

NEWSLETTER Spring 2012

Editor – Douglas Barr-Hamilton

Walking and eating and . . .

London Manx getting together.

It is with no little anticipation that we look forward to this year's annual lunch. Since being taken over by Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, 92 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4BH, is much improved and, at £30, the price of the meal has been held the same as the last two years. A strong turnout will make it a most enjoyable occasion.

Our guest of honour will be Edmund Southworth, Director of Manx National Heritage and we are confident he will be an interesting speaker. A good lunch, an informative talk and wonderful company: no excuses for missing it. We also have the generous offer of a return sailing for a car and two passengers as the first prize in our raffle. Once again the Steam Packet have been most kind to the Society. We trust the date is in your diary, 28th April 2012 12.15 p.m. for 12.45. Do please reserve your place through Sam Weller (form enclosed).

Prior to the AGM on 2nd April Mavis Bell, still full of her usual energy, has agreed to organise a pre-lunch walk to visit Charles Dickens' House Museum which will close later in the month for refurbishment. Meet at Russell Square tube station (Piccadilly Line) at 10.45 a.m. and bring £5 for admission (concessionary price). She promises to stroll. How better to build an appetite? Mavis is also willing to arrange further, gentle, literary walks throughout the year if the idea is popular.

DBH

Contacting the Society

Still without a Secretary, the officers of the Society have become aware that members are not sure who to contact although, with modern technology, contact is still being made. The last committee meeting decided that it should formalise the situation and Douglas has agreed to take on the role. This is particularly important in the submission of nominations and resolutions for the agm which should be received fourteen days before the meeting:

Douglas Barr-Hamilton, 132 Bush Hill, London N21 2BS

Illness

Several members of our committee are unwell at the present time, in particular Rose Fowler, Colin Gill and Maron Honeybourne. We wish all them a speedy recovery.

Deaths

We are sorry to report two deaths since the start of the year:

Ivy Tweed (1915 -2012)

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Ivy Tweed, in January. Mother to Pam, Gill and Sally, she was a popular figure at LMS events and we vividly recall her smiling face, (still a pretty lady in her late nineties) happy to receive her Raffle Prize at Pam and Mike's Cooish before Christmas.

Pam, Sally, and Gill (in the States) were lucky with their Mum, but she was equally fortunate with her daughters, who with love and patience, chose to take turns to look after Ivy in her final years. Her son-in-law, Peter, spoke of the change-overs at South Mimms Service Area, being about mid-way between their homes in Cambridge and Ickenham, and frequent trips to Ivy's home on the Island.

Ivy was born in Liverpool in 1915, the only girl in a family of 4 brothers and a father who was a master tailor, with the good Manx name of Fletcher. For his health he moved his family to the Isle of Man, where he built up a successful tailoring business. She trained as a dressmaker and then a hairdresser and eventually met and married Norman Kewley, who worked in, and in time inherited his father's building firm. They had three daughters, and during the last summer of the war, when Norman was away serving in the Merchant Navy, Ivy was resourceful enough to rent out their Douglas home and move Pam and Gill (Sally was born after the war) to Port St Mary, 'for fresh air and fun'.

The family decided to emigrate to New Zealand in the mid-fifties, returning after five years, as it didn't suit them, and then they had homes in Cornwall and then in London.

Ivy loved people around her, and was devastated when Norman died at the early age of 56, and she spent some lonely years. However, she married John Tweed in her seventies and spent some good years in the Isle of Man, before becoming a widow for the second time.

Her funeral took place at the Cambridge Crematorium at 4pm on Friday, 10th February, with a web-cast connection to Australia for Pam and Mike's son, Andrew, and for Gill in Seattle who is unwell, but her son, Duncan, had flown over to attend his Grandmother's funeral. Our own Margaret Brady was there to play the Manx tunes Ivy loved, including 'Isle of Mona, Home Beloved', 'The Manx Fisherman's Evening Hymn' and 'Ellan Vannin'. The civic ceremony was conducted by Wendy Parnell, celebrant, and a eulogy and poem were read by

Sally and Pam. But the proceedings ended on a cheerful note – typical of Ivy, with Margaret playing, ‘Give me the bus fare to Laxey’. It was a lovely send-off for a lovely lady who will be missed, not only by her family but by us all.

