

## NEWSLETTER Autumn 2014

Editor – Douglas Barr-Hamilton

### **London Manx meet in Ramsey**

London Manx Society got Homecoming Week off to a good start on 2nd July by organising a cooish at Harbour Lights' Ramsey restaurant which opened specially so its Island members, most now retired to the Island, could have a reunion of their own to which they could invite members of kindred societies and the World Manx Association assembled for the celebration.

Sadly neither of its Ramsey residents could attend: Clare Crellin was in Spain and Mike Devereau, would you believe, had to be in London. From the other side of the world, however, came Australia's Lynn Cupitt. The United States was represented by Margaret Martinson and her cousin both from Chicago. The London Society's President and Secretary were both able to come: Alastair Kneale and Douglas Barr-Hamilton being on the Island for a few days. And the Island was represented in force by David and Mavis Bell who moved to Peel from Hertfordshire only a couple of weeks ago, Terence and Chrissie Brack, Clare and Carole Christian, Mona Fargher, Pauline Jackman (nee Cowley), Ella Slack and all their guests.

Twenty-three people in all enjoyed dinners, individually booked and ordered to ensure easy organisation and Harbour Lights' manager and staff made certain everything went with a swing. There was much reminiscing, of course: Carole reminded the London officers how she had appreciated a visit from Maisie Sell through its Almoner Service when she had been in a London hospital; many recalled past cooish, mhelliah and sundry outings; all reflected on happy times on the Island while renewing old acquaintances and establishing new ones along with the inevitable revelation of family roots. Discussion too of coming events in the next week and of longer term prospects of Ellan Vannin and the societies providing a touch of home to Manx folk who have left their homeland but continue to show their love for its beauty and way of life.

**DBH**

### **New venue for Mhelliah**

The Harvest Thanksgiving Service will be held at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street as usual but, the Press House Wine Bar having closed down, Sam has speedily found an alternative nearby. It's the Punch Tavern, 99 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1DE ([www.punchtavern.com](http://www.punchtavern.com)) where we shall have lunch in a private room following the service which starts at noon on Monday 6th October. Canon Robert Teare will again officiate and Margaret Brady be our organist.

A flyer accompanies this newsletter. Please let Sam Weller know that you are able to come as soon as you can.

### **Pam's Progress**

We are pleased to report that Pam Fiddik is progressing satisfactorily after her strokes earlier this year. She tells us she is getting better gradually, if rather more slowly than once hoped but she plans to attend the Mhelliah on 6th October and hopes to meet many friends at St Bride's and at the meal after the service.

**DBH**

### **Impromptu Tynwald Cooish**

Our scheduled event having been cancelled, Colin and Sheila Gill celebrated Tynwald Day, albeit a day late, at Sam and Mary Weller's house in Cambridge, hanging our flag high over the banisters, standing our Three Legs shield outside by the front door and enjoying Manx food, including Moore's kippers from Peel and home-made Bonnag with jam.

We sat in the garden in the sunshine, reminiscing and remembering our Manx heritage.

**Sam Weller**





### **London Manx at Tynwald Fair**

To try and raise the profile of the Society, this year I booked a stall space at Tynwald Fayre and got a London Manx Society banner printed for it. I also printed off some of our leaflets to give to enquirers and bought some Manx flags and bunting to decorate it a bit. It seemed to be well received and visitors included some ex-members who came up to the stall: a very nice couple called Mr and Mrs O'Hare. Mrs. O'Hare's maiden name had been Crellin and she said her father was a past President of the Society adding that they had met through the Manx Society. Here is a picture of them.

### **Alastair Kneale**



### **Alastair's Parish Walk**

As promised in our last newsletter, I did the Parish Walk and got about £220 for Manx Wildlife Trust. I have given them a quote and they will give LMS some publicity on their website.

