



FOUNDED 1895

**London Manx Society**  
(Yn Cheshaght Manninagh Lunnin)

PATRONS: H E THE LT GOVERNOR OF THE ISLE OF MAN  
THE PRESIDENT OF TYNWALD  
THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF KEYS

**President – Alastair Kneale**

**NEWSLETTER Winter, 2024**

**Editor – Douglas Barr-Hamilton**

**Mhelliah**

Fifteen members of the Society assembled in London's Fleet Street on Monday, first for its annual Mhelliah: Harvest Thanksgiving at St Bride's Church, then at the nearby Old Bell Tavern, both built in the seventeenth century to replace buildings destroyed in the Great Fire of London. However, the afternoon was modern. The service was led by the rector, Rev Canon Dr Alison Joyce who, in her sermon, spoke of changing attitudes: how things that had seemed to represent the future were now seen as detrimental to our way of life, how little respect now seems to be shown. She reminded us that often we fail to appreciate it when things go well and that we don't need to get stressed, citing Jesus' words, "Consider the lilies of the field." Today we give thanks to God.

The Old Bell Tavern boasts a long and proud history and has stood for more than 300 years. Built by Sir Christopher Wren, it housed his masons who were rebuilding St Bride's. There the members enjoyed lunch, a drink and each other's company only to heave themselves away as the rush hour approached.

## **Jennifer Kewley Draskau**

We are saddened to hear of the passing of linguist, historian, author, horsewoman, and all-round force of nature, Dr Margaret Jennifer Kewley Draskau.

Jennifer was well-known for her work with Manx Studies and within Manx culture more widely, and as someone who never believed in half measures. She loved language, literature, and life, and animals more than most humans (with some notable exceptions), and was happiest when she had horses and German Shepherds by her side.

Jennifer had what can only be described as an extraordinary life. She lived in many countries around the world, spoke at least seven languages fluently (and smatterings of many more), and worked as an academic, a teacher, a radio show host and a journalist. She spent her youth with Welsh-speaking cousins in Wales, riding horses bare-back in New Zealand, and in her beloved Isle of Man, where she attended the Buchan School. Jennifer held degrees from the universities of Manchester and Copenhagen, and was made a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Liverpool through her work with and for the University's Centre for Manx Studies. She had lectured at various universities, and was a much-loved tutor to the royal family in Thailand. Once back on the Island, she taught German at Ramsey Grammar School, and supported Manx Studies in the curriculum, authoring, for example '10 Famous Figures from Manx History'. She felt most at home once she had re-connected with academia through post-doctoral research projects at the Centre for Manx Studies, and when researching, writing and publishing her own books.

Jennifer is the author of many historical and reference books, including *Practical Manx* (2008), *Illiam Dhone: Patriot or Traitor?* (2012), *The Tudor Rose: Princess Mary, Henry VIII's Sister* (2013), *The Lusitania: Tragedy or War Crime?* (2015), and *Lady Derby the Great Whore of Babylon* (2020).

She was an award-winning playwright, poet and writer, with novels *Margaid of Baldhoon* (2000), *Black Tiger* (2013), and *Transportee* (2020), and plays such as 'The Sinking of Immaculate O'Shea' (c.2010), written for her sister, Elizabeth, and performed in the Isle of Man and New Zealand.

She had a love of languages, linguistics, and in particular, translation. Her doctoral thesis in 1986 was entitled 'The quest for equivalence: on translating Villon', and this passion for working between languages never left her. In 2006, she published a new translation of the oldest text in Manx Gaelic, entitled *An*

