



FOUNDED 1895

London Manx Society (Yn Cheshaght Manninagh Lunnin)

PATRONS: H E THE LT GOVERNOR OF THE ISLE OF MAN
THE PRESIDENT OF TYNWALD
THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF KEYS

President – Alastair Kneale

NEWSLETTER Autumn, 2023

Editor – Douglas Barr-Hamilton

Cooish

No kind words for the railways this year: engineering work on the line from King's Cross cut the number of available services by two-thirds and led to some members being unable to attend and the halving of some Liverpool Street trains created severe over-crowding. However, the day was warm, the sun shone, the garden was beautiful and a delicious meal that included our traditional Manx kippers ensured that things went with a swing. Despite slightly smaller numbers, we were delighted to welcome some new members of the Society and to have Maureen Wigley with us again, enjoying a first outing since long isolation caused by delays to and then recovery from knee surgery.

Our thanks to Sally and Peter Miller for a perfect Tynwald celebration.



New Member

The Society is delighted to welcome Adam Keay. After several new arrivals in the previous quarter, numbers are growing for the first time in several years and everyone looks forward to more fresh Manx blood and to getting to see some rather younger faces at events.

DBH

Faltering flights

Planning to visit the Island has been a headache for most of the summer. A shortage in the number of air traffic controllers and severe difficulty in recruiting more meant that in late June and all of July, the runway at Ronaldsway was shut five times a day so those staff could take mandatory fatigue breaks. This led to a Manx travel agent urging travellers to take out travel insurance policies that provide adequate cover in the event of delays and cancellations. However, some good news came when new rosters were drawn up for August reducing the number of closures and by over two hours.

The difficulty in recruitment is not confined to Ronaldsway, however, and EasyJet cancelled numerous flights and Brussels-based Eurocontrol, which manages air traffic in over forty countries warned of walkouts likely to take place in the peak summer season, inevitably resulting in delays and cancellations across the Continent.

It comes at a busy time for air travel and data show that July 2023 is calculated to have the highest number of UK departures since October 2019. It is suggested that staff are fully stretched, trying to squeeze capacity through an air space system, constrained as flights are not operating across Ukrainian airspace.

Passengers prefer to know of a flight cancellation in advance of leaving home so in many ways Easyjet is being prudent. Yet it might make travel difficult for Society members going home this summer.

DBH

Rushen News

I was not previously aware of the Rushen Heritage Trust so was delighted to hear from the trust's coordinator, John Quirk and to accept his offer of a copy of its newsletter, produced roughly every two months. He also asked me to inform any of our members with a link/family history to Rushen or able to contribute to the newsletter by way of a letter, article, or photographs. He'd be happy to hear from them (rushenheritage.org) so do let me know if you are interested. In the newsletter was an article about divers from the Port St Mary visiting wrecks off Dunkirk including Mona's Queen III lost during the 1940 evacuation along with King Orry and Fenella: all three within a space of 21 hours. The group had planned the trip for 2020 to mark the 80th anniversary of the Dunkirk evacuation, but travel restrictions caused by the Covid pandemic saw it delayed. Michelle Haywood from Discover Diving, and MHK for Rushen, coordinated the dives and the commemorative exhibition held at Port St, Mary Town Hall in June. Steam Packet Company vessel Mona's Queen hit a mine on 29th May 1940 as it returned to Dunkirk, having previously evacuated more than 1,000 men. 24 of the crew, including 17 Manxmen, died. Mona's Queen remains substantially complete and largely undisturbed and the anchor from the vessel was raised from the sea and returned to the Island in 2011. It is preserved at Kallow Point (South of Port St. Mary) where there is a memorial to the casualties from all three vessels (24 from the King Orry and Fenella) and where a memorial service is held each year on 29th May and the divers had got as close as they could to the three wrecks. Michelle Haywood explained that the dive conditions were challenging but the divers successfully placed a plaque close to Mona's Queen taking a video and photographs for the exhibition as well as the book to be published later this year.

