

Spring Newsletter

2025 Bute Museum & Natural History Society

It is time to get you all updated on what is going on this summer as well as news on what has been happening. Since the start of the year Anne Speirs, ably assisted by Maureen Neary and Gary Edmondson have been busy with school visits. In the last few weeks we have had five classes from St Andrews, North Bute and Rothesay Primary. Each visit was organised to meet the needs of the class and they got to handle objects from the reserve collection. Topics ranged from fossils to World War I.

We also had two groups of Archaeology students - almost 90 from Glasgow University and 32 from Queen's University Belfast. For these visits we had a range of reports, photos and books out in the Museum Library, they were given an introductory talk and Anne, Jean, Sue and Gary were on hand to answer all their questions.

This weekend we have a talk by Stewart Redwood on Saturday 19th April at 3.30. His subject is 'A wedding ring for the Marchioness: Victorian gold exploration in Bute and gold mining in Scotland



We also have an event on the following Saturday, 26th April at 3.30. Gordon Brown and Douglas Skelton will be talking about their latest novels. They are always very entertaining, as well as giving information about writing and publishing. Tickets are priced at £5 from Print Point and the proceeds go to the Museum.

This year there are some exciting new additions to the Museum shop. Latest additions are a selection of fossils and Scottish polished stones. The fossils have been so popular that they have disappeared like the dinosaurs and I will have to put another order in very soon. There are plenty of pocket money priced fossils to encourage young visitors to start collecting.

The 2024 Transactions will be published very soon, and as it is the summer we aim to have a launch event. The launch will be in June, though we are unable to give the exact date at the moment. Members will be able to pick up their copies at the launch and there will be light refreshments so keep an eye open for the exact date nearer the time. You will be able to get the up to date information from our website, our facebook page, by calling in at the Museum, and, if we have an email address for you, by email circular. Such emails, like this newsletter come from my email account, so make sure you have my email in your contact list so it doesn't get consigned to 'junk' (Dawn's email is dawncollis@hotmail.com).

Later on in this newsletter there are two listings, for summer Bird Group activities and for the summer outings and events being organised for your interest. There will be other activities as well, such as monthly moth trapping at Mount Stuart, where dates have not yet been set, but if you are interested let us know and we will ensure that you receive the relevant information.

With so much on offer for your membership we do ask for a little something in return, a bit of your time, if possible. Over the summer the Museum is open every day, anyone who has visited another Museum both at home and abroad will realise this is a rarity, but we want to show visitors what we have to offer, whatever day they come. This means that for two days each week, Sunday and Monday, we need volunteers to assist in ensuring the Museum is open and staffed as Gary, our custodian has those as his days off. For this we rely on you, our members, so if you are able to, please be willing to sign up to cover a door duty. The rota is now in the Museum, so pop in and offer your services. For those not familiar with covering door duties there is an afternoon slot on Sundays from 1.30 till 3.30, a Monday morning slot, 10.30 till 1pm and a Monday afternoon session from 1pm till 3.30pm. Gary will run through procedures with you if you want to learn, or refresh your memory. There were a couple of very stressful days last summer when we were very close to having to not open the Museum to the public as there seemed to be no one available to cover the duties. If you can help, please do so, we need your help.

You will be aware that the red squirrel project continues apace, and we have had a researcher collecting DNA material from our squirrels to investigate their genetic diversity. Anyone who wants to become involved in the project, or any of the other special interest groups we have just drop your contact details in at the Museum and the relevant group will get back to you. As a reminder in addition to the red squirrels we have a bird group, a moth group and an archaeology group.



(photographs by John Williams and Dougie Menzies, members involved in the Red squirrel and Bird groups)

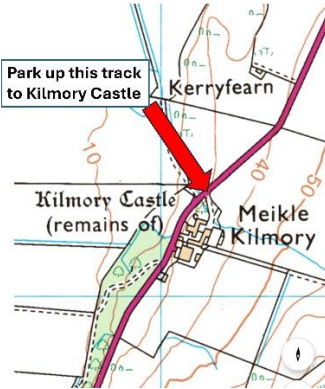
Bird Group's events April – September 2025

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TRIP</u>	<u>LEADER</u>	<u>Contact Tel No.</u>
16 th April 2025	Gigha, a day trip to the island	Ron Forrester	07773 470324
19-22 nd May	Northumberland and Farne Islands	Mike Dodds	07803 207029
Saturday 14 th June 10am – 1pm	Ospreys – an opportunity to see Bute's Ospreys at their nests and fishing around Loch Fad	Billy Shields	07984 258150
Tuesday 15 th July	Nightjar hunt. Go out in pairs or small groups to possible Nightjar locations – to look and listen at dusk NB We need good weather for this event. Date may change at short notice.	Malcolm Newdick	07768 874214

- Saturday 30th Aug Glasgow area. Bingham's Pond, Frankfield Loch, Hogganfield Loch and Baron's Haugh. 8am ferry. Ray Eddie 07742 023266
- Wed 24th Sep Around Bute – Bird identification. Learn from the best, find out how to spot the key features of some of the birds of Bute. Malcolm Newdick 07768 874214

BM&NHS Spring/Summer activities 2025

The following activities have been confirmed

Date	Activity	Leader / Contact
Sat 3 May 10am	Archaeology - Bickers Houses Joint event with Ramblers (Wendy Wilkie / Barbara Rimmington). Route: Track from Meikle Kilmory. Ramblers: Meet with fellow ramblers at Chapel Hill car park for 10am departure to Meikle Kilmory. Natural History Society members: Meet with ramblers in Rothesay for car-sharing or at Meikle Kilmory. Depart from Meikle Kilmory 10:15-10:30. We can park up the track that leads to Kilmory Castle, at the north end of Meikle Kilmory.  NB It's a 30 minute walk uphill along a track and over rough ground. Walking boots recommended. Bring some refreshments too.	Sue Hothersall
Sat 31 May 10am	Archaeology walk – Dunagoil. Meet at 10am at the St Blane's parking area on the Plan Road or the layby near Dunagoil Farm/Cottage.	Sue Hothersall
Weds 2 July 10am	Wild flowers Meet 10am at the carpark at the southern end of Ettrick Bay (grid ref: NS044656) for a coastal wildflower walk (2 hours).	Roger Connard

Date	Activity	Leader / Contact
Weds 16 July 10am	Balnakailly Wood Joint event with Bute Community Forest. Speaker & guide: Ian Dow, ACT (www.act-now.org.uk) Meet at Rhubodach parking area Book early! This event will be open to the public, not just Natural History Society members.	Malcolm Newdick Samuel Lindsay Ian Dow
Weds 20 August 10am	Moth Morning At Rhoda House, Hydro Road, Port Bannatyne (courtesy of Patrick and Janet O'Sullivan) at 10.00 when overnight traps will be opened. Leader Ron Forrester. Please book in advance via phone (01700 505352) or email (ronandedith1@gmail.com).	Ron Forrester

The following two events may take place but details have not yet been confirmed or completed. If you are interested keep an eye on our website for further information

Date	Activity	Leader / Contact
August or September (date TBC)	Geology. A walk with Stewart around one of the areas he has researched	Stewart Redwood
TBC probably end of August or September	A Friends event in the Castle A joint event with the Friends of the Castle and the Friends of the Museum	