

With delightful spring weather already upon us the summer programme of activities and events seems very close. As usual there are a great many activities either being organised by BNHS members, or to which BNHS members are welcome. As always, further information will be available from organisers and/or at the Museum.

Summer opening hours are now in operation at the Museum, so a reminder for those willing to do a volunteer door duty that there are a number of dates not yet covered. The rota is in the office at the Museum. A big thank you to all who have offered their help so far, your help is greatly appreciated. More volunteers for the wild flower rota would also be a great help. If you are willing, but no botanical expert, why not come along to one of Angus's botany walks this summer. Please do not let lack of 'expertise' be a barrier as others can help with identification, if you are willing to collect some wild flowers and replenish the display then please add your name to the rota - also in the office at the Museum.

Rural Settlement Group:

With the culmination of RCAHMS survey of the island and publication of their excellent book "The Archaeological Landscape of Bute" (available from the Museum shop) the survey team are now concentrating on the completion of the commitment to the 'Scotland's Rural Past' (SRP) project. The first prototype swinging signpost is now in place at Branser, and, to date, the feedback has been very positive. Any comments regarding this signage are welcome. The group are well on the way to completing material for all the West Island Way deserted historic settlements.

The final SRP conference will be held in Dunkeld on 18th June (unfortunately this clashes with the DBLPS Scalpsie event) when a final paper on the work carried out by our group on Bute will be delivered by Donald Kinnear.

Anyone interested in getting involved with the Rural Settlement Group can find out more by contacting either Isabell McArthur (831643) or MuretteGrewar (831668)

Bute Bird Group:

Bute Bird Group held its first meeting in February 2010 and had an eventful first year. The Bird Group is a sub-group, formed within BNHS accommodating a specific demand for more bird-watching related activities. The group held five field trips last summer and another three during the winter. These were all very successful, including a weekend trip to the Solway. This last winter there was a series of monthly Tuesday evening meetings in the Museum, each with a guest speaker. Although topics included talks about birding in Australia, Alaska and India, others were designed to help members learn about birds on Bute. For a first full season we were very happy with attendances, we would encourage more BNHS members to come along to sample next winter's programme. Details will be in the autumn newsletter.

The summer programme, which all BNHS members are welcome to attend appears overleaf. You don't need to be an expert as help will be at hand to identify the many birds likely to be seen.

Natural History News:

As a follow up to the very successful talk by Robin Harvey on 'What makes the seas of Argyll & Bute so special' Robin has agreed to lead a shore walk on Bute during the summer. It has not been possible to finalise a date for this yet but if you are interested let Glyn Collis know and he will let you know once a date has been fixed. Glyn can be contacted by phone (504429), email (g.m.collis@gmail.com) or by leaving a message in the Museum.

Already this year another four new species of moth have been recorded on the island bringing the total number of 'macro moth' species up to 315. An atlas showing the distribution of moths throughout Britain was published late in 2010 and there is a copy in the Museum Library. If you pop in and have a look at this Atlas you may find it very satisfying to see how many maps have black blobs indicating that a species has been found in one or more of the 10km squares covering Bute. Thanks to the many members who have contributed records, specimens and in many cases 'hosted' an overnight moth trap by their home.

Summer activities

Annual walk with the Scottish Wildlife Trust Glasgow members group.

For the fourth consecutive year, members of the SWT Glasgow group are coming to Bute to join BNHS members for a day's walk. Last year it was the circular walk around the south end of Bute. This year, the itinerary will be from Rhubodach to Balnakailly and the return to Rhubodach via the forest tracks. The date is Sat 14th May. Our visitors from Glasgow are due to arrive at the Rothesay ferry terminal at 10.50am. It would be good to have offers of lifts to Rhubodach for our visitors. Please contact Glyn if you can help - 504429 or g.m.collis@gmail.com .

Bird Group

Sat May 21st Dawn Chorus Leader: Ian Hopkins Meet Guildford Square 6.30 am

Sat/Sun 11th/12th June Leighton Moss Leader Ron Forrester Depart Rothesay early Saturday; night in hotel; return Sunday teatime. Contact Secretary (Bill Stein) 504307 for details

Sat 13th August boat trip around Bute Leader Doug Menzies Meet harbour 9 am
[this will be on a fishing boat with limited places – prior booking of place on boat essential - book through Doug Menzies 505732 or 07818 093893]

Sat 3rd September Baron's Haugh Leader Doug Menzies Meet Rothesay Pier 7.45 am
Car sharing - contact Doug Menzies in advance re car seats.

Botany

Saturday 7 May: Rhodoclearance beside forest tracks. With DBLPS, Bute conservation volunteers, Land Company volunteers. It is really important to stop the spread of rhodies.

Meet 10 a.m. Rhubodach Cottage. Bring lunch, and any tools such as loppers, fork, saw etc if you wish, but some will be available to use.

Saturday 28 May: Botanical walk (short distance easy walking, some wet ground) with particular emphasis on orchids and sedges.

Meet 2 p.m. Kilchattan Bay turning circle.

Saturday 18 June: Botanical walk to Haystack and Scalpsie shore area. In conjunction with DBLPS event at Scalpsie. Julian Hill will be there to provide expert explanations of the area's geology.

Meet at marquee by Scalpsie Bay car park at 2 p.m.

DBLPS activities

May (date TBC) Ancient Pottery Workshop with Dr Alison Sheridan of NMS: A chance to meet another leading artefact specialist whilst she studies the material recovered from Scalpsie Barrow last year.

29th May: Community Consultation on Archaeological Research Framework for the Isle of Bute: your chance to help shape the development and direction of archaeological research on the island.

29th May: Ancient Pottery Workshop: join leading replica potter Graham Taylor as he recreates some of the pottery found on archaeology sites across the island.

18th June: DBLPS Scalpsie Event: a day of Music, Food, Walks, Storytelling and Archaeology events celebrating the Scalpsie Landscape.

20th June – 10th July: Archaeology Excavations: come along and help solve more of Bute's archaeological mysteries.

July (date TBC) Geophysics investigation and training. Join Rose Geophysics in their research project examining early church sites through geophysical survey.

September Scottish Archaeology Month – watch the DBLPS website for further details.