

NEWSLETTER Spring 2021
Editor – Douglas Barr-Hamilton

The Society's officers are still scratching their head and discussing when and how to resume activities. Certainly as February draws to a close the time when we can safely meet together looks as though it is still some way off and it does not seem wise to consider anything before July.

It was snowing when I read early in the month that the Queensland Manx Society would be having a picnic north of Brisbane in Scarborough on 28th February. However, it's summer there and theirs is a country that has dealt with the Covid-19 pandemic very differently but if we can emulate them in July, how happy we all shall be so let's pencil in 4th July for a Tynwald Day cooish.

Hours after the Queensland meeting, the USA has planned a Zoom gathering for members of the world's Manx Societies. Details are on page 14. Do come. Our president joined their last one and recommends the experience.

DBH

OBITUARY

In memory of Ethel Qualtrough

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Ethel Qualtrough on 5th November 2020 aged 95. Ethel was a regular attendee at the Society's annual lunches and before that at the dinners (which she attended with her late husband Will). She always looked forward to these events and we still have a number of photographs of Mum and Dad standing proudly before the London Manx banner.

Ethel was born on 18 August 1925 at the Ballaquinney Cottages in Glen Vine. Still a baby she moved to a farm cottage 'Ballamodha' in East Baldwin (behind East Baldwin School) and aged three she moved to Ballavar, Trollaby Lane, in Union Mills. Later her parents moved to Eyreton Cottages in Crosby, a traditional Manx stone cottage with thatched roof. Mum used to tell the story of one particular stormy night, when a Manx gale was blowing, and she and her sister awoke to see large areas of sky where the roof should have been. In the morning they could not open the front door due to the amount of thatch on the ground.

Mum attended Braddan Primary School and then Douglas High School for Girls. She trained as a nurse at Nobles Hospital in Douglas, qualifying as a state registered nurse. She then went to Manchester to train as a midwife where she met Dad at Manchester's Methodist Central Hall. They were married in Crosby Methodist Church in November 1951.



After marrying, Mum and Dad settled in Buxton in Derbyshire, later moving to Shrewsbury and finally, in 1961, to Warwick.

Mum had a strong Christian faith, and Northgate Methodist Church in Warwick was a big part of her life. She was a member there for 56 years and, over those years she held many jobs within the church.

She was a huge fan of jigsaws (the bigger and more complex the better) and crosswords (she would complete the Daily Telegraph cryptic crossword most days). She loved cooking and baking. A large amount of the produce she cooked or baked, especially fruit and vegetables, was grown in the garden, first by Dad and later by Mum. Other produce, especially fruit, was found in the adjoining countryside – Mum understood and practiced ‘foraging’ in the countryside long before it became fashionable especially blackberries for pies and jam.

In her later years she became a devoted gardener. Everything in the garden was picked and eaten or bottled, frozen or salted for another day. If you rang her on a summer's evening, there would be no reply until after 10pm when she finally finished in the garden and returned to the house.

Mum was immensely proud of her Manx heritage. As a family we spent many holidays on the Island. After Dad passed away, we were fortunate to enjoy a few Island breaks with Mum. On our travels around the Island Mum would

point out who lived at this or that house or cottage. Most of all she loved to call in and visit various Manx relations and friends and catch up on the latest news. Everywhere we went we would receive full Manx hospitality and would always leave having eaten far too much.

In March 2019 Mum moved to a Care Home in Wallington, Surrey. That summer we were able to spend time with her, going out for drives, visiting garden centres, drinking coffee, eating chocolate (one of Mum's big weaknesses) and ice cream

Unfortunately for all of us, our lives changed dramatically in March 2020. We were barred from visiting, and shortly after this Mum's health deteriorated. Although we were eventually allowed social distance visiting, it was very difficult for everyone and especially confusing for Mum who did not fully understand what was happening. However, true to her character, she remained stoical and uncomplaining.

John and Tim Qualtrough

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New Book by Society member

Best known for his extraordinary kills at the wheel of racing cars, Stirling Moss was also an extremely effective rally driver. He entered many rallies from the early 1950s onwards usually achieving a top ten result in a variety of makes, initially Sunbeam-Talbot and in later years Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar, Aston Martin and Saab.

