



# Volunteer Newsletter

Issue 2  
Summer 2020

*We hope this newsletter will keep you up to date with what volunteers are up to throughout Manx Wildlife Trust. If you'd like to find out more about wider volunteering opportunities, please contact [enquiries@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@manxwt.org.uk). You can also keep in touch with what is happening with MWT by looking at our new Website ([mwt.im](http://mwt.im)), our [Facebook](#) page, [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#). The current edition of our member's magazine Manx Nature is also available online.*

## Return to Volunteering—Sarah Hickey

As a result of the lifting of covid-19 restrictions, we are happy to welcome many of our volunteers back! We missed the contribution and company of volunteers during the lockdown period, although I know many of you have still been actively doing your bit for wildlife. As part of my role as Volunteer Co-ordinator, I am hoping to visit different volunteer groups over the next couple of months, so if you have any comments or ideas about volunteering, I'd love to hear them!

## Our MWT Volunteer Team! - Leigh Morris

I'm now 6 months into my role as CEO of MWT, and I am absolutely delighted with the amazing contribution made by you, our volunteers. The work done by our Midweek Muckers, North & Southern Groups, Gift Shop & Visitor Centre Teams and all the others of you that help with our conservation work, and/or in the office is vital to MWT. We have some fantastic groups who are all doing amazing things. Thank you!

I've been fortunate that in my career to date, as I've worked with large teams of volunteers in horticultural colleges, botanical gardens and zoos and wildlife parks.

More amazing and passionate people who care strongly about nature and conservation, as I know you all do.

Based on my previous experiences, there are some things we are now looking to implement within MWT, that will hopefully better showcase your contribution, allow more people to volunteer with us, allow you all to make an even greater positive impact for nature, and make it clearer to the Island what being an MWT Volunteer means. We/I do not want to do anything to harm the wonderful groups/culture we already have, but instead look at ways we can perhaps learn from each other, and link up more for a greater gain:

- Many of you will know that we have a MWT Volunteer Coordinator (Sarah Hickey). The funding for this post was achieved by my predecessor, Tim Graham, and I'm delighted how Sarah is developing in this role. Sarah has oversight across all our volunteers and it is her function to organise MWT approaches, systems and processes if/when appropriate.

Sarah will be engaging with all our volunteers and volunteer groups in the coming months – please reach out to her with anything to do with volunteering with us.

- Sarah has written a generic MWT Volunteer Handbook. This will be distributed to all present and future volunteers. Existing handbooks (for e.g. the Muckers or Gift Shop) will remain as separate sections, with your specific information but will also hold the generic information in the one handbook.
- Sarah has produced a spreadsheet (soon to be a database) of all our volunteers. To help her get this up-to-date we are asking all existing volunteers to check and if necessary provide new information. We'd be grateful if you could provide that for Sarah when requested.



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- We have been granted 12 months funding from the Manx Lottery Trust to employ Rachael Harrop (Rey) for 2 days a week in a role to support our three visitor centres and retail outlets (Ayres, Peel and Scarlett). Rey will be available to assist with all aspects

of the work across our 3 centres and also develop joint messaging, signage and systems as appropriate. I encourage volunteers to make good use of her boundless enthusiasm and talents!

- We re-launched our MWT Volunteer Awards this year and have received nominations for some amazing people/contributions. All our volunteers and the contributions you make are amazing, but these awards are an opportunity for MWT to recognise particular excellence 'above and beyond'. We hope they become a part of MWT Volunteering culture for years ahead.

Thanks again for your wonderful contributions to MWT.

## News

### Muckers

Our practical conservation volunteers have recommenced their valuable work on our volunteers. A great turn-out of 25 volunteers worked at Goshen reserve on 2nd July, with energy levels kept up by the delicious cakes!



### Southern Group

Ten volunteers have kindly taken on duties at Scarlett Visitor Centre and the centre reopened on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. One

very special volunteer, William Cain, decided it was time to retire from Scarlett duties. William and his wife, Felicity, were founding members of what became the Manx Wildlife Trust and thus William's interest in Scarlett VC goes back to the centre's earliest days. Thank you, William and Felicity, for your long and greatly appreciated service to the public and this special area of Manx coastline.

Ballachurry Wetland Reserve was popular with local residents during the COVID-19 restrictions. Work parties do not take place on the reserve during bird nesting season but some necessary repairs to paths and boardwalks were undertaken. Special thanks to Guy and Janet Thompson for some of these. Sheila Norris continued her dedicated work of recording species on the site and, with some guidance from Tricia Sayle, kept an eye open for any urgent maintenance work that was required. Unfortunately brambles do not obey lock down restrictions and keeping the paths clear of overhanging brambles and nettles is a constant task at this time of year.

Three enthusiastic ladies have recently volunteered to help maintain and develop Earystane Reserve. Cheryl Callister had the idea of "adopting" Earystane, and Southern Group Committee were delighted to meet her and look forward to working together.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> July Ian and Carrie Costain opened to the public their delightful and interesting cottage garden near Fistard. This was in aid of MWT and was the sole survivor of a "Gardening for Wildlife" weekend which Southern Group had planned before COVID-19 struck. Thank you, Ian and Carrie, for all your hard work and imagination in creating a garden that is a joy to visit.

