

**Nollick Ghennal erriu, as blein feer vie
Seihll as slaynt da'n slane lught-thie;
Bea as gennallys eu bio ry-cheilley,
Shee as graih eddyr mraane as deiney**

**A 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.**

RBV nominations close

Nominations for the Reih Bleeaney Vanannan (Manannan's Choice of the Year) closed last month.

The RBV is an annual award made by the Manx Heritage Foundation to the person or group who, in the opinion of the panel of assessors, has made the most outstanding contribution to Manx culture.

Inspired by Manxman Mr Stephen Quayle of Kidderminster, it is the natural successor to the Manannan Trophy. The new trophy was awarded for the first time in 1987.

The trophy for 2011 will be awarded on Friday 13th January 2012.

Happy 60th Anniversary to the Manx Folk Dance Society

This seems like the last chance to congratulate the Manx Folk Dance Society on its 60th anniversary. The Society has had a particularly busy year with its international folk dance festival in August: <http://manxfolkdance.org.uk>



Folk finalists

Ramsey Grammar's 'So You Think You've got Talent 2011' featuring 11 acts in the final including Mera Royle, harp, playing two Manx tunes; Georgie King (Y8) singing Katy Perry's 'The One That Got Away'; Abu & Ciaran (Y8), two lads performing a hip-hop and break-dance routine to Flo Rida's 'Low'; Carlisha Simmons (Y11) singing Nicki Minaj's 'Superbass'; Stix (six Ys 7,8 & 9 boys) performing the traditional Manx dance 'Gorse Sticks'; Jess Sherry (Y11) with Ellie Goulding's version of 'Your Song' and Frankie Greenwood (Y7) playing Twilight's 'River Flows In You' on the keyboard. All gave fantastic performances.

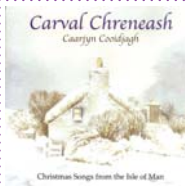
Organised by Year 13 pupils to raise funds for their prom evening next May, it was an evening of sparkling entertainment presented by Michael Tushingam and Theo Leach, with a panel of four teachers as the judges.

The undisputed winner was 13 year old James Mitchell (Y9), who sang Train's 'Hey Soul Sister' and received a £50 cash prize.

It's nice to see that Manx traditional music and dance are lining up alongside so many genres of music and dance - jeant dy mie!

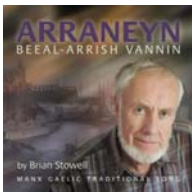
square-shaped stocking fillers

This new economic climate asks you to buy Manx and give Manx. In buying Manx-made products in Manx shops, you'll be doing your bit for the economy. So give yourself a warm glow by popping down to any good bookshop or the Manx Museum giftshop to pick up CDs or music books as those special presents this Christmas...To make it easier for you to choose the right gift for your cousins in Dubai and uncle in Andreas, here's a quick round up for you. Many are also available online at www.manxmusic.com **Buy Manx, give Manx!**

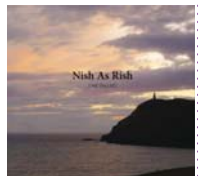


Manx Gaelic choirs Caarjyn Coidjagh have two CDs specially put together for Christmas, as well as other releases:

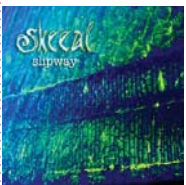
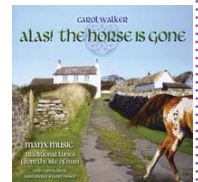
Caarjyn Coidjagh: *Carval Chreneash* (2004) also try *Skellyn* (2008)
Clogaree Twoaie: *Nollick Ghennal* (2006) or *Drogh Vraane* (2005)



Brian Stowell's CD *Arraneyn* was released earlier this year. A reissue of the 1973 recording, it is the perfect introduction to Manx songs. Nish as Rish won the prestigious folk group trophy at the Lorient festival this summer. Their debut recording introduces you to their quirky and sleek arrangements, new compositions and explorations of traditional material.

