

NEWSLETTER Summer 2011

Editor – Douglas Barr-Hamilton

Ella Slack wows packed Annual Lunch

A completely new interior and yet another name (Double Tree) for what we still call the Bonnington did not deter London Manx members and friends from coming to hear our Guest of Honour, Ella Slack on 14th May. A larger than usual gathering enjoyed pâté, feill-chirkey rostit and crème brulée limon and I can take this opportunity on behalf of all our members to say a big thank you to Brian Stowell who valiantly translates our menu into Manx every year.

After the national anthem, Douglas Barr-Hamilton spoke about the World Manx centenary celebrations during Tynwald week when he will represent the Society at the Homecomers' reception and other events. He mentioned the changes he observes on his frequent trips to Ramsey: the demolition of Albert Road School, a new swimming pool and bowling ally and repairs to the pier. Having raised the toast to the Land of our Birth, Douglas was followed by retiring President, Stewart Christian who welcomed Ella who had come to tell us about her life and work at the BBC. Stewart extended a warm welcome to new members Voirrey and Robin Carr and other guests including Susan Johnson, Don and Brian, Mrs Teare and daughter Christine whose lovely voice greatly enhanced the singing in the absence of our usual pianist, Margaret Brady.

Warm thanks were given to Rose Fowler for her inspired and tireless efforts as acting secretary for the Society for three years – where would we be without her enthusiasm and cheerful good humour? Thanks also went to Sam Weller, our indefatigable treasurer, Douglas for his wonderful job on the newsletter, Wendy and Sean for the website and to Preston our functions secretary, back in harness after a spell in hospital. Particular mention was made of the attractive table mats, inspired by Manx crosses and made by pupils at Merton Park School under the watchful eye of past president, Chris Price who kindly said we may take them home as a souvenir.

Both Douglas and Stewart mentioned that our Society is entering a new phase with neither a new President or Secretary being appointed, hoping that all members will pull their weight. London Manx still has many enthusiastic and loyal members who enjoy the functions and lend their support so it is hoped that the interregnum will be short.

Ella Slack began by extending greeting from the Auckland Manx Society which she had recently visited, going on to recall visits to the LMS with her father at the end of the war when she recalled members staging a

pantomime – sadly, something we don't get round to these days! Having attended theatre school, Ella entered the BBC under Pat Wilson in the Artists' Contracts Department and recalled meeting famous people in the lifts: David Jacobs, Fanny Craddock, Kenneth More and Shelly Winters to name a few. She worked long hours often from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. but, wanting a change after ten years, moved to the Music Department, doing the Proms and Covent Garden. Later, as manager of the Science Department doing Tomorrow's World and Horizon, she came up against some resentment from a predominantly male environment but this did not deter her from becoming a manager in the Events Department during which time she did Come Dancing, the Cenotaph Ceremony and Princess Diana's funeral. An unusual but enjoyable aspect of her job was when she stood in for the queen at important rehearsals on great state occasions; Ella is two inches shorter and has travelled in a carriage down the Mall, been in the Royal Box and at the State Opening of Parliament – but only permitted to perch on the throne, not to sit down.

Her career at the BBC took her into a further male dominated realm as Manager of Sport and Events Group on TV for seventeen years. Our neighbour, who still works there said, "She was one of the bosses and we were all scared of her!"

I think we could have stayed all afternoon listening to Ella's fascinating account of her life but instead we make her a small presentation along with heartfelt thanks for a most interesting and enjoyable insight into a long career in broadcasting.

Mavis Bell



Sodor and Man at Westminster Abbey

On Thursday 21st April, there were forty recipients of the Royal Maundy Money from the Diocese of Sodor and Man. These had been chosen from churches and communities throughout the Island. The ceremony of the distribution of Maundy Alms dates back to 1210 when King John washed feet and distributed alms at Knaresborough, North Yorkshire although it might have begun prior to that and the custom is derived from the washing of the disciples' feet by our Lord at the last Supper.

From the 15th Century the number of recipients has been related to the years of the Sovereign's life. At one time, they were required to be of the same sex as the Sovereign but since the 18th Century they have numbered as many men and women as the Sovereign has years of age. Recipients are now pensioners selected because of the Christian service they have rendered to the Church and community. The gifts of money are now symbolic. The red purse contains an allowance for clothing and provisions and a payment for redemption of the royal gown. The white purse contains Maundy coins – silver pennies, twopences, threepences and fourpences, as many pence as the Sovereign has years of age. Maundy coins are legal tender and are much sought after by collectors but are usually kept and highly valued by the recipients and their families.

