, Rothesay, PA20 0EP, or by email to secretary@butemuseum.org and we will send you a copy.

The Birds of Bute: This beautiful hard back, full colour publication, written by three of our members is, for a limited time available as a free copy to members. If you have not received your copy, you can collect it from the Museum during opening hours. Due to the high cost of postage, anyone unable to collect their copy from the Museum but who wishes to have it posted to them is requested to pay £6 towards the cost of postage and packing, (for overseas members please enquire what the cost will be). The offer of free copies will expire at the end of May, so if you wish to claim your free copy please do not delay. Please send your cheque for £6 made payable to BNHS to BNHS, Bute Museum, Stuart Street, Rothesay, PA20 0EP, together with a note of your name and address.

The Museum and Society now have a new website and a linked facebook presence. People are working hard to get material on the site, do have a look at it www.butemuseum.org.uk, tell your friends and family and 'like' us on facebook. The likes ensure we get more publicity, and hopefully more visitors and more members. Past newsletters appear on the website as will this newsletter in due course. You will also be able to view the winter speaker programme on the website so no worries if you lose your syllabus card from now on.

A reminder that as a member of the Natural History Society you are entitled to free entry to the Museum is particularly appropriate as there are several interesting and exciting acquisitions to see. After considerable delay the new Inchmarnock display is now in place, of such international significance is this material that two items are already on loan to a German Museum! You may have seen information both on the television and in the press about the hostage stone. Further items in the History Gallery and some new material in the Natural History Gallery have been paid for by an extremely generous donation from a long standing member of the Society, Commander Ian Hamilton. Not to be outdone by the two Galleries and their new acquisitions

Jean McMillan, the Museum Librarian put together a lovely feature called 'Then and Now' which was shown earlier in April. This will be on view again on the Museums at Night weekend (see below for details), and well worth a bit of your time! Why not drag some friends along too!

Later this year the Museum Trustees will be launching a 'Friends of the Museum'. While this is not primarily aimed at members of the Society it is a way to raise more much needed funds for the Museum. If you, or any of your family or friends would be willing to part with £20 a year to meet the costs involved in keeping the Museum open then the Friends will be a way to do this.

The RSPB UK Beached Bird Survey 2013

For many years, members of the BNHS have volunteered to take part in the RSPB's 'Beached Bird Survey'. This UK-wide survey dates back to 1971 and monitors trends in mortality and oiling in seabirds. The RSPB Conservation Science department's analyses of the results help monitor the health of our seabird populations and the wider marine environment. Seventeen BNHS members participated in the February 2013 Survey, walking a total of nearly 40 km of Bute's shoreline and contributing to the 1,900 km walked throughout the UK. Members will be pleased to learn that no oiling incidents were reported. Bill Stein coordinated the Survey this year, having taken over from Elaine Jukes who looked after it for several years. Bill would like to say 'thank you' to all the Volunteer observers.

Summer activities

Friday 17th May & Saturday 18th May: Museums at Night. The Museum will be open 6.30pm until 8.30pm each evening. Special items include 'Then and Now', a bat detecting session on Friday evening (weather permitting) and 'more about moths' where you can see 'here's ones we caught earlier' on Saturday evening.

Saturday 22nd June: Joint walk with the Glasgow branch of the Scottish Wildlife Trust: This walk has become almost an annual fixture and is a lovely opportunity to make you feel smug as our visitors go positively gooey over our beautiful island. Details will be available nearer the time in the Museum or by calling Glyn Collis (504429)

Saturday 3rd August: Geology walk with Julian Hill. Kilchattan Bay to Glencallum, along the shore. Bring packed lunch. Meet at the Museum at 10.30 to rationalise cars. Phone Glyn (504429) nearer the time or call in to the Museum for an update.

There are likely to be archaeological activities and more natural history events over the summer and early autumn. Call in at the Museum or visit the website for updates on what is happening.

Bird Group Outdoor Events

Tuesday 11th June: Evening Bird Survey. Meet Guildford Sq at 21.00. Doug Menzies will lead.

Saturday 6th July: North End Walk. Meet Guildford Square at 10.00. Ian Hopkins will lead.

Saturday 17th August: South End Walk (Kilchattan Bay to Glencallum Bay & beyond). Meet Guildford Square at 10.00. Iona Gray will lead.

Saturday 28th September: Migrant search - Lochs and Bays. Meet Guildford Square at 10.00. Bill Stein will lead.