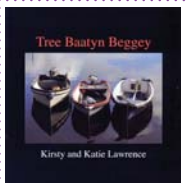


Yn Chruinnaght's *The Gathering* CD is an inter-Celtic celebration. With tracks from Mabon, Rachel Hair, Trio Froger and a whole host of others, it's the perfect gift. Available online here: www.ynchruinnaght.com/cd/
Carol Walker's *Alas the Horse is Gone* is gorgeous - mountain dulcimer, fiddle. Download or buy the CD here: www.cdbaby.com/cd/carolwalker



These two CDs from Skeal and Staa mix tracks from vocal and instrumental traditions in gorgeous arrangements:

Staa: *She Lhong Honnick Mee* (2009)
Skeal: *Slipway* (2009) Like this? Try Skeal's debut CD *Long Story* (2005)



Need a good fix of traditional tunes, played with energy and elegance? Then try out CDs by King Chiauullee and Kirsty & Katie Lawrence:

Kirsty & Katie Lawrence: *Tree Baatyn Beggey* (2006)
King Chiauullee: *Nish* (2006)...also *Reel:Ode* (2003)



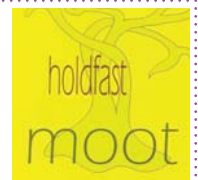
If you want a mix of fiddle, harp and guitar or fiddles, accordion and bodhran, then these two recordings will be right up your street:

Osborne, Guard & Lumb: *Kiaull Manninagh* (2008)
Phynnodderee: *Y Reesht* (2003) or *There's no F in Phynnodderee* (1999)



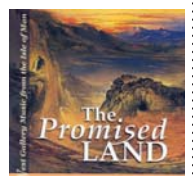
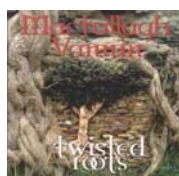
Fancy something that bit different? From the upbeat protest songs (think green, think human rights) to the electronic dub-tinged soundscapes of Moot, Manx music is never dull...

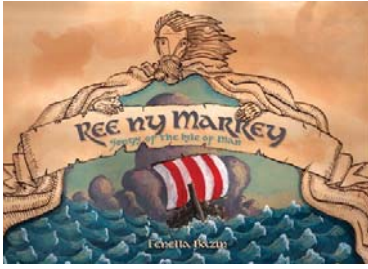
The Mollag Band: *Into the Tide* (1997)
Moot: *Holdfast* (2006)



Mactullagh Vannin's *Twisted Roots* is one of the catchiest introductions to Manx instrumental music - their music has been used for jingles on Manx Radio for years now. The Mannin Folk's retrospective *Through The Years* brings together all the favourites - 'Laxey Wheel' and 'Foxdale Miner' to name but a few.

Songs from the *Manx National Song Book* feature on *Come Back to Mona*, and West Gallery church music is the focus of *The Promised Land*. For a mixture of all styles and genres, pick up *The Best That's In!*

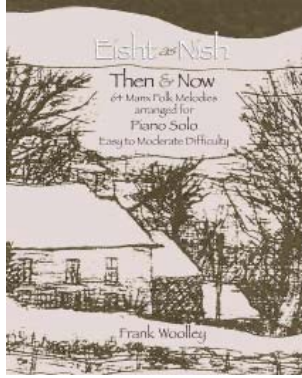




LIOARYN - BOOKS

The new edition of Fenella Bazin's *Ree ny Marrey* features over 60 songs arranged for piano and voice in Manx and English and illustrated by Juan Moore - only £12 in local bookshops and online here: www.manxheritage.org/cms/publication_1695.html

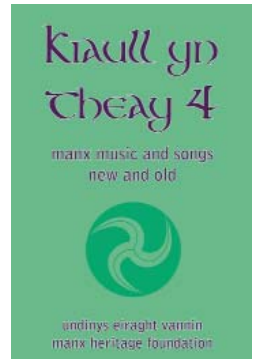
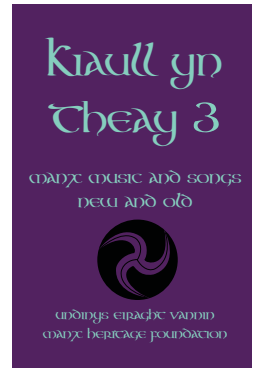
If you're interested in a gift for budding pianists, then you should check out the lovely arrangements by Frank Woolley in *Eisht as Nish*, great value at only £7.50.