**Alastair Kneale**

### **Island back on big screen**

Over the summer, a painting that hangs in Scone Palace in Perthshire has featured regularly in the cinema columns of newspapers as they reviewed the film, “Belle” telling the story of Dido, the mixed race, West Indian born “companion” to Lady Elizabeth Murray. Painted in 1779, the picture shows the two women with a background of a rural British Georgian country scene. If you saw a similar image in the film, the background was Manx countryside. Much of the filming was done at Pinewood Studios but several island locations were also used and readers might have seen – but maybe not recognised – Castletown harbour, Rushen Castle dungeons, Billown and Ballaugh Old Church. How much did you see? Did you notice any Island friend appearing as an Extra?

On the Island, the film also created financial comment. A short while before there had been controversy when Tynwald approved the investment of over £12m in Pinewood Studios as it sought to encourage the development of the film industry on the Island. The success of “Belle” has made a start to justification of the decision.

**DBH**

### **Jack Honeyborne faces cameras again**

Producer, Richard Curtis will be bringing out a new film in December called, "Roald Dahl's SEIO-Trot" starring Judy Dench and Dustin Hoffman who, I understand, specifically asked for Jack's participation after his role in, "Quartet" Filming took place in June for this Christmas special.

### **. . . and a Ramsey audience**

smaller in number but doubly enthusiastic, Ramsey will resound to Jack when he is a soloist supporting the Ramsey Music Society on Monday 20th October at its fortieth anniversary celebration concert in the West Hall of Ramsey Grammar School. It will start at 7.45 p.m. and tickets cost £10.

### **Norwegian Exhibition Docks in Peel**

A unique exhibition made a short stop-over in Peel earlier this summer as part of an exciting journey christened The Thing Trail 2014.

The exhibition, which was housed on a converted Norwegian fishing boat, MS Nybakk Venner, attracted a large number of visitors interested to learn more about their mission and why they were visiting the Isle of Man.

With partners in Norway, Iceland, the Faroes, Shetland, Orkney, Scotland and the Isle of Man, The Thing Trail is an EU funded three year transnational project instigated to promote the understanding of 'Thing sites', including Tynwald Hill. It is also hoped that this unusual project will help peripheral and remote communities on the northern margins of Europe develop their economic, social and environmental potential.

Visitors to the exhibition, which was free of charge, also had the opportunity of learning more about the vessel's own history as a busy fishing boat based in Norway, before moving on to the fascinating Thing Trail exhibition itself, which gave visitors an insight into this fascinating topic.

Members of the crew were on hand to explain more about their journey and describe some of the artefacts on board, complemented by a continuous film show and a range of literature.

Later in the day Manx National Heritage hosted a free public seminar at the House of Manannan, exploring the connections between Viking 'Thing' sites. A wide range of topics were discussed by a number of local speakers, closing with a talk by the skipper of MS Nybakk Venner, Hans Haddal.

Following the seminar, President of Tynwald, The Honourable Clare Christian MLC, presented gifts to the crew of MS Nybakk Venner at Tynwald Hill and passed on an official greeting to Gulating in Norway from the Isle of Man. Gifts were also presented to the crew from representatives of the Isle of Man Ship Registry.

**Valerie Caine**

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## **Scottish Manx**

In our last edition Rose Fowler told us of the probable Norse origins of her Cowley maiden name and I penned a short piece on the ending of Norse rule of the Island. Although Viking power finished in the Isle of Man, in Scotland Norse nobility continued to rule with feudal power delegated by Scottish kings to several clans descended from Viking ancestors. Of particular interest to readers will be the Clan MacLeod which ruled large parts of the Hebrides for hundreds of years. The original Leod was a son of King Olaf (the Black) of Mann and in the early years of the 13th century he was fostered by one Paul Balkasson (the name suggests another Scandinavian), Sheriff of Skye and later he married and had four sons, so starting the clan Mac (son of) Leod and the clan's crest comprises the three legs of Man in two of its quarters to this day.

Rose's mother had been told by William Cubbon that Cowley probably derived from (Ma)c Olaf. An ancestor may have been an Olaf. That seems to make the MacLeod clan another Cowley family: one with royal blood in its veins!

