

Mee Averil 2020 April

MANX MUSIC TODAY

Giant Manx contingent invade Welsh Celtic festival!

Nearly 70 members from Manx dance groups Skeddan Jiarg and Perree Bane went to the Cwlwm Celtaidd Interceltic Festival in Wales last month, and wowed audiences with stunning concert performances at the Hi-Tide festival venue, local school visits, workshops and outdoor displays in the local town of Porthcawl.

The festival also featured a headline concert from Jamie Smith's Mabon (led by Peel residents Jamie Smith and Paul Rogers), along with a short performance from young all-girl singing group, 'Little Manx', who sang a range of groovy songs in Manx Gaelic, and a Manx super-group made up of Beccy Hurst, David Kilgallon, Frank Joughin and Jamie Smith. (pictured: Skeddan Jiarg)



In this month's edition...

- *New EP from guitarist Mark Lawrence*
- *Mera film nominated for Celtic Media Awards*
- *Test your Manx music knowledge with a fun quiz!*





photos: James Franklin, Nick Treharne, John Dowling, Mike Wade, Chloe Woolley

Perree Bane at Cwllwm Celtaidd 2020 *report by John Dowling*

A compact side of Perree Bane dancers and musicians ran down to Porthcawl in 2 vehicles to participate in the always enjoyable Festival by the sea. A good journey both ways. Looking around at the 60-odd musicians and dancers on the Ben my Chree with both Skeddan Jiarg and Perree Bane on board gave rise to the comment that if this boat sank it would put Manx music and dance back half a century!

Friday was spent at two local schools, demonstrating dances and getting the ever-enthusiastic youngsters to join in. Some had an idea of where the Isle of Man actually was, and were fascinated to learn that the cats there have no tails and was once ruled by the Vikings. Suitably warmed up, there was an evening performance at the Hi-Tide entertainment centre.

The forecast for the next day (Saturday) was not promising, but it stayed dry for the street dancing, whilst very windy. A welcome respite was at the harbour, where the RNLI kindly parked their lifeboats outside and we danced inside the lifeboat house, along with a side of clog dancers and the Cornish ladies. Another dance performance at the Hi-Tide in the afternoon showed we still had legs!

The overnight rain had died away in time for the massed ceili outside the Hi-Tide, on Sunday morning although parkas, furry jackets and woolly hats were worn. The official last event was the inter-Celtic ceili in the afternoon, but come the evening the Ancient Briton pub was bustling, as it always is after the events at the Hi-Tide have finished.

It was lucky that it all happened before the Coronavirus pandemic struck; there is going to be a considerable drought in cultural activities for the foreseeable future.

Many thanks to the highly efficient organisers for inviting us to a super Festival, to meet up with old friends and enjoy some wonderful musicians and dancers. Thanks to our excellent musicians Peter, Beccy and Mike (on loan from Skeddan Jiarg) who all played with boundless enthusiasm.

Special thanks are due to the Arts Council, whose support made it all possible.

See Perree Bane performing "Dance for Five" and others dances : <https://vimeo.com/402408856>



Culture Vannin 's Manx Year Concert

The Manx Year, albeit with some minor adjustments, was a singular opportunity to reflect on a whole host of cultural celebrations through the medium of music, song, poetry, dance and drama.

Held at the Centenary Centre in Peel (14 March), the evening's entertainment was compèred by Annie Kissack, well known to many in the Manx cultural circle and beyond, more particularly since her year as the Manx Bard.

Its production was presented in a sequential fashion, beginning with the Invocation of St Bridget sung by Ruth Keggin - before celebrating Candlemas and the Easter with local dance group Perree Bane. Hot on its heels came both the eve of May Day and May Day itself, with Tynwald Day balancing the year. But it wasn't long before Michaelmas and Hop tu Naa announced that summer was at an end and the festive season would bring its own pleasures with a peculiarly Manx twist.

Many of the performers typically feature in concerts, parochial gatherings and festivals throughout the year, both on and off the Island.

The evening concluded with Arrane Oie Vie - the traditional Manx 'goodnight song'.