Mavis Bell.

Preston Calvert Glass (1944-2012)

Preston Glass, a former President of the London Manx Society, died in Luton on 16 February 2012 at the age of 67.

He made a significant and important contribution to the London Manx Society during his Presidency and long term membership of the Committee. For several years he held the offices of Honorary Secretary and Social Secretary and he arranged outings and Manx quizzes. At the occasional Mhelliah he was even known to play the spoons with great verve and perform to the accompaniment of the recorded music he brought back from his travels.

Preston Calvert Glass was born in Heywood, Lancashire on 23 February 1944. His father, Rev E B Glass, an old boy of King William’s College, and later Archdeacon of Mann, became Vicar of Castletown. Preston grew up at the Vicarage opposite the Nautical Museum.

He attended King William’s College from 1955 to 1962 where he was active in the Combined Cadet Force. When he left school he joined the regular Army for nine years, serving in Germany and Aden. He held the position of Regimental Surveyor with 1st Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery and later transferred to REME.

Preston Glass was a meticulous man and took up the position of Clerical Officer at the European Rail Passenger Office of British Rail in their offices at Paddington. Early retirement enabled him to indulge his passion of railway travel to the farthest reaches of the globe. He travelled in Canada and the United States, Australia, Japan, Vietnam and throughout Europe.

Preston would also travel extensively on trips from his home base at Luton visiting the much loved Severn Valley Railway and further destinations, returning to London to indulge his fondness for good Jazz and real ale. He visited the Isle of Man once a year and took delight in the diversity of antique railway and transport systems which have survived to this day and which served as a reminder of his many years on the Island.

Preston was an accomplished painter and loved nature and wildlife, frequently visiting Kew Gardens and Bushey Park. He wrote well and was a most intelligent conversationalist.

Personally I will miss my weekly chats with Preston over the most wide ranging topics, on all of which he was well informed and held entertaining and firm convictions. He was greatly sustained by his Christian faith and the connections with his local church.

Preston Glass was a singular man and we shall all miss him. We send our sympathy to his sister Frances and her family. We have all lost a steadfast friend.

Sam Alder

. . . and a Happy Birthday

The Society wishes many happy returns of the day to Maisie Sell who will turn 90 on 20th April. We can't believe it's ten years since her last big one!

Manx Visitors

It was striking at Preston Glass' funeral how several islanders "happened" to be on the mainland on that day and it struck Society members present that, although the circumstances were not happy ones, it was good to meet and reminisce with folk last seen years ago; in my case two that I had not met since our schooldays. Someone made the suggestion that we ask a London member to be a contact who would keep a list of those willing to try and get to such a "reunion" if it could be arranged and for island visitors to our neck of the woods to inform.

Reaction please.

DBH

Margaret knows who Cressy Dodd was

You may be interested to know that, in response to the article in the latest Newsletter we have just sent out, headed "Who was Cressy Dodd" I have written to Stephen Miller, as she was my aunt and her daughter is my cousin Joan, whom I visited last March in Australia. I have given the appropriate emails so hopefully Stephen can contact Joan and get all the info he wants.

Margaret Brady

More Memories of Miss Frazier

I was amused by Felicity Grundy's mention of "a rather formidable French teacher called Miss Frazier," in the winter newsletter. She had been my aunt's teacher and, when short of adults to accompany her party of girls to Paris in about 1955 asked my aunt (who happened to be free as by then she was a teacher at Victoria Road, Castletown (the trip went in TT week) to go along and my aunt also "volunteered" my mother – and I was allowed to go too! I did not find her too formidable but then I wasn't one of her regular pupils. So I went to Paris for a week and returned to Cambridge with a Manx accent!

