# ISLAND HERITAGE TRUST

The Conservation Land Trust of Deer Isle and Stonington, Maine, and Surrounding Islands

### Volume XXIII, No. 1

## **INSIDE IHT's PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

ay "program" to the members of most organizations and what generally comes to mind is a lecture or PowerPoint presentation with slides and commentary. While IHT also offers such presentations periodically as part of its annual events schedule, the majority of the Trust's programs are intended by design to be hands-on experiences. Walks on IHT

preserves that engage not only the intellect, but also the senses; knottying and rope splicing workshops that feature practical skills; bird walks and tidal pool explorations that invite curiosity and engender awe, are but a sampling of the many programs IHT offers year in and year out. Such programming has always been a significant component of IHT's mission -- to educate and involve participants in a discovery process that not only fosters a deeper feeling for their surroundings, but leads them, we hope, to more educated and thoughtful care of those surroundings.

At the heart of this challenging effort is IHT's Program Committee, a creative group of between 7-9 members whose task it is to ferret out scientists, naturalists, teachers and artists willing to volunteer their time and particular talents. Not only does the committee find volunteers to lead activities, it is also responsible for arranging the details of all the programs as well as modifying them when necessary. Occasionally, an expert in a particular area is invited to join the committee for some lively brainstorming. Such a meeting with Bert Yankielun resulted in a new series of programs aimed at getting people outdoors in winter to explore on snowshoes and build snow shelters.

While IHT has been offering an ambitious array of programs for many years, the Program Committee, currently under the leadership of Jane Osborne, has been eager to involve



New preschool program perfectMarissa Hutchinsonfor curious kids like Alden Guyot

families and children to a greater degree than in the past. By orienting specific programs to preschoolers, the committee hopes to ignite an early enthusiasm for the environment in the children to help foster a lifelong interest in the natural world.

The new program, to be launched this summer and dear to Jane's heart, is targeted specifically toward both families and preschoolers, a population that committee member Doug Wilson noted is "an important one to target." The program will include a weekly story time and related craft activity for little ones, both, of course, connected to the natural world. Books by such writers as Deer Isle's own Cherie Mason and acclaimed artist Rebekah Raye will be featured, while volunteer readers will include librarians and even a few grandmothers. Local artist and teacher Sarah Doremus will help develop the craft

component of the program.

Jane noted that the new program directed toward preschoolers reflects her fervent belief that the younger children are when exposed to the natural world, the greater the likelihood they will become more sensitive toward and engaged with the environment as they grow older, a belief informed by her significant experience in environmental education. Following her retirement from a career in health care administration for the U.S. Federal Health Service, Jane established an environmental academy in the Washington, D. C.

area. While she is clearly enthusiastic about providing a program not only for visiting families with young children, but especially for local island families, Jane noted that the work of developing any new program is not without its challenges.

Among them, she said, are the constraints imposed by a limited budget. Currently, most of the activities offered by the trust, with the exception of programs like the boat tours, are free to participants. It's possible, Jane commented, that we (*cont on p. 5*)

Spring 2014



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reality, land trusts are about protecting land for people, about forging links between people and nature. Land trusts are also about protecting the natural resources that form the base of our economies - whether those resources are clam flats or clean freshwater for our taps.

The late twentieth century found us more and more divorced from nature, in spite of the growing environmental movement- and the trend continues. Environmental issues have grown so large and overwhelming as to seem insurmountable: climate change and the increasing chemical soup in which we live, among others. IHT cannot address either of these in any substantive way, but we can keep areas of

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Michael J. Little

a n d 1trusts are all about and land. protecting the land from people right? This is a belief that is heard all too often. In Deer Isle green and sequestering carbon; preserve habitat for wildlife and marine life. We can provide places where people can find contemplative peace away from the sounds and frenzy of the modern world. Places where the forces of nature are the principle actors not man-made machines. We can help nurture a sense of wonder and curiosity in our young people, give them a scientific lens through which to view their own backyard.

Is this perfect? Perhaps not, but it is one thing the land trust can do for the people of Deer Isle - residents, summer people and visitors. Another benefit the land trust provides is access to the tidal zone for those who work there (clammers) and for anyone who simply wishes to enjoy the shore.