He very nearly won the Monte Carlo Rally at his first attempt in 1952, losing only narrowly to Sydney Allard and then went on to join the exclusive club of rally drivers who won a coveted Coupe d'Or on the Alpine Rally, one of the toughest events in the calendar.

His contribution to pace notes, based on the technique used in his astounding Mille Miglia win with Denis Jenkinson, is told here, together with his abortive attempt at the East African Safari Rally with his brother-in-law, Eric Carlsson. Africa was not kind to Moss – he nearly died on another rally when stranded in a remote part of the Sahara Desert and was lucky to be rescued.

The cars he drove, the teams, the co-drivers, all are covered in this record of the amazing and often overlooked rally driving career of the legendary Stirling Moss.

For the first time the rally exploits of Stirling Moss have been brought together in this book which is hard-back with 150 b/w and colour images, maps, results etc. Copies of the book are available from the publisher www.herridgeandsons.com, price £30.00.

Other information from the author:

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Stirling Moss - Rally Driver

by Vic Quayle. Publisher: herridgeandsons.com, £30.00

Steam Packet's new vessel will be 'Manxman'

The article about HMS Manxman in our last issue had no influence on the decision but the announcement was made on 1st December following month of deliberation by the company which in October had published a shortlist of four popular names: Manxman, Mona's Isle, Manx Maid and King Orry, all traditional Steam Packet Company vessel names.

Given the opportunity to put forward their preference for the name of the new ferry to replace the Ben-my-Chree due to enter service in 2023, the public's overwhelming preference was for Manxman or King Orry and the Steam Packet directors chose the former.

She will be the third ship to bear the name and the company's Chief Executive Mark Woodward explained, "After much thought and deliberation we are excited to announce the name of our bespoke, custom-built vessel. King Orry and Manxman were both clear favourites. However, with more than 65 years having passed since the launch of our last ship called Manxman compared with

just twenty years since we named a vessel King Orry, we feel that now is the right time for the return of Manxman. It is a name that embodies the Manx spirit, signifies national pride and is suitably enduring for a vessel that will take the ‘Steam Packet Company into its 200th year and beyond. She will be a fine addition to our fleet.

“We would like to thank everyone who took time to express their views on the four shortlisted names. It was pleasing to see such interest and, of course, to take the public’s views into consideration when making the final decision: something we thought very important.”

DBH

Source: iomtoday

Faster internet disrupts queenies

In the latter part of 2020 more than half a million queen scallop were moved from the path of an underwater fibre optic cable. The Isle of Man is being linked with the Havhingsten Telecommunication Cable which will connect Ireland with Europe with a cable leaving England at Squire’s Gate, Blackpool. There will be two branches to the Island going ashore at Port Erin and Port Grenaugh. To ensure the minimum of disruption and damage to fishing grounds, the government had to work with scientist and fishermen to locate, catch and find new homes for 19 tonnes of scallops.

During the summer a survey of the sea bed had revealed the proposed path of the cable would disturb high-density beds of queenies west of the Calf of Man and it was decided to relocate the scallops along a 7.5 km stretch and it is estimated that during November some 555,000 shellfish were caught and moved to assure the future of the Manx national dish.

DBH

Source: iomtoday

Brexit brings island benefit

Last time I was in La Rochelle a shellfish stall in the market invited me to taste *un pétoncle* (a queen scallop). It was delicious but it wasn’t Manx. It could not have been. With the exception of those from a few areas of Class A (very clean) waters, the import of live molluscs into the EU is prohibited.

The UK and the EU seem to have negotiated Brexit without providing for this regulation and the British seafood industry was unprepared. The EU requires its shellfish imports to have been depurated before they are considered fit for human consumption and the UK does not have enough purifications plants because the process was previously carried out after arrival on the continent and the industry estimates it will cost about £1 million to install them.