Valerie Caine © March 2020

(Courtesy of the *North Western Chronicle*)



The Manx Year

A night of music, song, poetry, dance & drama

Saturday 14th March, 7.30pm
Peel Centenary Centre

Featuring:

Ruth Keggin

Perree Bane

Annie Kissack

Caarjyn Cooicjagh

Phil Gawne

Greg Joughin

The White Boys



Invocation to St. Bridget

On Oie'll Vreeshey (31 January) St. Bridget will be roaming the Isle of Man looking for somewhere to stay. – Invite her in!

Moirrey ny Cainle

A traditional dance which is performed at Candlemas (2 February), when lighted candles were carried into church and blessed by the priest.

Flitter Dance

Eat flitters on the beach on Good Friday and stamp out the fire with this dance.

Berree Dhone (poem)

Berree Dhone (song) arr. Aalin Clague

Oie Voaldyn (30 April) is when buitcheragh (witchcraft) is at its strongest. Watch out for Berree hiding behind your door!

She Moghrey Laa Boaldyn by Robert Corteen Carswell RBV

Laa Boaldyn (1 May) is a time for celebration, when summer wins the battle against winter.

Bollan Bane

Wear bollan bane to protect yourself from the Lil' People on Tynwald Day (5 July).

Manannan Song & Girls of Balladoole arr. Rachel Hair

Pay your annual rent to Manannan by taking rushes up South Barrule.

Poem by Annie Kissack

Shooyl Inneenyn

The dance used to be performed by women at the Michaelmas hiring fair on 25 September.

Hop tu Naa

Celebrated each year on 31 October, Hop tu Naa is the oldest continuously-existing tradition in the Isle of Man. Join in with the chorus: Hop tu naa as troll-la-laa, Ta shenn Oie Houney, hop tu naa!

Crosh Bollan (poem) by Annie Kissack

Mannin Veg Veen arr. Annie Kissack

Manx boats fished for herring throughout summer and winter.

Kiark Catreeney Marroo arr. Annie Kissack

On Laa'l Catreeney (6 December), young lads would hold a mock funeral of a hen, singing: "Catherine's hen is dead; you take the head and I'll take the feet, and we'll put her under the ground."

The White Boys (play)

A 200 year old Christmastime tradition in which saints fight, die and are resurrected to sing and dance.

Poem by Annie Kissack

Mylecharaine's March & Three Little Boats arr. Rachel Hair

This dance tune was performed on Twelfth Night, before they cut off the fiddler's head and divined the future!

Three Little Boats is a popular traditional Manx tune associated with Christmas.

Hunt the Wren

On St Stephen's Day (26 December) communities all over the Isle of Man come together to dance around the King of All Birds.

Arrane Oie Vie

The traditional Manx goodnight song.



Covid-19 won't stop the music!

As we are all aware, most of the forthcoming concerts, ceilis and festivals we have been looking forward to have unfortunately been cancelled or postponed. But it's not all doom and gloom, and musicians and dancers in the Isle of Man and beyond have already been looking at more inventive ways to keep celebrating Manx culture!

>> On-line Music Jam

American musician Jonathan Werk kick-started a social distanced group performance of Manx tune, "Three Little Boats", which he recorded first and then asked others to contribute to. 9 musicians have added their instruments so far. Jonathan learnt the tune from Will Quale at the Pinewoods music camp in Plymouth MA. Watch: <https://youtu.be/OJ7KU81QBHg>



>> Manx Folk Awards... on the Radio

After having to cancel the annual competitions, Jo Callister from the MFA invited would-be participants to record their pieces of music, song, poetry, etc. and upload them to be played by Phil and Simon on the Manx Radio Sunday afternoon show, Goll as Gaccan! Listen Again here: 38'21" & 60'22"

www.manxradio.com/radioplayer/fm/od/items/6161/

* Tune in again for the next two Sunday afternoons to hear more MFA extracts.

>> Learn tunes

"Dog Jigs" sheet music - Sarah Shimmin and Sue-Ling Jaques, teachers from the Dhoon School, are sharing some of their favourite folk tunes to keep students practising at home. See *KMJ transcription of month* for Mai-Ying Lee-Ellis' tune, Dog Jigs 1 and listen to it performed by Mactullagh Vannin on their album, *Twisted Roots*: <https://mactullaghvannin.bandcamp.com/releases>

Tutorial films - learn to play **"Oikan ayns Bethlehem"** <https://vimeo.com/147303950> and **"Yernagh Keoie"** <https://vimeo.com/127967292> step-by-step with Dr Laura Rowles.