While private property signs often say "Stay Away," Island Heritage Trust says, "You are Welcome to Visit our Shores," "Land for the Enjoyment of People," "Access for People."

## **TROOP 144: BENCH PROJECT**

Then his Scoutmaster, Jackie Pelletier, first met Cody he was eleven years old. He shook her hand and said, "Hello. I'm Cody Eaton and I want to be an Eagle Scout."

A junior in high school now, Cody is very close to making that goal. He has chosen IHT and its preserves as the beneficiary for his community project, completion of which is a requirement for becoming an Eagle Scout. He is responsible for planning, completing and raising all the necessary funds for a project that benefits his community. (Cody needs to raise at least \$1,000 for the project to happen.) Working in consultation with the IHT's Stewardship Committee he intends to build and site at least 6 benches. Someday someone might very well enjoy watching eagles soar from this Eagle Scout's bench at one of IHT's preserves-thank you, Cody, and good luck with vour project!

Donations for Cody's project can be made payable to "Troop 144—Bench Project.," PO Box 265, Stonington, ME 04681.



The mission of Island Heritage Trust is to conserve significant open space, scenic areas, wildlife habitats, natural resources, historic and cultural features that offer public benefit and are essential to the character of the Deer Isle area.



## **IHT'S MARTHA BELL** JOINS HIGH SCHOOL RENAISSANCE

artha Bell may be the new environmental education coordinator at the Island Heritage Trust, working with students and teachers on the Ma-

rine Pathways Program at the Deer Isle-Stonington High School, but she sees her role as so much more than that.

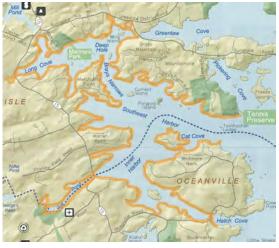
"I am one piece of the Deer Isle-Stonington High School renaissance," says the 52-year-old Bell. "The school is going through a transformation and has big goals and creative ways of getting there. This is a piece of that."

Bell is helping direct a studentled research study of Southeast Harbor to determine the health of its ecological system and whether there's been any long-term impact from mussel dragging, silt build-

up, and freshwater runoff on the ocean bed in that area. The Marine Pathways students, pursuing hands-on, project-based learning that makes subjects such as science

## "The kids are becoming young scientists ...."

more relevant to their everyday lives, chose to focus on Southeast Harbor based on the concerns of lifelong island resident and fisherman, Herbie Carter. Carter presented his observations on Southeast Harbor to the students and the class later toured the area by boat. They will be working in the field collecting and analyzing data, learning about ecology and population dynamics, while honing



Outlined in orange: Deer Isle-Stonington's Southeast Harbor.



their math and public presentation skills. "The kids are becoming young scientists," says Bell. "Real-life science is key to their education."

> Prior to joining IHT, Bell served for 18 years as educational program director at the Marine Environmental Research Institute in Blue Hill. A 1984 graduate of Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass., Bell has devoted her entire career to environmental studies. She spent 10 years on Cape Cod, working at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History in Brewster and for the National Environmental Education Development Collaborative in Provincetown, among other jobs. She moved to Blue Hill in 1993 with her husband Mark Bell, a potter. The couple has a son in his Marissa Hutchinson sophomore year at Maine Maritime

Academy and a daughter in her jun-

ior year at George Stevens Academy.

In addition to her work at IHT, which is a part-time position, Bell is the part-time program coordinator for Friends of Blue Hill Bay, a non-profit group dedicated to preserving the natural ecology and traditional marine fisheries of the bay. Currently, she is managing a citizen-as-scientist project monitoring the health of the clam flats in Blue Hill Bay.

Despite her long experience in environmental education, Bell says the Marine Pathways program represents a first for her in that the research her students are working on is integrated into the school's overall curriculum, rather than treated as a once-a-week classroom feature. "I've never done anything quite like this before," says Bell, noting "this is a new road for everyone."

### **CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECT**

Curious about your world? Like to be outdoors? Want to hone your observation skills? Or learn to use scientific field equipment? ... YES! Then you should be a citizen scientist!

