

## NEWSLETTER Summer 2014

Editor – Douglas Barr-Hamilton

### **Culture Vannin comes to London**

With several regulars unable to make the date, a disappointingly small number of members made our annual lunch on Saturday 10th May at the Doubletree, Hilton Hotel near Russell Square but the couple of dozen who made it had an enjoyable gathering that all were delighted not to have missed.

Dr Breesha Maddrell was our Guest of Honour. Breesha, is acting Director of Culture Vannin, informed us of the reasons for the recent change of name from the Manx Heritage Foundation. She talked about the unique culture of the Isle of Man, its language, literature, music, dance, history and people. Breesha, herself a fluent Manx Gaelic speaker, spoke of how our culture is key to who we are. It is a vibrant and living culture that shapes our strong sense of belonging that also needs to continue to be inclusive. Breesha spoke of how Culture Vannin wanted to take Manx culture forward in creative, innovative ways. Alastair Kneale, President of London Manx, thanked Breesha for travelling from the Island to talk to us and for an excellent speech which was appreciated by everyone there.

At the annual lunch thanks were given to Sally Miller who gave the Toast: The Land of Our Birth and to all who continue to contribute to the work of the London Manx Society. With sadness we remembered those members who are no longer with us. Ellan Vannin and the Manx National Anthem (Arrane Ashoonagh) were sung at the event which concluded with the words Mannin dy bra! (Isle of Man forever).

**Alastair Kneale and Sam Weller**

### **Chronicles of Mann and the Isles lead to AGM**

A visit to the British Library at St Pancras proved to be one of the most popular Society events for a long time but entirely because our President had arranged for us a private viewing of the Chronicles. It was with eager anticipation that 22 members assembled in the foyer well before the appointed hour. At the due time we were led to a small distant room with a table in the centre on which stood the source of our interest.

The book was surprisingly small. It was also surprisingly simple: no colourful illustrations as frequently shown in pictures of medieval documents. Each of us was able to examine it and read some of the Latin words. The script was not easy, the language unfamiliar to some but several things stood out and led to questions, always answered in detail. The word, “Ballasalla” appeared fairly often, not surprisingly because the chronicles are a diary of happenings at Rushen Abbey and not, as their title suggests, a history of the Island and the

Western Isles. It's also worth a mention that we learned that it was recovered from Furness Abbey and not the Isle of Man.

Following our viewing, we were able to tour the magnificent library and spend time in the treasures gallery. Then it was time for lunch which we ate at nearby Casa Mamma who kindly provided the venue for our AGM. The existing officers were re-elected for another year as was the committee apart from Margaret Brady, Rose Fowler and Veen Hill who decided to stand down: two needing a rest after many years of service and Veen because of ill health.

New blood bringing new ideas is needed to replace an invaluable trio.

**DBH**

### **London's Tynwald Cooish cancelled**

We are sorry to advise you that Pam Fiddik suffered a stroke early in the Spring after she and her husband, Mike had kindly offered their home for our annual cooish. It became clear very quickly that the work involved would be too much and her sister Sally, after looking into the possibility of her taking it over, found it impossible to change an existing commitment.

It is with regret that the Society's committee felt the event would have to be cancelled. Our apologies to all who were looking forward to the get together. Even sadder, Pam suffered another stroke earlier this month and, with other problems, progress is slow at the moment. She asked me to say that she hopes to meet all her London Manx friends later in the year but she is frustrated as she cannot email and finds it extremely difficult to write. She would very much welcome hearing from them by phone as asks for a call on 01895 634 185. Please cheer Pam up by contacting her from time to time.

**DBH**

### **Obituaries**

#### **Agnes Winifred (Veen) Hill, 1928 – 2014**

Mum was born in Douglas. Christened Agnes Winifred, she became known as Winnie or Wyn to some friends all her life but to most she was and is Veen which means Dearest One in Manx. Her early years were difficult – she lost her mother Florence when only three years old. Her beloved father, Hubert Shimmin remarried so it was Veen's grandmother, Gran Corlett who looked after her and her older brother John.

The Second World War years, although spent in relative safety on the Island, still meant the hardship of rations and the devastation of young relatives lost.

In her professional life she was a teacher – of both French and English language and her great passion, English Literature. From her early teacher training days in Liverpool where she taught and looked after classes of up to fifty of the most deprived children right up to her final professional work in her early 60s when she taught small groups of accomplished mature students, she received a deep

sense of fulfilment, of achievement, of so much hard work very well done. She was a brilliant teacher.

