

SUMMER 2024



Steep Holm News

Official Newsletter of the Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust



Summer News from Steep Holm

Hello and welcome to the new Steep Holm newsletter where we hope to keep you up-to-date with all the projects and plans we have in store for 2024!

Welcome to the KAMT summer newsletter. Spring on Steep Holm with good number of visitors landing on the island, the hard-working volunteers have been working hard on maintenance, scrub clearance and other essential tasks. Following the BBC Points West news item in 2023 we have been able to attract some excellent new volunteers. In April we held a meeting for the new volunteers (supported by long serving volunteers) they are now involved will all aspects of helping on the island.

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HIGHLIGHTS



Mark's Project

What's our hammer-welding hero been up to lately?.

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Volunteer Spotlight

Let us introduce you to one of our new volunteers **PAGE 4**



Fancy becoming a volunteer?

All the ways you can help us on Steep Holm from volunteering to donating **PAGE 5**

Stay Connected

For all the latest news on the island find us on www.steepholm.online and other social platforms.



Steep Holm Island



@SteepHolmIsland



Steeppholmisland



Top: (l-r) Herring gull and chicks whose nest was right outside The Barracks
Right: Mark with new volunteer, Jason, updating the boards in the museum



Ever since I became the Chair of the KAMT I have been concerned that we were not able to keep you the members regularly updated with a news of the island. I am delighted that we now have the capacity to produce an electronic newsletter hopefully on a quarterly basis additionally we have a new Facebook page.

Following the BBC Points West news item in 2023 we have been able to attract some excellent new volunteers.

For the last six months I have working closely with Natural England and others to enhance the habitat for breeding gulls on Steep Holm. Over the years scrub has increased on the island, we now have plans to remove more scrub

which should provide more open habitat for breeding gulls. Plans are in place to start recording the number and productivity of gull nests. Additional scrub clearance will also be

beneficial for other wildlife on the island. I will keep you updated on the progress of this new and amazing project.

The recent Channel 5 television series on Somerset highlighted the importance of our small island for its wildlife and historic fort. I

know the whole board of trustees were very pleased with the resulting programme and we want to say a very big thank you to Mark and all the volunteers that appeared in the feature.



Stephen Parker
 Chariman (Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust)



FANTASTIC GIFT

Last year the KAMT was gifted a thick book of news cuttings. These cuttings were collected by Edmund J Mason (1911 to 1993) they cover not only Steep Holm but also Mendip and its caves. We now have had the collect rebound. This wonderful resource will allow historians and naturalists to study the history of the island.

Steep Holm new volunteers up for the challenge

After our successful recruitment drive on the BBC last year, it was finally time to get our new volunteers out to the island

What we try to do, is get all the volunteers out to the island at least once over the year, but we've had a disappointing start to the season with three out of five scheduled trips cancelled due to bad weather. Now though, our volunteers have started to arrive and all extremely enthusiastic and eager to get started.

The jobs that the volunteers have been doing are varied from shrub clearance building repairs working in barracks on displays helping out at the refreshments counter and souvenirs.

Greg and I have been organising the various working parties with health and safety briefings And instructions on the various equipment needed to carry out the different projects.

So far the volunteers have managed to clear all the steps at Rudder Rock ahead of installation of new hand railing later on in the year. Clearance work to the entrances of Tombstone cartridge and shell store all part of the ongoing restoration

Clearance work to the entrances of Tombstone cartridge and shell store all part of the ongoing restoration program of Tombstone Battery



Top: (l-r) Dave Prout, Adam Masters, Martin Pratt and Mark Harris moving large stones in Quay Wall for repairs.

Right: shattering ready for new concrete steps to poured



program of Tombstone Battery. We've relocated one of our

Victorian marker stones from the bottom of the island and moved it back to its original position at Garden Battery. Other ongoing projects include repairing the Quay Wall, installing new information boards and displays in the barracks, replacing lights in the display cabinets and workshops, installing the plywood shuttering ready for concrete pour for the new steps

leading down to Tombstone Cartridge Store as well as cleaning the display cabinets in the museum and barracks.

As you can see, the volunteers will be extremely busy, and it has been an absolute delight to work with these guys and girls. The fact they all want to come back for more is absolutely fantastic. The only problem is, I'm struggling to keep up with them.

By Mark Harris



Left: new information and display boards in barracks.
Right: Mark Harris



Dr Michael White

Each issue, we plan to introduce one of our fantastic volunteers and this week, we have a very interesting young man who's become one of our latest recruits.

“ I'm an ocean and climate scientist and often found on remote islands, many even uninhabited. I'm knowledgeable around animal species, and fairly good with plants ~ although I've lived in the Tropics a lot. I also have a small woodland over on Westhay Moor, Somerset, so I'm used to dealing with wild growth and pruning carefully to maintain diverse habitats. I understand climate impacts and biodiversity loss very well. Marine pollution, especially plastics, is another major problem.

I've offered to review and organise the various survey reports and data for Steep Holm. So over time that information will be useful in the visitor centre,



I understand climate impacts and biodiversity loss very well.

and any other outlets we use for publicity. I have an idea for a 'sightings sheet' so people can record data in a consistent way, which should make life easier in future and help us find out even more about the island.

I'm a member of Glastonbury Town Council, and was just elected Deputy Mayor of Glastonbury. And amongst my other accolades, I'm a Member of IUCN - Species Survival Commission: Marine Turtle Specialist Group, the Marine Pollution Working Group, the Deep-Sea Biodiversity-Conservation Task Force and President of Hakono Hararanga, Tongareva Atoll, in the northern group of the Cook Islands in the south Pacific Ocean.”



DID YOU KNOW...

The Vikings used Steep Holm as a secure base from which to raid the mainland.



DID YOU KNOW...

The island covers 48.87 acres (19.78 ha) at high tide, expanding to 63.26 acres (25.60 ha) at mean low water.



DID YOU KNOW...

There are three species of gulls that nest on the island - herring gulls, lesser black-backed gulls and great black-backed gulls

Do you fancy becoming a Volunteer?

There are loads of opportunities to get involved in the continuing evolution of this fantastic little part of the world.



Do you have skills Steep Holm can benefit from? Want to be part of the team to help, protect, preserve and enhance for the benefit of the public the landscape, antiquities, flora and fauna, natural beauty and scientific interest of the Island?

If you feel you can help, please contact steepholmcompanysecretary1@gmail.com

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

AGM 28th September

Where we are going to have a talk on our sister island of Flat Holm by Sarah Morgan. Details will be sent to members in September.

A Visit from the High Sheriff of Somerset

We are also expecting a visit to the island by **Rob Beckley** the High Sheriff of Somerset, to thank all the volunteers for their hard work. He will formally open the refurbished munitions store (or whatever Mark calls it)



MEMBERSHIP FEES

This remains £25 per year. If you would like to become a member of the Trust or set up a direct debit please contact our membership secretary on email mgmembersholm@btinternet.com

Applications for membership will be welcomed on the form by post or electronically.

LEGACIES

We would be delighted if you could consider leaving a legacy to the charity to help us maintain and enhance Steep Holm as an extraordinary nature reserve full of historic interest and open to the public.

Please contact

mgmembersholm@btinternet.com if you would like to consider making a gift under your will to the Kenneth Allsop Memorial Trust Limited (register charity 270059) for its general purposes as trustee of the charity.

LOTTERY

Consider buying lottery numbers if you haven't done so yet. You can win up to £50.

For further details please contact our membership secretary on mgmembersholm@btinternet.com