

As the nights draw in and the weather turns decidedly autumnal we can reflect on another busy summer for BNHS. Much of this summer's activity has centred around work undertaken in conjunction with the Landscape Partnership Scheme (DBLPS) and has involved many members in a variety of tasks. These have included assisting a PhD student who was surveying the long cairn field at Scalpsie, a dig at Old Quien, and the shoreline survey being conducted under the auspices of the Association of Certificated Field Archaeologists.

With support from DBLPS the Rural Settlement Group have been involved in developing a swinging fingerpost sign for historic settlement sites and the first of these will be installed in the near future at Branser.

A second dig, this time at the Scalpsie burial cairn, was conducted to mark Scottish Archaeology Month. Towards the end of the dig a 4000 year old beaker was excavated. The Royal Commission (RCAHMS) are continuing their field walking (see overleaf for details of events). Any BNHS members who wish to become actively involved should contact either Isabell MacArthur (831643) or Murette Grewar (831668).

The bird group has now established itself within the framework of BNHS. You will find the Bird Group speaker programme included in the Syllabus card. Remember all members of the Society are able to attend these meetings. The Group has had a range of field meetings over the summer and continues to collect data for the national survey into breeding and overwintering birds. The field meetings are listed in the activities list overleaf.

The Museum now has a 'Bute fox' on display. The animal, a road casualty near Glecknabae earlier this year, reflects the changing face of wildlife on the island. The Bute moth survey is continuing with the total number of macro moth species recorded on the island now up to 310. During a wild flower walk led by Angus Hannah in May, evidence was found of a possible new site for Marsh Fritillaries. A follow up visit confirmed a sizeable colony bringing to four the known sites for this species on the island. Then a fifth adjacent site was identified a few days later. This makes Bute a hot spot for this 'Biodiversity Action Plan' species. If you want to see why the Bute sites are so important, have a look at the butterfly conservation website showing where it had been recorded in Britain up to 2004. (Go to www.butterfly-conservation.org and select Marsh Fritillary in the A-Z list of butterflies). Since this date the species has continued to disappear south of the border.

The Museum Trustees have spent the last year preparing and applying for Accreditation, the new form of recognition that indicates the Museum is of a standard fit to hold exhibits of national significance. The process came to fruition in August when Accredited status was awarded. It was particularly gratifying that this happened just a few days before the visit to the Museum of Fiona Hyslop, the Minister for Culture, as part of the Scottish Government's stay on the island. The visit had been suggested by Museums Galleries Scotland who consider that 'Bute Museum is a very good example of a small community Museum'. The Chief Executive Officer for Museums Galleries Scotland also attended and was duly impressed with what she found. In particular she was astounded by the level of active support the Museum receives from the members of BNHS. Therefore, once more, a big 'Thank You' to all those who helped in some way over the summer. Without lots of volunteers, summer opening hours and wild flower displays cannot be sustained so please be prepared to help again next year. For those who have not yet ventured into this area – we need your help. Each summer we have 52 days that need door duty covered so that John, our custodian, does not have to work a seven day week, and 26 weeks when we ask for volunteers to help with the wild flower display. Every helper is welcome.

During the summer a band of volunteers, led by Donald Kinnear redecorated the Library. This had been preceded by the refurbishment of the office. Thanks to all those who contributed to this effort, the Library looks super now. The Natural History Gallery is next on the hit list. It is hoped to paint this during the winter closure after Christmas. All volunteers are welcome so if you fancy wielding a paint roller let us know! The rising cost of energy has affected the Museum in the same way as it has affected households everywhere. The Trustees are pressing ahead with ways to make the Museum more energy efficient, so money can be saved in the long run. However this means raising money to help pay for improvements as many grants require 'matched funding'. Watch out for fund raising events, and if you have any ideas yourself please be willing to bring them forward.

Getting to winter meetings can be a problem for some of our members. If you fall into this category but still want to get to meetings let us know and we will organise another BNHS member to collect and return you to your home on the Tuesday evenings you wish to attend. Leave a message with your name and contact details at the Museum (Tel 505067) and we will get back to you.

Membership fees If you would be willing to pay your subscription fees by standing order please remember to complete a form and hand it in to your bank. Copies of a standing order form were sent out with the Spring newsletter and spare copies are available in the Museum.

Autumn Activities

There are a series of events organised by either DBLPS or RCAHMS to which BNHS members are invited. Please note that in most cases it is necessary to book as places are limited. For such events, indicated by *, please contact Paul Duffy (discoverbutearchaeology@gmail.com) or Sharon MacDonald (Sharon.MacDonald2@argyll-bute.gov.uk) to book your place.

Sept 28th Discover the archaeology of Scalpsie (DBLPS & Bute Healthy Living) Meet 11am at Guilford Square for lift share.

* Sept 27th – Oct 1st, Oct 11th – Oct 15th: Finding & Recording Sites in the Landscape (RCAHMS)

* Oct 11th – Oct 14th, Oct 25th – Oct 28th: Surveying sites in the Landscape (RCAHMS)

* Oct 15th: Ancient Landscapes Workshop (Headland Archaeology)

Oct 18th – Oct 21st: Paleoenvironmental Audit of Bute. Fieldwork for which volunteers are both welcome and appreciated. Contact Paul or Sharon for further information (Headland Archaeology)

Bird Group field meetings: (all meetings are on a Saturday at 10am unless otherwise indicated)

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Oct 16th: Kilchattan, St Ninian's & Etrick Bays. Meet St Blane's Hotel. Leader: Ron Forrester

Nov 13th: Goose Hunt. Meet Guilford Square. Leader Ian Hopkins

Sat/Sun Dec 4th & 5th: Caerlaverock, Merse Head & Loch Ken. 8am ferry Leader: Ron Forrester.
Requires overnight accommodation

2011

Jan 15th Loch Ascog & Loc Fad. Meet at Loch Ascog waterworks. Leader: Dougie Menzies

Sun Feb 13th: Quien Loch, Scalpsie Bay & Greenan Loch. Meet Scalpsie Bay car park. Leader Ann Foster

Mar 12th: Lochwinnoch RSPB Reserve, Meet at pier for 8am ferry. Leader Bill Stein

Wed Apr 20th: Owl watch. Meet Guilford Square 8.30pm. Leader Dougie Menzies