It was in Liverpool where she met our dad, Laurence Hill. They laughed all the time together – and fought some of the rest. They created a family and even when we had left the nest, mum held us all together with her adherence to the weekly Sunday dinner but also the celebration seasons: family Christmas, family Easter right up to last Christmas so that's for nearly 66 years she cooked everything and we can only recall one cock-up: a rogue tea-bag slipped into a mince and veg pie with home-made pastry: for ever after known as teabag pie. She hadn't been to Specsavers!

After our dear dad died in 1996, while grieving deeply mum entered into what was perhaps one of the happiest phases of her life, not only because of the support of her three children but because of the utter joy and pride she garnered from her four beautiful grandchildren, Lara, Quito, Tiger and Carter. Now she was also benevolent Matriarch and wonderful Grandma Matriarch.

She went on holiday adventures with us. She was such good company. So with us she journeyed three times to the South of France, to Annecy, Venice, Rome, Tenerife and, of course, to her island, her spiritual home, the Isle of Man.

She had a great gift for words and phrases, often coming out in her humour. For example, for her, "Five a day" meant five bars of chocolate: "Much better for you. Broccoli doesn't make you happy!"

Many came from her love of great literature. She especially loved the Brontes, Shakespeare, Edith Wharton and the poems of Keats and Emily Bronte. She could quote long sections which enlivened conversations and debate which she loved although she hated being talked over. She loved theatre: anything from Pinter to Chekov. She loved Radio 4. She loved flowers and plants. She loved fudge, declaring Scottish tablet to be the best. She loved her friends. She loved her island, the Isle of Man and was a keen participant in London Manx Society outings and just last year had written some brilliant pieces for its magazine.

She also loved to sing – hymns, love songs, lullabies. In the two nights before she went, though barely able to breath, she somehow managed to sing two of her favourite songs, "Pull to the Shore" and "Shall we meet at the River" to resounding applause from the nurses: the same nurses who wept along with her doctor when she passed away. They know courage when they see it.

Yes, mum's greatest quality was a courageous, selfless love that knew no bounds.

**David Hill, Helen Clothier (daughter) and Lara Morgan (granddaughter)**

#### **Marie Barr-Hamilton, 1908 – 2014**

It was in February 1944 that my mother arrived in the Isle of Man with three young sons to join her husband Eric who had just been posted to the WW2 Air Force base in Andreas. She stayed for seventy years after thirty-five of travel.

Born in Shepperton, Middlesex to a French lady's maid and a Midlands chauffeur/car mechanic, she was Manx London rather than London Manx but she joined LMS when I took over the newsletter as she wanted to see what I wrote. So, although our oldest member at 105, she was also one of our newest. Her family had moved to Brighton after her father was gravely wounded in the Battle of the Somme, to need constant nursing until his death in 1924. In 1935 she married her childhood sweetheart, a regular airman, and accompanied him on his postings until spending several years in the northern Punjab (now in Pakistan) while he was fighting in Burma, eventually to be returned to the UK in 1943 after contracting malaria.

Coming to the Island was the end of her moving though not Eric's and she immersed herself in raising her family and in the life of the village, notably helping with the Girls' Friendly Society, becoming a founder member of the Women's Institute and gaining renown for her home-made wine for which she won several prizes at Andreas Root Show. She also supported the parish church where Eric was, after retirement, a warden and a lay reader. And it was in that Church that a large congregation of family and friends attended the funeral of a lady who had been seventy years a Comeover.

**DBH**

### **New Members**

Over the weekend that included the London OKW and Buchan Dinner and the Society's visit to the British Library five new members joined the London Manx. We welcome Doug Bolton, Geoff Denner, Annabelle Field, Patrick Hartley and Bobbie Lamming.

**DBH**

### **Almoner Service**

It is many years since the Society was called upon to visit a Manx resident being treated in a London hospital. However, earlier this year we were asked to be prepared to find someone to visit such a patient although, in the end, the person was able to be admitted to a Liverpool hospital.

The committee would like to be prepared in the event of a similar request in the future and would invite members to let us know if they would be prepared for their name to be put on a list as a potential visit to one or two specialist hospitals.

**DBH**

### **Have Vikings infiltrated London Manx?**

Vikings are in the news at the moment – at the cinema and at the British Museum. Both of those programmes seem to leave you with the idea that all

Vikings raped, pillaged and looted whereas some were looking for land where they could settle and farm.

My mother was widowed in 1939 just after war was declared. Dad was building four boarding houses in Hutchinson Square and the whole of the square was taken over for an internment camp so mum was left with no income – no social security in those days. Luckily mum had qualified as an SRN at Noble's Hospital in 1920 so she returned to nursing. One of her patients in the 40s was Miss Cubbon, the sister of William Cubbon MA who was Director of the Manx Museum and also a Knight of St Olaf, bestowed on him by the Norwegian government.