IHT needs information about Southeast Harbor. With so much happening and changing day to day on Deer Isle, some baseline data collected by local people will be a resource for us all. We want to learn about the effects of land change on the bay, to learn about changes in eel grass habitat, intertidal biodiversity, invasive species (Green crab, Asian shore crab), water temperatures, smelt and alewife fish populations, and more. This database would be incredibly useful to anyone studying estuaries and especially to the DISHS Marine Studies Program. Maintaining and protecting our fisheries is no longer just the realm of experts and managers. If we want a viable coastal community we all need to Join IHT in this investigation for the future of Deer Isle. help.

## **VOLUNTEER PROFILE:** A WAY OF LIFE FOR JUDY CURTIS



Judy and Dusty

Anne Beerits

ne of Judy Curtis's favorite tasks, if indeed it can be called by that name instead of "really, really fun" -- as she herself labels it -- is transcribing the comments and messages left in IHT's Letterboxes. Once these notes, which Judy says she just "loves to read," are transcribed, she passes on the collected transcriptions to Marissa Hutchinson, to be filed at the IHT office. If that were Judy's sole act of volunteerism, it would be contribution enough. But this sort of "fun" is merely the tip of the iceberg, just a scratch, in fact, on the broad surface of Judy's volunteer service on the island.

When she moved to Deer Isle in July 2008, it was to take up year-round residence in a home she's owned for about 30 years, she said in a recent interview. During the years preceding that move, Judy provided counseling for troubled boys as well as developing outdoor activities and other programs for kids in low-income communities, equipped with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in textile design as well as a Masters' degree in art therapy. She shifted gears radically after a dozen years in social service work, by opening an antiques shop and participating in high-end shows. By that time, she also had lived in both Utah and Idaho, and returned to her native New England because she missed the East Coast. Born in Massachusetts, she also lived for a time in Vermont and New Hampshire before her move to Maine.

While Judy was familiar with the island after visiting for many years, she said it took her awhile to fully appreciate all the "gifts to be found in Deer Isle," among them the "great bunch of people on the island [and the] amazing amount of preserved land in a place the size of Deer Isle. I took the preserves for granted at first" she remarked, but added that she soon came to recognize their diverse riches and the generosity of their donors. Having been a lifelong volunteer, she was soon moved to "give back to the

# *"I took the preserves for granted at first."*

community" by volunteering at IHT on what else, but the Volunteer Committee. It was Anne Beerits, she said, who drew her in. Before long she was enlisting Jackie Pelletier to get the Boy Scouts to help clean up the Reach Beach, something she continues to do.

The list of Judy's volunteer involvements is long and varied: She's made cookies for Tom Kellogg's knot workshop, helped cut sections of the Backbone Trail, and still helps clear trails on IHT's preserves. These days she also serves on the Program Committee, helping to develop new activities and programs that she believes are "a wonderful way to educate people about the environment of the island." Judy's volunteerism doesn't end with IHT, however, but extends far beyond. For two years, for example, she helped an infirm neighbor through Neighbor Care, by frequently walking the elderly woman's dog. Moreover, she often visited that neighbor out of sheer friendliness and concern for her welfare.

And ask anyone about Judy's contributions to the Evergreen Garden Club and you'll learn how she helps to cut back invasives at Mariner's Park as well as helps organize the club's annual, island-wide garden tour.

You might think this list of activities would preclude doing much else, but Judy also works part-time at Nervous Nellie's and keeps her hand in the antiques business by scouring flea markets and selling her finds at local shows. And lest you think relaxation for Judy means sitting by the shore catching her breath, think again.

Never idle for long, she enjoys hiking, often in the company of her Golden Retriever, Dusty; rowing; kayaking; and sailing her red-sailed, rehabbed sailboat. She also takes classes at Havstack as well as with local artists, and manages, on top of all that, to go on the occasional extended vacation, one which typically involves camping and long-distance bicycling. If, as Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give," then Judy Curtis has made a profoundly rich life through her many volunteer activities -- generous gifts, indeed, to her adopted island community.

### SOME OF JUDY'S FAVORITE LETTERBOX QUOTES:

We love your perfect untouched piece of paradise. Thank you for welcoming us and sharing it. – Light & love, Ben & Laurel I stand here overlooking Greenlaw Cove, listening to the sea gulls & feeling the wind. Thank you IHT. Life is good. – Lance Broy, Athens, OH.