However, the Island's fishermen won't be affected by the ban. Never in the EU and needing a purification plant, the Island has one. The Manx government has estimated the value of its fishing industry at around £21 million a year, most sales being to the EU and this valuable asset looks like adding to that figure this year as products are purified on the Island before being packaged and sent with the required health certificate to a UK logistics hub for transporting to Europe although care has to be taken to avoid transporting with any item that falls short of food standards now being enforced or has poor paper-work, risking refusal of everything.

DBH

Sources: Manx Radio, The Fishing Daily (Ireland)

Further to walk and an easier ride

The Island's Heritage Trail is being made more accessible to all and since a hard-pack surface was laid some years ago on the old Steam Railway line between Douglas and Peel which closed in 1968, the same treatment is to be carried out on the route between St. John's and Kirk Michael. Visiting Manx beauty spots will be easier for walkers and runners, cyclists and wheel-chair users with the additional amenities of picnic and information sites along the way and there will be links to existing walks to Foxdale and Sulby. Glen Mooar and Glen Wyllin made much more popular.

The existing path does not quite follow the old railway tracks. At the Douglas end it starts near the Quarter Bridge and in Peel it finishes near the House of Manannan car park. It has proved very popular even attracting in 2011 the traditional Douglas to Peel "Marathon" won by Joe Karran when it was first staged in 1909.

When I was a child, one of my father's sisters arrived on the Island by boat and cycled to Andreas via St John's, Kirk Michael and Sulby Bridge. It will be rather easier for anyone who wishes to emulate her.

DBH

Manx post offices' future under review

Port St Mary residents were expecting to lose their post office with postmaster Jeff Calvert due to retire at the end of January but were given a last minute reprieve while a review takes place of the services provided.

Several weeks earlier the Manx Post Office had begun a consultation about the service it offers having in mind providing only a parcel collection service and the sale of postage stamps. However, soon afterwards Tynwald required all sub post offices to be kept open until it receive a report from the Chief Minister's community committee expected in July. This led to Mr Calvert postponing his retirement adding, "Calvert Newsagents are pleased to continue to provide counter services in Port St Mary for the foreseeable future."

DBH

Source: iomtoday

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Part of 17th Century Peel revealed

The old quay has been identified. Surveys in preparation for the replacing of the water main and sewers in Peel by Manx Utilities late last year exposed the old red sandstone quayside believed to date from the 1700s, buried under East Quay when today's layout was built.

Although a number of old dwellings and warehouses remain, most of the old buildings had been demolished to be replaced by what we can now see and their foundations remain so care will be taken to avoid them as the new pipes are laid. Manx National Heritage who has been working closely on the project preparations with the utility company, explained that two hundred years ago Castle Street in Peel had been home to a number of the city's more prosperous merchants and they would have had adjacent vaults, yards or warehouses. They may be, they added, the source of rumours that smugglers' tunnels run underneath Peel.

There may be more to find. The route of the First World War temporary railway line used to transport internees to Knockaloe ran along East Quay. Manx National Heritage hopes parts of it can be found.

DBH

Source: Courier, BBC

War time tourism

Do you know the new attraction that brought visitors to the Island during the early years of the Second World War? Although there was no TT, visitor numbers (excluding service personnel) rose from 25,041 in 1940 to 71,942 in 1941. The Ramsey Courier had spotted the phenomenon after somebody had noticed the influx of young ladies in the town since the previous autumn. Investigation revealed that they were girlfriends of internees housed on the Mooragh Promenade and that security was granting them a 48 hour pass to spend Monday and Tuesday with their man. This the paper reported in its edition of 7th November 1941. Of course, the figure was nowhere near the half a million who crossed to the Island each pre-war summer and a much larger percentage will have come more than once.

DBH

Samantha Barks hits headlines twice

First it was her appearance in the Royal Variety Show. It lasted just four minutes at an event which the queen could not attend but Samantha's song shone at the Blackpool Opera House, the Royal Family being present virtually with the Prince of Wales. A former Laxey resident, Samantha sang "Let it go" from the musical, "Frozen" in which she will star as Elsa when it opens in London, we hope in April.