Margaret M Hunt

A Manx Soldier and his War Horse

William Hubert Shimmin MM served in the 42nd Signal Coy of the Royal Engineers throughout the 1914-18 War. He never spoke of the horrors endured, only of the amusing or piquant incidents fit, in his judgement, to be relayed to the women and children safe at home in the Isle of Man. The beauty of his Island memories helped him to blot out the ugliness of his actual surroundings in France.

Having joined up and reported to Manchester Barracks, he had a brief training in weaponry and also in horse-riding. He had never ridden a horse in his young life. A few circles of the stable-yards provided lessons in horsemanship with no time for refinements like “posture” or “good seat” training, let alone “dressage.” The new recruits, some of whom were terrified of the animals, were then deemed ready to go into battle on horseback.

William never enlarged on these battles. His favourite war story was of becoming lost and alone behind enemy lines; and then of being so grateful to, and enamoured of, his horse’s behaviour. The animal knew the way back and coolly and calmly eventually deposited William safely behind his own company’s lines.

Towards the end of his life, aged over 80, William often told his grandchildren about this incident which impressed and amused them and which had had such a lasting effect on William’s own memory, even his psyche.

Once, after a lovely day exploring the Island by car with his grandchildren, they were homeward bound but, as the sun went down and with no Port St. Mary in sight, the children became anxious. They seemed to be heading in the wrong direction towards an isolated quarry.

“Grandpa, we’re lost! We’re going the wrong way.” But William reassured them by saying, “Don’t worry, kids. The car knows its way.”

Miraculously, it did!

Veen Hill (grand-daughter)

Island parishes disappear

I always loved one question in Paul Garbutt’s quizzes. I’ve known as long as I can remember that there are seventeen parishes in the Isle of Man. No longer. On Sunday 4th March the Northern Pastoral Scheme 2011 was inaugurated by the Bishop in a ceremony in Sulby Church, having formally begun on 1st March. Andreas, Jurby, Ballaugh and that part of Lezayre administered by St Stephen’s, Sulby, become a single parish under Rev. Cyril Rogers, previously vicar of Ballaugh and Michael. This would represent a doubling of Mr Rogers’ responsibilities but, in fact, they will increase even further as he has been appointed Rural Dean also.

In a message to his new parishioners, he wrote, “Please know that I will do my best for you. I want to see all my churches thrive and, as parish priest, I wish to

be there for all my parishioners. Old fashioned pastoral ministry is important to me and I do not want to see that role swamped by administrative duties.”

Sadly, just as he was about to begin his new duties, Rev. Rogers suffered a heart attack. I understand it is not as serious as it might have been but he was taken to hospital in Liverpool and is likely to be out of action for a couple of months. And members have the answer to the first question in our latest quiz.

DBH

Manx Gaelic News

Manx Heritage Foundation has announced its mobile site for **Learnmanx** is up and running. This means that we'll be able to access all the best bits from our website on a smartphone and tablet. The specific address is www.learnmanx.com/mobile but we'll be directed straight to the site from our mobile devices by logging on to www.learnmanx.com. There's loads on the site in both Manx and English, whilst a redesign soon to go live, should make a visit an even more pleasurable experience!

Adrian Cain

Isle of Man Family History Society

Genealogy can be a time consuming process, littered with frustrations, surprises and fascination, but help is at hand for those budding genealogists who require help in pinning down their elusive ancestors.

The Isle of Man Family History Society was formed in 1979 by a group of twenty nine enthusiastic volunteers under the leadership of Mona Christian, in order to encourage others worldwide to research their ancestry.

Spokesperson Priscilla Lewthwaite said, “Genealogy is the bare bones of the development of a family. Family history is putting the flesh onto the bones, or putting leaves on the family tree. This is what we try to encourage our members to do, not just to produce a Family Tree going back into the dark ages, but to try and find out as much as possible about each person on the tree”.

With over thirty years' collective experience under their belt, members of this respected organisation have used their time productively. Each gravestone, ranging from early examples up to the 1980s, has been recorded, burial records indexed, publications and discs produced and valuable Census Records indexed from 1841 up to 1901. They have also generously given their time to transcribe Wills, index records of the poor and give voluntary assistance to the staff of Manx National Heritage.

