

KIAULL MANNINAGH JIU

Toshiaght Arree 2024 February

MANX MUSIC TODAY

Duo are set for Ireland ~ Arrane son Mannin winners!

Singer Sarah Mercer and harpist Mera Royle will represent the Isle of Man at the Pan-Celtic Festival in Carlow, Ireland, in April. They will compete in the international song competition after winning the contest at Peel Masonic Hall to find a new Song for Mann, Arrane son Mannin.

Sarah and Mera [pictured on right >] performed Paper Boats (Baatyn Pabyr), composed by Sarah's partner Matthew Warren and translated into Manx by Bob Carswell.

Matthew told Island Life: 'We are all so excited to be playing in Carlow. I went along to Arrane son Mannin as a first-time entrant with the idea that we'd just have a great evening sharing the song with everyone.'

'Seeing the other performances blew me away - to bring together such a variety of fabulous musicians to sing in Manx is a truly remarkable thing.'

'In the company of such brilliant other performances, I think we all felt genuine disbelief when we were announced as the winners.'

The duo was one of six entries into the competition.

Sue Harrison's song Jenny Rosemary McFee won the competition for a new song in traditional style.

The song was performed by Sue and her son Jamys. They were awarded £100, sponsored by Fiona McArdle.

Cara Rowles sang With Me Now (Marym Aynshoh), with the melody by Dave Rowles and words by Laura and Cara Rowles.

Love and War (Caggey as Graih) with the melody and words by Doug Francisco, was sung by Ruby Biscoe-Taylor and with instrumentals by David 'Kin' Kinley and Doug.

The choir Un Chorraa performed Give me your Hand (Cur dou dty Laue), with the melody, arrangement and Manx words by Aalin Clague. And Owen Williams sang his own song, This is the Time (She Nish yn Traa).

Matthew explained he wrote Paper Boats alongside a poem of the same name about three years ago. 'Both of them reflect on yearning for an absent loved one,' he said. 'At the time, Sarah was away travelling for several months, so for me it grew out of that absence. It described the experience of missing her in moments of idle thought in which inconsequential things seemed to remind me of her and sparked thoughts of longing that drifted lightly out into the world with little sense of



In this month's edition...

- *Manx Folk Awards 2024 syllabus*
- *"Roll Away" by Davy Knowles for junior choir*
- *Festive Photos of the Kegeesh Ommidjagh!*



direction.' He added: 'When Sarah did return, she loved the song and began to sing it. It suited the gentleness of her voice perfectly and it became a favourite of hers, so much so that she persuaded me to enter it for Arrane son Mannin this year.'

Matthew said that he was initially 'slightly reluctant': 'I'm mainly a classical composer, and entering the composition class of the Guild last year was much more my home turf than this,' he said. 'I don't write many songs - this is one of only a handful I've ever composed.'

'But, I eventually agreed on the proviso that Sarah had to sing it herself, which is also not her home turf, but I couldn't imagine anyone else's voice suiting it as well as hers.'

Matthew praised Bob for his generosity and skill in creating a translation which fitted the song seamlessly and captured its meaning perfectly. He asked Mera to come on board once they entered the competition. 'Mera's lovely harp playing and Sarah's voice, I think, balanced each other with a real delicacy,' he said.

As well as representing the island in Carlow, they received £300, sponsored by Culture Vannin. Adjudicators were Annie Kissack, Peddyr Crellin and Julie Matthews.

The evening saw Pan-Celtic Manx delegate and organiser of the Arrane son Mannin Fiona McArdle step down from the role after many years. She was presented with a bouquet.

There was also a Manx concert featuring David Kilgallon and Scran, poetry by Annie Kissack, Ruth Keggan, Phil Gawne, Ruby Biscoe-Taylor and Owen Williams as Caarjyn.