Shown on ITV on 8th December, the transmission was seen by millions of real people unlike the performances themselves which took place in late November inside a theatre filled with a "virtual" audience.

Then, at the end of January, she got engaged to American actor Alex Stoll whom she first met when they were both appearing in "Pretty Woman" on Broadway. She posted the news on Instagram with a photo showing the couple,

she wearing her engagement ring while her fiancé, also on Instagram, used a picture of himself on one knee, proposing to Samantha.

Samantha, now 30 years old, came to fame as Eponine in the film version of the musical, “Les Misérables” in 2012.

DBH

2021 TT cancelled

For the first time since the Second World War the TT races have been cancelled two years running, the decision being taken at the beginning of December by the island’s Department for Enterprise, 2020’s TT Festival having been cancelled in March. Although the early notice was appreciated, the decision was received with disappointment and concern by the hospitality industry, the event bringing some £30 million to the Manx economy according to official figures. Laurence Skelly, the Enterprise minister explained when making the announcement that it was the logical decision to protect residents and visitors in view of the present crisis.

There are schemes in place to protect business but these run out at the end of April so the government will offer loans allowing deposits already paid to be refunded. The Steam Packet Company will offer those already booked the option of transferring their booking to 2022 or receiving a full refund.

The cancellation will leave the fortnight from 28th May to 12th June strangely quiet. If any member thinks this makes it an opportunity to visit the Island and would like to hear of others making the trip at the same time, do let me know so we can share the information. And if you are a race fan, the Southern 100 Road Races will go ahead from 12th and 15th July on the Billown circuit on a provisional basis, dependent on Covid restrictions at the time, the organisers having seized the opportunity to announce the news a few days after the TT’s cancellation.

DBH

Sources: BBC, Manx Radio

Agricultural Show Restored

Just a day after the circuit breaker ended the organisers of the annual Royal Manx Agricultural Show were able to announce that this year's event would go ahead in August. It will again be at Knockaloe and held on 13th and 14th of the month. Called off last year, they were keen that it should take place although border restrictions mean there will be no UK judges and they will be inviting local experts to take on the responsibility.

The show is sponsored by Manx Telecom and is always a popular event as there is always a huge choice of family entertainment as well as the chance for farmers and livestock owners to show off their animals.

DBH

Source: Manx Radio

A mad Sunday at the Lhen

The story of the Methodists' impact on the Island is impressive with chapels built all over the place including the Lhen (in 1819). Sometimes, however things did not conform to the well-known pattern and I thought it might be of interest to members to reproduce a report from the Mona's Herald in January 1841 that I came across in the Manx note-book (www.isle-of-man.com). I had always thought the old practice of pew rents to be unchristian so was not surprised to find they had attracted the headline, "Another row in a Methodist chapel".

A very unseemly occurrence took place in the Methodist Chapel at the Lhenmoor, Kirk Andreas on Sunday week. It appears that an individual, who rents a seat therein, on approaching his pew a few minute before the commencement of the afternoon service on that day, observed several females seated in a pew near his own, when, it is supposed, mistaking the seat they occupied for his, he rushed forward and struck at several of the females with a stick, assisted by his son, a hopeful aspirant for holy order in mother church, and unceremoniously seized some of them by the throat. The screams of "murder" from the terrified females quickly brought the people standing round the doors to ascertain what was the cause of the uproar, and endeavour, if possible, to separate the combatants. The leading actor in the tragedy, we had almost forgotten to say, was assisted by his man servant, as well as his hopeful son, and the said, "man Friday" ordered the people to stand aloof, and take

care of themselves, for he was in possession of a knife! When the preacher appointed for the day made his appearance, and saw what had happened, he at once turned on his heel, and left them to settle matters as best they could; consequently there was no service. The combatants were ultimately separated, but no apology has yet been made for this disgraceful outrage.

Shocking, amusing and interesting at the same time, the article is informative in its description of where those who did not pay pew rent stood. Does it explain why Churches seem to fill up from the back, even today?

DBH

Manx spell well?