DBH

Source: Rushen Heritage Trust

Manxman under way

It has taken almost two years but the Steam Packet's newest vessel set off for Heysham, just a little late, few minutes after nine o'clock on Thursday 17th August watched by a good crowd on Douglas Head. The Manxman, the company's largest ever vessel capable of carrying 948 passengers, 300 more than the Ben-my-Chree, was entering service and is expected to take over its full schedule in mid-October.

She had berthed in Douglas harbour nearly seven weeks earlier in the morning of Sunday, 2nd July after a journey of over 12,000 nautical miles from South Korea where construction had begun in August 2021, setting off on 11th May and stopping in six ports before arrival in Southampton where some further equipment was installed and artwork by Island-based artists added. The company's fleet now comprises four ships: in addition to the Manxman, the Ben-my-Chree, handing over the title of flag-ship, the Manannan and the MV Arrow.

During July, there were essential preparations to make before fare-paying passengers could board. First, it had to be demonstrated that the ship could be evacuated quickly and safely in the event of an emergency: a test that was passed successfully. Next, she needed her Passenger Ship Safety Certificate, a lengthy process as the crew had to show they could take her into and out of all the ports she uses at all states of weather and tide in addition to several entries into the port at Heysham to receive exemption from the need to take on a pilot, entries used to train dock-side workers and crewmen to dock the new vessel. Finally, the Manxman's freight handling had to be thoroughly tested, vehicles of all types being loaded and unloaded and ensuring all involved became familiar with the new visitor and to make loading and discharging as efficient as they could.

While the first sailing was a success, disappointment followed as she is initially operating under temporary speed restrictions and forecast winds in excess of 26 knots meant another ship had to replace her and Friday turned out to be a stormy day.

It is expected that she will switch to the overnight service after about a month but sailings to Liverpool look like waiting for the completion of the new terminal on the Mersey.

There will be a special four hour cruise round the island Thursday 17th September after a ballot for tickets that will cost £35 each.

DBH

Sources: iomtoday, Manx Radio

July's wind and rain

Lancashire's Preston made UK headlines towards the end of July having recorded a month's rainfall three times its average July precipitation. It was pretty wet a few miles to the west too. The Met Office at Ronaldsway recorded 144.9mm of rain, more than double the long-term average, signalling the wettest July on record with the wettest day being Sunday 23rd when there was 35mm of rain. The previous July record was 139.8mm in 1985.

DBH

Traditional industry's comeback

During the last few days of July the queenie season got off to a good start adding to the good news that the Island's fishing industry is enjoying new life following a better season for king scallop and a new quota for herring, which meant that local boats could fish commercially for viable quantities for the first time in a quarter of a century.

DBH

Source: Manx Radio

Changes at Nautical Museum

The Peggy is one of the world's oldest surviving boats and the only surviving example of a small wooden yacht once found in their thousands around the western British Isles. The preservation of the Peggy began in 2015 when she was carefully removed from the boat cellar of the Nautical Museum in Castletown to be stabilised, studied and conserved.

It was natural, therefore, that proposals to renovate the museum would attract a good number to the unveiling of plans to renovate it, described by Manx National Heritage as “The regeneration of the Nautical Museum into an all-weather family friendly and accessible heritage visitor attraction is a transformative project which we believe will create an engaging and truly memorable experience for all visitors, from near and far. Both the stories told at the Nautical Museum and surrounding the Peggy are of great international significance and this exciting development will further contribute to the already rich cultural life of Castletown and the Isle of Man. It will also create a landmark venue to be proud of, housing a world-class visitor attraction with a broad appeal.”

Visitors to Castletown Civic Centre, the venue for three open days in mid-July could see the proposed designs and meet representatives of Manx National Heritage with the Design team on hand to discuss the regeneration project.



Ranald Caldwell, Chairman of Visit Isle of Man, added, “The Island needs new developments of this nature to enable us to compete on an international level, to attract new audiences and encourage repeat visits. Other nations are investing in their visitor attractions and heritage in particular, which is a vital part of our visitor experience here on the Isle of Man.”

