

NEWSLETTER Winter 2020
Editor – Douglas Barr-Hamilton

125 years and still going

On 28th November 1895 a cluster of Manx men and women would have been seen in London's Trafalgar Square. They were making their way to St Martin's-in-the-Fields Church and its Vestry Hall, booked after an idea from the son of the well known Douglas draper, J J Cowin. The London Manx Society was to be formed and the inaugural meeting agreed a constitution, electing Deemster S Stevenson Moore as its first president. Mr Cowin was to be its secretary, a post that he held for three years and Mr Clement Vickers was elected as treasurer, continuing in that role until 1903.

Many have followed in their foot-steps and taken on tasks as diverse as press secretary, newsletter editor and choir master so ensuring the society thrived through peace, war and depression for 125 years. It's ironic, therefore, that the current officers have had to see the society through many months of inactivity forced upon it by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

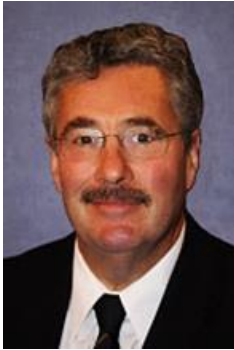
Its 126th year has to be one to look forward to.

Messages from our Patrons



His Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man, Sir Richard Grozney KCMG, CVO, wrote, "Warm congratulations to the London Manx Society on their 125th Anniversary. Reading the Society's newsletter during my 4 years in the Isle of Man has highlighted to me the very strong interest in Manx culture and history which is retained by those now living away. I find it admirable that members are keen to be well informed. "It is a shame, of course, that the Society cannot celebrate in person as

all of us would wish it but it is a celebration postponed, not cancelled. Meanwhile those of us lucky enough to be on-Isle, without COVID-19 circulating in the community as I write in early November, are doubly blessed. We realise our good fortune and we wish all London Manx Society members a safe passage, a return to normal activities before too long, and many years continued success for the society.



The President of Tynwald, the Honourable Steve Rodan, OBE, BSc (Hons), MRPharmS, MLC, wrote, “As President of the world’s oldest continuous parliament it gives me great pleasure to send warm congratulations to the London Manx Society as it celebrates 125 years. The Manx people take great pride in the history and heritage of our precious Ellan Vannin – and none more so than those who have settled beyond its shores elsewhere.

The Society has done a very good job over the years in celebrating and upholding Manx traditions and keeping the Manx identity alive. As the Island moves forward in a fast changing world, maintaining links with it people – whether in the London area or beyond – becomes ever more important.

I send all members of the Society my best wishes for the festive Season and a happy and – above all – healthy 2021. Sonny's ort. Gow kiarail. Slaynt vie.”



The Speaker of the House of Keys, The Honourable Juan Watterson, BA (Hons) BFP FRSA FCA CMgr FCMI SHK wrote, “It seems strange for an Island so

outward looking as ours to close its borders as the price for the domestic freedoms we currently enjoy. Strange because for centuries we have welcomed people to our shores with a Manx welcome that has been something of a trademark. Having married a Londoner, I have done my bit for London-Manx relations so eagerly look forward to the days when we can share visits again, and welcome members of the Society to our shores in pursuit of our common heritage.”

Photographs: Tynwald

AGM and Christmas Cooish

Members will be aware from our earlier issue that we plan to hold two years' AGM in 2021 and your officers have regularly been in touch with each other discussing a date. Despite – or in some respects, because of – the changing situation, we have decided to put off announcing one. It seems to make little sense to pick one that might have to be undone. A summer meeting with the cooish seems a possibility. We'll let you know in good time.

The informal gathering on Tuesday 8th December similarly looks doubtful but your secretary will keep it in his diary and will make “The Bonnington” if he can. Do contact him if you think of going.

Water wheels start and stop

Less than a week apart, one started to turn again after nearly twenty years dilapidated and stationary, including the last year under repair and the other stopped after failure of one of the rods connecting the wheel with the T-rocker that converts its horizontal movement to the vertical movement of the pump rod. This was October's news of the two Isabellas, the Little Isabella and the Lady Isabella, correctly known as the Groudle Glen Waterwheel and the Great Laxey Wheel respectively.

