

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to be writing once again as Chairman of the Friends of Manx National Heritage. The Friends were established for the charitable purpose of the advancement and promotion of the aims and work of the Manx Museum and Manx National Heritage, and the acquisition or contribution towards the acquisition of suitable exhibits and property.

Here are a few examples of how we have helped preserve our unique cultural heritage and support the acquisitions and conservation of the National collection.

This year we have agreed to help Manx National Heritage with funding for osteological research following the conclusion of the Round Mounds Project, which uncovered thirteen deposits of human remains. Round mounds are earthen mounds built over human burial sites. They are found throughout the British Isles and in Continental Europe. First appearing in the Neolithic Age around 3500 BC, their use continued in some form into the Bronze Age. The Isle of Man’s prehistoric round mounds were investigated in a new research project undertaken by researchers from Newcastle University and University of Leicester.

FMNH also provided funding for Manx National Heritage to purchase five debit/credit card reader devices - three for MNH sites that do not yet have them and two handheld devices for events such as Heritage Open Days. With fewer people carrying and using cash these days, card reader devices are essential for collecting donations and payments.

When you attend the AGM, you will hear Connie Lovel Executive Director of MNH’s presentation giving more details about what has been going on, how support from the Friends continues to assist and where the funds have been spent.

Our wonderful Friends volunteers have helped at several MNH events and gardening volunteers at Cregneash, Rushen Abbey and The Grove make an enormous difference with the continued development of the gardens. We have provided volunteers for the Little People’s Picnic at Rushen Abbey, stewards for the ever-popular Heritage Open days and helpers for Hop Tu Naa at Cregneash. We are also hoping to work with MNH’s Conservation Officer at Laxey Wheel and other sites. Thank you to everyone who has helped for their time and commitment, you are all very much appreciated.

We did not have a stall at Tynwald Day this year, as our Administrator was away, but we attended the Royal Manx Agricultural Show and used Manx National Heritage’s ‘Museum on the Move’ boxes to tell stories about the Isle of Man’s heritage, focusing on the 200th anniversary of the RNLI and Childhood Toys and Games, which attracted a lot of visitors to our stall.

Our Administration Officer has also been doing some outreach work, giving a talk to the Peel Ladies’ Friendship Group, attending the University Isle of Man charity and volunteering event and this year we have joined the Isle of Man Chamber of Commerce, attending their networking events and the Chamber of Commerce annual Charity and Business Partnership Conference.

There has been a full programme of Member events this year. Our members have enjoyed eleven events, ranging from illustrated talks and behind the scenes visits at the Manx Museum, guided gallery tours, a guided walk with Dr Peter Davey outlining some of the archaeology followed by a strawberry tea at Rushen Abbey, a tour of the Grove’s gardens and a rainy but fascinating tour of the former internment camp at Hutchinson Square with former MNH Curator Yvonne Cresswell. We have started charging for events as a way of increasing our fundraising.

We are constantly updating records that still only have a postal address for contact details. If you are one of those, please can you provide us with your email address? As you must be aware this is the preferred way of staying in touch as it saves so much on postage and administration. Send an email to emma@fmnh.im and we will do the rest.

Lastly, my thanks as ever to Mary Bridson for her amazing work running the Membership and to Harley Shimmin, our Treasurer, for all his hard work and all my fellow Directors for their continued support.

But we would not be where we are without you – our members – so a continued huge thank you to you all for your support to our Charity. I hope to see as many of you as possible at our AGM on Saturday 9th November.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

 Michael Crowe

 Chairman.