Photos: Valerie Caine / Original article: Jackie Darbyshire, Isle of Man Newspapers

www.iomtoday.co.im/news/entertainment/duo-are-set-for-ireland-661213

The International Pan-Celtic Festival in Ireland will take place from 2-6 April: www.panceltic.ie



LAAIL
BREESHEY
MASONIC HALL PEEL
THURSDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 7.30PM

THE MOLLAG BAND
 SKEDDAN JIARG, THE LOCKDOWN LOVELIES
 FRANK + JAMIE, CAARJYN COOID JAGH
 ADMISSION BY DONATION

The belief on the Isle of Man was that St. Bridget ("Breeshey" in Manx Gaelic) could be found seeking for a place to sleep on the 31st of January, the day before her Feast Day. So you must be prepared for her to stay - with food and a bed ready. If you do everything right, you might be lucky enough to have her stay, after which things would certainly go right for you in the year to come: <https://culturevannin.im/manxfolklore/laal-breeshey-469776/>

Family Bingo Night
Friday 2nd February

Cash Prizes including £100 Jackpot
St. Paul's Hall, Ramsey
7.30 p.m.

Free Admission

Peel Centenary Centre
Atholl Room Concerts

"Ruby Biscoe Taylor"

Matt Kelly

Free entry
 (donations gratefully received)
The Atholl Room and Bar
Friday 2nd February 8pm

@evergreen

Battle of the Bands Isle of Man

The battle is on to find the best young band on the Island!


Sunday 10th March 6:30pm, Peel Centenary Centre

Senior (secondary school age)
Junior (primary school age)

Senior Prize—£500
 Junior Prize—£300
 Best original song prize—£100

Closing date for entries: Sunday 18th February
Email iombotb@gmail.com for a registration form

CLOIDERYN NORTHERN THEATRE
 In Tribute to Marilyn Cannell
 Will Present Special Performances Of
"THE STAR OF INDIA"
 MUSICAL
 Proceeds to Cancer Charities



Feb. 23rd & 24th & March 1st & 2nd
 7.30pm In St. Pauls Hall Ramsey
 Tickets Adult £10 & Concession £8
 Available At Old Courthouse Ramsey
 Wednesdays & Saturdays 10am to 1pm
 Or Tel. Heather Ruffino 437904

SHENNAGHYS JIU
 28TH - 31ST MARCH
FESTIVAL #25



<< Cloideryn Northern Theatre announce that in tribute to Marilyn Cannell they will stage 4 special evening performances of the Star of

India Musical of which she wrote the music for. Proceeds will go to cancer charities. It will be staged on February 23rd & 24th & March 1st & 2nd in St Paul's Hall Ramsey. Tickets £10 Adults & £8 concession available from Old Courthouse Ramsey on Wednesdays & Saturdays between 10am & 1pm starting Saturday 13th January or tel. Heather Ruffino Director on 437904.

MANX MUSIC FESTIVAL / GUILD

www.manxmusicfestival.org

Entries close 3rd Feb 2024!!!

The Festival will take place from
 27th April to 4th May 2024



THE
MANX MUSIC
 SPEECH & DANCE
Festival
 Founded 1892



The Manx Folk Awards (Aundryyn Kiaull-Theay Vannin) will take place from 17 - 22 March 2024.

Organised by DESC & Culture Vannin, the Manx Folk Awards are informal competitions for children in Manx music, song, dance and language with friendly adjudicators.

This year's overall theme is the sea and the 200th anniversary of the RNLI.

Entries close 12th February.

All info here:

<https://culturevannin.im/resources/manx-folk-awards-716357/>



Music, poetry and plays leave a warm winter glow

The warmth of Christmas was brought to the stage of the Gaiety Theatre for the sixth Manannan's Winterfest. The event, a staple of the festive entertainment calendar, is a variety concert celebrating Manx Christmas traditions. It featured a wide range of music, songs, drama and comedy all designed to leave the audience with a winter glow.