Though the act of washing the feet was discontinued in about 1730, the Lord High Almoner (currently the Bishop of Manchester) and his assistants are still girded with linen towels and carry nosegays of sweet herbs. Four children of the Royal Almonry also carry nosegays and one of these, Ben Haworth, was from the Island. This is a service with much ceremonial and colour. The Alms dishes are carried by the Yeomen of the Guard. There are a variety of colourful processions and, of course, the presence of her Majesty the Queen.

This year's recipients were chosen by the Dioceses of Sodor and Man, Gibraltar and Europe, and Westminster and they had the extra honour in that this year Maundy Thursday coincided with the Queen's Birthday. There had been much excitement on the island when letters from Buckingham Palace arrived in the post. Each recipient was allowed to invite an "Escort" (or carer) and two or three other guests to sit with them in the Nave of the Abbey. Behind them were extra places for other invitees from Sodor and Man.

Nick and I were stunned to receive an email asking us if we would like to occupy two of the latter places and we said "Yes" at once! On the day we arrived early at the Abbey and began to queue for security checks. We then found where recipients known to us would be sitting and were able to take seats behind them. There was a great variety of fashions and hats. I heard that there had been a run on hats and fascinators over on the Island and everyone had "scrubbed up" to look their best. There was a happy feel

before, during and after the service and evidently Her Majesty commented on how happy the Manx folk were – Well, we are, aren't we?

The music and singing were of the highest quality – they were gearing up for the Wedding – and the service was both joyful and dignified. The Bishop of Sodor and Man read the first lesson from the pulpit in the Nave and the Duke of Edinburgh read the second lesson from the Choir. We really felt that it was a privilege to be there and to watch Her Majesty distribute Alms to Sodor and Man. It will be at least sixty years before the Diocese is eligible again if the present progression is followed so it was an occasion to be treasured. The recipients came from all over the Island and one lady who received had never left the Island before which is unusual in this day and age. The ceremonial procession from the Island included the new Lieutenant Governor, his wife and daughter, the President of Tynwald and the Chief Minister with the captains of the Parishes and Clergy from Sodor and Man led by the Chancellor of the Diocese and followed by the Bishop. This group preceded the Queen's Procession into the Abbey. It was a day of colour and pageantry with trumpet fanfares, the Yeomen of the Guard and choirs in attendance. When we watched "The Wedding" on television a week later there were times when we could say: "They were there for us too!"

Anne and Nick Alexander

A trip from Castletown to Douglas

At breakfast time one day early in January 1963, during that awful cold winter, my father came into my room to tell me of a surprise: a trip to Douglas and we would not be travelling by car, bus or train. I got up, got ready and had breakfast. Dad and I set off from the vicarage (he was vicar of Castletown at the time). Our means of transport was little more than a stone's throw from our house; it was to be provided by the IOMSPCo's SS CONNISTER, a coaster, similar to the Ben boats. The skipper was Captain Harry Kinley, a true Manxman, a gentleman whose working life was spent on Steam Packet vessels and war service. He greeted us and we sat in his cabin under the bridge and wheelhouse for a short time: a cosy cabin with a bunk bed, desk and easy chair. Later, we made our way to the bridge and prepared to sail. Schedules had to be adhered to owing to tidal conditions. Once the vessel had sailed by the pedestrian swing bridge I was given the task of steering the CONNISTER through the narrow exit and the steering wheel was, strangely enough, power assisted by steam power. Once the vessel had sailed into Castletown Bay, Captain Kinley gave the order, "Full stream ahead," by the ship's telegraph. He then gave a loud blast on the hooter for his daughter, Elizabeth; the Kinleys lived on Castletown

Promenade: with his love. We sailed past Langness lighthouse and Port Soderick.

I was allowed to wander round the vessel and the Chief Engineer showed me the engine room where the engine was a three cylinder compound machine. This was, I reckon, a product of the well-known firm, Sir W G Armstrong Whitworth of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. There was also a steam powered generator to supply electric lighting on board. I was not shown round the boiler room as it was: a) a furnace and b) grimy! After my tour I was given a mug of tea and a Penguin biscuit in the Chief Engineer's cabin, located on the poop deck.

The CONNISTER had passed Port Soderick as I made my way back to the bridge to rejoin Captain Kinley and dad. As we passed Douglas Head lighthouse, the hooter was sounded and the steamer sailed into Douglas harbour where we tied up. We both thanked the captain for his kindness and hospitality for laying on an unusual cruise from Castletown to Douglas. There is a video and DVD of the history of the Steam Packet with 75 years of service to the Island: "A Nation's Lifeline." All the Steam Packet's vessels from early days to the present time are mentioned – but not the CONNISTER. That seems a shame but this article will do a little to set the record straight.