*Account of the Isle of Man in Song* for the Centre for Manx Studies. In 2019, she produced the English version of Jon Leirfall's Norwegian perspective of the Isle of Man as *A Thousand Years in Man* for Culture Vannin. In her last years, she again turned to the translation work she loved, shaping the English versions of the 'Daughters of Freya' novels for Norwegian author, Gunhild Haugnes. Her academic papers reflected her wide and varied interests, and include studies of drag performance in internment, policing during WWI, and modals with variable morphology in Manx Gaelic. She spoke at conferences around the world, and to Manx heritage and antiquarian groups, raising money for the Isle of Man Agricultural Benevolent Trust in 2013 through a lecture about her ancestor, Illiam Dhone, for Manx National Heritage. This was not the first time she helped to raise money for the community. In 2005, she curated a CD 'Treasure of the Island Heart' for the World Manx Association which brought Major Geoff Crellin's recitation of T E Brown together with Manx music performed by Breasha Maddrell to raise vital funds for the organisation. Jennifer contributed to both John Koch's Celtic Culture: a historical encyclopedia, and the University of Liverpool's *A New History of the Isle of Man* series. A bibliography of her contribution is being constructed and will extend beyond the listings in this short tribute.

Jennifer was swimming in the Irish Sea long before it became fashionable, and her profile picture online was of a bungee-jump achieved at an age when most would shy away from danger – of course, to her, it was just another thrill to be embraced. When not jumping insanely high fences on one horse or another, she loved to play the violin with Ramsey friends, and to sing with Manx choir Cliogaree Twoaie, being secretly delighted by the compliments paid to her high clear voice perhaps more than for anything else.

Jennifer was a fierce, dynamic, impulsive soul, with a love of language and a deeper love of life. She contributed much to an understanding of the Isle of Man, its history, language and culture. She will be missed.

We send our love and best wishes to her family and close friends.

**Culture Vannin**

## **Congratulations**

Our congratulations to Society life member, David Martin on his appointment during the summer as Captain of the parish of Andreas.

Captain of the Parish – often abbreviated to CP - is an ancient and uniquely Manx role, which has been held by a number of Dave's ancestors back to at least 1626 when the first known tabulation of the Watch and Ward in the Castle Rushen papers names his ancestor Finlo Martin of Knock-e-Dhooney as *Custos* (or Warden) of both the Day and the Night Watch for Andreas. More recently, a member of his family was CP Andreas in the 1800s and Dave's late Father, John James Martin, was CP Andreas in the 1970s until his eyesight deteriorated.

Although his Warrant empowers and indeed, requires Dave to raise the militia to defend the Island, nowadays his main official duties are chairing Requisition meetings and attending the swearing-in of new Governors and, of course, participating in the annual Tynwald ceremony at St Johns. Captains of the Parish also welcome Royal visitors, and Dave's first official duty was in fact as one of the CPs who welcomed Queen Camilla to the Island this spring. Captains of the Parish are appointed for life and Dave says that helping to celebrate the community and preserve its identity is, he thinks, the biggest honour. The swearing-in ceremony (including background to the role and the Governor reading-out details of Dave's warrant) can be watched at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4fyzEdRKWQ>

Dave was brought up at Knock-e-Dhooney in Andreas where his family were, through St Andrew's Church at Kirk Andreas, friends with the Glass and Barr-Hamilton families. After Bride, Albert Road, and Ramsey Grammar School, Dave went to Liverpool University for his first degree then UMIST in Manchester and then back to Liverpool University as a postgrad and then staff member; Dave joined the London Manx in the 1980s when he used to regularly attend meetings at the Institute of Electrical Engineers in London; and he continued to attend LMS when meetings at the Chamber of Shipping and Inmarsat, or RNR training (he served as an RNR Officer for 14 years) overlapped with LMS.

After returning to the Island in 1987, Dave joined a ship management company in the early 1990s as the Group IT Manager until he left them some twenty

years ago at a time of partial outsourcing, at which point as Global Head of Information Systems he was responsible for the information systems in a group that managed over six hundred ships from offices in over twenty countries. At that time, Dave decided to base himself on the Island to look after his now-late parents, and established his own business providing consultancy to shipping companies across the world and also making electronics for televising motorsport.

