

NEWSLETTER Summer 2016

Editor – Douglas Barr-Hamilton

Annual lunch

Thirty-six members and guests of the Society assembled for our annual lunch at the traditional venue in Southampton Row on Saturday, 7th May and thoroughly enjoyed our first social gathering of the year. We dined on leek and potato soup, roasted supreme of chicken and lemon crème brûlée while catching up on one other's news.

Having toasted the Lord of Mann, sung the Manx National Anthem and toasted the guests and the land of our birth, the guest of honour, Edmund Southworth, director of Manx National Heritage brought us up to date with the organisation's work on the Island in an entertaining speech and kindly answered a number of topical questions.

Other guests present were Mrs Suzanne Richardson, Mrs Josie Thacker, Peter Nash and Rev. Justin White. Members who attended were Anne and Nick Alexander, Voirry and Robin Carr, Bryan and Sheila Corrin, Pam and Mike Fiddik, Colin and Sheila Gill, Sally and Peter Miller, Melodie and Harry Waddingham, Sam and Mary Weller, Jim and Sue Wood, Douglas Barr-Hamilton, Margaret Brady, Stewart Christian, Derek Costain, Rose Fowler, Maron Honeyborne, Alastair Kneale, Carol Radcliffe, Margaret Robertson, Maisie Sell, Elizabeth Watson and Mary West.

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The outgoing president, Alastair Kneale, after three years in the post, handed over to his successor Bryan Corrin from Beckenham. Bryan is Emeritus Professor of Respiratory Medicine at Imperial College, London and a long-time member of the Society. He is a descendant of Richard Corrin of Castletown and Catherine Creer of St Anne's (presumably Santon) who were married at Braddan in 1839, immediately prior to leaving the island to settle in Liverpool. To escape the worst of the Liverpool blitz Bryan was evacuated to Teenie Faragher in Douglas, a stranger but one who looked after him with true Manx kindness. He returned to the island in 1946 as a boarder at King William's College where he made many Manx friends. This was followed by medical school in London where he progressed through the academic ranks to a chair in lung pathology.

The draw was made to the raffle held to defray the administrative costs of the event and keep the society's finances on an even keel, successful thanks in no small part to the generosity of the Steam Packet company as well as prizes donated by members then what else but the singing of "Ellan Vannin" and a return to the hotel lounge for a bit more gossip?

DBH



Prof Bryan Corrin, Edmund Southworth and Alastair Kneale

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Annual General Meeting

The Society held its annual general meeting on 7th March at the Casa Mamma Restaurant near King's Cross as last year and a relatively small attendance was augmented by new members David and Ruth Kirby. It was a pleasure meet them and receive fresh ideas and a shame they had a previous engagement that clashes with our lunch this year. We look forward to seeing them at another function soon.

Reports on the year were received and the accounts accepted which show a tiny excess of expenditure over income of less than £30 caused by a one-off payment for our web site which was offset by an increase in value of £65 in the investments in which most of our reserves are held.

DBH

Obituary

Brian Kneen

The Society is sad to advise members of the death of Brian Kneen, a long time member of London Manx and my predecessor as editor of the newsletter. Our president expressed our condolences to his widow, Mary and our secretary represented the Society at his funeral in his home town of Westbury on 22nd April. The service included the poem, "When I come to the End of the Road," recited by his son Jason before he was joined by his sisters Angie and Vycky in a moving family tribute. Then a recording was played of Robin Gibb's rendition of Ellan Vannin.

DBH

Mary wrote to the Society:

Brian passed peacefully away on April 2nd 2016 at home with his family around him. Brian was told last July that the cancer he had so bravely fought had returned and that it was terminal.

Brian was a long standing member of the LMS and its Web Master for a long time, he along with Mary loved coming to the LMS events when they could.

Brian was very proud of his Manx roots and it was heart-warming to see a packed church. We hope we have raised a sizable amount for Dorothy House Hospice who helped and prepared us.

We gave him a good Manx/ Viking send off.

Mary Kneen

New Members

We have welcomed three new members in the past quarter, Paul Allot of Central London and James and Sue Wood of Pinner. We were delighted to meet James and Sue again at our annual lunch and look forward to meeting Paul at one of our functions in the near future and getting to know them and their island connections.

