

The Friends of Manx National Heritage



Dear Friends,

I am delighted to be writing once again as Chairman. Who would have thought that a year on from the last AGM there would be so much change within the Friends of Manx National Heritage? As you will recall Nicola, our previous Development and Admin Officer retired after 20 years at the end of 2022 and Hayley Naldrett was appointed as her replacement. This is only a part time role and Hayley left us in August to take up full time employment. We have been very fortunate to find Emma Morter to take on this role and you will find a detailed description of her in the recent Newsletter. We thank Hayley for keeping the Friends ticking over in this transition period and for scheduling content for our Facebook page, updating regularly, and creating a LinkedIn page with the aim of reaching out to more Corporates.

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 how we have helped to directly preserve our unique cultural heritage and also support the acquisitions and conservation of the National collection.

The brand-new TT Gallery is now open. We made a contribution to acquire artefacts and ensure that those already in the ownership of MNH were fit for display, and a plaque recognising this is placed at the entrance of the gallery. Exclusive behind the scenes tours were arranged for us earlier this year. These were conducted by Matthew Richardson, who has extensive knowledge of the TT and the new Gallery and provided an opportunity to hear more about the fantastic artefacts on display and learn more about the vibrant history of the TT races. On this occasion we charged a fee as a fund-raising opportunity for the Friends.

I hope you all had the opportunity to visit the drop-in sessions to showcase the plans for the Nautical Museum Transformation project. Concept visual designs for the regeneration of the Nautical Museum in Castletown were on display where representatives of MNH and the Project Design Team, Dannatt Johnson Associates, were on hand to discuss the regeneration proposals and answer any questions. This was all hugely informative and provided a virtual tour of the design which incorporates extensive conservation works to bring the historic buildings back into a state of good repair, as well as re-purposing currently unused outbuildings. Naturally this included the new boat hall where The Peggy, one of the most significant items held by MNH for the nation, will be returned and displayed. MNH are in ongoing discussions over funding for this project with the Government and your directors have already agreed to assist with an element of this funding.

As stated in the MNH media release: 'This project will create a landmark venue to be proud of, housing a world-class, family-friendly visitor attraction with a broad appeal, highlighting the wider story of the maritime history of the Isle of Man in a compelling and engaging manner. For those who are familiar with the Nautical Museum, you will be able to see the buildings in an entirely new light next week and we look forward to welcoming as many people as possible to view the proposed designs and to discuss the potential positive impact of this project'.

In May we agreed to fund up to £10,000 towards the acquisition of a group of Quayle family portraits (one being the only known colour depiction of George Quayle). Based on the previous experience of similar items the MNH Curatorial staff estimate that this set of miniatures may be worth in the region of £10,000. The MNH collections team will be bidding at auction this month for these 4 x Portrait miniatures originating from a descendant of the Quayle family. They would be displayed in The Nautical Museum and will significantly add to the story of the Quayle family, their connection to Castletown and the roles they played over the centuries.

We paid £5,000 for the repatriation of the statue of the Manx Trafalgar hero Captain John Quilliam on the Quarterdeck in Castletown.

A generator is needed on the Calf of Man for the observatory. The Estate Warden who looks after the equipment has suggested that £7,000 - £8,000 is needed and we have agreed that this will be purchased and in place for the start of the 2024 season. This summer season has been covered by the loan of a generator from the DoI until the appropriate type of generator could be sourced.

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

We have been unable to run the FMNH trailer at events such as Tynwald Day, the Southern Show and the Royal Show this year though we will be endeavouring to see whether this can start up again in 2024. We intend to return to a fuller Events Programme next year.

There have however been volunteering opportunities to assist with MNH events and most importantly gardening volunteers at Cregneash, Rushen Abbey and The Grove making a huge difference with the continued development of the gardens. Thank you to everyone who has helped for their time and commitment, you are all very much appreciated.

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

But we wouldn't 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 25th November.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,

Michael Crowe
Chairman.