

The spring sunshine and warming weather herald another summer of activities organised under the auspices of the BNHS. This year there are some new ideas for summer activities that will have follow up sessions in the winter months. Thanks to Ron Forrester who is co-ordinating this. It is aimed to give members an opportunity to develop their knowledge and expertise in natural history

One very important development that will be happening during the summer is that a small group of members will be working on the creation of an updated constitution for the Society and for the Museum. As part of the process of applying for a grant from Heritage Lottery Fund to upgrade the Museum, it is incumbent on the Museum Trustees to take a long hard look at the governance of the Museum. In addition, should the bid be successful, the grant will be a substantial amount of money and it is prudent to take steps to ensure that Trustees and Members are not personally liable should anything go awry. The re-examination of the various instruments of governance has led the Museum Trustees and BNHS Council to actively consider the possibility that the two organisations could be combined together again, as they were for the first eighty years of their existence. The working group will be reporting back to the Trustees and Council during the summer, there will be an update in the autumn newsletter and it is hoped to bring the proposals to members in the autumn. Neither Council nor the Trustees wish to change the essential nature of the organisation, furthermore everyone wants the membership to be kept well informed. There is one way in which you can help the process at this stage. If the Society and Museum recombine, rules for Charities mean that we will have to have a new name, we would like your suggestions. There is a card included with this newsletter, there will also be some in the Museum. Please let us have your suggestions.

We are very short of volunteers to help cover custodian duties at the Museum on Sundays (1.30 - 3.30pm) and Mondays (10.30am-1pm & 1pm -3.30pm). Please help if you can, the rota is in the Museum, you can volunteer by calling by, by phoning the Museum (505067) or Dawn (504429) or emailing Dawn at dawncollis@hotmail.com. We are offering 'training sessions' for anyone who would like to learn what to do, or like a refresher. If you would like to participate in a training session contact us (as above).

On Friday 15th May there will be a 'Museums at Night' event. The Museum will be open from 6pm until 10pm. We hope to have a quiz for adults, activities for children and more. Do come along and bring your friends or family along. Entry is free.

SOS: The Museum Trustees are still trying to find a new Treasurer. Currently Glyn and Dawn Collis have taken on the tasks, assisted by Anne Speirs. If you or anyone you know can help please contact Dawn (504429) or leave a message at the Museum.

Beached Birds Survey

Once more BNHS members helped conduct the annual beached birds' survey. Now into its second half century this international survey aims to survey coastal zones that border on the Irish Sea, North Sea and English Channel. Bute data is included in this annual snapshot designed to monitor and understand seabird mortality.

Australian Landhopper survey

Glyn Collis has been monitoring the extent of this species on Bute for the past 18 months. It is apparent that it is spreading. Almost certainly harmless the hoppers look like smaller, darker versions of the familiar beach sandhopper but are found among dead vegetation well away from the shore. If you think you may have this species in your garden Glyn would like to know. Either phone (504429) or leave a message in the Museum.

Deserted Buildings Project

Under the guidance of Paul Duffy, the group has been busy collating the fieldwork survey results, photographs and social history material, so as to form an archive report for each farmstead. Ambrismore, Meikle Kilmory and Ballianlay Old School are now almost complete, with work on-going for Quien and Ballianlay Farm. Ettrick Bay Smiddy has also been surveyed during the winter. For further information on the group's work, please contact Isabell McArthur (831643) or Paul Duffy (503351).

Summer Programme of events

Saturday 20th June: South end walk with Scottish Wildlife Trust (Glasgow Branch). We will meet our guests at the pier at 10.50a.m. Leader Glyn Collis (504429)

Bute Bird Group Summer Programme

18 th April	Isle of Gigha Leader Ian Hopkins (504042)
27 th – 31 st May	Norfolk 'long weekend' Leader Ron Forrester (505352).
20 th June	walk to Bull Loch Leader Ian Hopkins (504042)
11 th July	Ailsa Craig Leader Dougie Menzies (505732)
15 th August	Pelagic sail from Rothesay looking for seabirds. Leader Viv Shelley (503475)
12 th September	South-end walk Leader Bill Stein (504307).

Please contact the leaders of the outings for further information and joining instructions.

Fauna and Flora workshops

A programme of outdoor natural history workshops covering a variety of subjects to be followed by related indoor workshops next winter. Aimed at beginners and those wishing to improve their knowledge/skills. For a detailed programme contact Ron Forrester (505352).

Moth trapping (examining and identifying overnight catch)

Meet at Bute Produce (in front of Rothesay Academy) at 9.00 a.m. on 16th May and 5th September when overnight moth traps will be opened. For further details contact Glyn Collis (504429).

Marsh Fritillary Walks

A few weather dependant walks will be arranged during June looking for Marsh Fritillary butterflies. Contact Glyn Collis (504429) for details including dates and joining instructions.

Flora Walks

Short walks to look at spring and summer wild flowers. Contact Roger Connard (500390) for details.

Saturday 13th June – meet Kilchattan Bay (bus turning circle) at 10.00 a.m.

Saturday 8th August – meet Guildford Square at 9.45 a.m. (for Scalpsie)

Dragonfly Walk

Saturday 18th July – meet Guildford Square 10.00a.m. (car sharing will be arranged)

A short walk to look primarily for dragonflies (but also butterflies), to Mountstuart Reservoir and Quien Burn. For further information contact Ron Forrester (505352).