The society's on-going popularity has ensured a worldwide membership of more than 1200 people who receive a fact-filled quarterly journal. But there's also time to continue indexing and arrange an annual exhibition in a different part of the Island each year to help create public awareness of their work. Many will also be

conscious of their presence within the Homecomers' Tent on Tynwald Day. Members of the society also took part in the 'Who Do You Think You Are Exhibition?' in London in conjunction with other agencies from the Isle of Man. There are many advantages to becoming a member of the Isle of Man Family History Society, where they will guide new recruits through the sometimes demanding process of filtering the wheat from the chaff of genealogical research. This includes the society's library situated on Derby Road in Peel (open three afternoons each week) which contains a growing collection of valuable information. Members also have the opportunity to meet socially every month at Union Mills Methodist Church to hear an invited Lecturer speak on a chosen topic, followed by the chance to discuss any problems members may have with their research.

New members are always welcome with further information available from their website, www.iomfhs.im

Valerie Caine

© February 2012

(Courtesy of Manx Tails)

William Kennish Manninagh Dooie - True Manxman

Soon to be published:

William Kennish received £100 from the Admiralty in 1828 for his Marine Theodolite which simplified the concentration of a broadside from a Ship of War. His Gun Commander system using bells, rope and a command of the helm using his theodolite put 16 shots through a 6ft square target at 500 yards whilst moving at 3 knots – a challenge even for a 21st century gunner.

Later developments included a diving machine to allow recovery of lost coinage in Brooklyn harbour before he set out to discover a route to link the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. His discovery in 1854 of a route requiring no locks and proof that linking the two great oceans would not, as believed at the time, risk draining one into the other have set this Manxman head and shoulders above his contemporaries.

His son supervised the construction of the plinth supporting the statue of liberty and volunteered with his brother as part of Serrell's Engineers in the American Civil War. All the more remarkable is the revelation that the inventions of both father and son from the Victorian era are still cited as relevant 'prior art' in modern patents of invention.

This book charts the life and career of "an illiterate Manx peasant" (William's own words) who rose in only seven years from seaman to master carpenter of the Mediterranean Fleet, eventually serving on three admirals' flagships.

(from the dustsheet by permission)

Past Times in the Parish of Patrick

During the month of March lovers of nostalgia will be invited through the doors of Holy Trinity Church in the parish of Patrick to view an exciting new photographic exhibition.

Organised by local photographer Vicky Harrop and a number of friends living in the parish, they have found residents within the villages of Dalby, Glen Maye and Patrick very generous, loaning a selection of family photographs for display. Emphasising its rural location, there's a clear focus on the lively hubs of each village, whether it's the Post Office, the local church, or the once burgeoning day school. But it also reminds us how life has changed for these small, rural communities with the demise of some of the local elements of village life. It's a tantalising glimpse into the everyday lives of people from the area, whether at work or play, where the sense of community spirit is almost tangible.

A selection of poems by Manx poet 'Cushag' (Josephine Kermode) contributes its own element of nostalgia to the exhibition which is already well patronised by a curious visiting public.

With light refreshments on offer and a chance to browse through some very well thumbed Manx scrap books, it's also a good opportunity to take stock of this well maintained parish church on the west coast, known locally as the 'Prison Camp Church'. And if the weather is kind perhaps a wander through the adjoining graveyard with its historical links to the now defunct Knockaloe Internment Camp and the great music hall star Florrie Forde.

Monetary donations from the exhibition will be put towards the Church Restoration Fund.

Valerie Caine

© March 2012

South African and London Manx Societies get together

Several members of the London Society met Kevin Williams and George Woods when they were on the Island last July for the World Manx Association's centenary and, having learned of a planned trip, kindly invited Douglas and Margarita to join them in a meal while in Johannesburg. Kevin is President (they use Manx Gaelic there so, Reiltagh) and, in addition to George, he invited Scrydeyr (Secretary) Tom Cain and his wife Rhoda to an historic meal on 26th January. It was a wonderful (and warm) occasion.

