



Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society

Spring 2019 newsletter

Welcome to our Spring 2019 newsletter. Enclosed is the summer programme card with a cornucopia of excursions; this newsletter is intended to give a summary of some of the activities of the Society during the last six months, and other selected topics of interest to members.

Winter lectures

We have enjoyed a thoroughly stimulating series of lectures this winter on a wide range of topics. They have all been well-attended, several by over a hundred; however we must though take this opportunity to once again apologise to those members who were turned away by Museum staff from Pat Tutt's lecture in January on the use of white quartz on the Island. The Museum is carrying out work to improve the main entrance adjacent to the lecture theatre (including power-assisted outer doors) and that work had been expected to start in January 2019. As a result, the IoMNHAS bookings for the lecture theatre were all moved to the iMuseum for January – March 2019. Unfortunately, the turnout was so good we found out after the end of the lecture that we had unwittingly exceeded the capacity of the iMuseum seminar room, and that the Museum staff had had to turn away several members of the Society.

Data Protection

GDPR is now in force for the Isle of Man, and your Committee has reviewed the data the Society holds and how it is used.

The Isle of Man Natural History & Antiquarian Society holds minimal contact/personal details for members of the Society - this data is limited to name(s) and address, which are essential for membership, and e-mail or telephone number if the member provides it. This data is held and used by the Society for the sole purpose of administering and delivering the benefits of your membership, namely: (i) correspondence relating to membership (renewals etc.); (ii) correspondence relating to administration and meetings of your Society (ordinary, annual and other meetings, lectures and excursions); and (iii) newsletters, bulletins and journals produced by the Society.

The Society will not use your contact information for any other purpose, nor will the Society pass your contact details to any third party without your permission. The Society does not have, or retain, any other personal or any financial information for members.

Fairs and Festivals

After last year's success, the Society has decided we will attend three events in 2019 - Tynwald Fair (5th July), the Southern Show (27th and 28th July), and the Food and Drink Festival (14th and 15th September). 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.

Building Conservation and Planning

Ross Brazier arrived to fill the new post of Registered Buildings Officer within the Planning & Building Control Division at DEFA almost a year ago, and hit the ground running bringing professionalism, insight, independence and pragmatism to the RBO role and the conservation of Manx built heritage. Inroads were slowly made into the backlog of buildings proposed for addition to the Protected Buildings Register; although previous delays within DEFA have meant that a number of buildings already proposed have been lost or deteriorated to the extent they are beyond saving. Unfortunately we learned at the end of March that Ross was returning to the UK (apparently lured back by one of his previous employers). The Registered Buildings Officer post will be advertised, and we hope re-filled, as soon as possible.

Registered Buildings and Conservation Areas

The Society continues to comment on planning applications, and has also supported the inclusion of a number of buildings on the Protected Buildings Register. We would particularly draw attention that members' support is currently needed for proposals to Register the former Trafalgar Hotel on Douglas South Quay and to oppose the de-listing of the former Farmers' Combine Warehouse on the West Quay in Ramsey.

The Society supports the proposal made to the Cabinet Office to create a Douglas Head Conservation Area. One of the principal routes for proposing Conservation Areas used to be the 'Area Plan' - a number were proposed in the Southern Area Plan which was adopted by Tynwald in 2013, but six years on, still no action has occurred to complete the designation of those proposed Conservation Areas. With current focus on the Area Plan for the East (whose public inquiry has been delayed once more to Autumn 2019) it has been made clear that Conservation Areas can no longer be proposed via an Area Plan, they can only be progressed if an independent submission is made direct to the Cabinet Office. **IF** the Cabinet Office decide to accept and proceed with the proposal, there will be an opportunity to comment but before that happens, officials in the Cabinet Office must decide whether to take up the proposal, and there is a very real danger that the proposal could arbitrarily sink in an un-accountable fashion before it reaches public notice or consideration (as did some Registration proposals in times gone by). Therefore whilst it is not the normal time for views to be submitted, if any member wishes to see these plans at least brought forward for public scrutiny, you can write to the Planning Policy Section, Cabinet Office, Government Office, Bucks Rd, Douglas IM1 3PN.

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. We originally envisaged six articles to raise the profile of the plight of our built heritage leading up to the General Election in autumn 2016, but we've managed to keep going and not long ago published article number sixty-six. A full list of previous articles can be found on www.ABC.org.im

IoMNHAS Committee

We have welcomed a further two long-standing members of the Society who have been co-opted to join David Allwood as Research Coordinators. Nigel Crowe (President 1991) is returning, and Bob Moon joins the Committee for the first time.

Nigel will be well known to many of the membership as a stalwart of Manx historical, genealogical and landscape research; and Bob is a Blue Badge Guide who will also be known as a leading light in the Manx Bat Group (who helped lead our Bat Walk at Port Soderick in 2017).

We are now back up to three Research co-ordinators; Rule 8 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

Isle of Man Studies (Proceedings of IoMNHAS)

During Autumn 2018, Dave Martin had collected and started to work with authors on material ready for the new Hon. Editor, but no candidate came forward for the role. In January 2019, Dave Martin was appointed by the Committee (under Rule 9) as Hon. Editor of Isle of Man Studies (Proceedings of IoMNHAS).

Work on *Isle of Man Studies* volume XVI is nearing completion; all except two papers have been set, and page proofs are currently being prepared for / checked by authors. It is hoped that vol XVI will go to press later this Spring. *IOM Studies* will probably then revert to a biennial schedule (as the *Proceedings* were previously).

Research – excavations – two opportunities to get involved

The 'Round Mounds' team will be returning in 2019 to continue their exciting excavations at Cronk Guckley, Berk, courtesy of Robert and Anne Cannell. IoMNHAS members have participated in previous years, and there is an invitation to volunteer again this year (24 June – 19 July) alongside the university team – anyone interested please contact digisleofman@gmail.com

Plans are also being finalised for a proposed excavation (22 July - 4 August) at Renshent, courtesy of Mrs Angela Cain, to investigate some of the many anomalies identified by geophysical survey. Renshent is a quarterland farm in Malew which can be traced back to at least 1540, whose archaeology is potentially very rich. Not only is there a nearby keeill, but just to the south-west, in the vicinity of Clough Willey, possible prehistoric hut circles, a cup-marked stone and shieling mound have been

recorded. This is a local, rather than university-teaching dig (but will still be supervised by a professional archaeologist), and there should be ample opportunities for IoMNHAS members to undertake some of the many and varied jobs involved in an excavation such as this. For further details, anyone interested in volunteering please contact Pauline Stewart (pauline@mals-e.com).

Research – opportunities to collaborate

For the benefit of members who didn't make it to the AGM, three of our members have invited information or collaboration on their current research projects:

- Nigel Crowe, in connection with his research on the fourth Duke of Athol, is interested to discuss collaboration on transcribing Dr Oswald's diary; with examining records at Blair Castle; and in tracing plans, drawings or photographs of the Castle Mona basement. Also, in relation to defensive works, assistance with documenting a structure called The Big Cellar which existed until the 1930s on Castletown foreshore near King William's College.
- Tim Grass is researching the impact of the Protestant Reformation on the Isle of Man, with the aid of a grant from Culture Vannin and with a view to publishing on the subject. He is keen to network with others working on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Manx history, and plans to take a long view, covering the period to 1698.
- Richard Selman is researching historical records of frogs and newts, and is particularly interested in early records of these species and also if anyone knows of material from Edward Forbes on these species.

As there is a lot more information to share on these research topics, a special Research Update will be circulated later in April to those on the email list.

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