Visit the **LEARN** page on www.manxmusic.com to access more songs, tunes and sheet music

>> Perfect your Solo Girls' Jig!

Learn this (full and simplified version) of the Girls' Jig, plus other dances with these video tutorials presented by Grainne Joughin: www.culturevannin.im/video_story_579863.html

And practice at home to these music accompaniments:

<https://culturevannin.bandcamp.com/album/manx-dance-tunes>

>> Listen to Manx music

Enjoy streaming this Manx Gaelic songs spotify playlist

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7dYNh3CoUfDccWCNVwqxCc>

& discover Manx music and stories here: <https://soundcloud.com/culture-vannin>

>> Take a Manx Music & Dance Quiz

Have fun with our multiple choice quiz <PTO> or play online: www.surveymonkey.com/r/HND67Q9

>> **KEEP UP TO DATE** with online gigs, fun quizzes, new music releases, Manx music and dance videos, etc. via www.facebook.com/groups/manxmusicanddance/



How well do you know your Manx songs, tunes & dances?!

TAKE THIS FUN QUIZ

OR ONLINE: www.surveymonkey.com/r/HND67Q9

1. Which song was written in the same year as the first TT? [1907]

A. Lhigey Lhigey B. Manx National Anthem C. Ellan Vannin D. The Laxey Wheel

2. What day did the 'Three Little Boats' go out to Sea?

A. Christmas day B. St Stephen's Day C. Pancake day D. National Kipper Day

3. Who wrote the Manx National Anthem?

A. Robin Gibb B. Lady Gaga C. Mona Douglas D. William H Gill

4. According to the tune, what was Tom Dukes doing?

A. A-riding B. playing guitar hero C. farming D. eating chips, cheese & gravy

5. Which stringed instrument has the same tuning as the mandolin?

A. violin B. viola C. guitar D. ukulele

6. Who made the custards and jellies in 'The Manx Wedding' song?

A. Aunt Bessie B. Mrs Joughin C. Mrs Cregeen D. Muffins

7. What's a 'niddy noddy'?

A. A doll B. A wool-winding tool C. A dance D. Big Ears' best mate

8. Who is the 'King of the Sea'?

A. cod B. haddock C. sturgeon D. herring

9. What is the song 'Kirree Fo Niaghtey' (or Sniaghtey) about?

A. pigs in blankets B. cat in a basket C. sheep under the snow D. cows on a hill

10. Who is being hunted on St Stephen's Day?

A. wren B. limpets C. turnip D. Jishag y Nollick

<< Answers at the end of KMJ >>

Three Manx music books you'll want to have at home...

Many of us will have found ourselves stuck in our homes over the coming weeks & months, so make sure you have some good Manx music books to hand!

Manx Music Development Officer, Dr Chloe Woolley offers her suggestions of three books she would want safely on her shelves during self-isolation:



<https://www.facebook.com/culturevannin/videos/645075766287213/>

1) The key source of Manx popular music, from Ellan Vannin to the Laxey Wheel

https://www.culturevannin.im/publication_450873.html

2) An innovative way to learn the key trad tunes you would hear at sessions or concerts

https://www.culturevannin.im/publication_297292.html

http://www.manxmusic.com/publication_134246.html

http://www.manxmusic.com/publication_134254.html

3) A book of modern piano arrangements of trad Manx music (especially dedicated to Chloe's sister in Virginia!)

http://www.manxmusic.com/publication_129867.html

http://www.manxmusic.com/publication_506486.html

NB. Bridge Bookshop in the Isle of Man can deliver. Have a browse or give them a call:

www.bridge-bookshop.com/store/c12/ManxMusic



Flitter Dance Friday!

Better known as 'limpets' everywhere else, flitters were said to have been collected on the beach on Good Friday, cooked on an open fire, eaten (yum!) and then the party-goers would stamp out the embers whilst performing the 'Flitter Dance'.

Find out more here!

www.culturevannin.im/manx_year_event_520943.html

GUITAR PIECE OF THE MONTH

"**Flitter Dance**" is the latest release with video tutorial from Pete Lumb, plus the sheet music/TAB to download.