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New governor

Sharp eyed readers will have noticed that the Island's governor is not named as one of our patrons on page one. We trust it will be restored for our autumn edition.

Sir Richard Gozney, former Governor of Bermuda has been appointed as the Isle of Man's thirtieth Lieutenant Governor and succeeds Adam Wood who has completed his five year term.

Sir Richard will be installed on 27th May but he gave advance notice that neither he nor Lady Gozney wanted to assume any office of Patron without giving it prior consideration and the Society naturally respects the decision.

On his appointment he said he felt privileged to be chosen and added that he had fallen for our island when visiting a few years ago with his wife Diana and is hugely looking forward to meeting the people of the island. Now aged 64, our new governor retired from the British Diplomatic Service after a distinguished career which culminated as the Governor of Bermuda in 2012 and his previous positions include British Ambassador to Indonesia and British High Commissioner to Nigeria.

He has also worked as a diplomat in many countries including Indonesia, Nigeria and Argentina.

DBH

Web site

Our apologies to members unable recently to access our web site. We have discovered that the host provider hasn't renewed its security certificate and it is now deemed not to be a trusted site. It takes a little time to check our contract but it would appear to be easy to transfer to a new provider.

Another Manx singer set for Les Misérables

Manx actress and singer Sam Barks played the role of Éponine in this West End production as well as the film adaptation in 2012 and now she is to be followed onto the stage by 24-year-old Simon Lynch from Greeba. On the Island he has performed with Manx Operatic Society and Stage Door Productions. Now he will make his West End debut in June at the Queen's Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue.

Les Misérables is now in its 31st year, the West End's longest running musical ever. Simon actually moved to London in December and worked at the Queen's Theatre's very own bar before being cast in the show and before that he hit our TV screens last Autumn when he auditioned for ITV talent show X Factor making it to the live judges' houses round.

We wish him every success.

DBH

Sources: iomtoday, *www.queenstheatre.co.uk*

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Manx Fly the Flag at 2016 Australian Celtic Festival

The Australian Celtic Festival took place at Glen Innes in New South Wales, Australia from 26 April to 1 May 2016. This year the festival celebrated the Isle of Man. Glen Innes is the site of the Australian Standing Stones, an Australian National Monument that pays homage to its Celtic pioneers.

Members of the New South Wales and Queensland Manx Societies were joined by renowned Manx singer/songwriter Christine Collister who sang the Manx National anthem in Manx and English at the festival's opening ceremony. In representing the Isle of Man at the festival Christine described it as a wonderful opportunity to explore her musical roots and to delve into the history and folklore of the Island in ways she hadn't before. The festival was also giving her the opportunity to premiere a wonderful documentary - *Island Bound* - which was commissioned for the Island of Culture in 2014.

Also travelling from the Isle of Man was Alastair Kneale, then President of the London Manx Society who was given the honour of formally opening the Festival. Alastair spoke to a crowded Glen Innes town square in both Manx and English. He talked about the island's proud history and the importance to the Manx people of their Celtic identity.

After the ceremony Alastair said it was a real honour to open the festival, "I am very proud of my Manx nationality and it is a privilege to be able to tell others of what a great and special place the Isle of Man is". In the build up to the Festival a number of events took place to promote the Island. Local schools presented a concert with Manx song and dance along with artwork featuring the Island. There was also an outdoor presentation undertaken by a local community group on the Viking influences on the Isle of Man and the history of the Kingdom of Mann and the Isles. Christine gave a number of concerts over the festival period. Also giving a magnificent presentation on the Isle of Man in a workshop featuring song, folklore and Manx history. Alastair also spoke at a number of ceremonies talking about the Island's special and unique identity. There was also a parade of featuring the flags of Australia and all of the Celtic Nations through the town of Glen Innes with the NSW and Queensland Manx Societies in the lead.

Also present at the ceremony was Australian Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce. Alastair told us that the profile of the Isle of Man has been raised in Australia by their presence with many people describing an interest in travelling to the island as a result of the information they had been given. This sentiment was echoed by the Chair of the Australian Standing Stones Management Board, Judi Toms, Lara Gresham, the Chair of the Australian Celtic Festival committee as well as Margaret Sharpe, the Convenor of the Celtic Council of Australia.