I am the only one here in the warm sunshine the earth awakens there is so much to attend to after the long cold winter...if I still myself and truly listen...beyond the cars, in a deeper settling...all around & beneath me...everything is pulsating with new life. –Nettie

# TOM WESSELS ON **DEER ISLE**

HT is very fortunate to welcome Tom Wessels to the island for a day of programs in late July. On Tuesday, July 29 at 7 PM he will speak on "The Myth of Progress" at St. Brendan's Episcopal In his book of the same name, Wessels offers a Church. provocative critique of Western progress from a scientific perspective," according to the University of Vermont Press. An ecol-

ogist and founding director of the master's degree program in Conservation Biology at Antioch University New England, he is an impassioned and original thinker on the subject of sustainability and the nature of place. Wessels is the current chair of The Center for Whole Communities and, in addition to teaching and writing, has conducted workshops all over the U.S. for more than 30 years.

Earlier in the day, Wessels will conduct a workshop for IHT volunteer stewards based on his book "Reading the Forested Landscape." Likened to forest forensics, this process of "reading" a particular landscape "is an interactive narrative that involves humans and nature. For those interested in enhancing their sense of place, I know of no better way than by becoming intimately acquainted with their local forests and the fascinating stories they have to tell." This training workshop is open only to IHT stewards. We currently have openings for stewards on preserves, conservation lands and islands. If you are interested in



Photo provided by Tom Wessels

learning about what's involved in volunteer stewardship please contact us, and take part in this fascinating workshop!

#### Annual Shore Dinner & Benefit Auction Friday, July 25, 2014

◆ An incredible garden & oceanside setting ◆ Silent & very live(ly) auctions ◆ A tasty, traditional shore dinner catered by Bianco Catering (chicken or vegetarian option also available)! 

Toe-tapping music by Isle of Jazz

> Join us for a wonderful evening of fun and fundraising to benefit Island Heritage Trust's conservation and environmental education efforts.

(PROGRAM Cont from p. 1) "may have to charge for some programs, perhaps going to a tiered system, with a discount offered for IHT

members, for example. We're also brainstorming how we can better use the Heritage House barn to draw in families," she said. While "there's no end to ideas" that might be implemented, "finding folks to lead walks and talks" is another ongoing challenge Birch bark workshop for children for the committee, she said.



Members of the Program Committee bring an unfailing enthusiasm to their work in developing new programs and refining those already on the schedule. Doug Wilson, local iron artist and blacksmith who has been involved at IHT for nearly ten years, noted that just as natural habitats support diversity to the benefit of all, so too the committee's diversi- Jane said, developing new programs that are "educational, ty enriches the group's work as a whole. "I'm so happy to enjoyable and simultaneously help the trust accomplish its

be on this committee," he enthused. Interested in "how we can slow people down," and get them to attend "to what they see when they walk on the preserves," Doug has led workshops in the past to foster that process. He hopes that the trust's programs "help bring new people into the fold," who will carry on the work of conservation and also help financially support the trust's mission.

Committee member Marissa Hutchinson (also IHT's Development Director and Volunteer Coordinator) said that for her "to be part of the brainstorming and searching out of new ideas and people to deliver the programs" is the most satisfying part of being a member of the committee. Her hope, she added, is that the programs "will enrich the interactions

between people and our beautiful island."

As the spring and summer unfold with a host of programs old and new, the Program Committee will continue its work of providing new activities to the public, adding to what clearly is already a rich and innovative array of programs. It's what keeps the work of volunteering exciting,

# WORKDAY WORKOUT ON IHT TRAILS

any of us know Tim Henderson as the guy who keeps our computers running efficiently. Less well known is Tim's devotion to hiking the woods of Maine and especially those of Deer Isle. As the owner of PC Fitness, Tim is on the island twice a week, serving his clients. During this time he routinely squeezes in hikes on our preserves, doubtless spending more time on IHT's preserves in a month than many of us do in a year. And with his snowshoes always tucked in the back of his car, winter weather is not a deterrent. Tim's enthusiasm for our preserves is perennially rewarded with new discoveries, such as a recent surprise encounter with a Snowy Owl while hiking in the Tennis Preserve.