### **DBH**

Sources: Scottish Clans and Family Names, Mainstream Publishing 2008.

## **Celebrating the 120th Anniversary of the Manx Electric Railway Extension to Laxey**

It's been 120 years since the Manx Electric Railway reached the mining village of Laxey, on the east coast, but in celebration of this significant event the Island's oldest tramcars (Nos. 1 & 2) came into operation as part of the daily scheduled services during the weekend; with a rare opportunity to photograph both tramcars as they passed each other at Laxey Station.

Built by G. F. Milnes & Co. of Birkenhead in England, both tramcars are recognised by Guinness World Records as the oldest tramcars in service on their original system anywhere in the world. They were delivered to the Isle of Man in 1893 along with a third tramcar, which was subsequently lost during a fire in the Laxey car shed in 1930.

Although not in daily use, tramcar number one carries the official Guinness World Record plaque which supports this achievement.

A plaque commemorating the official opening of the line to Laxey was recently discovered, and is now on display at the Manx Electric Railway Museum located at the Derby Castle terminus in Douglas.

**Valerie Caine**

© July 2014



**M E R Driving Experience**



One winter lunchtime I was reading iomonline.com to catch up the skeet when I spotted an article headed up "Railway Experience" and discovered I could buy Sean a day on either the MER or IoM Steam Railway for Christmas. There were quite a few weekends to choose from and decided on 5th July so we could go to Tynwald Fair at the same time.

We arrived at the Terminus in Douglas early on the Saturday morning, when thankfully the sun was shining, to be told it would be just us and the two MER drivers – there could have been up to three other experience drivers and their guests. Our first trip was to Laxey for our safety briefing and refreshments – a lovely cream tea at 9.30. We then went back to Douglas to pick up a coach trip as they had prebooked our train. Sean had his first experience of driving down to Douglas but sadly was not insured to bring the visitors back. They got out at Laxey and we stopped for a three course packed lunch including bonnag with the other drivers. I was in charge of throwing the points at Laxey for our train and we set off for Ramsey. During the journey we were reminded of the history of the MER. The vision of those Victorians was amazing. We were able to stop wherever we wanted on the way between Laxey and Ramsey to take photographs and on the way back we chose Cornaa. Sean drove up to Ramsey and back. Sean was told it was an experience, not necessarily a lesson and it would take several weeks to learn the roads and the different speeds needed for the hills. They were impressed with him – driving up the hills and breaking at different levels on the way down. The train is powered by a bank of nine electrical motors on each side which are brought online as you move up a dial – a lot more complicated than we expected. The views of course were spectacular – my favourite around Groudle Glen and further up above Laxey. Everywhere we went people waved and took pictures. I am sure they were surprised to see just the one passenger on that train. We had a fantastic day – the weather and the good humour of the MER drivers adding to the experience.

For details or to book a course contact Marieanne Bridges by email on marieanne.bridges@gov.im or by telephone on 01624 697419.

**Wendy Ellis Kneen**

### **Peggy's Conservation**

We featured the Manx Nautical Museum's "Peggy" a few editions ago and members may be interested to know that the Classic Boat magazine has published an interesting article as Culture Vannin starts an ambitious programme to conserve and, at the same time, study this 18th century armed yacht. It will take some five years to complete and the work will be done by Oxford Archaeology North involving the removal, stabilising and naturally drying of the vessel, studying her construction all the while.

She is one of the three similar vessels built for George Quayle of Castletown and, launched in 1791, is the world's oldest surviving schooner and the oldest

surviving example of the shallop hull form. Sailors will be interested to know she had sliding keels : precursor of the modern daggerboard, fitted not long after the invention of the technology.

**DBH**

### **Romance at Knockaloe**

Here's a story not told in the many articles appearing on and off the Island about life at the camp where Great War internees were housed. My grandfather, Joseph Wood of Michael Street, Peel had a contract to supply meat to the camp. It being a family business, he used his eldest daughter, Marion, a teacher in the north of the island, to keep the accounts and, once a month, cycle to Knockaloe with their bill.