Preston Glass

Manx Stone Crosses

Manx stone crosses usually come in two types: Gaelic and Viking. There exists, however, one 21st century cross – or maybe two as a replica has been placed at the summit of Cronk ny Arrey Laa. It's the Millennium Stone Cross and can be found outside St Peter's Church in Cregneish. Designed by Colin Edwards and dedicated by the Bishop in 2003, it's well worth a special visit and should not be missed if taking a look at how the village is changing as Manx National Heritage develops the living museum. The symbols on the cross seem to me to represent a mix of Christian and pagan that might offend both: there is a cross on the top but at its centre is the sun with its rays shining as at dawn; beneath is a scallop shell and the monument's axis seems to be a huge fish made up of a myriad of tiny fishes swimming in all directions. The fish is an early Christian motif (ictus) but the base of the cross is a real Manx mythological symbol: ravens – surely Odin's ravens supposedly sent out at dawn to seek news from the world. The cross could only come from our era.

DBH

On dry land 77 years on

The Mona's Queen was built at Cammal Laird's in Birkenhead in 1934 and was one of three Isle of Man Steam Packet ships sunk at Dunkirk only six years later. The company has recently announced with evident satisfaction that there will be a permanent memorial to its crew members who took part in World War Two especially those lost in the disaster and, most appropriately, it will take the form of the ship's anchor.

After dedicated work by Captain Andrew Douglas who died last year before seeing the fruit of his labour but taken over by Captain Hamish Ross; after determined efforts by many other people from the Steam Packet, from the French navy, from Manx, United Kingdom and French government officials, the anchor has been found and raised from the sea bed and after being cleaned and restored, it will be brought to the Island. There had been discussion about placing it on Loch Promenade in Douglas but it has been decided that the site will be Kallow Point in Port St Mary. The Commissioners say they are committed to having an annual memorial service.

DBH

Mhelliah

The church service will be in St Bride's Church on October 10th at noon. Canon Teare will again preside and Margaret Brady will be our organist. Afterwards we are having our social in The Press House Wine Bar (almost under the Church!)

We look forward to a big attendance and an enjoyable occasion

Cambridge Cooish

Sam and Mary Weller are expecting to be packed out on 10th July for our annual Tynwald Cooish but ask that those coming who want a lift from Cambridge Station to call us to let them know which train they are on: 01223 720607. They have plenty of drivers ready. If arriving by car, they can send a map on request.

HMS Racehorse

The name of the ship providing the answer to question four in our spring quiz has a significant place in the history of the Isle of Man.

The story began on 6th October 1822. The British Admiralty cutter "Vigilant" was wrecked on St Mary's Isle and Sir William Hillary was involved in his first sea rescue, taking charge of a flotilla of boats.

Partially repaired but still unseaworthy, the Admiralty decided to recover the vessel and sent an 18-cannon, 385 tons, brigantine sloop, HMS Racehorse, from Milford Haven to finish the work in England. She set off a couple of weeks before Christmas in fine weather with clear skies and a good breeze. It should have been an easy job. They sailed a fraction too far to the West but that should not have been a problem as they identified the lights of the Calf of Man and changed course. It was very early in the morning, some three hours before dawn, but it seems that after too short a time, the lookout reported the lights of Douglas and the captain prepared the ship to enter the harbour. Alas, the lights were Castletown's and the mistake was tragically exposed as the ship struck rocks at the southern tip of Langness called the "Skerranes."

At that early hour Castletown was still asleep and nobody saw the distress rockets and flares, nobody heard the cannon being fired a mile away. The captain, realising this, dispatched two of the ship's boats: one to make for Castletown, the other for Fort Island from where the sailors could reach the town on foot. The two parties arrived almost simultaneously and local men filled five boats and set off for the wreck. The weather began to turn into storm and the rising tide to submerge the stricken man o' war. Five of the boats turned back to port. It was left to just one to bring the navy's seamen to shore. Four times they ferried some of the crew to the shore. The fifth shuttle would save the last. However, just after pushing off from the ship they were swamped by a huge wave. The boat sunk. A number of mariners struggled ashore including the captain and first lieutenant. So too did some of the rescuers but six seamen and three Castletown residents perished: Norris Bridson, Thomas Hall, Robert Quayle. They had, however, saved a hundred lives.