YouTube vid: <https://youtu.be/s9WbBrvKuEA>

CV page: www.culturevannin.im/video_story_606045.html

Sheet music:

www.culturevannin.im/media/Sheet%20music/Flitter%20Dance%20-%20Guitar%20-%20J%20Franklin.pdf

M is for Manx Cat

A recent musical adaptation of the book *M is for Manx Cat* recently finished its tour of Island venues at the Centenary Centre, with many families enjoying an ingenuous interpretation of the alphabet.

Created by local author Gemma Hjerth and illustrated by Kim Gee, the story revolves around two young children and their Manx granny - and her endeavours to read them an unusual bedtime story. But this is no ordinary tale, as granny takes them, and her audience, on a whirlwind journey through the alphabet; with each letter representing a significant aspect of the Isle of Man.

The musical adaptation was both produced and directed by Lisa Kreisky and Kristene Sutcliffe of Stage Door Entertainment, and sponsored by the Isle of Man Arts Council.

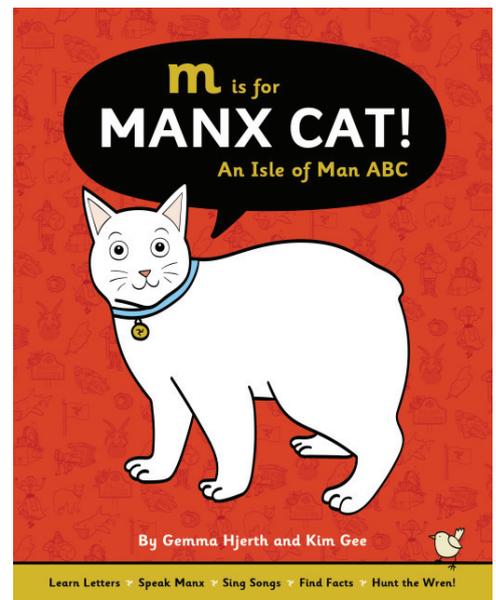
Lisa Kreisky commented, "As parents ourselves, Krissy and I are fully aware that it's not always easy to travel with young kids, even around the Isle of Man. But we believe that this should not stop them enjoying the magic of theatre, so we decided to take it on the road."

The show garnered a lot of popularity when first performed at The Studio Theatre towards the end of last year, growing into an Island success with its recent tour.

Copies of the original book are available from local bookshops.

by Valerie Caine © March 2020 (Courtesy of the North Western Chronicle)

{The cast included Gaelic singer Clare Kilgallon, Platform Theatre Choir, and others}



kiaul1 noa



Eagerly awaited by Manx guitar fans comes the debut solo EP of Mark Lawrence.

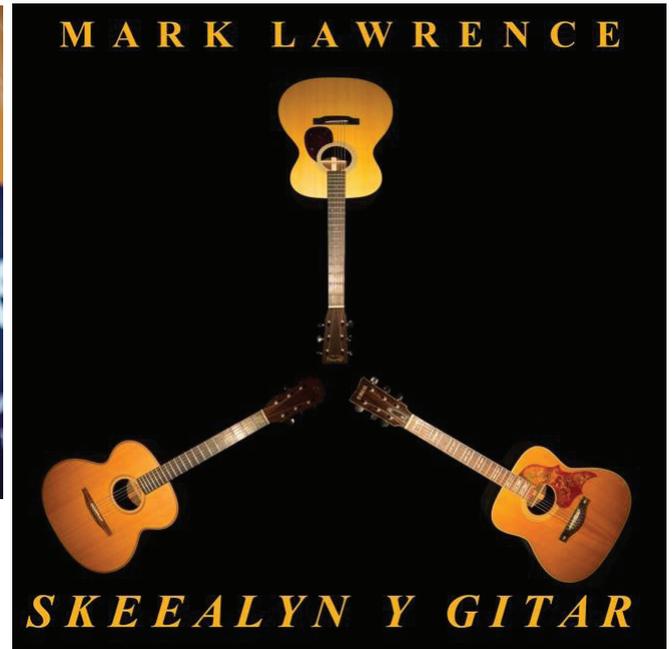
A year in the making, "Skealyn Y Gitar", which is Manx Gaelic for "Guitar Stories", is a 5 track EP of a mix of Manx and Irish tunes with some original tunes as well, mainly played Fingerstyle on acoustic Guitar.