For all those traditional musicians in your life, *Kiaull yn Theay 3* and *Kiaull yn Theay 4* are collections of tunes and songs, mixing those from older manuscripts with newly-composed pieces by some of the best musicians on the Island. The tunes are suitable for a wide range of instruments and singers. The books are a great gift for anyone interested in the developing Manx traditional music scene.

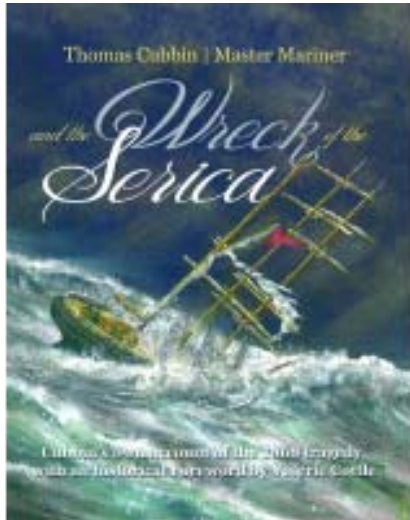
For those of you interested in traditions, Stephen Miller's book on the White Boys is an excellent place to start - pick it up at the Manx Museum Shop for around £20.

Available in good bookshops, MNH shops and online at www.lexiconbookshop.co.im



WRECK OF THE SERICA

In December 1867, Captain Thomas Cubbin, a master mariner from the Isle of Man, set out from Liverpool in the barque *Serica*, bound for Aden with a cargo of coal. With him on board were his wife Mary, their two sons, and a crew of fourteen men and boys.



In the Indian Ocean three months later the *Serica* encountered one of the most terrifying hurricanes ever recorded. What followed is a story of tragedy, adventure, and extraordinary courage...

www.manxheritage.org/cms/publication_172246.html

Do you have an Irish bouzouki but just don't know what to do with it?!!

If so, bouzouki maestro **Malcolm Stitt** (of Deaf Shepherd, Boys of the Lough and Kate Rusby fame) is willing to share some of his trade secrets with you.

If you'd be interested in learning some basics at a one off taster session, or by having private lessons on a regular basis, please contact Chloe who will pass on your enquiries.

All ages and abilities welcome:
manxmusicspecialist@mhf.org.im



GROUPS WANTED FOR LORIENT

Manx delegate to the Lorient Festival, Aalish Maddrell, is looking for groups (music or dance) who would like to represent the Island at the 2012 festival (3-12 August). If you're interested in applying, please send a promo pack with a recording to:

aalishm@yahoo.com by 5 December 2011

2012 will be the Year of Acadia

Kirk Michael Oie'll Verree will be taking place on **Thursday 5th January 2012 at 7.30 pm** in the Ebenezer Hall, Michael.

There will be the usual variety of acts: dancing, singing, recitations and, of course, the Manks Dialect Play, 'Johnny Jem Beg puts up for the Keys' by J.J. Kneen (1936).

Tickets cost £6 (including supper) available from James Kennaugh, Secretary to Michael Heritage Trust, Tel No. 878342

Ny Fennee are holding a giense / ceili on Friday 6th January to celebrate Shenn Laa Nollick (Old Christmas Day).

Venue: Masonic Hall, Ramsey
Details will appear on Ny Fennee's facebook page and elsewhere

HUNT THE WREN

Here's a list of the normal meeting times and places for activities around the Island on St Stephen's Day (26th). Everyone welcome...

Douglas Bock Yuan Fannee and friends will be Hunting the Wren on 26th December, meeting outside the Woodbourne Hotel, Alexander Drive, Douglas for a 10.30am start. All musicians, dancers & singers are most welcome - and anyone else who would like to go round. Proceeds to Douglas Lifeboat.

Port St Mary Golf Pavilion meet 10am. Includes Wren Pole competition and dancing in the streets. All welcome!

St Johns Musicians, singers and dancers (anyone who wants to take part) meet at 10.30am prompt at the Arboretum car park.

Ramsey Meet at St Paul's Church at 10.30am ending at Quayle's Hall at 11.30am for refreshments. All welcome!