That success as well as the tragic losses persuaded Sir William Hillary that system, planning, coordination, training and much more were essential to protect both seamen and the shore folk who took responsibility to save them in time of trouble. Within two months he had published, "An Appeal to the British Nation on the Humanity and Policy of forming a National Institution for the preservation of Lives and Property from Shipwreck" and

sent it to the Admiralty. The Admiralty, it seems, procrastinated. Not until 12th February 1824, a year later and after Sir William's perseverance and a MP's support, was the meeting organised that gave rise to the RNLI.

On 20th February 1970, the wreck was bought from the Ministry of Defence by the Isle of Man branch of the British Sub Aqua Club. The permanent memorial to those brave men is, however, the RNLI. Sad, in a way, that there is no longer a lifeboat in Castletown. The station, a very early one opened on 13th December 1825 – a day short of the third anniversary of the disaster, closed in 1922 after Port St Mary received a new motor lifeboat. Progress continued – and continues today.

Sources: RNLI history, UK Hydrographic Office, Ships of the Royal Navy (Colledge and Warlow)

Welcome

We are delighted to welcome two new members to the Society:
Alastair Kneale, a resident of Kensington.
Melodie Waddingham from Wandsworth.
We hope to meet and get to know you both at an event soon.

Greetings

Dorothy Garbutt has expressed the pleasure she receives from receiving news of the Society and the members she remembers with affection regretting that she now finds it difficult to travel. We too miss Dorothy at our gatherings and extend our best wishes.

Society's Website

Our website is managed by Sean and Wendy Ellis and officers have been delighted at hearing heaps of praise about it. A visit to www.londonmanxsociety is highly recommended.

A hundred years and still going strong

World Manx Association celebrates its centenary

Friday 1st July - Welcome Reception for Homecomers and Members

Saturday 2nd July - Annual Gathering and Dinner. Sefton Hotel, Douglas

Sunday 3rd July - Homecomers Service. The Nunnery Grounds, Douglas.

Monday 4th July - Tour, visiting various places of historical interest

associated with the WMA and Civic Reception.

Tuesday 5th July Tynwald Day

Wednesday 6th - Centenary Concert. Promenade Suite, Villa Marina, Douglas.

Thursday 7th July - Further Tour and Civic Reception

Friday 8th July - Farewell reception for Homecomers and Members. London Manx will be represented at several of the events.

Manx Queenie Pizza

... as well as Manx Chocolate Pizza, Snaefell Diabola, Ballabeg Banana and Butterscotch Sauce, Mannan Vodka cocktails: these items are on the menu at Clerkenwell's Real Man Pizza Company. Members who attended our annual lunch were made aware of the recent opening of this enterprise, the initiative of some of the directors of Rivington Street Holdings which has its headquarters in Athol Street and four offices in London and one in New York. The Pizza house has had some excellent reviews since it opened earlier this year and has the extraordinary special offer of a 20% discount if you pay the bill with Manx money.

I've not yet found time to try out the food as it's in part of London I rarely need to visit but if any member would like to go along and write us a restaurant review, we would be delighted. The address: 91-95 Clerkenwell Road, EC1R 5BX, close to Farringdon tube.

MA in Manx Studies

Founded in 1992, the Centre for Manx Studies of the University of Liverpool (Laare-Studeyrys Manninagh) is part of the School of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology of the University. Its primary functions are to teach undergraduate and postgraduate students, carry out archaeological, cultural, environmental and historical research of international significance on the Isle of Man and to further the international recognition of the Island in these subjects.

The Centre is now based at the Isle of Man Government Department of Education and Children's Isle of Man University Centre on Old Castletown

Road in Douglas. A one year MA in Manx studies is proposed for the next academic year and applications are required by the end of August. Details at www.liv.ac.uk/ManxStudies.

Commonwealth sport to fill Island's autumn

The Commonwealth Youth Games are to be staged on the Island from 7th to 14th September when Manx sport will welcome thousands of competitors from all parts of the Commonwealth. Seven sports participate so you will be able to enjoy athletics, badminton, boxing, cycling, gymnastics, rugby sevens and swimming.

If you can make the Island that week, the perfect opportunity to see performances from star athletes of the future.

