

Transactions: These are now ready for collection in the Museum library. Please indicate that you have collected your copy on the membership list provided.

Help needed: Now summer opening hours are in place at the Museum we are in need of volunteers for door duty on Wednesdays (10.30 till 4.30) and Sunday afternoons. While many stalwarts have already signed up there are still a lot of gaps, if you can help, do drop by at the Museum and put your name down on the list in the office. Remember without this help from members the Museum would be unable to open each day during the summer.

One of the highlights of the Museum is the wild flower display. Many of you will have seen and enjoyed it when visiting the Museum. We do need more people to take a turn on the flower rota. It involves picking some seasonal wild flowers, putting them in the vases and placing an appropriate label with the specimens (help is at hand if you are unsure), typically this is done twice in a week. If you would be willing to do a week on the flower rota please sign up on the list in the office.

Fund raising: At the most recent council meeting the financial situation of the Society was discussed. The contingency funds are steadily being eroded so Council are keen to hear of any fund raising ideas that members may have. It is hoped to consider fund raising strategies at the August council meeting with a view to holding some events over the winter months. If you have any ideas of ways we can raise money for the society, please provide to Dawn Collis (Secretary) either via the Museum or tel. 504429.

Records wanted for Bute Bird Atlas

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) is organising a field survey to produce a distribution atlas of birds in Britain & Ireland during both summer and winter. Bute has 48 tetrads (2km x 2km squares) and the BTO atlas requires each square to be visited for two-hour periods on four occasions (early winter, late winter, early summer and late summer). The survey is running over four years until July 2011 and four BTO members (all BNHS members) agreed at the outset to complete all of the required timed tetrad visits on the island between them. This is progressing well.

Rev J M McWilliam's *The Birds of Bute*, published in 1927 served its purpose well, but is now very out of date. As a result of the atlas work a large amount of information is being accumulated about the current distribution of birds on Bute. This provides an opportunity to publish an atlas for the island, accompanied by suitable text, as a much-needed successor to the work of J M McWilliam.

The timed tetrad visits are providing sufficient information for the BTO national atlas based on 10km² squares (i.e. 25 tetrads combined). However four two-hour visits is insufficient time to provide fully comprehensive coverage of individual tetrads, on which the Bute maps will be based. We would therefore welcome as much additional help as possible to fill the gaps and make the Bute distribution maps as accurate as possible. In particular there are a number of species, such as Woodcock and Tawny Owl, that are difficult to locate during timed visits, but which are often encountered during casual observation. Help can most conveniently be provided by submission of Roving Records direct to the website for collection of atlas records (The BTO are collating all records and have agreed to make those for Bute available for the local atlas). The website www.birdatlas.net is easily navigable, provides considerable additional information about the national project and lists species already recorded in each tetrad. Alternatively anyone willing to help can contact Ron Forrester (telephone 505352).

BNHS Historic Rural Settlements Survey Group: Members of the group attended the first Annual Conference held by Scotland's Rural Past (SRP) in November where a paper was presented by Donald Kinnear.

The winter conditions made any outdoor work impossible, however the better weather has seen the group working on the site at Old Quien. Charles Murray is producing a drawing of the latest measurements and that, together with other material will be entered onto the SRP online form in the near future. Helen MacLeod, Jean McMillan Murette Grewar and Margaret Lamb have all been heavily involved ensuring information is both up to date and on record.

Many of the group have been involved in the RCAHMS field walking project that is still ongoing (see forthcoming events). This work will mean that work carried out by present and previous members of the Society will be on the permanent National Database.

New members are welcome, contact Murette Grewar (831668) or Isabell McArthur (831643).

Summer activities

There are a variety of activities involving the society planned for the spring and summer months, currently known details are listed below. Additional information and any extra activities will be posted on the inside of the library door at the Museum as soon as any information is available, and also on the internet at <http://bnhsoc.googlepages.com/> (note no 'www').

Sat/Sun May 2nd and 3rd: Spring-flying moths: Neil Gregory will be coming to Bute to help with some more moth trapping (between the jazz !). Contact Glyn or Dawn Collis for details (504429).

19th, 20th & 21st May and 2nd, 3rd & 4th June: Field walks with RCAHMS (Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland). As a contribution to the Bute Landscape Partnership, staff from the RCAHMS are on Bute doing fieldwork to revise the records of archaeological sites, everything from Neolithic chambered cairns to post-medieval deserted settlements, which is held in a national electronic database. They walk from one site to another, at each site verifying position and details of the feature. In between they record anything new they spot, or that is pointed out to them. They welcome local people on their walks, no special knowledge is needed, BUT you should be fairly fit and energetic. You need boots or wellies, waterproof clothing and a packed lunch. Meet at Guildford Sq for 9 am, transport is provided, return is around 5pm to Guildford Square.

Friday 12th June 2009: Dr Richard Tipping will give a talk on a proposed survey of Bute's landscape history using soil-coring: 7.30pm in the Museum.

Saturday 13th June: Richard Tipping will lead a field meeting on soil coring, with hands-on experience. Details will be finalised at the talk on Friday 12th June.

Saturday 13th June: the Scottish Wildlife Trust local Glasgow members are coming to Bute, as they did last year when they walked over Barone Hill. This year they plan to walk round the south end of Bute and they would welcome any of our members who would like to join them.

September events

Saturday 12th September: there will be one or more Guided walks as part of Scottish Archaeology Month.

Friday and Saturday 18-19th September: National Moth Night, and another chance to see some of Bute's autumn flying moths.

It is hoped that Julian Hill will lead another of his annual geological talks & walks for National Geology Month in September.