



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 Summer, 2024

Editor – Douglas Barr-Hamilton

Cooish and AGM Merge

Returning to Cambridge for our annual cooish was a delight: a fine day in a year of unreliable weather and reliable railways instead of the travel problems some of us experienced in the last couple of years. As always, the Miller family changed their garden into an outdoor party room and provided nourishment that made it much more than a party.

So too did the decision to use the gathering to hold our Annual General Meetings. The usual reports were read, the accounts received and the elections held. Alastair Kneale will continue as President. Sally Kneale will be our new Secretary. Sam Weller will carry on as Treasurer, Sally Miller is to be Membership Secretary, the new post Events Secretary will be taken by Kathryn Kneale and Voirrey Kneen and I continue as committee members.

DBH

Pam remembered on Family's Island grave

Society member, Pam Fiddik who died in February, will be remembered on 1st September when a memorial plaque bearing her name will be placed on the Kewley family grave in Douglas Cemetery. There will be a short service at the graveside led by Peter Miller

Mike Fiddik

Letter to fellow members from Voirrey Carr

Dear friends

I must tell you some happy and sad news

We both had a lovely holiday in the Isle of Man with all the things that Robin likes: buses and trains and trams, music and good food and meeting with friends. We were looking forward to getting home on the 5th of August. Robin was in great spirits. He enjoyed a coffee and some food when we arrived on the ship. Once we got going, as usual, Robin set down to sleep but this was different, he was not moving. Huge efforts were made by a doctor who was going on holiday and staff on board to try to get him to come round as he lay on the floor. It was decided to call an air ambulance to move him to a hospital but it was not to be. Robin was dead when they arrived. Robin died at sea.

Robin suffered a heart attack some weeks ago and had been recovering but it seems likely that he had another heart attack on the ship. Nevertheless, he passed quickly and peacefully.

The ship got delayed and people had to move to give the doctor space and once we got to Liverpool the Police had to come in and confirm the body with me and fill in lots of forms and then remove the body. He had an inquest in Liverpool and I now have to send his details to the UK Ship Registry at the Maritime and Coastguard Agency for death certificates as he died at sea!

As you can imagine, we are all very upset but at the same time so glad that he had enjoyed his last holiday on the Isle of Man.

Voirrey

2024 Mhelliagh

The Society will be celebrating Harvest as always in October and the committee is delighted that the date selected as first choice was one when the Church's vicar would be able to attend. Attendance was slightly down last year which was a pity as the service and following lunch were most enjoyable.

This year, St Bride's will welcome the London Manx Society back on Monday 7th October and the service will, as usual, begin at 12.00 noon. For many years between the two world wars and after the second World War, the Society used to meet at the St Bride's Foundation Institute next door and it was very much the 'home' of the Society and London Manx contributed to the Church building's restoration after WW2 bombing, the donation recognised by a plaque on the north side of the nave.



We encourage members and any visitors from the Island too who can travel to Fleet Street to join us for the occasion and increase the enjoyment of the reunion for all as we meet together.

DBH

North America Manx visit ancestors' homeland

A group of NAMA members visits the Island every few years and 2024's party, almost 70 strong, was the largest for some time. I understand it went well. The central event was, of course, a day in St John's on Tynwald Day. Their activities had got under way with Manx language workshops on 3rd July led by Culture Vannin followed by a "Folklore Tour" around St. John's, a talk by Chloe Woolley on Manx traditional music followed by a ceili. The next day began with a time in the Manx Museum in Douglas followed by a trip to Peel

and the House of Manannan to see the “All at Sea” exhibition that celebrates 200 years of the RNLI and marvel at some of its archaeological treasures.

The 5th July was, of course, spent in St. John’s and a full day coach tour of the Island filled the following day. That left much to do and the next day was planned so members could select from a host of activities: a trip to the Calf of Man, a visit to the Camera Obscura, a tour of a lifeboat station and the day finished with a formal dinner with Laurence Skelly, President of Tynwald, as speaker, finding time to leave eight awards each including a medal from the Association at this year’s Yn Chruinnaght music festival. The Isle of Man Family History Society led a workshop on their final day that proved useful by offering a guide through its library and how to use it, and explaining its digital resources while a walking tour of Douglas was arranged for those who preferred a more energetic activity.

DBH

Visiting Glen Maye

I understand from a report a few weeks ago that Patrick commissioners hope to reopen the glen to the public soon. At a meeting in June, they explained that the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture has spent a lot of money on remedial works and the glen, closed in November last year after a storm and landslips caused damage, could be open in September.