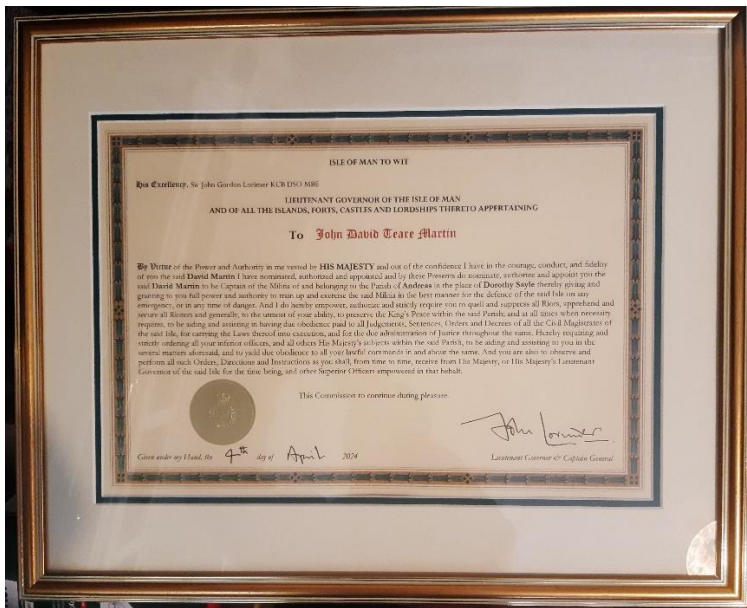
The Martin family have farmed Knock-e-Dhooney since at least the 1400s and growing up with a Viking Ship burial on one side of the house and an important Keeill on the other side, it is not surprising that Dave has an interest in Manx history. He has for many years been a stalwart of the IOM Natural History and Antiquarian Society, and edits the journal *Isle of Man Studies*; he is a long-standing Trustee of Manx National Heritage and is currently Vice-Chair of the Manx Museum and National Trust; he is involved with organisations ranging from Andreas Benevolent Society to the World Manx Association; and he enjoys sharing his knowledge through leading Heritage Open Day tours for visitors around the archaeological sites at Knock-e-Dhooney and elsewhere, and giving talks on aspects of Manx heritage to groups on the Island. Dave hopes that now he is semi-retired he will be able to once again attend an occasional LMS meeting

### **DBH**

After being sworn-in, Dave being presented with his badge of office by the Lieutenant Governor.



## Dave's warrant



Pictures courtesy of Government House

## And more

Congratulations too to member, Ann Abraham and her husband Ned who celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on 7th November. Ann, a native of Peel: was the daughter of Hartie and Nella Corrin and sister of Derek, the couple were married at St Patrick's RC Church in Peel. Ann was a friend of Maron Honeybourne from the age of eight and like her, a beauty queen: "Miss Sunset City" in 1957 and the "Herring Queen" the following year.

We trust they had a great day of celebration on 7th.

## DBH

## All roads led to Brisbane

I occasionally take a snippet from your newsletter so I thought you might like a snippet from ours. In October we participated in the 2024 Brisbane Celtic Festival held at the Brisbane Standing Stones, erected last year, which was a big event for the Celtic community in Queensland. All Celtic Societies were represented, including the Queensland Manx Society. We erected our own Queensland Manx tent and displayed Manx memorabilia, etc. participating in the events.

It turned out to be a great day for all "Celts".

## Val Ashworth

President and Newsletter Editor, Queensland Manx Society



## **Committee news**

At a recent meeting the committee decided to strengthen its expertise by coopting Norman Corrin and standardise its administration by making subscriptions payable from 1st March. 31st May is to be set aside for the annual lunch but refraining from booking the venue in case it is not convenient for our guest speaker, several interesting people to be approached.

**DBH**

## **Hunt the wren**

Still popular, there is a music and dance tradition that has been continuous in the Isle of Man. It is Hunt the Wren or Shelg yn Drean which is performed on St. Stephen's Day, 26th December. In the past, people would beat the bushes to catch a wren and kill it before parading the bird in a bush decorated with evergreens and ribbon. A traditional circle dance was performed around the bush to a lively song. Similar to the legends found in surrounding islands, one story behind the tradition is that a wren betrayed St. Stephen by alerting Roman soldiers to the bush where he was hiding. Another tells of a beautiful siren who lured Manx men into the sea to their deaths. When anyone tried to catch her, she turned into a wren and escaped, so each year since, men and boys tried to catch the bird. A feather from a hunted-down wren was considered very lucky, said to give protection against shipwrecks and witchcraft. Hunt the Wren revelry must be finished by midday when it was then customary to gather on Tynwald Fairfield for the annual cammag match between the North and South: a dangerous stick and ball game similar to hurling and shinty!