Built in the late 19th century to provide power for lighting and pumping water to the hotel above, unused in the 21st, the Little Isabella had fallen into disrepair and the wheelhouse, most of which had rusted and rotted away, could not be saved and a replacement had to be built using minimal maintenance materials. However, the wheel itself could be restored and the work, beginning in July 2019, the Laxey firm Mining Machine Developments completed the task. Just a few days later Laxey's Lady Isabella stopped turning and the reason was quickly attributed to age and weathering in the rod duct. It was reported that

initial indications were that sourcing and shaping replacement timber will be relatively straightforward but that replacing large sections of timber and metal framework on the rod duct of the 165 year old wheel will be complicated. “Engineers will now undertake a detailed assessment of the work required to undertake repairs which we already know will be a complex and financially demanding task,” added Edmund Southworth of Manx National Heritage. Despite the stillness of the wheel, the attraction remains open to the public (Saturday to Wednesday, 10.00 a m to 4.00 p m)

DBH

Sources, Manx National Heritage, iomtoday

Topping 37 Island peaks in eleven hours

At the crack of dawn on Sunday 25th October, Tom Cringle and Orran Smith set off from close to Ballaragh for the summit of 396 metre high Slieu Ruy. Eleven hours and fifteen minutes later they touched the cairn at the top of Cronk ny Arrey Laa having reached the peak of thirty-five other climbs including, of course, our tallest mountain, 621 metre Snaefell. They had beaten the record set 38 years ago by Colin Donnelly. What an achievement!

DBH

Source Courier 30th October 2020

More Manx traced in Cleveland

We recently reported that the North American Manx Association had lost contact with the officers of the Cleveland Manx Society. Cleveland is the Ohio city in which a large number of early Manx settlers in North America established a community so we are delighted to be able to report that NAMA has made contact with several people of Manx descent and, meeting fittingly at the Mona’s Relief Society Memorial, breathed new life into the organisation. Should any London member know of folk with Island connections living in that part of Ohio, do let NAMA know. A healthy society of Manx expatriates in Cleveland will be of great encouragement to the whole Diaspora.

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Zoom enlarges local society gathering



The Washington DC Area Manx Society normally prefers to do this in a local pub. However, due to circumstances this year they decided to go ahead on Zoom, a system which allows video, audio contact for groups of people from a variety of locations. This being the case they kindly decided it would be fun to invite people from outside their Society to join in this on-screen 'virtual' celebration.

A number of people joined in the celebration from across the United States and Canada. I was also able to join them as a member of London Manx Society. People were welcomed by Bill Cassidy, who hosted the event and Kelly McCarthy. Participants introduced themselves along with their location and Manx connection.

There was a Quiz: Three rounds of questions with three themes: Contemporary, Celtic & Manx. There was an Honour system for marking but there were no winners or losers as it was a fun and information sharing event.

There was also a session on Donation Sharing. The event was called Manxsgiving and fitted in with the annual US tradition of Thanksgiving. Everyone spoke of their favoured charity to which they donated.

The event, which lasted for about one and a half hours, ended with Bill Cassidy giving a toast in Manx: "Slaynt as shee as eash dy vea, as maynrys son dy bra." ('Health and peace and length of life and happiness for ever').

Thanks go to Washington DC Area Manx Society for inviting everyone to this enjoyable event.

Alastair Kneale

Baillie Scott's legacy

Castle Rushen is, of course, Castletown's landmark building but there is another one just across the road which is a registered listing building of architectural interest: the old police station which, since the police moved out in 2017, has lain empty. Now there is much debate about its future including its possible lease from Manx National Heritage.

Its architectural interest is because it was designed by Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott, a leading light in the Arts & Crafts movement who lived in the Isle of Man for twelve years while he worked as an architect. He also designed Red House, Ivydene and Thornbank in Douglas, Onchan Parish Hall and the former Majestic Hotel. The building is an important one on the Island as it is one of few buildings designed by the architect to replace the old police station in 1901.