DBH

(from Alastair Kneale's report)

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Manx on parade



Christine Collister, Alastair Kneale and Margaret Sharpe



Celtic flags on Tynwald Hill, NSW

To let, thatched cottage

There are tholtanyn all over the Island and the Ayres had their share of them. At Rue Point there were three near the road that leads down to the shore: farm worker cottages or crofts, traces of only two of which remain. At Blue Point there is no sign at all of two about which I was told as a primary school child by Jimmy Kneale (born 1872) of Cooil Veg in Andreas who had lived in one towards the end of the 19th century, working as fisherman or farm labourer depending on the weather, he said. Six others along the brooghs have disappeared and at the Lhen, little or nothing remains of eight.

However, one Lhen dwelling did not go the same way. Yn Thie Thooit (the thatched cottage) has been in continuous occupation at least since early in the 19th century and has long been the only thatched cottage left in Andreas parish. Now Manx National Heritage has launched a new venture there, turning it into an extraordinary place to stay for a self-catering holiday.

The cottage near the bridge over the Lhen river has belonged to Manx National Heritage since 1989 following a generous bequest from the late Catherine Craine Guylar, a Home Economics Teacher at Ramsey Grammar School and former chairwoman in the Isle of Man Federation of the Women's Institute. She had originally purchased the property in 1961 for £175. Miss Guylar has a LMS connection: she was first cousin to Kitty Glass, the mother of member Fran Higson and her brother Preston, late president of the Society. She was also Preston's godmother. Their common grandparents were Craines from Ballaugh. Following Miss Guylar's bequest, Manx National Heritage used the cottage to accommodate wardens working on the nearby nature reserves at Cronk y Bing* and the Ayres. It recently undertook a complete renovation and refurbishment of the cottage, restoring it to surpass its former glory.

Yn Thie Thooit now offers self-catering accommodation for up to two people. The cottage has been equipped with comfortable furniture, given luxurious finishing touches including heated blankets and high quality bedding and had a log-fire effect stove installed. A welcome pack promoting local Manx produce is provided for guests.

The cottage is located in a peaceful setting and enjoys access to the nearby shore and the nature reserve. It is ideal for nature lovers, birdwatchers and stargazers, whilst also offering an ideal location for walkers and cyclists wishing to explore the North of the Island. 'Yn Thie Thooit' is a registered historic building and one of only 23 examples of thatched buildings remaining on the Island. To rent, contact 01624 648015 or email staywithus@mnh.gov.im

Ol' Jimmy Kneale would not have believed it.

DBH

Sources: Manx National Heritage: Andreas, McCambridge and Dugdale.

* The word "Bing" is Manx for a jury. According to George Broderick's "Place Names of the Isle of Man" in Cronk y Bing it is a corruption of "phing" meaning a penny, the rental value of the land.

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Horse Trams

Having mentioned the subject at your annual lunch, Douglas has asked me to bring you up to date. The Horse Trams is to an extent an evolving situation. The decision to stop them by Douglas Corporation came as a shock to many of us and we only had a short space of time to put a rescue package together. My colleagues in Isle of Man Railways have taken the lead and they have taken on the operation as of the beginning of May. Douglas Corporation are not putting any actual cash into the operation but they have agreed to "lend" the horses and trams. IOM Railways reckon they can increase the income by running longer (till the end of October) and reducing the discounts to local residents. They will also try and cut costs.

This package is only for the coming year. It buys us time to look at other options for the future running. Manx National Heritage is supporting the operation with our

marketing and social media and we may have further involvement in the future. Much depends on how much income we can generate from passengers this year.

We are very hopeful but there will be a need for Tynwald approval to some level of public subsidy and investment in the infrastructure.

Edmund Southworth

Guide to Meayll Peninsular and the Sound reprinted

It was back in the year 2000 that Rushen Parish Commissioners first published its guide, "Features and History of the Meayll Peninsular and The Sound with a walkers' guide" and it has proved a popular buy ever since. Now, in time for the new season, a new and updated edition has been produced with a new chapter adding a greater historical context called, "The people of the peninsular" which includes Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age inhabitants, moving on to the arrival of the Celts and Vikings and treating the change from paganism to Christianity. The area does truly contain the ancient and the modern: the Meayll stone circle, Neolithic (Later Stone Age) and remnants of a World War II radar station. Less well known is the Glen Chass Mine on the north-west coast of Perwick Bay where folk seem to have searched for lead for about seventy years during the nineteenth century before abandoning hope of finding worthwhile quantities. The inhabitants were also people of the sea, of course, and the book reflects that history in covering the wrecks of the Lily, recently subject of an article in this newsletter, and that of the French schooner le jeune St. Charles, six years later which we will describe in a future newsletter.