DBH

Source: Manx National Heritage

A guided tour to history

Announcing the launch of a new book by Professor R. Andrew McDonald, “A Visitor’s Guide To The Medieval Kingdoms Of Man And The Isles, 1066-1275”, Manx National Heritage explained, “In the High Middle Ages, the Isle of Man and the Hebridean islands off the Scottish coast were forged into unique water-worlds known as the Kingdoms of Man and the Isles. For two centuries, the rulers of the kingdoms plied the seaways with their galley-fleets, earning international reputations as both ferocious warlords and pious Christian princes. Sadly, the story of the medieval sea kingdoms and their rulers has almost vanished from modern memory”.

It took place a lunchtime talk and book signing at the Manx Museum on Wednesday 23th August when the author described the development of the book, the main topics covered and how significant the time was for the Island. Professor McDonald is a regular visitor from Canada and a popular speaker. His previous publications have highlighted the role the Isle of Man played in the sea kingdom established by the Vikings and his new book provides a straightforward introduction to the history, archaeology, and built heritage of the forgotten Kingdoms of Man and the Isles, tracing important historical events, individuals, and themes, and identifying and exploring significant historical sites and monuments of the period, many of which are still visible and accessible today.

Professor McDonald is a regular visitor to the Island from Canada, and a popular speaker. His previous publications have highlighted, to an international audience, the role the Isle of Man played in the sea kingdom established by the Vikings. He is Professor of History and past Director of the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Brock University in Canada. He is the author of many books and articles on medieval Man and the Isles and is a regular visitor to the erstwhile kingdoms. The new book has contributions by Angus A. Somerville and Benjamin T. Hudson.

The new book provides a straightforward introduction to the history, archaeology, and built heritage of the forgotten Kingdoms of Man and the Isles, tracing important historical events, individuals, and themes, and identifying and exploring significant historical sites and monuments of the period, many of which are still visible and accessible today.

Discussions of sites and their medieval context in the Isle of Man as well as elsewhere in the kingdom, sit alongside new translations of

key historical documents, maps, tables, timelines and illustrations all of which help bring the world of the sea kings vividly to life.

Professor McDonald said “Whether you are an armchair tourist, first-time visitor, seasoned traveller, student, or enthusiast, this book is a modern visitor’s companion to these lost medieval maritime kingdoms.”

DBH

Source: Culture Vannin

Marshals from Government House

In what must be a first, this year the governor, Sir John Lorimer and his wife, Lady Philippa Lorimer, volunteered and trained as marshals for the TT races. I understand that their stints included Gorse Lea (between the 6th and 7th milestones), Black Dub (at the 9th) and at Signpost Corner (just a couple of miles from the end of each lap, in Onchan).

DBH

Come-back question

Manx cyclist, Mark Cavendish announced before this summer’s Tour de France that he would retire at the end of the season but hopes that he would surpass the record number of tour stage wins that he shares with the Belgian cycling legend Eddie Merckx were dashed when he crashed, broke his collarbone and had to retire during Stage eight. It has been reported that his team manager would like him to postpone retirement for one season and try again in 2024. It must be an agonising decision.

DBH

Sources: Manx Radio, BBC Sport, The Times

Andrus, Ronnug, Mackuld, . . .

A.R.M. your friends visiting the Island with the right pronunciation of its place names! In a recent newspaper article I learned that Culture Vannin has created an interactive map aimed to help them recognise the Island's stranger sounding place names.

The service has been available for some time both to those learning Manx and those wanting to avoid error, the late Dr. Brian Stowell having recorded several sound files with the pronunciation of Manx place names given in alphabetical order. They have been on its web site but now Ruth Keggin-Gell, Manx language development officer at Culture Vannin has created an interactive map there with the information on the place's point on it. It can be found at learnmanx.com/maps/place-names/

“Given the usefulness of these recordings, I wanted to utilise them in a new way, and embed them as part of an interactive map,” she said. “You can zoom in on the map, much like you would with Google Maps or similar, and click on the place name to see and hear it.”

I have to say that I learned a lot in a quick visit.

DBH

Source: IoM Today

Peel Castle wood in New South Wales Museum

Said to have been made from wood from the castle, a chair believed to have been made in the late 17th or early 18th century and belonging to New South Wales Manx Society member Inneen Donnelly has been found a new home as she needed to part with it. The Society has arranged for it to be exhibited in the Museum at Glen Innes. It's a museum steeped in Celtic tradition and the place where the Australian Celtic Festival is held annually.