In view of its importance and protected status, Manx National Heritage agreed to purchase the building using its charitable funds but has consistently made it

clear that it did not have the fund to operate the building itself and that a suitable sustainable use would need to be identified. Last month it launched a consultation on its future with the statement: “While we have committed to safeguarding the building for the future, we are keen to find out if there is local support for using the building for commercial or community purposes. The Baillie Scott Police Station is a landmark building and a huge part of the social history and architectural fabric of Castletown. Although Manx National Heritage does not have the funds to develop it as a tourist attraction, we recognise that many people would like to see it remain an active building. We are now looking for ideas that would enhance its contribution to the town and which would be complementary and sympathetic to the design and layout of the building. Above all, we are looking for suggestions as to how such use could be sustainably funded. This is a chance for everyone to express their views and suggest ideas. I hope that people will take this opportunity to have a say about how this wonderful structure should – or should not – be used, bearing in mind its registered status and the need to be self-financing.”

DBH

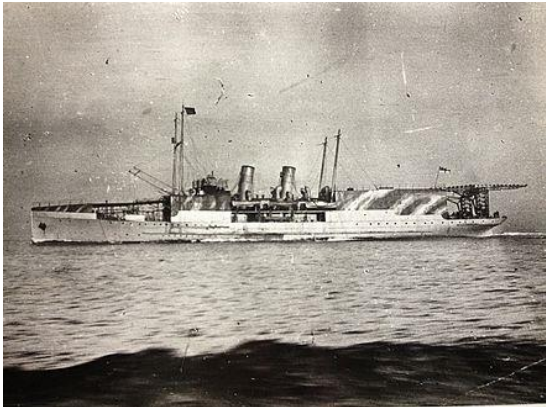
Source, Culture Vannin

HMS Manxman

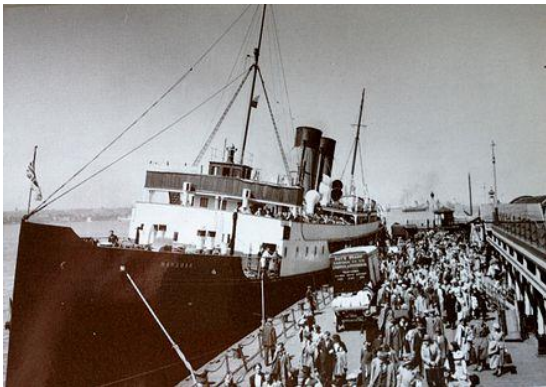
Twice during the 20th century the Royal Navy’s fleet included an HMS Manxman: one between 1915 and 1920, the other between 1941 and 1972 but our readers will be more familiar with the old vessel than with the navy’s fastest ship of the Second World War. This is because we saw George Formby arrive at Douglas in her in the film, “No Limit” although in real life the film’s star arrived by air at the Hall Caine Airport at Close Lake.

The Manxman had first belonged to the Midland Railway and plied between Heysham and the Island from her commissioning in 1904 to her acquisition by the Admiralty in April 1916 when HMS was added to her name. Like the Steam Packet company’s *Ben my Chree* and *Viking*, she was converted to carry aircraft, a flight deck being added fore and aft, but the conversion so cut her speed that her service with the Grand Fleet was cut short in October 1917. However, her attributes were ideal for the new fighter plane, the Sopwith Pup and she saw service in East Africa, based in Zanzibar. At the end of the war she

returned to Britain, was paid off in 1919 and acquired by the Steam Packet Company in March 1920.



HMS Manxman pictured during her Great War service.



Passengers disembark from the Manxman at the Pier Head, Liverpool.

