



ISISA

Newsletter

Volume 12, Number 2, December
2013

Published by the International Small Islands Studies Association

EDITORIAL

ISISA newsletter is here once again. This issue contains important information about the next ISISA 'Islands of the World XIII' conference, due in September 2014. One can also find various interesting contributions submitted by ISISA members. This newsletter is what you make it, so please keep the contributions coming. Photos, articles, forthcoming publications, upcoming conferences, book reviews and news on 'research in progress', are all more than welcome.

Contributions for the July 2014 issue are to reach me at abaldacchino59@gmail.com by not later than JUNE 15, 2014.

Read and Enjoy. Suggestions for improvement and feedback are always appreciated.

Anna Baldacchino
Newsletter Editor

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of their respective authors and are not necessarily endorsed by ISISA.

ISISA *Islands of the World XIII* ***Small is Beautiful: Island Connections and Innovations***

Penghu Archipelago, Taiwan
22 to 27 September 2014

Announcement and Call for Papers

Islands are bodies of land surrounded by water; albeit well connected via the waves of ocean, movements of people and flows of technology. Smallness is both aesthetically pleasing and intensely practical. There are increasing challenges for small islands in our connected planet with the added risk for some of mounting global warming. This conference welcomes the presentation of research and reflection to address the nature of islands from the past to the future, to achieve a better understanding of the uniqueness, connections, cultures, ethics, technologies, innovation and sustainability for the many possible futures of islands and archipelagos. Sub-themes proposed are as follows:

1. Small is Beautiful: Literature, poems, island diversity.
2. Small is Dangerous: history, heritages, culture and nature.
3. Small economy as a virtue: traditions, innovations and sustainability.

Supporting Institutions and Organizations

This conference is conducted every two years under the auspices of the International Small Islands Studies Association (**ISISA**).

The 13th *Islands of the World* conference is supported by the local government, institutions, universities, schools, including:

- Penghu County Government (major host local government)
- National Penghu University (major host university)
- National Taiwan Normal University, National Taiwan University and other universities in Taiwan (Academic Programs)
- National Science Council, Taiwan
- National Penghu Scenic Areas, Tourist Bureau
- Marine National Park
- Local Community Associations
- Islands Networks: There are 11 groups of small islands in Taiwan with various geoformations, ecosystems, cultures, and communities.

Contact Persons

Wen-Cheng Wang, National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan: wwang@ntnu.edu.tw

Beate Ratter, Universität Hamburg, Germany: ratter@geowiss.uni-hamburg.de

Huei-Min Tsai, National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan: hmtsai@ntnu.edu.tw

Shi-Liang Yu, National Penghu University, Taiwan: slyu@gms.npu.edu.tw

Jiawei Tang, National Penghu University, Taiwan: jiawei@gms.npu.edu.tw

Daniel Tung-Lin Hung, Penghu County Government, Taiwan: hdlid@ms12.hinet.net

A Taiwanese heart for island studies

By Ilan Kelman <http://www.ilankelman.org>

For tourists, Taiwan is labelled as the “Heart of Asia”--fair enough when considering the Pacific--but it could equally be suggested as the “Heart of Asian islands”. Taiwanese islands lived up to that reputation during the first week of October for the conference of the International Geographic Union’s Commission on Islands. Subtitled, “Island Development - Local Economy, Culture, Innovation and Sustainability”, delegates from nearly two dozen countries converged on the Penghu Archipelago to discuss islands and islanders around the world.

A packed programme kept us intensely busy. Eight keynotes spread across the days covered subjects from indigenous culture to participatory processes to sustainable design. Two tracks for concurrent sessions led to difficult choices including selecting amongst sustainable island economies and island life stories. Case studies were as diverse as Lakshadweep, India and the Isles of Scilly, U.K.

Local involvement was prominent, with notable talks from Taiwanese participants and about Taiwanese islands. That placed our collective international experience in context, localising island experiences and providing comparators from our hosts.

But we were not always sitting in lecture halls accompanied by the chimes of Big Ben! Two field trips introduced us to local landscapes and cultures. We spent one afternoon driving the islands connected by bridges and causeways. We wandered around a wind farm, munched local ice cream, were regaled by entertainment at a temple, and enjoyed a beach barbecue.

Then, an all-day field trip to outer islands tested our mettle regarding island life. A typhoon on the other side of Taiwan led to strong winds and choppy seas around Penghu. Should the boat trip go ahead? In the end, a compromise was reached. We travelled on the boats but the trip was curtailed, visiting only three islands. When landing on the first proved to be too difficult, that was abandoned leaving more time for the remaining two. Despite some seasick faces and others being soaked by waves leaking into the boats' cabins, it was exciting to see more of Penghu and to compare the various islands.

The days were impeccably organised, with our tireless leaders attending to all our needs and requests. They could not have slept much, yet always had a smile and a kind word. They were the meeting's heroes! As we continually ate, experimenting with the endless variety of tasty dishes, we were given clear instructions where to be and when. The word "hospitality" was defined by example.

Does it sound idyllic, even "islandly idyllic"? If you missed out on this one, do not despair. ISISA's next conference "Islands of the World XIII" will be held 22-27 September 2014 on Penghu. Another chance to leave your heart in Taiwan.



Pyrotechnics at the local temple on Penghu. Photo: Ilan Kelman