The Manx Association of Southern Africa incorporates several long-standing societies including the Transvaal Manx Association of which Rose Fowler's father was secretary in about 1910. He was out in South Africa for 20 years until 1920. I understand the archive papers were presented to the Manx Museum when they had the opportunity last year. Some of our members travel long distances to get to our meetings; one of South Africa's, a lady now in her 80s, calculates she has driven 20,000 miles to get theirs.

I have undertaken to reciprocate soon as both Kevin and George travel to London on business from time to time and they would love to try Real Man pizzas. Let me know if you'd like to make the occasion a party and I'll inform you of any visit they plan. Just over two years ago we hastily arranged a similar meal when a Manx couple from New Zealand were visiting London and enjoyed a very happy evening.

Society's Website

Londonmanxsociety.com

If you get a chance to look at the website you'll find photos of the officers, the current newsletter together with previous editions. Also links to other Manx websites etc. Another area which you might find interesting is the guest newsletters section found via HOME/NEWS/MANX LIFE. At present you will find the current Manx music (Kiaull Manninagh) and the Queensland Manx Society newsletters. The following is taken from the QMS newsletter:

The Tynwald Club

This is the fascinating story of a Manx Society which flourished in a prisoner of war camp in the heart of Germany for more than two and a half years, and was told to an annual Tynwald Day Gathering of the World Manx Association, at Douglas, by Bombardier Arnold Forrester. He was one of the founder members of this unique Society, which bore the name of The Tynwald Club.

It was formed in 1942 by 20 Manxmen in Stalag 383 situated at the foot of the Bavarian Alps, 33 miles from Nuremburg. Company Sgt. Major Harry Qualtrough was elected president, Sgt. Curwen Clague, Secretary, and Sgt. J.Manderson Treasurer. Most of the members belonged to the 129th Battery of the Manx Regiment, but Sgt Major Qualtrough was Senior W.O. of the Durham Light Infantry. Although he had not seen his home in St. John's for some years and had spent most of his life abroad, he was, said Bombdr. Forrester "as Manx as any of us" and by his splendid example and sympathetic understanding did much for their morale in those dark days. He got them their hut and from then on Wednesday night was Tynwald Night. In that hut in the evenings they would draw the curtain across the window, which looked out across the muddy wastes, the tumbled down huts, the high barbed wire fence, the lookout towers and the searchlights. They would shut out the present and dwell awhile on the past, returning in their thoughts to their loved ones at home.

News from home was of paramount interest. A letter to one, if it contained news of people and events was a letter to all. Cigarettes were the currency of the camp and with them one could buy almost anything from a shirt to an accordian. Each member paid two cigarettes a week to the treasurer and so created a fund which enabled them to have a light meal in the true "Manx Tay" traditions and also supply any of their members in hospital with extra cigarettes. Sometimes an Australian, a New Zealander or a Palestinian would give them a lecture on their

home country and in return Sgt. Norman Cowley would be invited to give a talk on the Isle of Man. On two occasions his audiences numbered over 1000 men. In addition, he spoke at every club in camp, representing almost every district in Britain. There were over 7000 men in Stalag 383 and by the time Sgt. Cowley had finished with the whole camp, it was Isle of Man conscious.

Wendy Ellis Kneen

HMS Peel Castle

When the Great War broke out in 1914 the Royal Navy was the greatest naval force in the world, undoubtedly in number and strength of its fleet although there were doubts about its fighting qualities as it had not been involved in a war in living memory and its inadequacies were soon to be exposed at the Battle of Jutland.

It was not long before the Admiralty realised they would need more ships and crew. As a result the Isle of Man Steam Packet was required to help.

Several of its ships and their sailors were speedily recruited and the Peel Castle, build in the 1890s, was typical of them. It took just five weeks to fit out at Cammell Lairds in Birkenhead and in November 1914 she became HMS Peel Castle with Steam Packet personnel providing most of the engine room staff. Ten days later she was at Scapa Flow for coaling and she then sailed for Plymouth and immediately had to undergo repairs as stormy conditions had caused some damage.