Castletown Singing and drinking but no dancing to be had! Contact Castletown Ale Drinkers - meet near the Union in the Square.

Cliogaree Twoaie will be leading carols in Manx and English at Santa's Grotto at the Corn Mill Cafe and Restaurant on **Saturday 10th December, 3-5pm**. There will also be some local hand-bell ringers!

The Corn Mill is a new cafe/restaurant on the left just before the Laxey Wheel. There is a car park further up the hill on the right. The surrounding area will be a nature reserve when completed and the water wheel has been renovated and will eventually be functional.

Perree Bane's Christmas do will be on Sunday 11th December at Ballasalla Abbey Hall starting at 7pm. Great music, fun dancing and faith supper. All very welcome - old and new friends, musicians, dancers - just turn up.

29th December, 8pm Mollag Ghennal at Douglas Masonic.
The Mollag Ghennal is THE place to be during the Foolish Fortnight. Hosted by the indefatigable Mollag Band and featuring the likes of King Chiallee, Jamie Smith & Tom Callister and Strengyn, you get a feast of music and some food for your bellies too.
Tickets £10 from Celtic Gold, Shakti Man, Peter Norris Music and Thompson Travel VERY SOON. More details as they happen online at www.manxmusic.com

WHAT'S ON AROUND THE FESTIVE SEASON

~ SESSIONS ~

THURS 9pm Singing session at The Brit, Ramsey
FRI 8.30pm Tynwald Inn, St. Johns **FRI** 9pm Irish at The Mitre, Ramsey
Folk at the Club (1st or 2nd Fri of month), 8pm, Peel Golf Club
Last FRI of month 9pm, Kiaull as Gaelg, Albert, Port St Mary
SAT 10pm Manx at The White House, Peel

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE MONTH

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

The Mother's Carol

Music by John W. Gelling (1886-1973)
Words by Cushag (1852-1937)

Sing soft___ and low Ye winds___ that blow, And
whis - per round___ this low___ ly shed. Break
not___ His sleep For sha - dows deep Are
draw - ing near___ His sac - red head

1. Sing soft and low, ye winds that blow,
And whisper round this lowly shed;
Break not His sleep for shadows deep
Are drawing near His sacred head.

2. Sing sweet and high, ye birds that fly,
But gently trill your tender theme
Lest all too soon your joyous tune
Should wake Him from some Heav'nly dream.

3. Sing loud and strong ye Angel Throng
To Kings and shepherds bear the sign
That Peace on earth is come to birth
And lies amid the humble kine.

4. O let Him rest in His poor nest
While still His mother softly sings;
For well we know what tears will flow
Ere sorrows crown Him King of Kings.

John W Gelling set this poem 'Sing Soft and Low' by Cushag and called it 'The Mother's Carol'. His original hand-written manuscript was recently discovered in the Manx museum and is thought to date from the 1950s. It has been published for various choral settings in Coraa – Manx songs for Choirs (MHF 2011).

"THE EVILS OF HOLDING ILL-VERIES" CARVAL SINGING IN THE ISLE OF MAN

Stephen Miller

This phrase comes from a meeting of the Manx Methodist conference in 1817, held at Ballakaneen (Andreas) in October of that same year:

Another long conversation took place respecting the evils of holding Ill-Veries, And they were again condemned by all present except two or three who pleaded for them. They were condemned, first as being contrary to our Lord's words, G John chap. 4th and verse 24th where it is declared that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in Truth But in these Meetings an Individual will start up and sing a Corral twenty or thirty verses long, some of it sense, and some of it Nonsense, and one after another continuing this practice for several hours, and that the worst of Characters for Miles round the places where they are held.

Secondly. They were condemned on the ground of the disorderly work which is carried on at them.

On the evening of Christmas Day, the vicar or rector would effectively hand the parish church over to the "lower orders," the servants and labourers who then sat in the pews of their masters and mistresses, the females ready with their parched peas to throw at those whose carval singing they felt was not up to be scratch.