Inneen's grandmother was a Quilliam and the chair comes from that side of her family which is related to Captain Quilliam who was on the Victory when Nelson died during the Battle of Trafalgar.

DBH

Source: NSW Manx Society

From Milk to Rum

When I was a lad in Andreas, Billy Teare used to deliver a can of milk from Ballakelly each morning. Recently I have discovered that two friends, Rick Dacey and Ian Warborn-Jones, have set up an artisan distillery on the same farm in Kiondroghad Road where they produce spirits including a white rum known as "Manx Hoolie" and sell them through their business, Outlier Distilling Company, having converted the old milking shed into a distillery.

They are using a 160-litre wood-fired still, burning off-cuts from a local sawmill and using water from a well on the farm: all this part of an undertaking as a UNESCO biosphere partner to produce the rum in a sustainable way; every part of the process is done by hand.

I also discovered that the rum is now being sold in Harrods. I won't be having it delivered daily.

DBH

A tough route to the Island

For the first time ever, someone has swum from the English mainland to the Island. A former army officer, Adam Diver from Fleetwood, successively completed the 51 kilometres (32 miles) challenge from St. Bees Head in Cumbria, arriving on the Island at Port Mooar (just south of Maughold). He had set off at eight in the morning of 29th

May and clambered up the shore at three in the afternoon, his wife and family there to greet him. What an effort! We include our congratulations.

Later, they met the governor, Sir John Lorimer and a statement was issued saying that His Excellency was thrilled to welcome him and his family to Government House, following the record-breaking charity swim across the Irish Sea in support of Healthier Heroes CIC. The completion of the challenge to raise awareness of veterans' and to support the charity of which Adam is a trustee, has raised over £12,000. He was also delighted to be able to celebrate the record-setting swim with him and gave him a Governor's coin as a keepsake, adding, "Well done Captain Adam Diver and all his support team on an amazing achievement!"

The achievement was well covered in Manx media and by Friday the achievement was being reported in the Nationals, the Metro adding the information that he had been repeatedly stung by jellyfish: agents of Manannan, no doubt, and the Times reporting an encounter with a group of dolphins. He is reported as saying, "That was hard work but I couldn't have done it without my amazing team. I'd like to say thank you to the mental health charity Healthier Heroes for all the work they do. Thanks to the Isle of Man for letting me on the island free of charge!"

Adam's efforts raised £12,000 for Healthier Heroes and he has spent the summer training for the next triathlon world championships but is having to use a swimming pool as the sea off Fleetwood is so polluted: a contrast to the waters around the Island which he had found clean and clear.

DBH

Hare in Celtic Folklore and Campaign to protect Manx Mountain Hare

Amongst the animals held to have spiritual significance for the Celts was the Hare. In Celtic mythology and folklore, the hare has links to the mysterious Otherworld of the supernatural. Celtic peoples looked on the hare as a creature with supernatural powers. This lonely creature was admired for strength, speed and was noted for being active at night and associated with the moon. They were seen as mysterious and magical, so thought of as an animal to be treated with caution. When the Romans invaded the British Isles, Julius Caesar made the observation that the Celtic people did not regard it lawful to eat the hare.

The scientific name for the family group of rabbits and hares is Leporidae. Although hares and rabbits are in the same family, they are different species. Generally hares are larger than rabbits, with longer ears, and have black markings on their fur. In the British Isles and Ireland there are three types of hares: the Irish Hare, the Common or Brown Hare and the Mountain or Blue Hare. They are generally herbivorous, have long-ears, are fast runners, and normally live alone or in pairs. Unlike rabbits, hares do not bear their young below ground in Burrows, but in what is known as a form, which can be a nest of grass or a shallow depression. A hare less than one year old is called a leveret.