It's one of the Island’s beauty spots and, about three miles south of Peel, is easy to reach by road although a more spectacular route is the coastal footpath (Raad ny Foillan). Like other beauty spots, the glen is also an ancient industrial site and an interesting feature is the wheel case of the 'Mona Erin', one of many water wheels that once provided power for the Manx lead mines but the eleven and a half acre glen is dominated by a spectacular bridged gorge and its beautiful sheltered, fern-filled woodland includes relics of the ancient forests that once covered much of the Island.

If you can get there, do let us know your impression.

DBH

Source: Manx Radio

Sink Hole at the Chasms

Manx National Heritage is encouraging users of the “Raad Ny Foillan” to take extra care at the Chasms where a sink hole has recently opened on the popular coastal footpath.

Temporary barriers are in place around the sink hole, which is over two metres deep, although has potential to become larger. The sink hole is believed to be caused by natural erosion, potentially a result of high levels of rainfall or rockfalls beneath the ground surface, weakening soil and vegetation.

Surface level studies will now be undertaken by engineers from Laxey Mines Research Group prior to further investigations and essential works.

Safety barriers will remain in place for the foreseeable future. Dog walkers should keep their pets on a lead and children walking on the footpath should be closely supervised at all times.

Manx National Heritage



Photo, Manx National Heritage

Tynwald delegation attends BIMR conference

A delegation from Tynwald has attended the 53rd British Islands and Mediterranean (BIMR) conference. The Speaker of the House of Keys, the Hon Juan Watterson SHK, Hon Daphne Caine MHK and John Wannenburg MHK, supported by the Clerk of Tynwald Jonathan King, joined delegates from 10 parliaments and legislatures from across the region for the week-long conference, which concluded on Saturday, May 25.

The conference, the first of its kind to have been held in St Helena, took for its theme ‘Addressing Challenges to Sustainable Development in Times of Global Uncertainty’. Topics included:

- Digital reforms and artificial intelligence;
- Decentralised finance;
- Climate emergency;
- Tourism development;
- Green energy solutions;
- Improving agriculture productivity and
- Benefits of a youth parliament.

The programme also included the BIMR AGM and a Commonwealth Women’s Parliamentarians (CWP) session and provided an opportunity for delegates to participate in the St Helena Day celebrations on May 21.

Mr Speaker said, “This was the first time St Helena had hosted this conference, which had previously been impossible due to the absence of air links. The pride that the “Saints” show in their island was clearly on display as they were keen to not just put on a first-rate conference, but took a day in the programme to show us the highlights of St Helena.

“It was a special moment to celebrate the connection between our two island communities by presenting a copy of the commemorative stamp issue featuring Colonel Mark Wilks that was issued by the Isle of Man Post Office in 1981. Colonel Mark Wilks was Governor of St Helena 1813-16, and was in charge when Napoleon arrived. On his return to the Isle of Man, he became an MHK, then Speaker 1826-1831. He brought back his servant, a “Saint”, who is buried in Braddan Cemetery. Colonel Wilks’ portrait hangs on the wall at the Governor’s residence in St Helena. Almost 200 years later, it feels appropriate

to reaffirm that affection for each other's communities. Thanks also to Maxine Cannon and those others involved at Isle of Man Post Office for their support in this endeavour."

Kindly provided by Juan Watterson, SHK

Thirty-five Tour de France stage wins

A couple of days before Tynwald Day, Manx cyclist and Essex resident, Mark Cavendish stormed into the lead of the riders completing the fifth stage of the Tour de France and secured the 35th stage win of his career. It would have been a magnificent achievement in any circumstances but was all the more remarkable as he had been sick during the opening stage requiring his teammates to nurse him to the finish line. The congratulations and praise in the press the following day are well deserved and it was lovely to read of congratulations from Eddy Merckx whose record he beat.

Perhaps just as remarkable is that nearly three weeks later he finished the final stage of the tour. In many ways, completing the event must have required as much determination and been as great an achievement as one more stage win.

The record-breaking Tour de France exploits were marked at a special homecoming event at the Island's National Sports Centre on 16th August. It celebrated a remarkable cycling career with a special lap of honour at one of the places it all began - the NSC raceway - with folk giving a flag-waving roar of appreciation as Sir Mark completed a lap on the cycling track he rode as a child and youngsters were given the opportunity to cycle with Sir Mark on their lap of the raceway.

DBH

2024 Birthday Honours List

Mark received a KBE in the king's birthday honours on 14th June "for services to cycling and to charity work".