Correspondence in The Times in early January after a news item about the pronunciation of “Harefield” reminded me of a Manx newspaper report some years ago. Being interviewed at Ronaldsway when leaving the Island, an Australian visitor of Manx heritage and with a Manx surname was asked what had most impressed her about her holiday. “It’s the first time in my life that in two weeks nobody has asked me to spell my name,” she replied.

DBH

Star first shone at Ramsey Grammar School

One summary of his career that I found says that he first appeared on stage in 1903 but he had brought the house down four years earlier in Ramsey in the play, “The Old Cobbler” while at the Grammar School. I’m talking of the film star from the first half of the 20th Century Gordon Harker whom I mentioned in 2019 in a piece about Florrie Forde with whom he had appeared in the film “My Old Dutch.” I discovered a connection with the Isle of Man and was curious. Interviewed in the London Evening News and reported in the Ramey Courier in April 1938, Gordon Harker (born 7th August 1885) revealed that when he was about eleven or twelve and a great nuisance at home (in Wandsworth) he was packed off to an aunt in the Isle of Man and attended RGS for a few years. One day in an English class he had to stand and read aloud and, after hearing his interpretation of “The Walrus and the Carpenter,” the class laughed at him. He assumes he must have impressed the teacher because soon afterwards the headmaster (Rev A S Newton) had him learning a part in the school play.

A search at the Manx Museum's iMuseum newspaper archives took me to the "Ramsey Weekly News" of Saturday 27th May 1899 and its lengthy review of Charles Dance's comedy, "The Wonderful Woman." It finished, "Yet the palm fell to Mr W G Harker as Crepin, the cobbler. It is not too much to say that he was the very life of the whole play. His excellent characterisation and ready dialogue, bristling at times with sarcasm and overflowing at other times with the happiness which comes from a contented mind, pleased the audience immensely and they did not fail to show their appreciation."

Interviewed by Roy Plomley on "Desert Island Discs" on 5th December 1952, he says his first professional role was as an urchin in "Sweet Nell of Old Drury" with Fred Terry and Julia Neilson at the age of sixteen (so again before 1903). Perhaps worth a mention is that among a selection of classical music that included Wagner, Schumann and Dvorak he asked to hear Flanagan and Allen's "If a Grey-haired Lady says, 'How's your father?'" As a young man Chesney Allen had been Florrie Forde's manager but the show's transcript kindly provided to me by BBC archives, indicates he did not mention the connection. What was the name of Gordon Harker's English teacher? Who was his aunt? They deserve recognition but alas, I have not been able to find out.

DBH

Sources: Manx Museum iMuseum Newspapers, BBC Archives, BFI.

Pandemic update

The Island has continued to keep a tight rein on activity to limit transmission of Covid-19 but towards the end of 2020 experienced a handful of cases in islanders who had visited the mainland or essential workers who had come to do a specific job. All self-isolated and contacts were traced. Nevertheless, in view of the deteriorating situation in the UK a three week "Circuit breaker" was announced on 5th January after the total number of active cases rose to twelve. This meant that schools were closed and although retail only and food shops and pharmacies could remain open, hospitality venues except takeaways ceased to trade, construction ceased except for emergency work, everyone who could work from home was asked to do so, social distancing was reintroduced, meeting someone from another household was prohibited, care home visits were banned, weddings and worship services could not take place and severe restrictions were placed on everyone returning to the Island after a trip away.

Four days later two more cases were diagnosed but one, in a primary school child, increased concerns as it meant that the coronavirus might be circulating in the community without displaying symptoms. A cluster of cases then occurred at King William's College among students who had returned from overseas but they were isolated and the outbreak did not spread to the community.

By 22nd January, the Island had gone four days without a further case and with no evidence of the virus spreading in the community, some easing in restrictions were announced. The construction industry was allowed to reopen, several other trades could resume and outdoor activities with precautions in place permitted allowing people to meet with family and friends socially distanced and wearing a face covering. It was hoped to be the first stage of a phased exit from the circuit breaker with 1st February the target for a complete relaxation except for the border restrictions which would remain in place.