With the help of the people of the area, the edition has been completed by John Rimington MHK, a former Rushen commissioner and is on sale for £5.95 at most Island bookshops. The proceeds will go to the charity, Thousla Cross.

Should you want to try one of their recommended walks, they include a hike around Meayll Hill, from Port Erin to The Sound, from Cronk-ny-Arrey to Burroo Ned and from Port St Mary to the Chasms.

DBH

Sources: iomtoday, Rushen Parish Commissioners

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Movement on Queen's Pier

Some years ago, Preston Glass wrote a delightful account for our newsletter of a day trip by steamer from Ramsey to Belfast. Alas, now never to be repeated . . . or is it? There have been a couple of developments in plans to revive Ramsey's pier since the mention in our last newsletter. Tom Durrant, the leader of the project, has collected the key to its long locked entrance and, spending a few days in Ramsey, I attended the ceremony when the gates were formally opened although the pier and its entrance will stay inaccessible to the public for some time on safety grounds.

This took place on Sunday 1st May and I understand from talking to some of the near-400 strong crowd enjoying the sunshine and the event that the government is allowing the Queen's Pier Restoration Trust to survey the structure and is willing then to allow it to lease the pier, one bay at a time as work is done. Mr Durrant kindly confirmed this to me; they are required to survey all 55 bays and report on damage to the

structure and provide a fresh estimate of the cost of repair. The survey will take three months in good weather and insuring untrained volunteers is proving a cost problem. After the survey is complete, they will be granted a three year lease to repair the first three bays. He is confident that there has been little deterioration since the last survey, having viewed and filmed the ironwork from a launch and is, furthermore, encouraged that the timber deck is not rotten as reported being of irreplaceable expensive African timber: just the nails have gone.

The bay next to the shore will be the most expensive as it is considerably wider and has suffered more damage than the others, battered by seas and souls (and soles) and all its steelwork has to be replaced. More precise costings will be possible after the survey but present estimates suggest about £66,000 with the remaining bays each costing about £25,000. The campaigners hope then to be allowed to work on the rest of the pier as funds arrive: target, five years.

Money raised ahead of the launch at the ceremony to open the gate raised over £1,500: about one thousandth of the likely total cost.

Let's hope for rapid progress. A crowdfunding page has been set up for contributions.

DBH

Skeleton back

If you missed the "Giant Elk" last time you visited the Manx Museum you will be pleased to know that it is back in the new Geology Gallery. In a talk at its return, Christopher Weeks, MNH conservator described the Island as it was at the time of the Ice Age giants then explained its discovery and excavation and the amazing craftsmen who reconstructed the skeleton now on display for over one hundred years. Last year it was carefully moved to a specialist conservation facility within the Museum and refurbishment work undertaken while the skeleton was studied and laser cleaned. Some ancient repairs needed specialist attention and had to be replaced. Samples of tooth and bone were taken for DNA testing and dating by carbon 14 analysis.

DBH

Source: Manx National Heritage

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Douglas Head's Camera

The Isle of Man Victorian Society was content at Easter as its volunteers for two days again opened and staffed the Great Union Camera Obscura on Douglas Head, that long neglected visitor attraction eventually restored by the Island's Government and handed over to the Department of Tourism and Leisure in the Spring of 2005

The principle of a camera obscura is said to have been known since the 5th century BC in China but they seem to have become a popular seaside attraction in 19th century Britain. So popular that there was one at Port Soderick and another in Onchan, above the Derby Castle dance hall as well as Douglas Head's. Examples can still be found in Bristol, Dumfries, Edinburgh and Llandudno. However, Douglas's is unique. While all the others have a single lens, it has eleven though it originally had twelve with one removed at some stage for structural reasons. A single lens camera had been build on Douglas Head in May 1887 but it burned down five months later.