Making Contact in Manx

Lesson 8 – Numbers

Some basic stuff

Nane – One

Jees - Two

Tree - Three

Kiare - Four

Queig - Five

Shey - Six

Shiaght - Seven

Hoght - Eight

Nuy - Nine

Jeih - Ten

Nane jeig - Eleven

Daa jeig – Twelve

The football results

Colby kiare Balley Chashtal jees - Colby 4 Castletown 2

Rhumsaa tree Doolish Recoil nuy - Ramsey 3 Douglas Royal 9

Laksaa shiaght Purt ny hlinshy hoght - Laksey 7 Peel 8

Kione ny-Ayrey queig Noo Shorys shey - Ayre 5 St Georges 6

Poyll Roish jeih Noo Moirrey nane - Pulrose 10 St Marys 1

Ellan Vannin feed Sostyn neu-nhee - Isle of Man 20 England 0

Your age

Ta mee hoght bleeaney – I am 8

Ta mee tree bleeaney jeig – I am 13 years old

Ta mee shenn – I am old

T'eh jeeaghyn shenn – He looks old

Ta mee foast aeg – I am still young

Some points to remember

Blein means year and bleeaney is the plural

Reproduced from the Manx Heritage Foundation's web site for learners www.learnmanx.com with kind permission. A MP3 audio version can be downloaded from the site.

Island Quiz

(open to non-members through the web site)

1. The Isle of Man Railway locomotive No. 13 was named
a) Caledonia, b) Derby, c) Fenella, d) Kissack?
2. At the London Manx cooish in January we made
a) bonnag, b) cowree, c) Manx knobs, d) potato soup with oatmeal?
3. The Manx phrase *Moghrey Mie* means,
a) I'm from Port St Mary, b) Good Morning, c) I am hungry, d) Mine's a pint?
4. The Island Games were last held in the Isle of Man in
a) 2001, b) 2003, c) 2005, d) 2007?
5. The 2011 Senior TT was won by
a) Bruce Anstey, b) Gary Johnson, c) John McGuinness, d) Guy Martin?

Answers to the editor by post or email, please. Closing date 30th July.

The first reader to send me five correct answers will receive a Manx £20 note, useful when next on the Island.

Spring quiz answers:

- 1) The “Journalists’ Church shares its name with Bride’s.
- 2) Kirkcudbright is nearer to Douglas than the other town stores.
- 3) Laxey is in Ohio.
- 4) HMS Racehorse was wrecked on Langness in 1822.
- 5) The expression says, “Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.”

There was no winner of our spring quiz. Everyone thought Whitehaven nearer than Kirkcudbright. The company’s web site says the Scottish town is two miles closer.

School breaking up



Dr Robin Barr-Hamilton

Along the River Neb

In the warm and balmy evening,
Where the river winds its way,
I strolled along the gorse-strewn path
And breathed the scent of sun on hay.

Little sounds were all around me,
Making silence deeper still –
The flurry of a startled bird,
The creaking from the watermill.

I listened to the tinkling music
Of the river, crystal clear,
Babbling over dappled pebbles
Ere it reached the man-made weir.

I heard a tiny popping noise;
It came from bursting pods of broom.
Scattering their contents o'er the earth.
Preparing next year's golden bloom.

The meadowland across the stream
Was as full of chirping insect sounds
Where silverweed, dog daises, vetch
Played hide-and-seek 'mid grassy mounds.

O'ergrown by pampas grass and reeds,
A long forgotten creek I found
Where childhood games I used to play
Away from grown-ups' sight and sound.

A sudden flock of memories came
With many a reminiscent smile
As I recalled such happy days
When I was young on Mona's Isle.

Maisie Sell

Acknowledgements

The Editor thanks Anne and Nick Alexander, Robin Barr-Hamilton, Mavis Bell, Preston Glass, Carol Gray (WMA), Maisie Sell, Sam Weller for their kind contribution and also the 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.

Copyright is retained by the contributor.

Closing date for the next issue, 25th August.

Dates for your diary

World Manx Association

Centenary Week 1-8th July 2011

Various events on the Island

See www.worldmanxassociation.co.uk

The Island will be full, but do join the crush.

Tynwald Day Cooish

10th July at Sam and Mary Weller's house in Cambridge.

Details on page 2.

The sun always shines on our Tynwald Cooish

Mhelliah

October 10th at noon. Service in St Bride's Church, Fleet Street.

Afterwards, social in The Press House Wine Bar

West London Cooish

27th November

At Pam Fiddik's house in Ickenham.

More details later or contact Pam at 01895 634185

Brighten up your autumn with a touch of Manx conviviality.

NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE IN THREE MONTHS

PLEASE SEND NEWS TO:

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

(telephone number 020 8360 8001)

e-mail: barrhamilton@btinternet.com

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