Mum asked him, "Where did the names Callow and Cowley originate?" He told her he thought that the names came from Olaf, a Viking who settled in Scotland. His son would be called McOlaf who settled in the Isle of Man. In the Island the name McLucas became Clucas. In similar fashion, the Mc was left out of McOlaf to become Colaf, then Colla and Cowle – Callow and Cowley, my mother's maiden name.

So not only am I proud to be Manx, I think I have Viking blood flowing in my veins!

**Rose Fowler**

### **Alexander III**

No, not the Tsar of Russia but King of Scotland, Alexander was born in 1241 and became King of Scotland when only seven years old. Three years later he married Henry III of England's eldest daughter, Margaret. In adulthood he proved a competent king who continued his father's ambition to add the Isles to Scottish control and in 1286 defeated the Norwegian army at the Battle of Largs in Ayrshire. He now ruled the Western Isles and, given his overwhelming power, the Isle of Man was conceded to him in 1266 under the Treaty of Perth.

However, he took time to conquer it; an "expedition" sent in 1267 against the "rebels" achieved little and the Manx seemed to have taken charge until, after proclaiming Godred, son of Magnus, king in the "Rebellion of 1275", they submitted without a fight after the Scottish Fleet put into port at Ronaldsway and landed an army on St Michael's Isle. Scottish domination was short-lived and, until 1405 when the Stanley family took control, the Island was to suffer over a hundred years of disputed ownership between the kings of Scotland and England. After securing the Island, a long period of peace had looked possible for Scotland but in 1286, Alexander was killed after his horse stumbled and he fell down a cliff in Fife. His granddaughter Margaret whose mother, also Margaret had married King Eric of Norway but died when she was born, now aged just three and heir to the throne of Norway, was declared Queen of Scotland, having been recognised as heiress when Alexander's only son died the year before. Sadly she died in Orkney en route from Norway to Scotland so never took power. The prospect of a return of Norse influence on the Island had ended.

## **DBH**

Sources: Royal web site, History of Isle of Man

### **Island photographs at Tate Britain**

A new exhibition can be seen at Tate Britain showing pictures taken by Chris Killip on the Island in the early 1980s. Having acquired a body of his work they will exhibit it in the Acquisitions Gallery until 28th September.

Chris Killip was born in Douglas in 1946, left school at sixteen and joined the Sefton as a trainee hotel manager. In June 1964 he decided to take up full time photography and became a beach photographer to earn enough money to leave the Island. In October that year he began work as the third assistant to a leading London advertising photographer and then worked as a freelance assistant for various photographers in London from 1966 to 1969. Then, after his very first exhibition of photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, he decided to return to photograph in the Isle of Man. He worked in his father's pub in the evening, returning to London from time to time to print his work. On a return visit to the USA in 1971 a New York gallery owner commissioned a limited edition portfolio of the Manx work, paying for it in advance so that he could continue to photograph. In 1972 he received a commission from The Arts Council of Great Britain to photograph Huddersfield and Bury St Edmunds for its exhibition "Two Views - Two Cities". In 1975, he moved to live in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on a two year fellowship as the Northern Arts Photography Fellow. He was a founding member, exhibition curator and advisor of Side Gallery in Newcastle as well as its director, from 1977 to 1979. He continued to live in the city and photographed all over the North East while, from 1980 to 1985, making occasional cover portraits for The London Review of Books.

In 1989 came the Henri Cartier Bresson Award and two years later came an invitation to become a Visiting Lecturer at the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard. In 1994 he was made a tenured professor and was department chair from 1994 to 1998 and continues to live in the America and teach at Harvard.

His work is featured in the permanent collections of major institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, Museum Folkwang in Essen, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, National Gallery of Australia in Canberra and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

It will eventually be shown on the Island too. In June 2013 the Manx Museum acquired 250 of his photographs of the Isle of Man from 1970 to 1973 for its permanent collection. The museum plans to exhibit a selection of this work in 2016. Can't wait two years? Get to Tate Britain before late September.

## **DBH**

### **London Exhibition Celebrates the Work of Archibald Knox**

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of the world famous designer and artist Archibald Knox, with a number of events organised by the Archibald Knox Society to celebrate the occasion.

Born on the Isle of Man in 1864, Archibald Knox became one of the most influential figures in the British Art Nouveau/arts and crafts movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly in respect of his dynamic partnership with the celebrated Liberty & Co of London.

His combination of Celtic design with modern aesthetics and manufacturing processes has attracted an extensive range of world-wide collectors, including decorative art specialists and celebrities such as Brad Pitt.

