



Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society

Spring 2021 newsletter

Welcome to our Spring 2021 newsletter which is intended to give a summary of some of the recent activities and future plans of the Society, and other selected topics of interest to members.

This is the first newsletter since the onset of COVID-19; the Society is grateful for the continued support of our members through these challenging times. Thank you to those members who have provided their email address – it makes it easier and cheaper to keep in touch; and thank you to all who returned voting forms (either electronically or by post) for the recent ‘virtual’ AGM.

After the spring 2020 lockdown, the start of the summer 2020 programme was delayed but thanks to Pat Newton’s organisation a very full programme was run in a COVID-safe manner. In total four evening walks (including one twice) and five afternoon walks were held and the Society also led a successful outing as part of Heritage Open Days in October.

As you will see from the enclosed Summer Excursion programme, Pat has arranged another great mix of excursions for Summer 2021. **Please note the booking arrangements on the card – these apply to everyone and to all excursions.**

The visit to Cumbria which had been planned for September 2020 was a casualty of the COVID lockdown and border controls, but it is hoped this can take place in 2021. Please see note from Pat on the next page for how to register interest.

The Winter 2020-21 Lecture programme was regrettably hard-hit by the spring 2021 COVID lockdowns, but we hope that the postponed lectures can be re-scheduled as part of the winter 2021-22 season. IoMNHAS Committee is currently investigating the options, practicality and costs for on-line lectures to increase future resilience, potentially not just on-line (e.g. ‘Zoom’) but also hybrid where those who can attend watch in person, and those who can’t be there in person can watch remotely.

As previously advised, the Committee has been working with the Attorney General’s chambers (who regulate Charities on the Isle of Man) on updating the Society’s Rules - to ensure compliance with the recently updated Charities Act & Regulations, to maximise resilience if situations similar to the recent lockdowns re-occur, and also make any other appropriate updates. Once the revisions have been prepared, they must be signed off by the AG’s chambers before we can put them to the members at an AGM or EGM; we will advise as soon as that stage is reached.

Fairs and Festivals

Although lockdowns in 2020 meant Tynwald Fair and the Southern Show were cancelled, we did attend the 2020 Food and Drink Festival with great success. This year the Society has decided we will attend all three events - Tynwald Fair (5th July), the Southern Show (31st July / 1st August), and the Food and Drink Festival (18th and 19th September). **We need your help** as we can only do this with volunteers to help run the Society's stall – please contact Dave Martin (Dave.Martin@manx.net) if you think you would like to join in and have fun on our stall.

Off-Island West Cumbria Excursion

Hopefully, this year, we'll get there! Potentially a 5/6 day trip, depending on minibus availability, sometime between 3rd and 10th September. Estimated costs would be similar to last year's – hiring a minibus across might cost less but will reduce time for site visits. Currently information on opening of sites is not available so no guarantees that we will go ahead. If potentially interested in participating, please let me know – email patricianewton@manx.net or phone 861560 / 366269 **before 30th June 2021**. Thereafter, **I will only communicate with those who have expressed an interest.** If you wish a further copy of suggested itinerary please contact me as above.

Patricia Newton

IoMNHAS Committee

As there were no newsletters in 2020, there are now three Committee members/officers to introduce to the members in this newsletter: Bob Moon, who served as Vice-President last year and was elected President for the current year; Anton Cashen who took over from Clare Bryan as Hon. Membership Secretary last year; and Christian Cowley who has just taken over as Hon. Treasurer from Ian Wrench. Ian is now taking a well-deserved rest and the Society owes him a great debt for his careful stewardship during his tenure as Hon. Treasurer; Clare remains on and assisting the Committee.

Here in their own words Bob, Anton and Christian introduce themselves:

Bob: Our society is a unique institution drawing together two important areas of our island's heritage and I am thrilled and honoured to have been elected to the presidency this year. Many people will know that I have active involvement with aspects of natural history. This love of the natural world started in my childhood and continued through my formal education, leading to a degree in Botany from Dundee University. I have also nurtured a passing interest in archaeology and antiquities which began when I took part in the excavation of a roman site at Alavna near Watercrock, Kendal during my student years. The professional side of my life was untouched by any of these interests. It progressed from manufacturing to IT to financial services and project management and 20 years ago brought me to the Isle of Man. Since then I have lived the happy life of a stop-over and have been able to

give full rein to my interests in the natural world. I am active in wildlife conservation as a licensed bat worker and like to help with biological recording, specifically of the island's fungi. Visitors to the Curraghs Wildlife Park might have listened to one of my wildlife presentations, and I have found a new professional calling as an IOM Blue Badge tour guide. Coming out of lockdown this month we have put together an exciting and varied programme of excursions which I hope you will enjoy. I look forward to meeting many of you during the course of the season.