All went to time-table and the restrictions finished as January came to an end so, welcoming visitors apart, life returned to normal although Culture Vannin decided on a phased reopening of the Manx Museum and the House of Manannan during the two weeks leading to half term in mid-February.

The Island received its first vaccines a little later than the UK and its programme began on 4th January with three priority groups: the over 80s, residents and staff of care homes and health and care workers. Initially vaccinations took place in a hub at Newlands on the Noble's Estate in Douglas before it moved to the empty super-store under the Chester Street car park on 15th February, a second hub having opened at Ronaldsway Airport from the end of January with a team taking vaccines to residential homes from 18th January and a pop-up clinic introduced at the Cottage Hospital in Ramsey since 13th February. There was one marked difference in policy with that of the English government, however, in that the second dose was given three or four weeks after the first in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.

By 16th February the total number of vaccinations had passed 15,000 well on the way to the initial target of 18,500 by the end of that month as they are immunising over 2,000 people each week: 4,024 were a second dose.

Latest statistics on the government's web site tell us there have been 437 confirmed cases of the virus on the Island with 25 deaths (19 in a care home). There are currently four cases on the Island, one after a spell in hospital, all having contracted the disease on the mainland and six people are self-isolating

Society members will all be asking, "When will we be able to go over to the Island?" The only indication has been a government hope expressed that it may be possible to start a lifting of restrictions by the end of May when all over 50s should have been vaccinated but it would depend on the situation in the UK. In the meantime, the London Manx Society thanks Mylchreests Car Hire for continuing to support our quiz and one member's homecoming this year.

DBH

Sources: Manx government web site, iomtoday, BBC, Manx Radio

All Manx societies to meet up

28th February, 2021 at 7:00 pm GMT

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86483204776?pwd=bmcxUXYzc1dwRmpWb0xGN3ZJazVadz09>

Meeting ID: 864 8320 4776

Passcode: 853322

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March Island Quiz

(Open to non-members through the web site)

- 1 "Moghrey Mie" means (a) Good day, (b) Good morning, (c) Good afternoon, (d) Good evening?
2. Catherine Callow was in the news on 22nd March 1881 because of (a) illness, (b) prize-winning, (c) theft, (d) voting?
3. The ship's bell of HMS Manxman can be seen at the (a) House of Manannan, Peel, (b) Manx Museum, Douglas, (c) Maritime Museum, Greenwich, (d) Royal Navy Museum, Portsmouth?



4. Help was given to the Sutton Hoo archaeological dig from (a) Ballabeg, (b) Ballakelly, (c) Knockaloe, (d) Knock-e-Dooney?
5. The Flitter Dance is traditionally performed at (a) Christmas, (b) Easter, (c) Harvest, (d) New Year?

Closing date 15th April. The first reader to send me five correct answers will receive £20 in fuel when hiring a car from Mylchreest Car Hire at Ronaldsway Airport.

Answers to Winter Quiz

1. “Nollick ghennal” means (b) Happy Christmas.
2. Maron Honeyborne was President of the London Manx Society between (d) 1988-89 and had a second double term a couple of years later.
3. The Margaret Brady Trophy is presented at (a) The Buchan School.
4. Bishop Wilson was appointed at the age of (a) 34.
5. The cost of admission to the Andreas Root Show in 1898 was (b) 3d.

Congratulations to Sam Weller who was the first to send in a set of correct answers.

Acknowledgements

The editor thanks John and Tim Qualtrough, Vic Quayle for their kind contribution and also the BBC, Isle of Man newspapers, Manx Radio, Culture Vannin, Mylchreests Car Hire 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 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 the Society. Closing date for the next issue, 20th May.

DBH

NEXT NEWLETTER DUE IN THREE MONTHS

Please send news to

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A ZOOM FOR ALL SOCIETIES GET TOGETHER

Sunday 28th February, 2021 starting at 7pm GMT

Details on page 14

TYNWALD COOISH

Provisional date, Sunday 4th July, 2021

Time and venue to be decided

Visit the Society' web site at www.londonmanxsociety.co.uk

LONDON MANX SOCIETY