Manx trad tunes include Arrane y Chlean and Arrane Ben Vlieaun, plus original tunes like "Gregor's Tune" written by Mark and others. Guest musicians on the first track are his sisters Kirsty Lawrence on whistles and Katie Lawrence on violin, and Russell Cowin on Bodhran.

You can order a CD directly from Mark by messaging him via <https://twitter.com/MarkLawrence77> or buy the download for £5.50 through Bandcamp: <https://marklawrence43.bandcamp.com/releases>

Watch Mark play live at last year's Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering:

https://www.culturevannin.im/video_story_591663.html



MEERA SHORT FILM NOMINATED FOR CELTIC MEDIA AWARDS

A documentary about Manx harpist Mera Royle has been nominated for the short film prize at this year's Celtic Media festival. The film which was produced by Patrick Crellin and Bethany White from local production company Dark Avenue Film, explores Mera's journey with Manx music, from playing the penny whistle to winning the BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Musician Mera Royle, which



has been shortlisted for the 2020 [Celtic Media Festival](http://www.celticmediafestival.co.uk) www.celticmediafestival.co.uk

Patrick and Bethany chat to Christy on this [Manx Radio](http://www.manxradio.com/podcasts/late-lunch/episode/dark-avenue-film-sheds-light-on-harpist-mera/) podcast:

www.manxradio.com/podcasts/late-lunch/episode/dark-avenue-film-sheds-light-on-harpist-mera/

WATCH THE SHORT FILM: <https://youtu.be/kXzpfZE9fQA>

New Biskee Brisht single

In times such as these, with panic buying in the isles, and concerts, tours and all manner of musical events being cancelled or scrapped altogether, it is clear that, at this moment in time, we all need as much positivity as we can get.

Step forward Biskee Brisht!

Like a ray of colourful sunlight in the gloom-laden skies, the island's happiest folk-pop group have announced the details of their latest single, set to be released this weekend.

The six-piece group unveil 'Sick and Tired', their latest single, tomorrow (Friday).

Those of you who are familiar with the group will instantly recognise the song, as it is one of their most popular tunes in their set.

'Sick and Tired' is a wonderfully catchy song, one that is guaranteed to get lodged in your head for a fair while. It is the fourth single from the group ahead of their debut album, scheduled for release this spring.

The song is written by singer and ukelele maestro Ruby Biscoe-Taylor, who described the song as an 'upbeat ode to new relationships and life's transitions'. It takes its lead from a feel-good, infectious, mariachi-style brass section, reminiscent of the group Beirut, supplied by trombonist Colin Furner and Django Kinley, on the trumpet.

Also featuring are driving guitars from David Kinley and Matt Brewster, on bass and some pretty handy, virtuosic accordion playing by John Kaighin. The track was recorded, mixed and mastered on the island by Gypo at Ballagroove Studios and funded by The Arts Council and Culture Vannin.

'Sick and Tired' will be available to listen to or purchase online on all major platforms including Spotify, Apple Music, Bandcamp and Soundcloud.

Previous songs released by the group are the tracks 'Not Again', 'The Fall' and 'This Won't End Well', which came out earlier this year.

To hear more from Biskee Brisht, including more music, videos, gigs and merchandise, you can follow them on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube or Spotify.

LISTEN ON SPOTIFY: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7dYNh3CoUfDccWCNVwqxCc>

Original article from: <http://www.iomtoday.co.im/article.cfm?id=54624>



PIPE UP FOR KEY WORKERS! If you plan on going outside this Thursday (2nd April) to clap for the NHS, and happen to live in Baldrine, Glen Mona or Union Mills you might also hear a piper playing Scotland the Brave.