As regards "disorderly work," this phrase well captures the carnivalesque nature of the Oie'l Voirrey itself: the parish church taken over by those who do not rent pews, amongst whom many have their own composed carvals in Manx to sing to be approved (or not as the case may be) of those there assembled. Some it was felt took it a little too far as this presentment to the Chapter Quest in 1705 shows:

Wm Fry and Jo: Caine presented by Robt Caineon one of ye Questmen for yr misbehaviour in ye Ch: on Xstmas day in ye morning by Striking others with bushes of holling to ye disturbance of ye people

They were sentenced to a day's confinement in the crypt of St German's cathedral on Saint Patrick's Isle. Thanks are due to the pair as their presentment provides the earliest mention to date of the Oie'l Voirrey itself.

That said, it is interesting that Waldron, a seasoned observer living in the Island in the 1720s, does not mention the Oie'l Voirrey at all and instead has on this date taking place the calendar custom of "Hunt the Wren":

CHRISTMAS is ushered in with a Form much less meaning, and infinitely more fatiguing. On the 24th of December, toward Evening, all the Servants in general have a Holiday, they go not to Bed all Night, but ramble about till the Bells ring in all the Churches, which is at twelve-a-clock; Prayers being over, they go to hunt the Wren, and after having found one of these poor Birds, they kill her, and lay her on a Bier with the utmost Solemnity, bringing her to the Parish-Church, and burying her with a whimsical kind of Solemnity, singing Dirges over her in the Manks Language, which they call her Knell; after which Christmas begins.

It is certainly clear that "Hunt the Wren" shifts to being celebrated on the 26th December, St Stephens Day, at some date during the 1700s—but for the presentment from 1705 as here I would have argued that "Hunt the Wren" was shifted in order to accommodate carval singing but it would appear that both took place on the same day in this period though "Hunt the Wren" was still shifted in date in due course during the 1700s.

The good folk of Ballaugh in 1758, were clear about what was expected on Oie'l Voirrey although stated in a petition from the so-named "Principall Inhabitants & Masters of Families in the Parish of Ballaugh":

That we do hereby declare our utter Abhorrence & Resentment of the Unworthy & Unbecoming Behaviour of some of our Young People & others unknown, towards the Rev[erend] Mr Moore our Rector, on the eve of last Christmas Day & the morning of the same, in riotously surrounding his House & throwing up stones on the Roof to the great Terror & Annoyance of his Family with outrageous Noise & Tumult, calling on Him, at an Unusual & Unseasonable Time, to come forth, & do his Duty at the Ill-Verry—though & repeatedly told that He was so very Ill in his Bed that He could not possibly come [...].

This petition failed and "The Wardens, upon the Complaint of Tho[mas] Stephen, present the Rector for not performing Divine Service before Daylight on Christmas Day, commonly called the Oie-Il-Wurrey—Referr'd to Tryal".

Carval singing and the composition of such carols are a remarkable Insular phenomenon and the carvals themselves are a body of vernacular Manx that deserves further study. A collection was drawn together by A.W. Moore in his *Carvalyn Gailckagh* from 1891, and C.I. Paton later ran a column in the *Isle of Man Examiner* (1915–17) reproducing material not found in Moore. The planned book never appeared.

The Oei'l Voirrey in the early eighteenth century was remembered in Andreas so:

At Christmas Eve, called 'Eel Varrey,' the church presented an extraordinary appearance. Crowds came with candles stuck in hollow turnips and holly boughs which they held before them. They sung carols of their own composition and kept watch until midnight.

It is also described in verse in William Kennish's volume of *Insular poems, Mona's Isle, and Other Poems* (1844). Archdeacon Kewley in 1923, fondly recalled the evening:

And the Oie'll Viorrey; the kishans of evergreens; the forest of firs nailed vertically in the angles of the pews; the big guttering candles for the only evening service in the course of the year; the carvals of interminable length, doubtful rhyme and metre, and successfully disguised melody; the tramp home in the snow; the hibbin, the holly [...].

By this date, the Oie'l Voirrey had passed into fond memory as here.

HOP TU NAA BANNERS - Roy Kennaugh

The apparent lack of Hop tu Naa display material available in the shops prompted Mec Vannin to produce a number of banners using one of the designs from the Manx Heritage Foundation schools pack.

The 6 ft. x 2 ft. Hop tu Naa banners were borrowed by seven primary schools and two public houses to display during their various events.