The curtain rose to Cooil Hand Fluke playing Deck The Halls. And they were followed by Kirk Michael Chamber Orchestra and Platform Vocal Ensemble. This year's Cleveland Medal winner Debbie Gooding sang Manx Gaelic Christmas song Bee Dty Host while Aalish Kilgallon sang traditional carols.

Comedy was provided by Dot Tilbury and Geoff Corkish, including a Blue Tits open water swimming sketch. There was poetry from Simon Clarke and Johnny Kaighin. Eve Puzzar sang Christmas Lullaby while Orry Wilson performed Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas. The house band was made up of Frank Joughin, David Kilgallon, Katie Lawrence, Jamie Smith and Malcolm Stitt, who also performed a trad set on the night.

Original article and more photos: <http://tinyurl.com/ye4audfa> By Dave Kneale



Bree & Scran joined forces to perform folky Christmas tunes at Nobles Hospital (16 Dec 2023)



Clogaree Twoaie Manx Gaelic choir joined Mannin Music ukeleles and Ny Fennee dancers and harpists for a wonderful Christmas concert in Lezayre Church and Arts Centre (10 Dec 2023).



Photos: Valerie Caine

Attention all young musicians!

Want to become the next Jess Gillam or Sheku Kanneh-Mason? Want to elevate your talent and study your chosen instrument further? The Roz Kelly Bursary can support you in your studies! The Roz Kelly Bursary is a generous grant of £1,000 to fund travel to and participation in a UK based music summer school of your choice.

Who can apply?

Musicians between 16-21 years old

Isle of Man residents

All genres welcome - we celebrate the diversity of music!

How to apply?

Letter of application: 1 side of A4 to include

- Your full name, address and date of birth
- Contact email and phone number
- Details of musical interests and achievements to date
- The title and venue of the summer school you wish to attend
- What benefits you hope to gain from participating in the summer school
- A short written recommendation from your teacher or musical mentor
- If you are under 18, please include a short, signed and dated letter from your parent/ carer to confirm support of the application

Send this to: TheFMYO@gmail.com or Friends of the Manx Youth Orchestra, Windmill House, The Curragh, Ballaugh, Ramsey, IM7 5BJ

Deadline for applications: 26th February 2024 *Seize this great opportunity before time runs out!*



JOIN THE WORLDWIDE CELEBRATION OF MUSIC!

MAKEMUSICDAY.ORG | [#MAKEMUSICDAY](https://twitter.com/MAKEMUSICDAY)

NAMM

Register now!

Laa Jannoo Kiaull / Make Music Day is the world's biggest DIY music festival and continues to grow in the UK. Last year, 450 events took place involving more than 36,000 music-makers!

You can take part by organising your own event in your own community. Events can be big or small, indoors or outdoors, professional or amateur. They can take place in parks, town centres, libraries, schools, community centres, shopping centres, offices, care homes, or anywhere else - including online. They can feature jazz, folk, classical, dance, rock, R&B, EDM, rap, electronic, or any other genre you can think of, so long as they follow these three rules: Events must be FREE / Events must take place (or premier) on 21st June / Events must be about music. Registrations for Make Music Day 2024 are now open. Simply click on the link below and complete our short form to take part. <https://makemusicday.co.uk/>

Folk and Roots Music at The Institute 2024

The Big Wheel Blues, Roots and Folk Club

FEBRUARY

23RD



TIM EDEY IN CONCERT

The internationally acclaimed guitarist and melodeon player presents his amazing one man show.

The Institute, Laxey

Friday February 23rd 2024
Doors open 7:30pm.

Tickets just £15 from
www.etickets.im/et

TRIBUTE TO MARILYN CANNELL BEM: 1947-2023

Marilyn Cannell, who for a quarter of a century was the official accompanist at the Manx Guild, has died. She was the official accompanist at the Manx Guild for 25 years.