The current building, on a different site, dates from 1892 and the name Great Union relates to the coming together of the pictures projected onto 12 separate tables through 12 lenses. It fell into disuse during the 1980s and restoration took place during the early years of this century.

So for eleven years it has again been a tourist attraction and it opened for the current season on 30th April, operated by volunteers recruited by the Isle of Man Victorian Society. The camera works by using a series of mirrors and lenses which are located around the roof line above a darkened room. Views of the adjoining area are then projected onto a circular table to produce eleven moving colour pictures of the 360 degree view, including, of course, Douglas harbour, Tower of Refuge, and the lighthouse. Adverse weather conditions sometimes interfere with viewing or prevent the Great Union Camera Obscura from opening. A flag flying announces that the attraction is open.

DBH

Sources: IOM Tourist Board, iomtoday

Calf's plastic puffins

It may sound like a desperate measure but we are told that in mid April a hundred replica puffins were placed on the Calf of Man to encourage the bird to return to breed on the island. Society members will recall the visit of Dessie Robinson to our 2009 Mhelliiah in which he mentioned efforts to rid the Calf of "long tails" so puffins and Manx shearwaters could return and use their holes. The numbers of both birds are in serious decline. In twenty years, the numbers of puffins observed around its shores have declined from about 800 to ten and globally they are an endangered species; Manx shearwaters have been rare for a very long time.

Supported by Manx National Heritage technicians, volunteers from Manx Wildlife Trust planted the model birds and hope they will encourage puffins again to breed on the Calf. All those years ago Dessie told us how they used to play recordings of shearwaters to try and attract passing birds. I wonder if they used puffin noises too.

DBH

Source: iomtoday

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What's on

Visiting the Island this summer or giving advice?

Easter - 18th September, in Manx Museum, Hope in the Great War: RNLI exhibition of WW1 rescues.

7th May - 30th July, Chris Killip's, the Isle of Man Revisited: 1970s' photographs: Manx Museum.

3-12th June at 11am in the Manx Museum Film Theatre. A screening of "Forgotten Heroes", a documentary about Stanley Woods, one of the biggest stars of the TT in the interwar years. The 350cc Velocette motorcycle, ridden to victory by Stanley Woods in the 1939 Junior TT will be on display at the Manx Museum for the 2016 TT which finishes 10th June.

7th June, (to be confirmed) Red Arrows RAF display team.

9th June, Laxey Motorcycle Show, Laxey Promenade.

9th June, Flag and Lifeboat Open Day, House of Manannan, Peel.
10th June, TT Fireworks Display, Douglas
18-29th June, Manannan Festival of Music and Arts, Erin Arts Centre, Port Erin.
20th June, Parish Walk; starts 8.00 a.m. at National Sports Centre.
20-24th June, Crown Green Bowls Festival.
3-9th July, Isle of Man Flower Festival.
5th July, Tynwald Day.
11-14th July, Southern 100 Motorcycle Races.
13-17th July, Yn Chruinnaght, Peel
22-24th July, Open Air Theatre: Shakespeare's "The Tempest," evening 22-23rd at Peel Castle, matinée 24th at Rushen Abbey.
28th July to 24th August, WW2 Internment Exhibition 1941-42, "Friend or Foe?" St Catherine's Church Hall, Port Erin.
30-31st August, Southern Agricultural Show, Great Meadow, Castletown.
31st July, A Year on Ballachurry Farm: exhibition of 1940s' farming life, Port St Mary Town Hall.
5-7th August, Peel Traditional Boat week-end.
6th August, Noble's Park Fun Day.
7th August, Peel Carnival, Promenade.
12-13th August, Manx Agricultural Show, Knockaloe.
20th August - 19th November, "Islands and Bridges", the art of Roger Dean, Manx Museum.
20th August - 2nd September, Manx Grand Prix (now known as Isle of Man Festival of Motorcycling)
28th August, from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm, Little People's Picnic, Rushen Abbey.

This selection of what's on has been taken from various sources including the excellent tourist guide produced by I OM Newspapers early in the year so it is recommended that a check is made before relying on the information.

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Douglas,

We were chatting over recollections from the recent lunch (AGM) and my wife recalled two old customs from her old family and we wonder if these are known about amongst members and still apply anywhere on the Island.