**DBH**

Source Culture Vannin

## **Refuge Manx Rum**

The follow up to our story last year of Ramsey made Manx rum stored in the Tower of Refuge on Douglas' Conister Rock to mature, bad weather preventing the expected September access when the tides were suitable, the "big collection" had to be postponed until October. The distillers' Paul Kerruish, when explaining the delay, announced the pre-sale of the stock which was delicious would be delayed until October. He added that 20% of all profits from the sale would be donated to the RNLI and encouraged everyone to buy.

### **Maureen Wigley**

Source, Isle of Man Examiner

The Fynoderee Distillery Web site tells us that as a fund-raising tribute to the founder of the RNLI, Sir William Hillary of the Isle of Man, eleven first fill bourbon quarter casks containing our scratch-made Refuge Manx Rum were taken to barrel-age in the Tower of Refuge for a year.

The limited edition of 2,500 bottles of 45% abv Refuge Manx Rum feature a stunning new label designed by Julia Ashby Smyth and were presented in a commemorative solid wood crate featuring Refuge Manx Rum, Fynoderee and RNLI logos. The crate included a beautifully designed souvenir booklet detailing the Isle of Man's role in the formation of the RNLI, the history of the Tower of Refuge itself and the production story behind Refuge Manx Rum. This limited edition release was fermented and distilled at the Fynoderee Distillery in Ramsey from organic Colombian Panela. It then made a very special and unusual journey to its resting place within the Tower via some of the Island's much loved heritage transport. It was then filled into their bourbon quarter casks securely stowed within the Tower to age.

The environment in which resting spirits are aged has a profound effect on the nuances of their flavour and this iconic storm lashed location has imbued our rich, smooth rum with a maritime minerality leading to tasting notes of toasted oak, vanilla, salted caramel and bourbon. Refuge Manx Rum has developed a beautiful and natural light amber colour during its time maturing in the Tower. During the year the company has been making occasional trips to check on the condition of the barrels and dip the contents to monitor their developing flavours. The most recent of these trips was in the company of the Isle of Man's Lieutenant Governor, His Excellency Sir John Lorimer, Lady Lorimer and their



guests, on the 12th September. A cask was dipped and a sample tasted by our intrepid guests and sipped neat over ice. On this trip we noticed that some of the hoops on the casks have suffered considerable corrosion due to the extreme marine environment but we are pleased to say the rum tasted fabulous and we uplifted the rum from the Tower in mid October to take back to the Distillery for bottling.

Paul Kerruish, co-founder of the distillery said, “We hope that this very special rum will generate a significant amount for the RNLi and provide the perfect ‘tot’ for everyone who wishes to salute all those brave RNLi crew members past and present who have saved lives at sea over the generations.

“As proud artisans, Refuge Manx Rum has been made from ‘scratch’ here on the Isle of Man to give it a real sense of place and belonging. Instead of molasses we have used panela sourced from a co-operative farmer in Colombia, which is the nearest thing we can get here on the Island to using freshly squeezed sugar cane juice”.

**DBH**

### **The World’s Largest Exhibition of Works by Archibald Knox 5th November 2024**

The world’s largest exhibition of works by Archibald Knox was unveiled in a new exhibition showcased in the National Art Gallery at the Manx Museum.

Opening at Easter in 2025, “KNOX: Order & Beauty” will feature over 200 pieces from collections across the British Isles including rare pieces of silver, pewter and jewelry from iconic collections including the V&A, The Peartree Collection, Titus Omega, Manx National Heritage and major private collectors.

Famed for his work for The Silver Studio and Liberty & Co, Archibald Knox was a leading exponent of the ‘British Celtic Revival’ design style. His metalwork designs with their distinctive interlace patterns, are seen as iconic examples of early 20th century design. He also embraced Arts and Crafts, British Art Nouveau and Modernism.