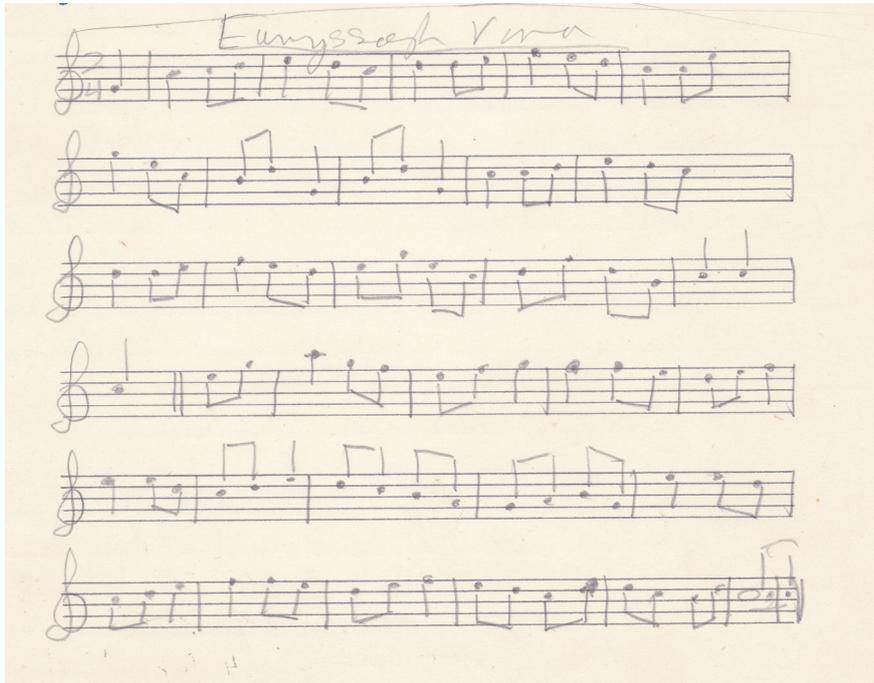
The National Piping Centre in Glasgow have put out a call for pipers all around the UK to play in support of all key workers, and members of local piping group 'Skirl' are joining in. A Skirl spokesman said "The National Piping Centre is calling all pipers from across Scotland and beyond to join them in paying tribute to the thousands key workers who are still working to keep the country fed, cared for and safe".

On Thursday 2nd April at 8pm BST, all pipers are asked to go into their gardens, be at their front door or strike up in their living room, wherever you can play safely and still keep socially distant, and play Scotland the Brave to support our key workers. The Skirl spokesman continued: "Locally, we're going to add a verse or two of Ellan Vannin and the Manx National Anthem, in special support of our key workers here on the Island".

#NHStheBrave #PipeUpforKeyWorkers

RESEARCH NEWS

THE MONA DOUGLAS FOLK DANCE COLLECTION EUNYSSAGH VONA



Mona Douglas, "The Scholastic Interleaved Manuscript Music Book," No 2, MNHL, MS 09545, Mona Douglas Papers, Box 9.

1937 [Completed and restored to use] (9) Eight-hand Reel, "Eunyssagh Vona" ('Mona's Delight'). A lively and popular reel with the usual "body" and figures, finishing in cross formation.

Mona Douglas, "Manx Folk Dances: their Notation and Revival," *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, iii.2 (1937), 110–16.

1959 We are practising the Manx dances in the following order: [...] 6. (If required) Eunyssagh Vona (Mona's Delight—8-hand reel)[.]

Letter from Mona Douglas to "Billy" [William Cain], 23 May 1959, MNHL, MS 09545, Mona Douglas Papers, Box 15.

ND Eunyssagh Vona—Mona's Delight. Popular all over the Island, but sometimes called "The Peel Fisherman's Game." Dancing at one time frowned upon by strict Methodists, a strong sect in the Island, and those dances which survived were often called "Games," and performed on the country roads after Chapel tea-parties, etc., generally to singing or the tune played on a mouth organ, but sometimes without any music at all. It was in this way that the dance was first recorded.

Mona Douglas, "NOTES ON THREE MANX DANCES," undated typescript, MNHL, MS 09545, Box 15, Mona Douglas Papers, *Manx Folk Dance Society* folder.

STEPHEN MILLER, RBV

SHARP-DRESSED MEN: DEEMSTER J.F. GILL & W.H. GILL

On 30 January 1949, Leslie Quirk collecting for the Manx Museum Folk-Life Survey visited a Mr Moore at Baldromney in Maughold and took down the following reminiscence: "Deemster Gill & W.H. Gill used to come round with 'Bell shiners' (top hats) Willie was taking spells coming round for old songs—did this for 3 years." This is a somewhat mind boggling picture it must be admitted, that even when out and about in the Manx countryside the Gill brothers had top hats firmly on their heads when "coming round for old songs."

Leslie Quirk, Notebook No. 2 (8 January–23 February 1949), MNHL, Manx Museum Folk-Life Survey, Box label "Original Contributors Notebooks." I am grateful to Kim Holden of the MNHL for locating this notebook.