1. At funerals only men attended. Even the widow was left at home to await the return of the family men.
 2. Wearing green was prohibited as it was a sign of an approaching death.
- These may be rubbish and simply a single family custom, but we wonder if it was more widespread.

David Kirkby

Reading the Newsletter, I recalled – I'd forgotten in the meantime – that it was I who recruited Sir Brian Cubbon to the Society. It was after he retired (and fairly near my own retirement in 1994) that he was carrying out some study about the Civil Service, and I was a member of his team, though I can recall very little of this now. When I mentioned the Society to him, he was at once very interested in joining. I fear that I must have missed hearing of his death last year.

Sorry also to hear of Keith Underhill's death. He and Doreen had a base here in Hutchinson Villas, Douglas, and were often on the Island over Christmas, and came to the lunch at Christmas time that used to be arranged for London Manx members here. You mention his King William's background, and I believe he played some part in OKW affairs at one time.

Terence Brack

Better on line?

Nearly a quarter of our members receive their newsletter by email as do a dozen sister societies around the world. A good number prefer to have a paper copy so we shall continue to produce it in its current form but postage costs continue to rise so should any reader prefer to change to an electronic copy, please let the editor know:

barrhamilton@btinternet.com

DBH

Tynwald Day Cooish

Hosted by Sam and Mary Weller, this year our cooish will be on Tynwald Day itself at 2a Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0LJ from around 12.30 pm. Kippers and bread provided. Advise attendance and discuss bringing one dish to share with Sam and Mary Weller on 01223 720607 or *samandmary_weller@hotmail.com*

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Summer Quiz 2016 (open to non-members through the web site)

1. When was the tragic Summerland fire,
(a) 1971, (b) 1972, (c) 1973, (d) 1974?
2. Which English diocese did Westminster decide in 1836 to merge Sodor and Man,
(a) Blackburn, (b) Carlisle, (c) Chester, (d) Liverpool?
3. What is Cammag,
(a) ancient Manx form of hockey, (b) land now flooded by Sulby Reservoir,
(c) modern Manx singing group, (d) slang for a resident of Peel?
4. Which 20th century MHK had two sons each of which became a Westminster MP,
one Labour, the other Conservative,
(a) Samuel Anderson, (b) Sir Thomas Hall Caine, (c) Thomas Kermode, (d) William Quayle?

5. What provoked the Battle of Ballacraigne,
(a) 1967 MGP, (b) Matchless bikes, (c) Press Gang, (d) Manchester rugby team?

Closing date, 30th June. The first reader to send me five correct answers will receive a £20 voucher towards dining at one of Harbour Lights' island restaurants.

Answers to June's quiz

- 1(a) Rushen Abbey was Cistercian.
- 2(d) A cast of the hand of the Sulby giant can be found at Rose Cottage in Regaby.
- 3(b) Cliogaree twoaie means "Northern croakers."
- 4(c) Terence Brack is not a member of Cliogaree twoaie.
- 5(d) A Manx governor's term is five years.

Acknowledgements

The Editor thanks Terence Brack, Bryan Corrin, Tom Durrant, Fran Higson, David Kirkby, Alastair Kneale, Mary Kneen, Maisie Sell, Edmund Southworth, for their kind contribution and also Isle of Man Newspapers, Culture Vannin and Manx National Heritage. News about you and articles (of around 450 words) about Island life are welcome and of interest to all. If in doubt, please contact me, Contributions can be sent at any time for inclusion in the next newsletter, if possible by email (barrhamilton@btinternet.com) or 132 Bush Hill, N21 2BS.

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Closing date for the next issue, 25th August.

A Seasonal Poem

Summer

Strolling down a country lane,
Fields of golden corn,
Lazy afternoons, a sun-lounge on the lawn,
The fragrance of the roses,
The droning of the bees -
Memories of summer are made of such as these.

Maisie Sell

Dates for your diary

Tynwald Day Cooish

With Sam and Mary Weller

Tuesday, 5th July

2a Girton Road Cambridge from about 12.30 p.m.

Mhelliah

Monday, 10th October

12.00 noon

St Bride's Church, Fleet Street

NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE IN THREE MONTHS

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