A retired teacher, Methodist local preacher and an accomplished musician, she was 76 and lived in Kirk Michael. She died peacefully at Hospice, surrounded by her family. Marilyn was also a long-time contributor to Manx Radio's *Thought for the Day* and *Just a Minute* features.

Tribute by the Guild committee

"Marilyn has a great sense of humour and this shows through in her self-penned material. She is an extremely talented person and is always pleasant".

The words spoken by Guild Chairman, Anne Clarke, in 2021 when Marilyn Cannell was awarded the British Empire Medal for her services to music. The Guild Committee and wider Guild Family were delighted when one of its most treasured and ardent supporters, Marilyn, was honoured with the BEM, and we all heartily celebrated this well-deserved award.

How we will miss this wonderful lady, Marilyn Cannell, who devoted her life to Manx music and culture, including our beloved Guild. Held closely in our thoughts at his time are husband John, daughters Ruth, Eleanor and Christiana and her wider family. Remembering late daughter Emily (a regular competitor in our Speech & Drama Classes).

Marilyn's history with The Guild stretched back almost 70 years, as she regularly competed in it as a young child. As an adult, her name is engraved on many trophies of the Public Speaking and Music Hall Classes. She was renowned for writing her own poetry and songs and in 2017, to mark the 125th Anniversary of The Guild, Marilyn wrote a special tribute, which went on to be played and sung by her at 'The Festival's Finest' celebratory concert.

Hailing from a highly musical family and, having been a regular on the Manx concert circuit, especially in Kirk Michael, Marilyn was also well-versed in accompanying friends and relatives on the piano. As a result, Gladys Skillicorn suggested that she become an official accompanist at The Guild; a role that she went on to relish; undertaking it to an exceedingly high standard for a quarter of a century.

In her 25 years' service, Marilyn was a dedicated and inspiring official accompanist. From the tiniest child to the Island's Cleveland Medal winners, she encouraged and cajoled in equal measure. She put hours of work and thought into ensuring that, with everybody she encountered, she brought the best out in them, playing an important, yet not dominant, part in Guild performances. She would gently 'lead in' competitors with her sensitive accompaniments, and had an amazing knack of being able to assist if things went awry! Frequently, while playing, Marilyn became a part of the action too, providing witty nods and gestures, especially during Songs from the Musicals Classes. Her stylish period costume and hat worn to accompany the Victorian & Edwardian Ballads became famous and always added to the occasion.

Marilyn loved The Guild, with friendships formed and memories made. She was a popular, kind and social figure each April at the Villa Marina, yet very practical and down-to-earth in her manner. She enjoyed being part of the general atmosphere, and latterly spent time as an audience member. Laughter and animated conversation could always be heard from her regular table in the Guild Café. The Guild Executive Committee and its wider family will greatly miss Marilyn. We are so proud of her and all her achievements. We now mourn the loss of a dear friend and her absence will be felt for many years to come.

A lovely song by Marilyn at the Michael Oie'll Verree in 2019:

<https://soundcloud.com/culture-vannin/our-oiell-verree-a-song-by-marilyn-cannell>

'Land Of My Birth' by Marilyn Cannell & sang by Mandy Griffin:

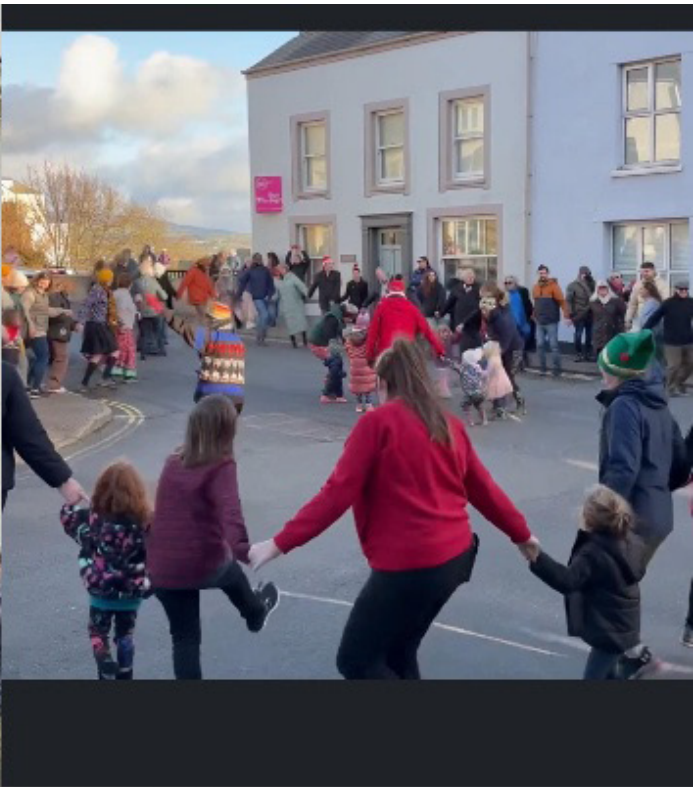
<https://soundcloud.com/manxliterature/land-of-my-birth-mandy-griffin-marilyn-cannell>





Yn Cheshaght Ghailckgagh Manx service in Castletown [top right] & Moinjer Veggey's Oie'll Verrey [all other photos] in Arbory Parish Hall (Jan 2024), featured the Lockdown Lovelies, Caarjyn Coidjagh, The White Boys, Owen Williams and more...

Hunt the Wren 2023 Watch as dozens sing and dance in the street to observe ancient Manx custom!! Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/36krc2ms>
Watch short video of the Ramsey wrenboys! <http://tinyurl.com/mfhkj9ya>





The Laare Vane (White Mare) made an appearance at the Douglas Hunt the Wren as well as Ramsey!
[Photo credits: James Franklin, Sue Jones, Chloe Woolley, Dave Kneale, Caroline Helps]

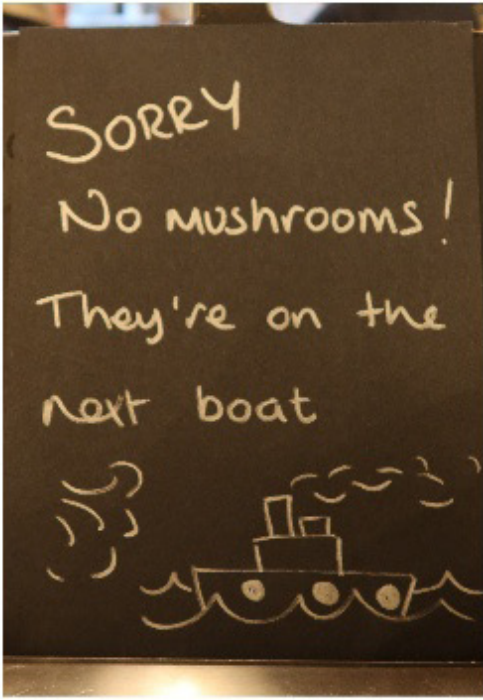


Arrane son Mannin winner Sarah Mercer, organiser and Manx delegate Fiona McArdle RBV, a visitor called Billy from Chester (who had come to visit the Island for the first time especially to watch the Arrane son Mannin!), and Matthew Warren, the composer of the winning entry, "Baatyn Pabyr".



Spotted on Instagram - this little sketch of the Mollags playing at Black Dog Oven in Peel (29th Dec 2023) www.instagram.com/p/C1mLCEut1bo/?igsh=MWxiYmJoMGFqanF5bQ== inky.dave (David Simonds - Cartoonist for *The Economist*) wrote:

"Very brave Isle Of Man folk band playing under semi cover in heavy rain.
Electrical crackles accompanied the double bass and flute".