### Northern Group

The Ayres Visitor centre opened from 1<sup>st</sup> July, but it has been noticeably quiet so far; more an opportunity to catch up on our refreshed volunteer manual and look at the lovely display of shop products



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Although the Gardeners Fair was cancelled Ian and Joe had produced a huge range of plants from seeds and cuttings. The first thought was to hold them over to next year, but this proved impossible especially with the very dry weather in April/May so.... Ian got going on Facebook and with Manx Plant and Garden Conservation Society to sell from an online list with call and collect by appointment. Joe kept potting on and splitting so the plant numbers kept increasing to supply demand! Over £2,300 worth of plants have been sold: more than the plant sales at last year's Fair! A huge thank you to them both! Ian has also "recruited" a satellite group of 6 "growers" who will grow plants/ take cuttings for next year's Fair.

Jean Buck played a huge part in producing the art exhibition at House of Mannan which closed the week after it opened BUT it has now re opened as well as being able to be viewed on line and purchased through an on line catalogue produced by MNH. Please view the fantastic artwork: you may be tempted to treat yourselves!

### Looking forward

We have suspended our Northern Group meetings due to COVID-19, but I am hoping we may be able to start again possibly using Zoom

We have a raffle at the Ramsey Co-op on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> August (to be confirmed but possibly on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August as well). This has been very generously offered by the Coop as we could not hold our bag pack in May.

MWT is one of the Co-op's chosen charities 2019/20 one of 6 local causes which benefit from a share of the Island wide fund raised from the 1p's which if you are a member you will see on the bottom of every Co-op receipt you get when shopping. This is in addition to the 5p you personally receive as a member as a 'reward' on the wide range of goods which are Co-op branded.

### Wildlife Gift Shop

With much joy the Shop was able to reopen for morning sessions only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 3rd June. Through the magic of social media people seemed to find us and we have had worthwhile sales



virtually every day including some big spenders and many cries of 'Thank goodness you're open again!' Rachel had put some orders on hold back in March and since reopening we have received these one by one, so there are now genuine new lines to be found in the Shop.

From Monday 29th June we upgraded to opening Mondays to Saturdays with normal hours 10.30-1700. As customers will all be Island residents, we decided not to open on Sundays yet. However, we feel we must retain the perspex screen around the serving counter, as it is not the sort of thing to put up and down at will. And who knows what protection we'll need when the Island's portcullis is raised? It was easy for Clive to assemble the July rota, because nobody is on holiday or away anywhere and everyone was very keen to get back on duty. What a team!

### Calf of Man



Our wardens are now back on the calf and busy ringing birds and surveying a range of wildlife, from lizards to seals. We will shortly be looking for volunteers to help with a wide variety of jobs, ideally for an extended period but we will consider all offers! If you're interested in learning new skills or using existing ones in this unique environment, please get in touch.

For eight weeks every autumn, Manx Wildlife Trust (MWT) sends volunteers to the Calf of Man to conduct seal surveys, to monitor the number of births and take a photographic record of adults, with the aim of better understanding the Isle of Man's seal population. The surveys start mid-September, to enable the survey to capture information about the pups and adult seals. Manx



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Wildlife Trust is looking for an enthusiastic volunteer to part-take in the whole survey period and the following 2 weeks to complete the data analysis. This is an exciting opportunity to study these unique mammals for someone already with or wanting to develop their photo ID skills.

The role will be based at the Calf of Man Bird Observatory for 8 weeks and then 2 weeks on the Isle of Man. Availability needs to be flexible, as the boat trips on/off the Calf of Man are very weather dependent. Shorter periods would be considered based on experience.

Tasks may include:

- Daily visits to pupping sights to count the number of births
- Photographing each pup with its mother (and all adult seals) and comparing photos with our existing photo ID catalogue
- Recording the developmental stage of the seal pup
- Monitoring mortality rate of the pups

Ideally experience in photo ID of seals would be preferable but training can be provided. Applicants must be comfortable walking 4 miles a day on variable terrain.

There is some support for this role. Accommodation will be provided on the Calf of Man and a £30 per week food allowance will also be provided.

The role shall report directly to MWT's Marine Officer, Lara Howe and enquiries should be directed to [lara@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:lara@manxwt.org.uk)

If applying, a CV should be sent, along with a cover letter outlining relevant experience, to the Marine Officer, Lara Howe at [lara@manxwt.org.uk](mailto:lara@manxwt.org.uk)

## Events

### Southern Group

The Southern Group are hosting a guided wildflower walk at Scarlett on Saturday 25th July. If anybody would like to get involved with helping at events like this, please get in touch.

## Festival of the Sea

This event will be going ahead on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th August, having been delayed by a month. As always, we are looking for volunteers to help on the weekend with the tanks and membership but also the week before for set up and a couple of days after for the take down. Also if anyone would like to bake the odd cake or biscuit for the



weekend that would be wonderful - it helps keep the energy levels up! This event really wouldn't be possible without you so thank you for all your support.

## Onchan Fun Day

We are planning to have a stall at this event on Saturday 15th August between 10.30am and 5.30pm. If you think you might be able to help with this, even for just a couple of hours, please could you get in touch?

## Fungus Foray

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September the Northern Group are holding a morning "Fungus Foray" - look out for more details closer to the time.

## Finally....

Thank you for your patience during COVID-19 restrictions and your enthusiasm to return to volunteering—we really couldn't manage without you!

Thanks also to all of the volunteers who have completed their volunteer forms. Hopefully this will help us to improve your experience as well as enabling us to fulfil our data protection requirements.

If you know of any volunteers who haven't received this newsletter, please could you ask them to get in touch so we can send them one?

Thanks !



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