On the Isle of Man there are two species of hare. The Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus*) and Mountain Hare (*Lepus timidus*) which is widely known as the 'Blue Hare' on the Island. The Brown Hare is found widely across the Island, excluding the Calf of Man. Although widespread, its distribution is somewhat localised and there are a few places where it is uncommon. The Mountain Hare is found only in the hills north of the Central Valley, where its reintroduction took place

in the 1950-60s. Recent data on its population and conservation status is lacking. For a number of years the Manx Wildlife Trust (Manx: Treisht Bea-Feie Vannin) has been campaigning for an update of the Schedules of the Wildlife Act 1990 which was last updated by Tynwald in 2011. Schedule 5 is the list of animal species which are fully protected and Manx Wildlife Trust wants the Mountain Hare added to this list.

Link: Manx Wildlife Trust - Treisht Bea-Feie Vannin www.mwt.im/
Alastair Kneale



Image: Mountain Hare

Poem for Manx Martyr Illiam Dhone

Illiam Dhone (14 April 1608 - 02 January 1663) also known as William Christian was a Manx politician and patriot. For his part in the Manx rising of 1651 he was executed by firing squad at Hango Hill on 2nd January 1663. This poem by A. P. Graves was written 110 years ago in his honour and published in "A Book of Manx Poetry" by the Manx Language Society and the World Manx Society, 1913. The writer, A.P. Graves, was also known to London Manx Society and delivered a lecture to the Society on Manx Music in 1913.

*"ILLIAM DHONE
THE Scot to mighty Wallace
And lordly Bruce is leal;
The Irish heart's the palace
Of Brian and O'Neil;
The Welsh, they laud Llewelyn
With harp and trumpet tone;
But oh! our hero's Illiam,
Our hero's Illiam Dhone!*

*For when oppression flourish'd,
And we were slaves, not men,
What voice rebellion nourish'd
And gave us heart again?
What proud insurgent vassal
Could shake the tyrant's throne,
And pluck from him his castle,
Say, who but Illiam Dhone?*

*Ah ! laurel tree fair risen,
But blasted at a breath,
O'erpower'd and pent in prison
Tried, doom'd, and led to death!
His fair ones he is clasping
A flash, a fall, a groan
And in his life's blood, gasping,
Lies gallant Illiam Dhone!*

*His foes traduced him living,
Hiss foes traduced him dead,
With hatred unforgiving,
Our hand, our heart, our head.
But when the dead have
mounted
Before the judgment Throne,
Which shall be righteous counted
Shall they, or Illiam Dhone?*

*When oh, while great and simple
Still side by side are set,
In God's own Tynwald temple,
Let Manxmen ne'er forget,
That the red seal on a charter
Of freedom all our own
Is the life-blood of our martyr
And monarch, Illiam Dhone.*

A.P. GRAVES

Source: "A Book of Manx Poetry" by the Manx Language Society and the World Manx Society, 1913



Image: Iliam Done with memorial plaque at Hango Hill

Boakesey Closs in new Manx Bard

The Manx Bard for the next year has been chosen and her name announced on 27th August. Boakesey will succeed Michael Manning.

On making the announcement, organisers said, "Boakesey beat of an overwhelming amount of entries this year, of which, after long listing were shortlisted to only four in total.

"Our final judges were treated to an array of spectacular performances from all four shortlisted entries.

"However, Boakesey's delivery of her own work, "Manannan's Revenge" (The Ballad of Cammag) blew the judges away and together with many other magnificent attributes, clinched that well sought after, prestigious position of IXth Manx Bard!"

DBH

Source, Manx Radio

Peel Cathedral needs half a million

Philip Longworth, who works supporting the Diocese of Sodor and Man and Cathedral Isle of Man in trying to raise funds for a major re-ordering project that will result in the Cathedral in Peel becoming a community hub in the West of the Island which can also be used for cross Island events and functions. The building will of course continue to function as a Cathedral in terms of its ministry but will also become a venue for local artists and musical productions and contain an education zone to capture the amazing heritage of our Island. On a weekly basis there will also be a range of community activities including the further development of the “Big Table Café” which offers a range of food and social setting with people being asked to contribute what they can to this.

Interestingly, the local business community also uses this venue for entertaining and is more than happy to make generous donations which have helped sustain and grow this activity over the past few years. The cathedral will also provide a range of health and leisure activities supporting people from cradle to grave and a principal aim is to deliver a venue which results in lower carbon emissions and continuing to work towards Net Carbon Zero.

