

**International Small Islands Studies Association (ISISA)**

**General Meeting – 18<sup>th</sup> *Islands of the World* Conference**

**St John's, Newfoundland, Canada, 18 June 2021**

**President's Report**

*Dear Colleagues in Island Studies, Dear Members of ISISA,*

It is my pleasure to present to you this presidential report, covering three years of activity since our 17<sup>th</sup> 'Islands of the World' (**IoW**) conference, held in Terschelling, The Netherlands, in June 2018. Here is a photo of the ten students who were granted a part scholarship to attend and present on that occasion:



We had plans to meet physically in St John's, the capital of the Canadian province of Newfoundland & Labrador, last June. But we know that such plans, as with so many others, were disrupted by one pesky virus. Instead, we ran the first *Global Island Studies Webinar* in June 2020: this comprised 70 presenters over a single 31-hour stretch, from 30 countries and territories, and drew 225 discrete participants and attendees. This was followed by this virtual Island Studies Conference, both courtesy of the wonderful team at the Leslie Harris Centre of Memorial University of Newfoundland. Thank you to such a wonderful and supportive team.

With such a long time between its conferences, ISISA endeavours to maintain contact by both traditional and new means of communication. *Island Studies Journal*, which ISISA endorses, goes from strength to strength and has now moved from the University of Prince Edward Island – where it has been nested since its founding in 2006 – to the University of the Faroe Islands, where it will be hosted for the next 5 years. ISISA's own website since January 2016 – [www.isisa.org](http://www.isisa.org) – is a regular site

for posting messages and updates. It also functions as the repository of ISISA's history and activity, and including details about previous **IoW** conferences and relevant documents. We have kept up a healthy traffic of news, comments, Q&As, and other information via our Twitter Handle - <https://twitter.com/IntSISA> - and our Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/Isisa-International-Small-Islands-Studies-Association-126009170815354/>. The *ISISA Newsletter* continues to appear twice yearly. And, in 2021, we have migrated to a new email group list-serve, [ISISA@groups.io](mailto:ISISA@groups.io) currently with 364 subscribers.

On the financial front, let me start with the bad news. We were the victims of a phishing attack. In September 2018, someone pretending to be me 'instructed' our Treasurer to make an urgent payment to 'Urban Island Studies Organisation', on the understanding that this money will be recouped in due course with a larger donation. A sophisticated series of emails led to our Treasurer endorsing a transfer of 3850USD of ISISA funds to an external account. The instigator of this elaborate scam was asking for even more \$\$; but, by that time - luckily - our Treasurer realised something was not quite right. NatWest, our UK Bank, was immediately informed and tried to recover the funds, but with no success. We need to stay vigilant. And any requests for the transfer of ISISA funds are now undergoing a two factor authentication.

Rosie Alexander, ISISA Treasurer, was quite distraught by the whole experience. Indeed, Rosie has asked to step down from our Executive and, on your behalf, I would like to thank her for her generous time and efforts in managing our finances to the best of her ability since 2016.

We are however fortunate that we maintain a healthy financial balance, so our ISISA activities are not compromised. Indeed, we are just around £1,000 short of where we left off in 2018.

And this, in spite of expressing our solidarity with the victims of bush fires on Kangaroo Island in 2020, with a donation of US\$1,000 to the Children Bushfire Fund on KI, in support of children and their families displaced by the fires; and a second donation of US\$1,000 to the citizens of St Vincent & the Grenadines displaced by the volcanic eruption earlier this year. Both donations have been formally acknowledged.

Other than these extraordinary expenses, all remaining funds are earmarked to support our website and to provide suitable part scholarships to encourage deserving students to attend and present at our premier conferences. This time round, given the virtual nature of the conference, neither ISISA nor Memorial (our hosts) issued any part-scholarships.

However, we have waived the conference fee for these 8 deserving students, who have presented their work-in-progress this week:

Kearney Coupland  
Maggie Henry  
Bobby McCauley  
Shiva Mohan

Izumi Nonaka  
Alicia Noreiga  
Brady Podloski  
Fleur Ward

We continue to encourage members to consider taking out an ISISA LIFE membership. The cost is 200US\$: equivalent to ten years of membership fees: this is good value for money for anyone planning to live more than ten years from now. We have 36 such members – 16 more than in 2018 - and I thank them for their open-ended commitment to ISISA. Life membership also prevents our Treasurer from having to intermittently chase those whose membership fee has lapsed.

Since 2018, ISISA has also participated in various activities organised by GLISPA, the [Global Islands Partnership](#) as well as Island Innovation: both promote and support initiatives that build, reinforce or express island resilience in its many forms.

I would like to end by thanking the team at the Leslie Harris Centre of Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada, led by Dr Rob Greenwood, for ably hosting our global island studies webinar in June 2020 and our 17<sup>th</sup> – and first virtual – *Islands of the World* Conference now in June 2021 on the theme of Sharing Lessons, Sharing Stories. A lot of sharing has taken place during these past few days, and involving both business and pleasure. Mandy Rowsell, Bojan Furst, John Duff and their colleagues @MUN have been there all along to make sure that things proceed smoothly, and that we may all have a pleasant and enjoying island studies conference, with a dash of Newfoundland culture thrown in for good measure. **Thank you!**

Meanwhile, we look forward to what we hope to be a physical 18<sup>th</sup> *Islands of the World* Conference in Zadar, Croatia, from June 13 to 17, 2022, on the theme Islands: Nature and Culture, and where a unique archipelagic experience awaits us. See you there.

**Živjeli (have a long life, in Croatian).**



**Godfrey Baldacchino**  
**President, ISISA**

**June 18, 2021**