Despite the brevity of the visits, she met and fell in love with Captain Robert Wallace of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders much to grandfather's disapproval as he wanted her to marry a Manxman and stay on the Island: ironic as his own wife was a McKay from Altnahara. But love will find its way.

The war eventually was coming to its end and so was Robert's commission. A friend of his in the regiment had already decided to sail to Canada to seek his fortune there and encouraged the young lovers to join him. Hence, one evening, Marion told her much younger brother, Stanley (my father) who was terrified of his older sister that she needed his services very early next morning and he must not tell anyone; she would touch him on the shoulder to wake him, to get up, dress silently and quickly and do as she instructed: get out the hand-cart, put two big suitcases on it and accompany her to the railway station. This he duly did. He put the cases on the train. She patted him on the head and gave him two half-crowns (a fortune to him in those days) and said, "Good boy, Stanley" and got on the train. He didn't see her again for fifty-six years.

Marion and Robert married in Liverpool, left for Canada and settled in Rawdon in Quebec. Only once, many years later, did Marion make a visit back to her beloved Island and another brother, who had emigrated to New Zealand, paid her a visit en route to a visit of his own to the Isle of Man. Otherwise her memories of Peel were kept alive by the box of kippers that Stanley sent her every summer.

**Maron Honeyborne**

### **. . . and Knockaloe now**

Royal Manx Agricultural Show 2014

Despite on-going road works and changeable weather conditions, crowds flocked to the Royal Manx Agricultural Show, held at Knockaloe Farm in Patrick, for an extensive programme of events over two days.

With its friendly atmosphere and family based activities, there was something for everyone, together with a wide range of eateries to suit all tastes and lots of interesting ideas for those seeking new hobbies or pastimes.



It was a perfect opportunity to display a cross-section of the rural industries, including the popular beekeepers' tent and the Manx Food Court, which provided an insight into local businesses such as the Apple Orphanage and Laxey Glen Flour Mill.

The meat section, which included both well established outlets and some new contenders, was particularly busy with shoppers.

Craftwork was especially prominent, as was a selection of trade stands and children's entertainment. with competitions for fur and feather, baking and vegetable growers attracting the curiosity seekers.

The main entertainment ring became a focus of attention for animal judging but also drew the crowds for the daring, trick riding stunt show, Gulliver's Carnival, presented by the Stampede Stunt Company and sponsored by Manx Telecom.

Currags Wildlife Park had a few treats in store for younger visitors, whilst the ever popular classic cars and vintage machinery kept other generations occupied at the far end of the showfield.

But equal to the surrounding entertainment was the presence of the farm animals submitted for judging, which included an excellent range of cattle, sheep, goats and heavy horses, with an opportunity for the public to come into close contact with some of our countryside companions.

**Valerie Caine**

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## **Island Quiz**

(open to non-members through the web site)

1. What act of parliament led to internment at Knockaloe in 1914  
(a) Aliens Internment Act, (b) Aliens Restriction Act, (c) Internment of Enemy Aliens Act, (d) Restriction of Movement Act?
2. Where was T E Brown born  
(a) Braddan, (b) Castletown, (c) Douglas, (d) Marown?
3. Does "Fastyr mie" mean  
(a) Good afternoon, (b) Good Morning, (c) Happy Birthday, (d) How are you?
4. What post did Lord George Murray hold prior to becoming Bishop of Sodor and Man  
(a) Archdeacon of Hampstead, Chaplain to Bishop of Rochester, Rector of Andreas, Vicar of Castletown?
5. Which former MHK is one letter short of a Paris Boulevard  
(a) David Cannan, (b) John Corrin. (c) Edgar Quine, (d) Edmond Ranson?