Also honoured:

Manx residents Captain Stephen Carter and Richard 'Milky' Quayle were also recognised in the list:

MBE

Captain Carter has received an MBE for ‘outstanding services to maritime safety and his community’.

As well as maritime service, Captain Carter was a board member of Lonan Parish Commissioners for more than ten years and a trustee of Laxey and Lonan Heritage Trust.

He is the current Captain of the Parish of Lonan and a supporter of the Lonan and Laxey Anti-Cancer Association.

BEM

Former TT winner ‘Milky’ was awarded the British Empire Medal for his ‘outstanding contribution to the Isle of Man road races’.

He is the third Manx rider to win a solo Isle of Man TT race in its history, triumphing in the Lightweight Race in 2002 and has used his experience to coach and advise hundreds of newcomers in navigating the Mountain Course safely.

Having also won the Manx Grand Prix Classic Senior Race that year, he was also voted 'Isle of Man Sportsman of the Year' and in 2006 he was appointed 'TT Riders Liaison Officer'

DBH

Source: Manx Radio

More Queenies

The Island's Queen Scallop season was drawing to a close in mid August when the permitted quota of 720 tonnes had been reached, an increase from last year's catch of 605 tonnes, allowed in a programme to ensure the survival of the queenie industry that gives stocks time to replenish. Then, attributed, in part, to conservation measures introduced in recent years and the size and quality of landings prompted a higher catch limit of 1,140 tonnes.

In 2018, the delicacy had been voted the Isle of Man's national dish but a few years of queenie fishing ban followed later to delay an effective start to the programme. Skippers will now look ahead to the King Scallop season.

DBH

Source: Manx Radio

Queen's Pier Progress

Replacement steelwork for the next two bays of Ramsey pier was lifted into position in mid-June after steel trusses were delivered by Mezeron to the compound at Ramsey's Queen's Pier a week earlier.

Project manager Dennis Curphey explained that as the girders for bays seven and eight needed to be craned in from the beach, the big lift had to wait until the tides are favourable but the operation marked a major step towards the completion of phase two of the ambitious restoration project.

The Queen's Pier Restoration Trust signed a five-year lease with the Manx government in July 2017 to restore the first three bays of the pier and this was completed within four years, the project quickly becoming a real community effort. Since then, the focus has been on Phase 2, which goes up to bay eight, the trust having signed an extension to the lease in 2021. Bays four and five were completed in time for an event to mark the King's Coronation and bay six was finished last autumn. If all goes to plan, bays seven and eight will be completed by the end of the summer.

Volunteers are having to contend with the spiralling costs of materials. The cost of the steel has increased from £35,000 a bay to £56,000. Overall restoration was originally set to cost £4.5m, with each of the sixty bays estimated to cost £75,000 but this was before the recent price rises. Replacement steelwork for the first few bays could be craned in but for phase two a telehandler operating from the beach has been necessary.

The encouraging news is that there was a steady stream of visitors to the pier which was open weekday mornings for TT fortnight. Less encouraging is continuing inflation and the trustees would welcome donations through their web site.

DBH

Source: iomToday

Point of Ayre

This summer, the conservation charity Manx BirdLife opened its Point of Ayre National Reserve to the public for the first time, following several years of work undertaken by the group, work which includes the creation of a welcome area and a bird watching hide.

Before the “Grand opening”, the trustees hosted two open days, Wednesday 12th and Sunday 16th June when people could a look at the extensive work that's been done there, a guided tour of the reserve, led by Manx BirdLife staff from 2pm each day.

Guided tours continued to be available during the summer but joining required booking by email: pointofayre@manxbirdlife im specifying your name, the day you would like to attend and how many people would be in the group as limited places were available. The tours were described as a great opportunity to see and hear about all the work that Reserve Manager, David and his fantastic team of volunteers have done over the past few years to get it to this point as well as the fantastic display of bee orchids. However, there is no need to book to visit the reserve, unless you would like to join a guided tour.

DBH

Source: Manx Radio



London Manufacturer moves to Ballasalla

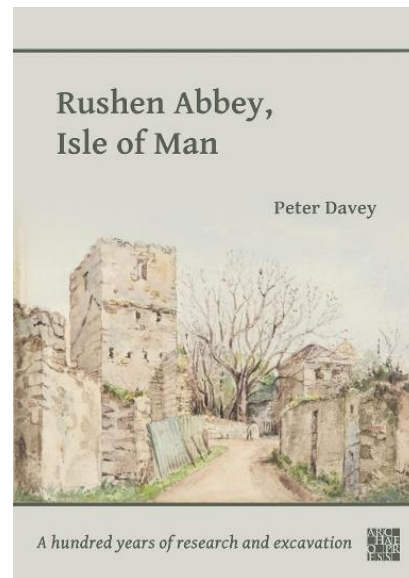
In the last few days Manx Radio has reported that London’s Albion Knitting Company will be moving its manufacture of luxury brand knitwear to Barrule House, Ballasalla, close to the airport.