Anton: Having benefitted from the work of Manx voluntary organisations and community groups all my life, I believe that if you are able to contribute and give back, then you should. An extended career break currently allows me time to contribute to the valuable work of IOMNHAS as Membership Secretary. I can usually be found managing and enjoying my 31 acre not-for-profit smallholding and woodland or discovering the Island's geology and coastal ecology by sea kayak and on foot.

Christian: Living in Maughold with a family of three teenagers, my time has until recently been spent working (I have worked in the financial services industry for the 20+ years – the last 16 years here on the Isle of Man) and ferrying my children to the numerous afterschool and weekend activities. However this is starting to reduce allowing me time to look at my own hobbies a bit more (aside from sport). I was brought up on farms, firstly in North Devon and then (when my father returned to the IOM) on the Island, I have benefited from a close connection with nature and its links to Mann. Following school, I attended Nottingham University to study Archaeology – with a focus on the Celtic and Roman periods of both the British Isles and Europe and I spent a number of weeks over four summers assisting on the Crickley Hill excavations in Gloucestershire. Having a life-long love of heritage, more specifically that of the Isle of Man and with a keen interest in a wide range of historical and archaeological subjects - getting involved with the IOMNHAS is the ideal opportunity to develop my hobbies and perhaps make a bit of a difference.

Research co-ordinators

We currently have two Research co-ordinators on IoMNHAS Committee; our Society Rules allows up to four. Natural History is still under-represented, any member who feels they can contribute in this area is asked to contact the Hon. Secretary secretary@manxantiquarians.com

Deemster William Cain CBE, QC, TH, RBV

Just as this newsletter was going to press we learned the sad news of the passing of William Cain, a past President and long-term supporter of IoMNHAS and other Manx institutions and societies. We extend our sympathy to his family; a full tribute to William will appear in *IOM Studies XVII* (along with William's seminal paper on the Manx Constitution).

Building Conservation and Planning

Our environment (natural and built), and our built heritage, remain at risk. The Society continues to make representations on planning applications. The Society has also made a number of submissions on proposals to add buildings to the Protected Buildings Register, for which there is an immense backlog. The Society has also made representations on the need to progress Conservation Areas, a number of which have been outstanding for decades.

Members' attention is drawn to the just-published initial list of sites in the Area Plan for the North and West, which is being progressed to allocate more land for housing despite all signs that the population is not increasing as the Government claimed when justifying the housing land grab in the recent Eastern Area Plan. The Society will be making a submission, but weight of number of submissions does count so we would encourage any concerned members to respond individually as well. The plans and details can be found at <https://consult.gov.im/cabinet-office/area-plan-for-the-north-and-west-preliminary-publi/> and responses have to be in to the Cabinet Office by 25th June 2021.

Our fortnightly double-page Buildings at Risk article series in the *Isle of Man Examiner*, which we publish under the Alliance for Building Conservation (ABC), continues. A full list of previous articles can be found on www.ABC.org.im

Isle of Man Studies (Proceedings of IoMNHAS)

As previously advised, *IOM Studies* has reverted to a biennial schedule (as the *Proceedings* were previously). A bumper volume XVII is on the way - it had been hoped to have it out by now but COVID lockdowns have prevented a couple of authors checking some references, but it will be going to press shortly.

Keeping in touch

- **About 70% of our members have kindly provided their email address. If you haven't done so and would like to receive appropriate bulletins please drop an email to membership@manxantiquarians.com and ask for your email to be added).** Our privacy and data protection policy can be found at: www.manxantiquarians.com/page_72633.html
- Visit our FaceBook page (you don't have to be a member of FaceBook to read our page; but if you are member of FaceBook, please "Like" our page and you can be automatically notified when any updates are posted) www.facebook.com/IsleOfManNaturalHistoryandAntiquarianSociety/
- Visit our web site www.manxantiquarians.com