Thus she offered passenger service during the hey-day of the Island's tourist trade but after World War two broke out the Manxman was again requisitioned. The navy had already launched a new HMS Manxman so she was named *HMS Caduceus*. Like seven of her Steam Packet sister ships, three of which were lost during the operation, she had taken part at the evacuation at Dunkirk and then went on to bring troops and others needing evacuation from France to Portsmouth from St. Malo and Cherbourg making her last crossing from Normandy needing the protection of a destroyer as Rommel's army arrived. Converted to a radio direction finding (Radar) vessel she operated in the Irish Sea from October 1941 training naval specialists in the new technology, the island having a number of (secret) radar stations. Ironically since it had been home for twenty years, the navy banned her from Douglas after she had twice collided with Victoria Pier, needing to be withdrawn for repair; the port was unsuitable for ships of her size! After more serious damage following being

driven ashore in a severe gale near Greenock in February 1943, she was reconditioned, ceased to be a warship, regained the name, *Manxman*, and operated as a troop carrier until 1949 when she was scrapped.

The new HMS *Manxman* had been launched in 1940, the first of three minelayers able to outrun Germany's fastest torpedo boats with a speed of 40 knots (50mph). While she was being built public subscription on the Island paid for a "dhobi machine" for her laundry. The ship's first operation was to deliver mines to Murmansk in July 1941. She spent the summer mine-laying in the Mediterranean before returning to home waters for a winter laying minefields around the British Isles. In May she joined the Eastern Fleet for an eventful year landing troops as well as laying mines and rejoined the Mediterranean Fleet in November but was struck by a U-boat torpedo off Algiers on 1st December, underwent temporary repair in Gibraltar allowing it to limp to Newcastle for permanent repairs that took four months to complete and was back at sea in mid April 1945. After VE Day, she again joined the war in the Far East finishing the tour by repatriating troops from Tokyo in September after taking relief supplies.



Post war, she performed various roles including the 1956 Suez operation, being converted to a minesweeper support ship in 1958, alterations that reduced her speed considerably and used for training engineering officers from 1969 when she was damaged by fire. Never used again, she was scrapped in 1970. She visited the Isle of Man on three occasions. The first and third were far from auspicious. Stormy weather in December 1946 meant that several functions on shore and ship had to be cancelled although the Lieutenant Governor, the Mayor of Douglas and Captain George Oswald of the *Manxman* were able to go aboard and present their gifts. The third, on 26th April 1963 fared even worse. Entering Douglas harbour at the early morning low tide, the ship's propellers were damaged when they struck the rock at Conister and within hours the visit had to be cut short so she could limp to Plymouth for repairs that needed to be completed urgently for a voyage to the Far East for planned mine-sweeping duties. Between the two, on 3rd September 1951 all went well, civic exchanges

passed smoothly and the rumpy kitten, given to succeed the cat lost at sea on the ship's first ever voyage and a later substitute, was successfully taken aboard.

DBH

Sources: Admiralty web site, Manx Museum iMuseum newspapers

Launch of Mayflower Isle of Man Stamp Collection

The Isle of Man Post Office (Manx: Oik Postagh Ellan Vannin) have launched a set of stamps to commemorate the 400th years of the sailing of the Mayflower. The Mayflower 400 Commemoration was designed by Ben Glazier. At a special presentation on November 18th 2020, a full set of the stamps were presented to Robert Wood Johnson, United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James's. Due to the present Covi-19 restrictions the presentation was done via videolink by the Isle of Man's Chief Minister (Manx: Ard-shirveishagh) Howard Quayle.

Taking part if the videolink was United States Ambassador Robert Wood Johnson; Christina Tribble, Culture Attaché at U.S. Embassy London; Isle of Man Chief Minister Howard Quayle; Jule Edge MHK Chair of the Isle of Man Post Office; Alastair Kneale President of the London Manx Society; Ben Glazier designer for the Mayflower 400 Commemoration. The event was hosted by the U.S. Embassy London and a number of their staff were involved in setting it up. This event was really driven by the great work of Maxine Cannon, General Manager Stamps & Coins.