But on the anniversary of his birth (9th April), there's a special invitation to a concert at St German's Cathedral in Peel. Organised in association with Culture Vannin and supported by the Isle of Man Arts Council, there will be an opportunity to hear Manx trad power trio Barrule, Manx Gaelic choir Caarjyn Coidjagh, emerging local harp group Claasagh and the cathedral choir, together with a talk entitled *The Significance of Archibald Knox* by Liam O'Neill. Tickets priced at £5 from various outlets – details available on the Archibald Knox Society website.

Copies of the exclusive *Archibald Knox Society Journal* which celebrates the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary will also be available at the concert.

But there's also exciting news of a special exhibition organised in London which will bring together possibly the greatest collection of Knox's metalwork from several private collections (some previously unseen in public) which will include rare examples of Cymric silver, jewellery and clocks from his time working for Liberty & Co.

Founder and Chairman of the Archibald Knox Society, Liam O'Neill, who will deliver a lecture about the designer and his work during the exhibition said, "In 1900 the extraordinary genius of Arthur L. Liberty, combined with his master designer, the Manxman Archibald Knox, put British Art Nouveau metalwork and jewellery in the forefront of modern design. In this exhibition the legacies of these two extraordinary men are once more to unite in bringing together an exceptional collection as chic today as it was then."

Entitled *Archibald Knox: Beauty and Modernity – a Designer Ahead of his Time*, this milestone exhibition will be held as part of the Olympia International Art and Antiques Fair, 5-15th June.

Dr Stephen Martin, author of the seminal publication *Archibald Knox* and President of the Archibald Knox Society commented, "Celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of the great Manx designer, Archibald Knox, with this exhibition at Olympia is a long overdue and very fortunate opportunity to appreciate more deeply Knox's diverse genius, his vast influence on twentieth century design and the sheer beauty of his objects."

[www.archibaldknoxsociety.com](http://www.archibaldknoxsociety.com)

[www.olympia-art-antiques.com](http://www.olympia-art-antiques.com)

**Valerie Caine** © April 2014  
(Courtesy of Manx Tails)

### **Resurgence of interest in T. E. Brown**

Manx born poet Thomas Edward Brown (colloquially known as T. E. Brown), was remembered by members of the World Manx Association as they gathered in Glen Falcon Gardens, off Broadway in Douglas, for an annual garlanding ceremony on his birthday, 5th May.

Born in Douglas in 1830, T. E. Brown attended King William's College before gaining a double first at Christ Church, Oxford, and entering the teaching profession, eventually retiring as Master of Clifton College in Bristol in 1892. His poetry explores various genres, but he is perhaps best remembered for his work with Manx dialect, and more specifically his Fo'c's'le Yarns.

The appeal of T. E. Brown's work has never waned, with a number of prominent Island figures regularly reciting bite-sized chunks of his poetry, from some of his lengthy pieces, but there's been a renewed push to ensure that school children have a better understanding of the man and his poetry in the year designated Island of Culture.

During May 1914, the now redundant Manx Society pursued similar lines by gifting a portrait of T. E. Brown to each Island school in a bid to encourage them to read more of his work. The Isle of Man Examiner which reported on the presentations said, "The rising generation should, as a result of the actions of the Manx Society this week, be encouraged to devote to the literary work of the Rev. Thomas Edward Brown that attention and study which its intrinsic merit should in itself be sufficient to command."

Their report highlighted how 'the poet has not reached the heart of the masses, as Burns, for example, appeals to the Scots' citing a lack of education about the poet. But now the Department of Education and Children is asking Island schools to seek out those portraits and discover how they marked the occasion a century ago.

Advisory Teacher for the Manx Curriculum, Jo Callister, said, "T. E. Brown is one of our greatest ever cultural figures. It will be fascinating to see how many of these portraits still exist, whether still on walls or stored away in attics or archives, and to raise the awareness of today's pupils to Brown's work in this culturally significant year."

Coincidentally, the World Manx Association has located eighteen of these portraits tucked away in an attic, which will be given to the recently built schools, along with copies of a CD of T. E. Brown's poetry read by Major Geoff Crellin entitled *Treasure of the Island Heart*

Culture Vannin will also be presenting a copy of Dollin Kelly's book *T. E. Brown: An Anthology* to each school on the Island.

T. E. Brown died in 1897.



Those interested in reading his poems can do so at <http://www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook/people/writers/teb/poems.htm>

**Valerie Caine**

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### **Shooyl ny Skeeraghyn (Parish Walk)**

Every year, close to the time of the northern summer solstice (Manx Gaelic: shass greiney souree) hundreds participate in Shooyl ny Skeeraghyn (Walk of the Parish's). This is the Manx Parish Walk (sponsored by Manx Telecom) which passes through every parish on Mannin (Isle of Man). It covers a distance of 85 miles (137 km). A Parish is a church unit of land that makes up a division of a diocese.