Born on the Isle of Man, Knox was known locally as the man who could ‘paint the wind’. Sketching and painting for his own pleasure, he painted evocative landscapes, rural scenes, buildings and other subjects.

One of the most outstanding examples of his work is ‘The Deer’s Cry’, an illustrated manuscript featuring ‘St Patrick’s Hymn’, an uncompleted masterpiece, which will feature in the exhibition.

Katie King, Manx National Heritage Curator for Art said, "We are thrilled to be working with the Archibald Knox Forum jointly to curate this unique exhibition bringing together the world’s largest-ever showcase of Archibald Knox’s work. Unique pieces of silverware, pewter and jewelry will be exhibited alongside rarely seen paintings, sketches, manuscripts, ceramics, textiles and furniture, whilst also showcasing his Island home by encouraging both residents and visitors to explore the landscape which inspired Knox’s work”.

The exhibition will be the largest exhibit of Knox material the world has ever seen, with over a hundred pieces on loan from private collections and museums and a further hundred drawn from Manx National Heritage’s extensive collection which is believed to be the largest and most diverse Knox collection in the world. The exhibition will be the first time many of the pieces will have been seen in public to tell the story of Knox’s life and work.

Chris Hobdell of The Archibald Knox Forum said. “In order to better understand Knox one must come to the Isle of Man to experience the island’s unique history, culture, spirituality and scenery which inspired and motivated him to become one of the greatest designers and artists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century”.

Sarah Maltby MHK, Political Member with Responsibility for Tourism, added, ““KNOX: Order and Beauty” offers an incredible opportunity to place the Isle of Man on a world stage. By holding this exhibition on the Island, we are showcasing Archibald Knox’s decorative art to be synonymous with the Isle of Man like Charles Rennie Mackintosh’s architecture is to Glasgow.

With many items on loan from private owners, the exhibit is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity for individuals to see the collection curated by the Manx

Museum. It is also an excellent way for visitors to learn about the role the Isle of Man's culture, heritage and landscapes have played in Knox's work.”

To celebrate the forthcoming exhibition, Manx National Heritage and the Archibald Knox Forum invited members of the public to nominate their own Knox designed piece, artwork or related artefact for inclusion in the exhibition.

To nominate a piece from your private collection one could email [collect@mnh.im](mailto:collect@mnh.im), including a photograph of your object, a short reason why you feel it should be in the exhibition and the dimensions of the piece. From the submissions ten objects will be chosen to form the 'People's 10' display in the gallery. The competition was only open to Isle of Man residents, with entries closing at midnight on Sunday 24th November.

The exhibition will open at the Manx Museum in Douglas on 5th April 2025 until 1st March 2026. It will form part of a wider 'Isle of Knox' campaign, supported by the Isle of Man Government's Visit Isle of Man Agency, with associated events, walks and talks dedicated to exploring the life and works of Archibald Knox taking place in 2025 and early 2026.

Manx National Heritage and the Archibald Knox Forum would like to thank the Decorative Arts Society, who have recently awarded a grant to help support the display of over 100 Knox pieces within an innovative 'wall of windows' within the National Art Gallery at the Manx Museum. They would also like to thank a number of private individuals and local companies who have contributed towards the display and conservation elements of the exhibition.

Both Manx National Heritage and the Archibald Knox Forum are actively seeking funding to support the exhibition and associated programming. To find out more or to make a donation to support the exhibition please contact [katie.king@mnh.im](mailto:katie.king@mnh.im)

**DBH**

Source: Manx National Heritage

## **Season's Greetings**

The officers and committee take this opportunity of wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. We look forward to meeting many at our events during 2025.

## **Acknowledgements**

The editor thanks Val Ashworth, Alastair Kneale, Dave Martin, Maureen Wigley for their kind contribution and also Queensland Manx Society, 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 mail 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 of the Society.

Closing date for the next issue, 24th February, 2025.

### **Date for your Diary**

Provisional only, 31st May 2025, Annual Lunch

**NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE IN THREE MONTHS**

**PLEASE SEND NEWS TO**

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**LONDON MANX SOCIETY**

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