There is a Manx connection to the Mayflower which ship set sail from Devon for what we now know as the United States with 102 pilgrims and 30 crew on board. Myles Standish, the Plymouth Colony's military advisor is believed to have been born around 1593 in Ellenbane, In Lezayre on the Isle of Man. His wife, Rose, was born at and had lived at Ellenbane. Unfortunately Rose did not survive the rigours of settling in the new settlement and died shortly after their arrival. Her sister Barbara followed and became Myles's second wife. They had 30 years of marriage and Barbara bore him six children.

Alastair Kneale



In Miles Standish's Shadow

The pandemic put paid to plans by the North American Manx Association to hold its biennial convention in Plymouth, Massachusetts in August 2020 to celebrate the arrival there two hundred years earlier of the Pilgrim Fathers including Myles Standish who claimed to come from Ellanbane, about two miles west of Ramsey. The Society has been pleased to have been able to secure the same venue for 2022 from 4th to 7th August.

North America's latest bulletin (newsletter) reproduces a report in a 1972 issue of the Island's Manx Life of that year's convention at which around thirty Island residents boosted attendance to around two hundred. Two years later, some more visitors from the British Isles might like to stand in Myles' footprints.

DBH

Hop Tu Naa

Our publication date is four weeks after the end of October (or two if you celebrate it on the old calendar date of 11th November) but I thought the words of this song for which there are several variants might be of interest. The recent Culture Vannin newsletter explains that it was learned by a person brought up in Maughold whose mother was originally from Peel and the words are close to

those sung in the west of the Island. If you sing a different version, do let us know.

Hop tu Naa, Put in the pot,

Hop tu Naa, Scald my trot [throat],

Hop tu Naa, I met an ole woman,

Hop tu Naa, She was baking bonnags,

Hop tu Naa, I asked her for a bit,

Hop tu Naa, She gave me a bit, as big as my big toe.

Hop tu Naa, She dipped it in milk,

Hop tu Naa, She wrapped it in silk,

Hop tu Naa, trol la laa. Jinny the witch went over the house, to catch a stick to lather the mouse.

Hop tu Naa, trol la laa. If you don't give us something, we'll run away with the light of the moon.

DBH

Manx Musicians at the Proms

Three Manx brass musicians played their part in the reconfigured and socially-distant BBC Proms concerts.

Among the enforced changes to the annual series of classical concerts three well-known local trumpet players, Jason Evans, Russell Gilmour and Sam Kinrade, played their parts in the last week of the event.

Jason, in particular, played a prominent role on the evening of Wednesday, September 9, when he took centre stage to perform the strongly-featured trumpet part in Dmitri Shostakovich's Concerto for piano, trumpet and strings (Piano Concerto No. 1) with the Philharmonia Orchestra and noted British concert pianist Benjamin Grosvenor.

Russell and Sam played first trumpet with the Aurora Orchestra the following night, performing a new piece by the British composer Richard Ayres. After an educational 'guided tour' of the final piece of music, both performers picked up the 'natural trumpet', a trumpet without valves, for a performance of Beethoven's rhythmic Seventh Symphony. Russell said that performing Beethoven's seventh is a challenging role for a first trumpet player and that a customary practice is to have two players in the first role, with one acting as a 'bumper', someone who can take up the piece while the principal trumpet player takes a moment to catch his breath.

'I recommended Sam Kinrade to the conductor as he can play both modern trumpet and natural trumpet to a very high standard,' said Russell.

'He played the modern piece by Richard Ayres in the first half, I played in the presentation, and then we both played in the Beethoven. We were both playing first trumpet in the Beethoven as, particularly the fourth movement, is relentless.'

He said the experience of performing at the iconic event and playing at an empty Albert Hall was unusual but he did feel that he was taking part in a unique event which is unlikely to be repeated.

'It is the fifth time I have appeared at the proms with the Aurora Orchestra and normally I would liken to being in a nightclub when you walk out with the orchestra, with all the 'prommers' chatting while you set up.

'This time it was more like a recording session, with it being slightly more organised and everyone in set places.

'You do miss the audience reaction, especially with such an emotional and driven piece as Beethoven's Seventh.