Despite poor weather conditions and no mushrooms (pizza topping or band members?!), Boghnid & The Mollag Band delivered a lovely night of festive entertainment in the Black Dog Oven, 29 Dec 2023.



The Peel White Boys were out and about again at Christmas (16 Dec), travelling to Kirk Michael, Ramsey and Peel.

*photos:
Sue Jones & Valerie Caine*



Shane's acoustic arrangement of 'Ellan Vannin' gets a bite of the Big Apple Shane has created an acoustic arrangement of 'Ellan Vannin'

The Isle of Man's unofficial anthem of Ellan Vannin is set for a new audience in New York.

Manx musician Shane Kerwin, who left the island in 2009 to pursue a music career in New York, has recorded an acoustic version of the song with a group of musicians in the city.

Shane told Island Life: 'If you're from the Isle of Man Ellan Vannin is really the song. It's a song I can't remember not knowing, we sang it in primary school and at the end of brass band concerts where everyone would sing along to every word.

'It always felt special because it's a beautiful song specifically about the Isle of Man and sometimes you can feel a bit lost in the mist over here. After nearly 15 years living in New York hearing that melody and those words always brings me right back home.

'There also aren't that many recordings of it, I know there's one very famous one, but the song can work so many different ways and I had this arrangement idea for it with just acoustic instruments.'

The song features Shane on tin whistle, Mary-Elaine Jenkins on vocals and guitar, Alejandro Haaker on double bass and Jon Hildenstein on harmonium. Shane said: 'I was surprised that Alejandro was so taken by it. 'He grew up in Peru 20 metres from the Pacific Ocean but really connected with the words. So even though the lyrics seem very specific to me, like all great songs and poems, they are actually pretty universal.'

The track was recorded live together in the same room and is unedited.

'It's the hardest way to record anything but the result is a very real moment,' he said.'

'It's just the four of us, one night in Brooklyn playing this song one of us learned in primary school 3,500 miles away and I think everyone connected with it. That's pretty amazing when I think about it.'

Ellan Vannin is due be released on Saturday (January 6). It will be available on Spotify, Apple Music, Bandcamp and YouTube. Asked how he thought the song would be received, he said: 'New Yorkers love Manx music. 'It's an immigrant city with a deep appreciation of cultures from other places around the world and there's no more other place than the Isle of Man. 'There's so much great traditional Manx music and people love the story of this mystical place in the middle of the Irish Sea.'

Shane credits his mum Mairéad, who was born in Chicago but has lived in the island for more than 50 years, for sparking his love of Manx music. A Manx Gaelic speaker, she also plays the tin whistle.

'She always took me and my brother to anything related to Manx music,' he said. 'I



•••••

Youtube corner

Watch Shane's new
version of Ellan Vannin:

<https://youtu.be/7TrP6vYFIt0?si=R7YxV0dCx6mnieT->

•••••

didn't quite appreciate it at the time but now I do.' Meanwhile his dad Brian plays tuba in Crosby Silver Band and more recently with Douglas Town Band.

Shane said he had found Manx music has been a 'great way' to connect with the 'many incredible musicians living in New York'.

He is working on an album of traditional Manx dance tunes with Jon Hildenstein on the guitar that may surface this year. Talking about his future plans, he said: 'I'm always asking people to play Manx music. I have some ideas for a few traditional songs in Manx Gaelic I think it would be great to get someone in New York to sing. It's usually a pretty easy sell because the music is so great. 'One day I think it'd be great to do a Manx music festival in New York and introduce some Manx musicians to New Yorkers. There's so much talent here a lot of listening public are missing out on.'

