



Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society

Autumn 2018 newsletter

Welcome to our Autumn 2018 newsletter. Enclosed is the programme card for the forthcoming Winter 2018-19 lecture series; this newsletter is intended to give a summary of the activities of the Society during the last six months, and highlight other selected topics of interest to members, **including an important message re Planning on page 3.**

Excursions

We have enjoyed a cornucopia of excursions this summer (thanks Pat, and the individual leaders), all with splendid weather.

Members' dedication was tested on several occasions by outside circumstances: a competing talk by DEFA on the same subject on the same day as our visit to Ramsey Forest; an eleventh hour announcement of road closures around Balladoole; and a completely unannounced closure of the Mountain Road which meant members had difficulties getting to the Crammag and Close walk. Despite these impediments, members who did get to those events found them very rewarding.



We also visited the 'Round Mounds' excavation at Berk again (more on page 4); toured Milntown and took tea; enjoyed a guided Archibald Knox trail in Douglas/ Braddan; and studied the coastal geology between Scarlett and Poolvaish.

Several of this summer's events were arranged for mid-week evenings – a tour of St Marks Country Park; visits to Golden Meadow Mill; and a walk to Raby Keeil and farmstead, all of which were very well attended.

As this newsletter goes to press, the IoMNHAS County Down expedition is still in progress. Two events now remain in our 2018 excursion programme, both walks contributed by IoMNHAS to the 'Heritage Open Days' programme: *Cists, Intacks and Tholtans of Glen Roy* on Sunday 7th October, and *Michael Landscape* on Sunday 14th October. Details and booking for these via the MNH website (please note these must be booked via the MNH website Heritage Open Days page).



Tynwald Fair / Southern Agricultural Show / Food and Drink Festival

Once again, we ran our interactive "How well do you know YOUR Island" challenge at the Tynwald Fair; we returned to the Southern Agricultural Show after many years; and we were invited to return to the Food and Drink Festival. Thanks to the members who helped run the stalls, we had fun at all of them!

Despite the low cloud rolling down from Slieau Whallian, Tynwald Fair went well. However, at the Southern Show, the weather was more challenging. We had been invited to share the organisers' Heritage Tent, with the privilege of a much greater display space in their marquee. Unfortunately, the weather tried very hard but failed to disrupt us. Those who were present in the tent on Saturday had a dramatic time as the professionally erected marquee started to come to grief in the squally storm; at one point, Clare Bryan was valiantly trying to hold part of the marquee down, and we feared she was about to take to the air like Dorothy, perhaps bound for Kansas!



As well as our usual displays, Pat Newton had brought some of her farm photographs; and had also arranged a display in tribute to the late Ian Quayle, former Southern Show President, which was greatly appreciated by all.

This was our second year at the Isle of Man Food and Drink Festival. Once again, the specially food and drink themed version of the challenge was taken up and enjoyed by many, from children to a gentleman who reminisced about, as a child himself, helping his Father swim sheep across the Sound to the Calf of Man.

If visitors to our "How well do you know YOUR Island?" activity weren't IOM residents, they soon learned some of the quirkier facts about our Island! (Catriona Livingstone seen here educating Adam Henson, BBC Countryfile presenter, about the Island).



Planning Legislation

IoMNHAS would wish to draw members' attention to recent changes in relation to Planning, and a current consultation which members may wish to respond to.

1. Following an unsatisfactory consultation based on anecdotal evidence, DEFA recently issued an 'operational policy' restricting those to whom Interested Party status could be granted. This policy more or less limits it to just local authorities and some Government departments, and those who own land within 20 metres of a site. It completely removes the chance of bodies such as IoMNHAS participating fully in the planning process to defend our Island. All a developer has to do is ensure they own land out to 20m beyond the planned development. IoMNHAS is pursuing this with DEFA.

2. There are three concerning aspects to the proposed changes to the Town & Country Planning Act. Firstly, it would empower the Council of Ministers to make 'Policy Directives' which can trump any Area Plans etc. Secondly, it specifies that any sizeable application may be called in for determination by CoMin, hence removing scrutiny by the Planning Committee. Thirdly, for some time the Government has neglected to follow their statutory obligations to appoint an Advisory Committee under section 40 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1999). This proposed amendment "clarifies" it by making it optional for the Government to appoint this committee - instead of making it optional, IoMNHAS feel the Government should just comply with their duty under current legislation. Details of the Consultation can be found via the Government's 'Consultation Hub' web site at <https://consult.gov.im/> or by telephoning the Cabinet Office on 685750. Consultation on these changes closes on 31st October 2018, and IoMNHAS would urge our members to consider the proposals and respond as they see fit.

Marshall Cubbon Bursaries

Every year, the Society offers up to two bursaries of up to £250 each in memory of the late Marshall Cubbon. They are available to full-time students who are researching a Manx-related natural history or cultural history topic at a recognised institution of Higher Education. Applications for the 2019 bursaries will open on 1st November 2018, more details and the application form can be found on the Society's web site www.manxantiquarians.com – information on a previous recipient's research on page 4.

Isle of Man Studies

Work on the next edition of *Isle of Man Studies* is underway, with a number of very interesting papers. The Society is committed to publishing vol XVI in the first half of 2019, hopefully in time for the AGM at the end of March 2019.

IoMNHAS Committee

Natural History is still under-represented on the Committee - any member who feels they can contribute in this area is asked to contact the Hon. Secretary, Pauline Stewart, via Secretary@manxantiquarians.com

Research Projects

Round Mounds



Excavations continued at Berk, this time extended to four weeks, allowing much more to be excavated by the team of university staff/students, and volunteers – including IoMNHAS members. A number of exciting discoveries were made (such as this marvelous urn), plus much material recovered for lab analysis. The Round Mounds project leaders will be giving one of our Winter lectures (16th Feb 2019) on some of the osteological (bone) material they have been analysing, and what that can tell us about Neolithic and Bronze Age burial practices on the Island.

Stone Axes

Amber Roy, of Newcastle University, received a Marshall Cubbon bursary from IoMNHAS at the start of 2018 to extend her work on stone battle-axes and axe-hammers from across Northern England and Scotland to the Manx collection. Amber is seen here (in a picture from MNH) examining some of the Manx axes in the Manx Museum.



Scanning the Manx Crosses and Carved Stones

An exciting project is under way by MNH to 3D-scan these crosses and carved stones – originally planned as an aid to their conservation, the 3D models will be made available for free public on-line access as well in due course.

Data Protection

IoMNHAS introduced a personal data privacy and communication policy some years ago (link below). Tynwald eventually brought the new European "General Data Protection Regulations" ("GDPR") into force in the Island with effect from 1st August 2018, and the 'Implementing Regulations' are now being finalised. The Committee continues to review its procedures but is committed to complying with the new GDPR.

Keeping in touch

- If you haven't already done so, you can join our e-mail list used to keep members informed – details & privacy policy: www.manxantiquarians.com/page_72633.html
- Visit our FaceBook page, for information from the Society and selected other items of interest to our members. You don't have to be a member of FaceBook to read our page; but if you are, please "Like" our page to be automatically notified when updates are posted www.facebook.com/IsleOfManNaturalHistoryandAntiquarianSociety/
- Visit our web site www.manxantiquarians.com