DBH

Rushen Abbey

Earlier this year Manx National Heritage announced the publication of “Rushen Abbey: 100 years of excavation” by Dr Peter Davey, an archaeologist with a special interest in the medieval and early modern periods in north-western Europe and a 40-year involvement with the Isle of Man. As Director of the multi-disciplinary Centre for Manx Studies between 1992 and 2007 he led the excavation team at Rushen Abbey from 1998 to his retirement. The book is available from MNH, Cost £40.

Rushen Abbey is one of the Isle of Man’s most important Christian heritage sites and was acquired by Manx National Heritage in 1998. It initiated an intensive and extensive programme of archaeological excavations aimed at uncovering and interpreting the physical remains of the medieval monastic site.



The book tells how abbey, church and monastic remains of the site reveal a place of religious power and piety and, later, how its use had given way to pleasure gardens and playgrounds. Archaeological artefacts from all periods are on view to illustrate this intriguing site, along with explanations of life and literacy in a medieval monastery and how the abbey changed through time. It reveals the surprising history of an 800-year-old site from its time as a medieval abbey, to a 1900s pleasure garden and 1980s nightclub

The outdoor ruins hint at the abbey’s original grandeur with areas of worship, study and rest clear to see. The extensive grounds lead away from the ruins and into beautiful gardens with planting inspired by the medicinal needs of the monks and the environment of the medieval Isle of Man. A site with sustainable living as its original core purpose, a visit to Rushen Abbey and its grounds is a different experience throughout the seasons.

The abbey was a Cistercian monastery founded in 1134 and suppressed in 1540. It was the most important religious institution on the Isle of Man wielding significant secular power as well as ecclesiastical authority. Its location in the middle of the Irish Sea and its political connections made it one of the most influential houses in western Britain and Ireland.

The first known excavations were carried out in the late 1890s by Deemster Gill, one of the most senior law officers on the island. They were followed in 1912 and again in 1926 by more extensive investigations of parts of the east range the north transept of the church by William Cubbon then owner of the site. The modern study of the site began in 1978 and 1979 with excavations of the presbytery and both transepts by Dr Lawrence Butler, who followed them in 1988 and 1989 with a complete exploration of the east range. In between these two programmes of work Dr Larch Garrad of the Manx Museum carried out an important rescue excavation to the east of the church in 1984, locating a new chapel, part of the monastic cemetery and a charnel pit.

Under threat of development for a hotel complex in 1998 the site was purchased by the Manx Government and the Centre for Manx Studies, University of Liverpool was asked to carry out exploratory excavations in the first place, followed by more extensive investigations of a number of areas of the site. These were carried out each year from 1998 to 2008 and succeeded in defining the plan of the church and claustral buildings together with parts of the western courtyard. In addition, to the south of the Cistercian complex an already disturbed early medieval cemetery was investigated. Alongside the excavations, medieval documentary sources were reviewed and extensive fieldwork was carried out on the abbey's lands throughout the island.

DBH

Source: Manx National Heritage

Raffle of historic watch

As a result of the success of our TT Gallery opened at the Manx Museum last year, we have been offered the opportunity to acquire a presentation watch given to H.G. Tyrell-Smith, in recognition of his performance in the 1929 Senior TT. Tyrell-Smith was in the lead when he fell off, breaking two ribs. He none the less remounted and fought his way back up the field to finish third.

This important item would fit well within the themes of the gallery.

We are currently fundraising to acquire the watch and we are just £500 short of our target. Members who wish to support this acquisition can contact me directly on [matthew.richardson @ mnh im](mailto:matthew.richardson@mnh.im) and can pledge as much or as little as they like; however if someone wished to contribute the whole amount we could display the item with the line 'acquired with the support of...' or 'acquired in memory of...'



Matthew Richardson, Curator: Art & Social History

Acknowledgements

The editor thanks Voirrey Carr, Mike Fiddik, Matthew Richardson, Juan Watterson, for their kind contribution and also NAMA, Isle of Man Newspapers, Culture Vannin, Manx Museum, Manx Radio 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, 23rd November.

Date for your diary

Mhelliah, Monday 7th October 2024, at 12 noon
St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8AU

NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE IN THREE MONTHS

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LONDON MANX SOCIETY

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