*Answers to the editor by post or email, please. Closing date 16th October.*

The first reader to send me five correct answers will receive a £20 voucher towards a meal at any of Harbour Lights' island restaurants (Peel, Ramsey, Port St Mary, Ramsey)

**Answers to May's quiz:**

1. Ramsey Swing Bridge was opened in 1892.
2. The Port Erin life-boat is called Muriel & Leslie.
3. The line, "Stories! stories! nothin' but stories!" is from T E Brown's, "The Doctor".
4. Attraversiamo, is a new restaurant in Ramsey.
5. Usag Veg Ruy is a lullaby.

*Colin Gill provided the first all correct answer and received £25 fuel from Mylchreest's Car Hire. Our thanks for their generous support.*

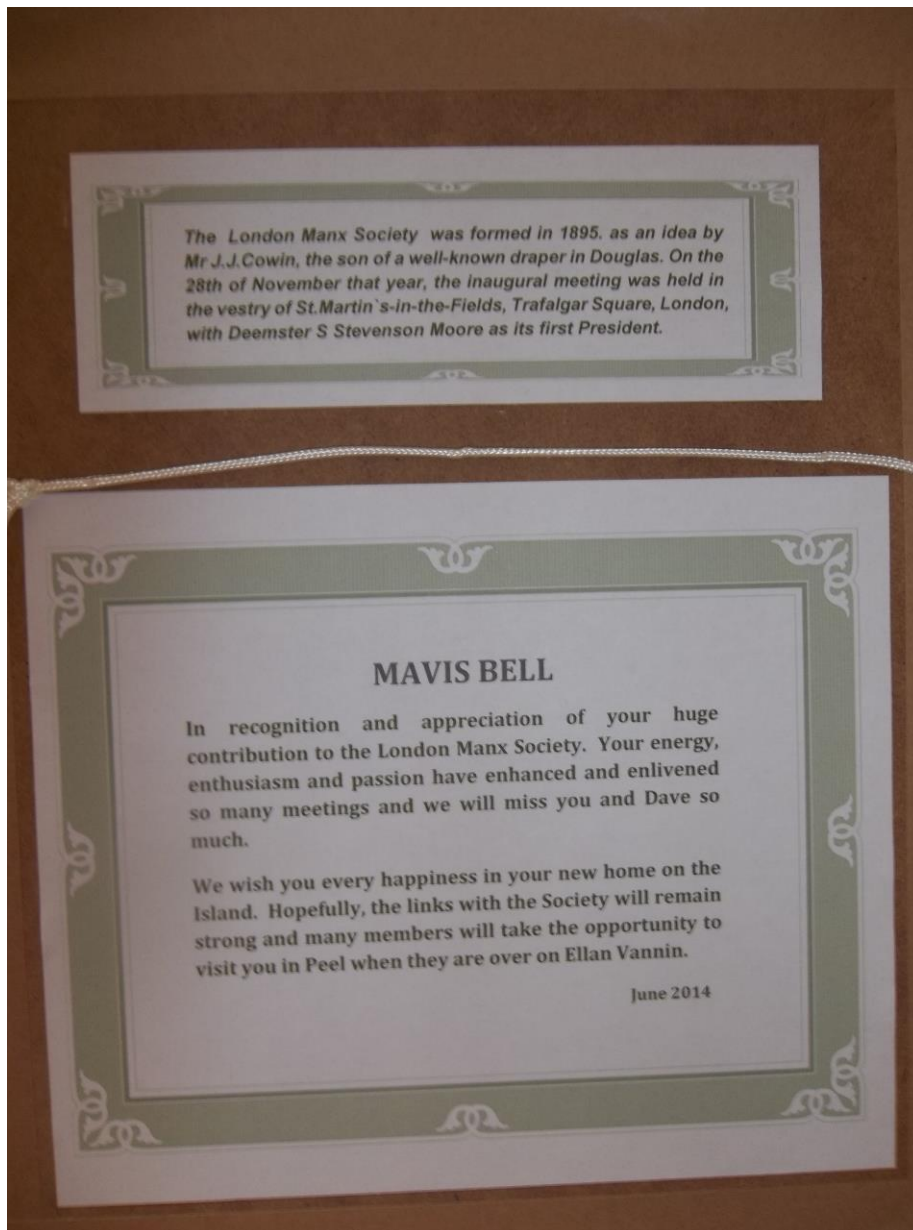
**Presentation to Mavis Bell**

While on the Island in July, Sam and Mary Weller visited Mavis and Dave Bell's new house in Peel on one of the hottest days of the year and partook of a wonderful lunch, prepared by Mavis, in their garden which has a spectacular view of the beach and castle.