Originally you would have to touch the door of each of the seventeen Parish churches on the Island of Mannin. These days an electronic timing device is worn. Not everyone is expected to complete the 85 miles, which needs to be completed in one day (24 hours). However, many do and it is a walking competition. Most try and do as well as they can and the main aim is to raise money for charity. For my sins (I'm afraid there are quite a few) I have signed up to partake in this year's walk and I'll get as far as my old crock of a body will take me. I am raising money for the Manx Wildlife Trust, which is a charity that works to protect the Manx environment on both land and sea. They are responsible for the maintenance of twenty-two of their own nature reserves across the island. Information on their work can be obtained from their website: <http://www.manxwt.org.uk/what-we-do>.

First I would like to thank those who have already made a sponsorship donation in regard to my own efforts on this year's Parish walk 2014. I have also now set up an account on <http://www.justgiving.com/alastairkneale> for anyone else who feels able to sponsor.

**Alastair Kneale**

### **London Manx Island Cooish**

A number of members will be on the Island in early July for Tynwald as will members of kindred societies it being the time of the North American Society's Homecoming. To take the opportunity of our getting together with the not insignificant membership who now lives there, I am arranging a "cooish" on the evening of Wednesday 2nd July at Harbour Lights Restaurant, St Paul's Square, Ramsey. The restaurant has agreed to open specially for us and I have booked a table for two. To warrant the special opening we need at least ten more to ring 01624 814692 and ask for a table near Douglas. Timing is not important; reserving tables between, say, 6.45 and 7.30 will make things easier for the kitchen.

Let's see if we can fill the place!

## **Lilac**

There were lilacs in a garden down the road;  
I was bringing home the shopping - quite a load:  
It was raining cats and dogs, turning pavements into bogs  
When I saw them in a garden down the road:  
Two lilac trees with clusters mauve and white.  
Together they made such a pretty sight,  
Though the rain streamed down my face  
The day was brightened by the g race  
Of those spring cameos of cluster mauve and white.

## **Maisie Sell**

(first printed four years ago)

## **Island Quiz**

(open to non-members through the web site)

1. Was Ramsey's swing bridge built in  
(a) 1890, (b) 1892, (c) 1894, (d) 1896?
2. What is the name of the Port Erin lifeboat  
(a) Anne & James Ritchie, (b) Gough Ritchie, (c) Muriel & Leslie, (d) Ruby Clery?
3. Which T E Brown poem starts with the line,  
"Stories! stories! nothin' but stories!"  
(a) The Doctor, (b) The Indiaman (c) The Manx Witch, (d) Tommy big-eyes?
4. What is the name of the new Italian restaurant in Parliament Street, Ramsey  
(a) Attraversiamo, (b) Casa Mamma, (c) La Piazza, (d) Mamma Mia,
5. Is Ushag Veg Ruy a  
(a) ballad, (b) carval, (c) lullaby, (d) waltz?

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

The first reader to send me five correct answers will receive £25 of fuel when hiring a car from Mylchreest Car Hire on the Island (excluding TT week)  
Our thanks for their kind support.

## **Answers to February's quiz:**

1. The Tower of Refuge built in 1832.
2. Six crew members were lost with the Ben Seyr.
3. Hall Caine was MHK for Ramsey.
4. Creditors of Dumbells Bank received 63% (12s 7d in £) by the end of its winding up, paid in several instalments. Shareholders got nothing.
5. Olga Stone was interviewed on BBC's Songs of Praise from St German's Cathedral in early December 2013.

*No all correct answer was received.*

### **Acknowledgements**

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

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Closing date for the next issue, 18th August

### **Visiting LMS web site**

**London Manx Society website – [londonmanxsociety.com](http://londonmanxsociety.com)**

For items on what's happening on the Island, go to **NEWS** and then

**MANXLIFE**

**Wendy Ellis Kneen**

### **Dates for your diary**

#### **Cancelled**

Tynwald Cooish(see page 2)

#### **Wednesday 2nd July**

London Manx Island Cooish(see page 11)

#### **3-7 July 2014**

North American Manx Society Homecoming

Events include

Saturday 5th July, Gala banquet

Monday 7th July, Tynwald Day at St. John's

**Monday 6th October**

Mhelliah

St Bride's Church, Fleet Street at 12 noon  
followed by lunch at Press House Wine Bar.

**NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE IN THREE MONTHS**

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