Due to the success of this initial venture, it is intended to produce more of the banners for next year.

If any other schools or organisations are interested in borrowing a banner, please let the Secretary know. Contact Cristl Jerry, 6 Glenfaba Road, Peel.

Jamie Smith's Mabon on flying form

Jamie Smith's Mabon played to a packed out Centenary Centre in Peel on Saturday 19 November as part of their Autumn tour. The five piece delighted the audience, inspiring them to call for encore after encore. The band was joined on stage for some numbers by talented Manx fiddler, Tom Callister.



CALENDAR

December

2nd Caarjyn Coidjagh at St James' Church, Dalby's Taste of Christmas, 7.30pm

3rd Bree busking at Strand Shopping Centre, 2-3pm (all musicians welcome!)

3rd Singing by the Sea, Ramsey Heritage Trust at the Ramsey Masonic Hall featuring the Cushag choir, Cliogaree Twoaie & Ramsey Choral, 7.30pm, £3.

5th Youth Got Talent, Douglas Youth Arts Centre, 7pm £2.

7th Bunscoil Ghaelgagh Xmas Service, Royal Chapel, St Johns, 6.30pm

9th Beginners' music session with Beki Collings & Caz Dougherty, Glue Pot, 7-9pm, all welcome

9th Folk at the Club, Peel Golf Club, 8pm

10th Cliogaree Twoaie at Santa's Grotto, Corn Mill Cafe Restaurant, Laxey, 3-5pm

10th Manx Youth Orchestra Christmas Concert, Gaiety, 7.30pm More details online: www.villagaiety.com

11th Perree Bane Xmas Ceili, Ballasalla Abbey Hall, 7pm ALL WELCOME

15th Caarjyn Coidjagh and many other artists, Port Erin Commissioners' Christmas Carol Service, St Catherine's Church, Port Erin, 7pm

26th Hunt the Wren around the Island - see newsletter for details

29th Mollag Ghennal, Douglas Masonic Hall, 8pm Tickets £10 (see newsletter for details)

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

January 2012

2nd Iliam Dhone Day - ceremony on hill (usually 2pm) followed by service at Malew Parish Church/session at Viking pub, Castletown - see press for details

5th Oie'll Verree, Ebenezer Hall, Kirk Michael, 7.30pm, see newsletter for details

6th Ny Fennee Ceili, Ramsey Masonic, YnCG Christmas service - watch press for details

Book of songs in English

I'm currently putting together a book of Manx songs in English for the Manx Heritage Foundation, to be published in March 2012. I'm looking for donations of songs from any genre really, as long as they're strong enough to stand up just as melody, chords and lyrics. We try to keep the cost of the final publication low and there's no profit on sales.

So far we have donations from bands like Scaanjoon, The Mollag Band, Moot, various individuals and suggestions that we try to get permission to include songs from the music hall era, from The Tholtan Builders and Stuart Slack.

If you think you have something you'd like to share with people, then email me on mhfmusic@mhf.org.im I'm happy to transcribe from recordings, accept hand-written music and words or have all the work done for me as you send in a Sibelius file!

Breesha Maddrell

manx heritage foundation ~ undinys eiraght vannin

For information on Manx music & dance contact:

Manx Music Development Officer **Dr Breesha Maddrell:** mhfmusic@mhf.org.im

Manx Music Specialist **Dr Chloë Woolley:** manxmusicspecialist@mhf.org.im

www.manxmusic.com

Call: Breesha: 01624 695784 or Chloë: 01624 695787
or write to: MHF Music Team, The Stable Building, The University Centre, Old Castletown Road, Douglas, Isle of Man IM2 1QB



Written and edited by Breesha Maddrell for the Manx Heritage Foundation

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

Creight eiraght rhum&d

Ramsey Heritage Trust



Singing by the Sea

Saturday 3rd December 2011 at 7.30 p.m.

Masonic Hall, Lezayre Road, Ramsey

Christmas music to enjoy - and to join in

with singers from Ramsey Ladies Cushag Choir, Ciogaree Twoaie, Ramsey Choral
and some surprise soloists

Chairman Mr David Jackson

admission £3, members £2

refreshments

raffle