For the rest of the war she patrolled the English Channel: ten days at sea followed by four in port at Dover. Her job simply was to manage the passage of ships and inspect neutral ships in case they were being used by the enemy. Sounds dull and routine doesn't it? However, she had to survive nine attacks by enemy shipping at sea and was regularly under bombing raids in port. Inevitably, there was a great deal of rescue work as ships, hostile and friendly, came to grief. There was much excitement when enemy aliens were found on neutral vessels and they became aware of a little known fact: that in the United States of America there was much opposition to the Allies' cause. The Steam Packet's history of its fleet offers a wonderful and detailed account of our grandfathers' activities under conscription.

After the war, she was used to ferry troops back from the battle fields and it was not until May 1919 that she was back transferring Manx folk between the Island and the mainland.

DBH

Island Quiz

(open to non-members through the web site)

1. How many parishes are there in the Isle of Man
a) 17, b) 16, c) 15, d) 14?
2. Mark Cavendish is cycling world champion at
a) Pursuit, b) Road Racing, c) Sprint, d) Time Trial?
3. Laxey Woollen Mills has recently acquired
a) Claire Boswell, b) Garrey Corneil, c) Looneys, d) ManninKilt?
4. What is the name of the glen that runs from below the Albert Tower to the Hairpin
a) Aulden, b) Ballacallow, c) Elfin, d) Fairy?
5. Which Manx town gives its name to a current Royal Navy warship
a) Douglas, Onchan, Peel, Ramsey?

*Answers to the editor by post or email, please. Closing date 2nd April.
The first reader to send me five correct answers will receive a crisp Manx £20 note (worth more at the AGM)*

Answers to December's quiz:

1. Snuff the wind is an old lead mine near Glen Rushen.
 2. Sam Barks has been playing Eponine in Les Misérables.
 3. Glenfaba means Neb valley.
 4. Knockaloe was a Great War internment camp.
 5. The Islands Millennium Stone Cross is at Cregneish.
- Sam Weller won the prize, complaining the quiz was difficult. I've tried to make this one a bit easier so have a go and get your answers to me as quickly as you can.

Spring

The short day lengthens.
The weak sun strengthens.
The grass looks greener,
The air is cleaner.
Through pearly light can I gaze
On the willow trees' haze
Of jade buds, soft and slender,
A promise of splendour.

Maisie Sell

(Taken from the season Quartet in Maisie's "The Poems of Maisie Sell.")

Acknowledgements

The Editor thanks Sam Alder, Mavis Bell, Margaret Brady, Adrian Cain, Valerie Caine, Wendy Ellis-Kneen, Pam Fiddik, Veen Hill, Margaret M Hunt, Maisie Sell, Bob Stimpson, for their kind contribution and also the Queensland Manx Society, Manx Heritage Foundation 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*) otherwise 132 Bush Hill, London N21 2BS.

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Closing date for the next issue, 25th May.

Dates for your diary

A.G.M.

Monday 2nd April

10.45 a.m. pre-lunch walk. Meet at Russell Square tube station (Piccadilly Line) to visit Charles Dickens' House Museum (before it closed late in the month for refurbishment) Entrance £5 (concessions). Leader, Mavis Bell who is willing to arrange further, gentle, literary walks throughout the year if the idea is popular. 2.00 p.m. after 1 o'clock lunch (20% discount if bought with Manx banknotes) Real Man Pizza Company, 91-95 Clerkenwell Road, London EC1R 5BX (a modest walk from King's Cross, Farringdon or Chancery Lane stations)

LMS Lunch

28th April 2012

At Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, 92 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4BH
Guest of honour will be Edmund Southworth, Director of Manx National Heritage.

Please keep the date free to come and hear our interesting speaker.

Midsummer Cooish

Sunday 1st July at 132 Bush Hill, London N21 2BS from about one o'clock.
(contact editor for travel directions 020 8360 8001)

NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE IN THREE MONTHS

PLEASE SEND NEWS TO:

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Visit the Society's web site at www.londonmanxsociety.com