'I think this year's proms are a fascinating piece of social history and it is certainly an experience I'll remember for a long time.'

Mike Wade

Courtesy of iomtoday

World first was in Ayre

It had been on 31st January 1881 that Tynwald became the first national parliament to give some women the right to vote in a general election – those who owned property in their own right. The first women to have cast their vote in the Manx general election in March of that year are recorded in eminent local historian, Dr Robert Fyson's book, "The Struggle for Manx Democracy" as Mrs

Catherine Callow of Ballakilley, the first to vote at Bride polling station, Miss Eliza Jane Goldsmith of Ramsey, the first at Lezayre polling station and Miss Esther Kee of Leodest, the first at Andreas polling station, the first contested election having begun in the sheading of Ayre where four candidates stood for three seats, the date set for the elections for the six sheadings and four towns being spread between Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 30th March.

So 2021 will be the 140th anniversary of a woman casting a vote in a general election anywhere in the world and it happened in the north of the Isle of Man. Expecting increased interest in the historical event, Tynwald is looking for information about that election and wonders if any members of London Manx remember tales from the time passed down their family. If you do, please contact the deputy head of Chamber and Information Service, Francisca Gale, f.gale@tynwald.org.im or phone 01624 685516. She would welcome all information, especially the loan of documents and photographs which will, of course, be returned.

Please help if you can and, should you be keen to find out more about women's enfranchisement in the Isle of Man, visit <https://www.tynwald.org.im/women/Pages/Women.aspx>

DBH

Pandemic update

Early in November the Island announced its 25th death from Covid-19, a man who appears to have contracted the virus during a visit to the UK. He had been self-isolating during his illness as are five others who have similarly been off the Island. A tiny cluster of cases already existed so as we go to print the total since the crisis began has reached 359. However, as the source of the new outbreak is known, the authorities are confident the outbreak can be controlled.

DBH

Island Quiz

(Open to non-members through the web site)

1. Does "Nollick ghenal" mean (a) Happy Birthday, (b) Happy Christmas, (c) Happy Easter, (d) Happy New Year?
2. Was Maron Honeyborne President of the London Manx Society between (a) 1986-87, (b) 1987-88, (c) 1988-89, (d) 1989-90?

3. Is the Margaret Brady Trophy presented at (a) Buchan School, (b) King William's College, (c) Ramsey Grammar School, (d) St Ninian's High School?
4. Was Bishop Wilson appointed at the age of (a) 34, (b) 39 (c) 44 (d) 49?
5. Was the cost of admission to the Andreas Root Show in 1898 (a) 1d, (b) 3d, (c) 6d, (d) 1/-?

Answers to September's quiz

1. Laxey Wheel appeared to be coloured (a) blue on 12th May.
2. 111 year old Dan Teare was buried at (d) Santon.
3. The Manx politician who contracted coronavirus was (d) Howard Quayle.
4. Cheltenham Spa was founded by (c) Henry Skillicorne
5. WW2's HMS Manxman was (c) a mine-layer.

Closing date 15th January. The first reader to send me five correct answers will receive a Manx £20 note.

Congratulations to Richard Moore of South Africa who was again first to send in a set of correct answers. He hopes he will be able to make a trip to the Island next year to spend his winnings.

Acknowledgements

The editor thanks our patrons, Tynwald Information Services, North America Manx Association, Alastair Kneale, Mike Wade, 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 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 21st March.

Dates for your diary

Christmas Chat

Your LMS Secretary invites members and their friends
To join him and his wife
From 4.00 p m on Tuesday 8th December
At Doubletree by Hilton
Southampton Row, WC1B 4BH

NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE IN THREE MONTHS

Please send news to
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Email: barrhamilton@btinternet.com

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

Nollick ghennal erriu, as blein feer vie,
Seihll as skaynt da'n slane lught-tie;
Bea as gennallys eu bio ry-cheilley,
Shee as graih eddyr mraane as deiney.

Merry Christmas to you and a very good year,
Long life and health to the whole household;
Life and joy to you living together,
Peace and love between women and men.