Tim grew up on Deer Isle and graduated from our high school. He went to college in Boston, but as he puts it, "most [of us] come back." He married Jen Harrington, who also grew up on Deer Isle, and the couple returned to a rented house on the island for the first summer of their marriage. They then settled in Farmington so that Jen could finish college. Certified as an elementary school teacher, Tim got a job teaching. While living in western Maine he became an avid fisherman, keeping a journal in which he recorded water temperatures and depths and the very particular habits of specific fish, an absorption with the details of his natural surroundings that remains with him today.

Both Tim and Jen always wanted to live on the coast "or as near to it as we could get." Pulled by this urge, Tim got a job teaching in Sedgwick. But in order to bring off the move, he had to find a location for their mobile home, which proved surprisingly difficult. Finding nothing suitable on Deer Isle, he found a spot in Castine, where the couple still lives, although the mobile home has since given way to a house. Tim taught in Sedgwick for four years before going into the computer business with Steve Brown, an old friend. Subsequently, with Steve Brown's encouragement, he started his own business.

Once settled in Castine, Tim found that "hiking was the piece [he] loved." He regularly traveled to the Camden Hills and Acadia National Park, hiking virtually all of its trails in all kinds of weather. With iderable humor given the circumstances. Tim recalled

considerable humor given the circumstances, Tim recalled



a hike on Dorr Mountain, alone in the winter. Caught in a blinding snow storm, struggling along icy trails, he turned his foot so his cleats no longer held. His legs went out from under him, and he slipped down the side of a steep incline, finally (and fortunately) catching himself on a rock. The whole thing was filmed by his GoPro camera. His composure in such circumstances is displayed in a 'selfie" taken at the conclusion of the adventure,

Post-slide selfie of Tim Henderson which shows the icicles

in his hair and headgear, as well as the satisfaction of relief in his face.

Undeterred by such hair-raising experiences, Tim's love for the woods, kindled during his stay in Farmington, always draws him back, often for an all day hike, or the occasional overnight hike. But as his business has grown and he has become busier, he is always on the lookout for hikes he can do in the middle of the workday. Sitting all day in front of a computer or in his car between appointments builds in him the urge and need to get out in the woods. Initially, he ignored the "shorter" trails of our preserves, but now they are a critical part of his everyday life. In the process of getting to know our preserves, he noticed that some of our maps and trail markers do not have accurate mileage. And for Tim this is particularly important since he needs to know how long a particular hike (*cont. on p. 7*)



Pat & Peppermint at Settlement Quarry

**HAPPY 20TH ANNIVERSARY, PAT GROSS!** For twenty years many faces have come and gone at IHT, but bookkeeper Pat Gross with her positive energy has remained constant. Just think of all the different personalities (15 Board Chairs and about 75 different board members, for example!) with whom she has graciously interacted. Pat has kept our "books" neat and tidy with dedication and her characteristic good cheer. We've watched as her children grew up, as she commuted for "numerous years!" to complete her Masters degree in Business Administration, and as she excelled as Executive Director of the Island Community Center in Stonington. A big thank you to *Ron Gross* the lady with the million dollar smile!

### **2013 GRANT AWARDS**

L. L. Bean Maine Land Trust Grant \$4,095 Friends of SQ

> MCF Fund for Maine Land Conservation \$3,274 Stewardship Training

Norcross Wildlife Foundation \$800 SQ Panorama Sign

Morten-Kelly Charitable Trust \$5,000 Mark Island Light Ninth-graders give IHT's grounds and barn a lift on Community Service Day. THANKS!



Back row, L to R: Dustin Hypes, Christina Hutchinson, Ashley Nevells, Jess Trainor. Staff: Kelcey Snowdeal, Judith Hotchkiss, Kathy Ryan. Front: L to R: Zachary Welch, Jordon Eaton

### **VOLUNTEERS PLEASE!** 2014 PRESERVE WORK PARTIES 9 TO 11:30 AM

- May 30 Pine Hill
- June 5 Lily Pond
- June 7 Holt Mill Pond/Backbone Trail: National Trails Day
- June 9 Barred Island
- June 13 Tennis Preserve
- June 15 Wreck & Round Island Kayak & Clean Up (starts at Old Quarry, 8:30-4:30)
- June 17 Causeway Beach
- June 20 Scott's Landing
- June 26 Shore Acres
- July 1 Reach Beach
- July 11 Settlement Quarry

Friends of Tennis Preserve & Settlement Quarry are always looking for new friends! To help with time, materials, or monitoring, contact Joe Dorr for Tennis Preserve, <u>joe@dorrstep.com</u>; Dan Hadley for Settlement Quarry, <u>danhadley@myfairpoint.net</u>. (*Cont from p. 6*) is going to take, as he is frequently fitting it in between appointments with clients. Using a GPS ???, he has regularly provided IHT with information that will enable us to improve our maps and make our trail markers more accurate.