The re-ordering will cost in the region of £2.1m and approximately £1.6m is secured or pledged but has hit a major challenge in that costs are now increasing at a greater rate than funds can be raised. Philip wonders if members may be interested in supporting such an initiative or have some introductions that they could make to people who may be able to support the appeal. He is happy to offer more information so please do not hesitate to contact me for his details.

DBH

Railway Centenary

The Island's railways have had a checkered history. Founded one hundred years ago, the steam section boasts the longest narrow gauge steam line in Britain still using the original locomotives and carriages. It was on 1st July 1873 that the first train left Douglas for Peel with a three foot narrow gauge. The line to Port St Mary was added eleven months later. In 1879, a line from St John's to Ramsey, originally operated by a different company, was added as were branch lines to the Foxdale mines and the WW1 internment camp at Knockaloe.

The electric railway started its operations in 1893 but its extension beyond Laxey led to the failure of the steam operation to Ramsey which was taken over by Manx Railways. The line from Laxey to the top of Snaefell opened two years later. A bus subsidiary was established in the 1920s enabling the company to remain profitable but not until 1949 and the Howden Report was there a serious examination of its sustainability. This recommended the immediate closure on the Ramsey line, the winding down of the Peel branch and the retention of the line in the South of the Island, clearly profitable. It remains to this day.

However, economies were chosen over closures and the Ramsey line continued losing money until the 1960s. The profitable days when rail was the first choice conveyor of freight, especially minerals from Foxdale and Laxey and fish from Peel were over. Now the railway is primarily a tourist attraction. There is Pullman-style fine dining in the beautifully restored Dining Car. Built in 1905 and restored in the Spring of 2013, the plush carriage is one of only a handful of fine dining narrow gauge dining cars in the world. With a mouth-watering menu using only the finest Manx produce, fully licensed with 14 wines listed and a cocktail bar, it offers a popular evening out.

DBH

September Island Quiz

(Open to non-members through the web site)

1. The collision between the “King Orry” and a fishing boat in September 1904 happened (a) off Douglas Head, (b) near the Mersey Bar, (c) off Maughold Head, (d) off the Mull of Galloway?
2. Did the Island experience, “The Great Snowfall” in (a) 1885, (b) 1895 (c) 1905, (d) 1915?
3. The former Society secretary buried in Andreas churchyard in 1939 following a service conducted in Manx was (a) Sir Frederick Clucas CBE, (b) Miss E E Caine, (c) J T Freer, (d) William Radcliffe?
4. The 1973 Summerland Fire started (a) in a bedroom, (b) in the dance hall, (c) in the lobby, (d) on the miniature golf course?
5. The number of islands making up the Kingdom of Mann under Godred Crovan (d.1095) was (a) 8, (b) 10, (c) 12, (d) 15?

Answers to Spring Quiz

1. The breed of sheep unique to the Island is (b) Loaghtan,
2. The water wheel, Mona Erin is in (c) Glen Maye.
3. There is a breed of bear called (c) Kennaught.
4. The type of aircraft that crashed into North Barrule in April 1945 was (d) Flying Fortress
5. Those eating “Braddan” at the LMS lunch enjoyed (d) salmon.

Winner. Richard Moore of South Africa whose has had to postpone a trip to the Island this year to claim his prizes and spend them.

Closing date 17th November. The first reader to send me five correct answers will receive a Manx £20 note.

Acknowledgements

The editor thanks Alastair Kneale, Philip Longworth, NSW Manx Society, for their kind contribution and also NAMA, Isle of Man Newspapers, Culture Vannin and Manx National Heritage. 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 mail to 132 Bush Hill, N21 2BS. Copyright is retained by the contributor. Opinions expressed are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the editor or of the Society.

Closing date for the next issue, 23rd November.

NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE IN THREE MONTHS

PLEASE SEND NEWS TO

**Douglas Barr-Hamilton, 132 Bush Hill, London N21 2BS
Telephone 020 8360 8001 Email: barrhamilton@btinternet.com**

Date for your diary

Yn Mhelliagh

**Monday, 16th October, 2023 at 12 noon
St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, EC4Y 1DE
followed by lunch at the Old Bell Tavern nearby**

LONDON MANX SOCIETY