STEPHEN MILLER, RBV

Further extracts from Haydn Wood and the Isle of Man, a chronology from the Isle of Man newspapers compiled and annotated by Maurice Powell.

April 1897

Isle of Man Times 3rd April:

RISING MUSICIANS. 'The final examination for the 12 free open scholarships at the Royal College of Music took place in London last weekend'. The numbers of entrants had been reduced at local examination centres on 3rd February; the final 109 candidates were then examined in London. 'Violin: Haydn Woods (sic) Douglas'. Other contemporaries of Haydn Wood mentioned in the report included Thomas F. Dunhill of Canterbury, a composition scholar, and Felix G. Swinstead of Stoke Newington, a piano scholar.

Thomas Frederick Dunhill's father was a 'purveyor of tarpaulins, canvas and other pre-requisites for horse-drawn vehicles' and his brother Alfred was the founder of the famous Dunhill tobacco empire. Thomas founded the Thomas Dunhill Concerts in London to promote the chamber music of avant-garde young English composers. His best-known compositions are the song cycle 'The Wind Among the Reed' (1912) and the opera 'Tantivy Towers' (1931). In 1905 he composed a Fantasia (Concertstuck) for violin and orchestra based on Manx National Melodies for Haydn Wood. In a later conversation with W. H. Gill, Dunhill recalled that it was '... a good many years since Haydn Wood showed me your book ('Manx National Songs') and the tunes at once took hold of my imagination ...' This substantial virtuoso violin piece has never been published; a hand-written violin and piano score may be found in the Manx Museum under reference MS 01350. Felix Swinstead, a professor at the Royal Academy of Music for much of his career, is remembered today as the composer of dozens of delightful children's pieces for piano familiar to generations of ABRSM candidates such as 'The Way Ahead,' 'Step by Step to the Classics' and 'Work and Play'.

Manx Sun 10th April:

First Concert by the Douglas Ladies Amateur Banjo and Mandolin orchestra of twenty-four players at the Regent Hall on 21st April. Local vocalists and Guild prize winners took part along with Master Haydn Wood who played the 'Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso' op. 28 by Saint-Saens. In addition to Banjo band pieces, the programme included marches, sketches and 'Darkie Songs'.



Phillie the Desert

Pictured is one of Dr John Clague and the Gill brothers' main informants - the singer Phillip Cain, AKA "Phillie the Desert"; a retired farmer and shoemaker who lived in West Baldwin, Braddan.

He was particularly well known for singing "Kirree Fo Niaghtey" and he contributed several songs to the collection including, Yn Bollan Bane, Thurot as Elliot, The Loss of the Herring Fleet Yn Colbagh Breck er Sthrap.

Read a research article about Phillie the Desert by Stephen Miller RBV in an previous edition of KMJ:

www.manxmusic.com/media/Newsletters/KMJ%20November%202011.pdf

WORK ON LAND AND SEA

Manx traditional songs inspired by crofting, fishing and mining

By Dr Chloë Woolley. Originally published in the Manx Independent, 19/03/2020

At a time when ICT, finance and hospitality are the major providers of employment, it is interesting to note that many of the folk songs, dances and tunes we still perform hark back to the occupations of those living more than a century ago.

When the collectors scoured the Island in the 1890s for the last remnants of traditional songs and melodies, the main sources of income were crofting and fishing – usually a combination of both. Manx Gaelic was still spoken in the country areas, and singing would have been an important form of entertainment and a way of passing on stories.

With #ManxMarch, we are encouraged to buy fresh local produce and support local farmers rather than import from around the world, but a hundred years ago, everyone would have had a connection to the land. The song titles from that time reveal a glimpse of country life through the seasons:

“Arrane ny Guilley Hesheree” (Song of the Ploughboy), “Arrane Ben-Vlieaun” (Milking Song), “Lhigey Lhigey”; a singing game for children about “galloping” to the market, and “Kirree Fo Niaghtey”; the tragic lament telling a true story from the 1600s about thousands of sheep buried under the snow. Harvest was a time when the whole rural community would assist in gathering-in the crops, and the ritualistic “Mheillea” dance was performed in circle around the last sheaf of corn fashioned into a doll named the ‘Babban ny Mheillea’.

The barn where hay was stored was also a place of entertainment where the fiddler would play and people gathered to feast and dance.