We took the opportunity to present Mavis Bell with a print of St Martin's-in-the-Fields church where the The London Manx Society was formed in 1895, an idea by Mr J.J.Cowin, the son of a well-known draper in Douglas. On the 28th of November that year, the inaugural meeting was held in the vestry of St.Martin's-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, with Deemster S Stevenson Moore as its first President. The print was given by the Society in recognition of Mavis's long, varied and dedicated service during which, amongst many other roles, she was President, committee member and The Mary Weller Award coordinator.

**Sam Weller**





The London Manx Society was formed in 1895, as an idea by Mr J.J.Cowin, the son of a well-known draper in Douglas. On the 28th of November that year, the inaugural meeting was held in the vestry of St.Martin's-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, with Deemster S Stevenson Moore as its first President.

### MAVIS BELL

In recognition and appreciation of your huge contribution to the London Manx Society. Your energy, enthusiasm and passion have enhanced and enlivened so many meetings and we will miss you and Dave so much.

We wish you every happiness in your new home on the Island. Hopefully, the links with the Society will remain strong and many members will take the opportunity to visit you in Peel when they are over on Ellan Vannin.

June 2014

*The following account is what actually happened at the end of an enjoyable afternoon at the British Library on 10th March and a delicious meal afterwards at Casa Mamma Restaurant. They say it's a tonic to have a great laugh so please enjoy reading about my gaffe*

## **The Criminal**

I couldn't believe I'd done such a thing  
But we never know what the day will bring.  
Oh! The shame! The shame!  
I've gone and tarnished my good name.  
My mind was pondering which crossing to choose,  
(I hadn't even drunk any booze!)  
When I walked to my bus across the way  
And, horrors of horrors, forgot to pay!  
I can hear you say, "No, not our Maisie;  
She surely wouldn't be so crazy."  
Well hopefully not; I simply forgot.  
I'd thanked Franco and staff as I sailed past  
And happily boarded my bus at last.  
I was half way home when memory warned  
That something was wrong and then it dawned -  
As the wheels of the bus were turning, turning,  
These words round my head kept churning, churning:  
You're a criminal, you're a criminal -  
Wherever I looked I saw (subliminal)  
You're a criminal, you're a criminal.  
I eventually rang Douglas, explaining my plight  
And vowed that next day I'd put things right  
For I knew he and Franco were very good friends  
And here my story nearly ends.  
Back at the restaurant I paid my debt  
And was kindly told I wasn't to fret.  
A big hug from Franco and on each cheek a kiss,  
I certainly never expected this!  
Thank goodness I've escaped a prison cell!  
So all's well that ends well.

**Maisie Sell**

## **Acknowledgements**

The Editor thanks Valerie Caine, Wendy Ellis-Kneen, Alastair Kneale, Maron Honeyborne, Maisie Sell, Sam Weller, Maureen Wigley, for their kind contribution and also the Manx National Heritage and Manx Radio. News about you and articles (of around 450 words) about Island life are welcome and of interest to all. If in doubt, please contact me, Contributions can be sent at any time for inclusion in the next newsletter, if possible by email (*barrhamilton@btinternet.com*) or 132 Bush Hill, N21 2BS.

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Closing date for the next issue, 18th November

## **Dates for your diary**

**Monday 6th October**

Mhelliah

St Bride's Church, Fleet Street at 12 noon

followed by lunch at the Punch Tavern, 99 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1DE

**NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE IN THREE MONTHS**

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