Tim's love and appreciation for the woods and particularly of IHT's preserves has prompted him to share his enthusiasm with others. He recently started a Facebook group, the Hancock County Hikers, which affords members an opportunity to organize and share hiking experiences. And as the father of two boys, he has become heavily involved in their scouting activities. When the boys were in Cub Scouts he organized relatively short outdoor activities for them and their fellow Cubs, giving them an appreciation of nature and helping them to learn how to identify and understand what they saw. As the boys got older (they are now 14 and 16) these activities expanded into longer hikes and overnight camping excursions. Tim became a merit badge counselor for hiking, a responsibility that spurred him on to more fully understand hiking and its woodland environs. As he put it, he pushed himself to "another level" of knowledge of the woods in order to give his charges the full benefit of his instruction. His boys and their fellow scouts are lucky to have him. And so is IHT.

# THE NATURE SHOP

... has some fun new outdoor toys, puzzles, rainy day items and books for the younger set; alongside our great selection of birding guides, bird houses & feeders and other nature-oriented books and items. *Come check it out*!

### **NEW MEMBER BENEFITS:**

10% off purchases at IHT's Nature Shop and special membership rates for IHT fee programs! Along with the IHT



biannual newsletter, invitations to IHT member only events, and IHT's popular *Hiking Trails & Public Access Map*.

So renew or become a new member today!

### Wilderness Voyageurs Summer Camp July 16-18, July 23-25, July 30-Aug 1, or Aug 4-8

Looking for a fun new adventure this summer? Check out Wilderness Voyageurs Summer camp, where children will learn wilderness and kayak skills while exploring the Maine coast. Three and five day camps offered from July 16<sup>th</sup>- Aug. 4<sup>th</sup>. Scholarships available for local students, contact **kristiemarks@gmail.com**. For more information check out **www.oldquarry.com/kayak-camp/**.



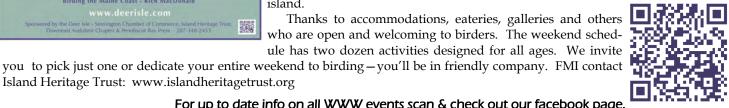
## **BIRDS AND BIRDERS FLOCK TO DEER ISLE**

eer Isle's annual May birding festival is timed to catch the early spring migration of songbirds. The weekend is designed for birders-from beginners to life-listers, as well as families - anyone who'd like to savor a spring day by observing and learning about birds.

Kathie Fiveash will lead a natural history walk on Isle au Haut, and there will be two boat trips to Matinicus Seal Island for an up-close look at Atlantic Puffins, Great Cormorants, Arctic Terns, among others. Bob Duchesne, founder of the Maine Birding Trail, will be guiding on land and sea all weekend, along with the best birders in the area. After a "birders' supper" on Saturday evening at the Harbor Café, Rich MacDonald will give an illustrated talk on Maine Coast Birds. An active guide and owner of The Natural History Center in Bar Harbor, he once paddled 1,500 miles of shoreline, tallying an amazing 199 species.

Just as birds are drawn to our coastal habitat, so are artists. In addition to the popular Wings, Waves & Woods exhibit that opens Friday evening at the Pearson Legacy Gallery, several artists offer workshops and demos in sketching, brush painting and found object sculpture. Sue Shaw, who painted the image of Northern Gannets on this years poster, is a volunteer monitor on Downeast Audubon's Bluebird Trail. Join her at Scott's Landing to check the nest boxes there and learn about how to attract bluebirds to your yard or help monitor boxes here on the island.

Thanks to accommodations, eateries, galleries and others who are open and welcoming to birders. The weekend schedule has two dozen activities designed for all ages. We invite



Island Heritage Trust: www.islandheritagetrust.org For up to date info on all WWW events scan & check out our facebook page.



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