Hiring fairs were an important part of the farming year too, and the rather alluring dance “Shooyl Ineenyn”(girls walking) imitates the actions of young women showing their wares to potential employers at the Michaelmas Hiring Fair!

Songs also tell us about marriage practices in the country districts. “Mylecharaine” told of a miserly farmer, reluctant to give his daughter a decent dowry. “Colbagh Breac” tells of a speckled heifer offered with another farmer’s daughter.

Of course, fishing was a popular topic, from ballads recounting disasters at sea such as “The Wreck of the Herring Fleet” and “The Storm of Port St Mary”, to the hymns and invocations associated with protecting those engaged in this most precarious of livelihoods.

“Mannin Veg Veen” (Dear Little Mannin) announces the beginning of the herring season on St John the Baptist’s Day (now July 5th) and the song describes the travails and traditions associated with this very significant occasion.

Happily, the fishing connection is still alive and well, thanks to Peel’s vibrant dance group, Skeddan Jiarg, (Manx for ‘Red Herring’!)

Mining - another major occupation a centenary ago - is rarely referred to in the collections, perhaps because it was a ‘new’ industry that employed many men from outside of the Island.

The story of mining remained untold in song until the 1960s when Stuart Slack redressed the imbalance and wrote of the Great Depression of 1929 in his enduring popular song, “The Laxey Wheel”. He also paid acknowledged their life of hardship and drudgery in his song-tribute to “The Foxdale Miner”:

“From breakfast to bed we go diggin’ for lead, but I’d rather be diggin’ for gold!”

Our articles tie in with free tuition films of Manx tunes for finger-style guitar with sheet music and TAB aimed at players of all ages and levels. The arrangements, including “Guilley Hesheree” are expertly demonstrated by guitarist, Pete Lumb on the LEARN page of www.manxmusic.com or through www.culturevannin.im

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE MONTH

see www.manxmusic.com for more printable pieces of Manx music

Written by Mai-Ying Ellis, Dog Jigs 1 is performed by Mai and other members of Mactullagh Vannin on the re-released version of their album, Twisted Roots.

Dog Jigs 1

The musical score for "Dog Jigs 1" is presented in six systems. Each system contains a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 6/8 time signature. Below each staff are two rows of guitar tablature: the top row shows fret numbers (1-6) and the bottom row shows chord names (D, C, Em, A, G). The music is a continuous sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes, with some triplets and a final double bar line with repeat dots. Handwritten annotations include "4/2 5" and "5" above certain notes, and "3" and "5" below others.

CALENDAR

JUNE

21st Laa Jannoo Kiull - Make Music Day!!



JULY

5th Tynwald Day

20th – 26th Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering

www.celticgathering.im UPDATED DETAILS

TBC

AUGUST

7th – 16th Festival Interceltique de Lorient

www.festival-interceltique.bzh/

SEPTEMBER

11th – 12th Our Island Our World festival

25th – 27th IOM Trad Music Weekend



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. B. Manx National Anthem
2. A. Christmas day
3. D. William H Gill
4. A. A-riding
5. A. violin
6. C. Mrs Cregeen
7. B. A wool-winding tool
8. D. herring
9. C. sheep under the snow
10. A. wren

Please send in dates so that we can publicise events here & online:

www.manxmusic.com

~ SESSIONS ~

TUES 8pm Singaround at The Manor, Douglas
WED 8.30pm Session at O'Donnells, Douglas
THURS 8pm Singing session at The Mitre, Ramsey
FRI 8pm Trad session at The Mitre, Ramsey
FRI Trad session at the Manor, Willaston
Last **FRI** of month 9pm, Kiull as Gaelg, Albert, Port St Mary
Occasional **SAT** 10pm Manx session at The White House, Peel
Monthly **SUN** 12.30pm Trad session in Laxey

~ SESSIONS ~

culture vannin

For information on Manx music & dance contact:
Manx Music Development Officer **Dr Chloë Woolley**: chloe@culturevannin.im
www.manxmusic.com

Call: Chloë: 01624 694758 (answerphone)
or write to: Culture Vannin, PO Box 1986, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1SR

Written and edited by Chloë Woolley for Culture Vannin
The Editor welcomes submissions but reserves the right to edit for style and space
PRESS: please feel free to pick up articles without named authors to spread the word about Manx culture