Original article from IOM Newspapers: <http://tinyurl.com/mvtybmhk>

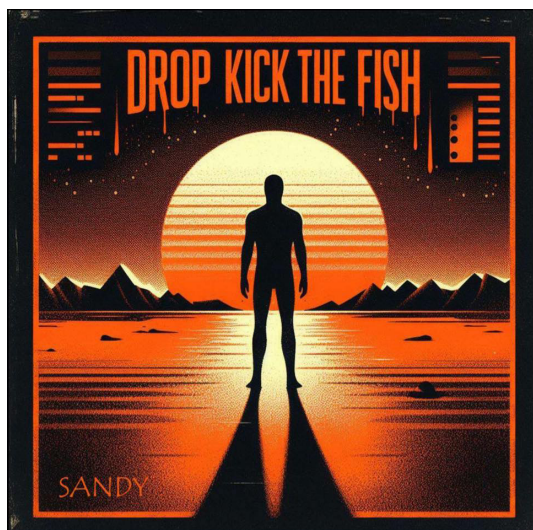
Gaelic choir Cliogaree Twoaie's class albums are now online for free!

Drogh Vraane & a Few Men

<https://soundcloud.com/culture-vannin/sets/drogh-vraane-and-a-few-men>

Nollick Ghennal

<https://soundcloud.com/culture-vannin/sets/nollick-ghennal-cliogaree>



FRANKIE ARCHER RECORDS MANX TUNE

Frankie Archer Music - 19 December 2023 · you asked for it - an unplanned experimental [rough] 12 minutes of sampler+fiddle, with the tune Tilly Trip by Breesha Maddrell. <https://frankiearchermusic.com>

Fresh from starring on Jools Holland's TV show, Northumbrian folk singer and fiddler Frankie treated fans to a sneak preview of her version of Manx tune Tilly Trip.

Young Manx band & Battle of the Band winners Drop Kick the Fish have released a new EP called Sandy: <http://tinyurl.com/2p88jb79>

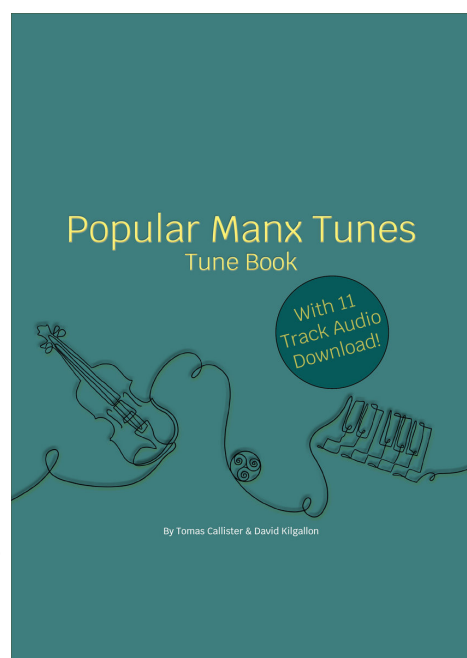
Popular Manx Tunes Tunebook from David Kilgallon Book/Magazine + Digital Album

Manx music, known for its captivating melodies and cultural richness, takes center stage in this exclusive tunebook. The "Popular Manx Tunes Tunebook" by Tomas Callister & David Kilgallon offers musicians and music enthusiasts an opportunity to immerse themselves in the enchanting world of Manx tradition.

Includes unlimited streaming of Popular Manx Tunes D Edition via the free Bandcamp app, plus high-quality download in MP3, FLAC and

Buy for £25:

<https://davidkilgallon.bandcamp.com/merch/popular-manx-tunes-tunebook-ships-december>



Harrish y Cheayn - Across the Sea

Flying the flag for Mann at a festival

A contingent of Manx musicians are looking forward to representing the island at this year's Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow.



The festival gets under way on Thursday next week (January 18) and continues until February 4.

Ruth Keggins will again be singing in the collaborative Celtic Odyssey project, following on from its success at the Festival Interceltique de Lorient in the summer.

The concert features artists from the eight Celtic nations and takes place at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on Thursday, January 25.

Ruth told Island Life: 'As well as the camaraderie of performing along with other musicians that I have so much respect for, I am always excited to share songs in Manx with audiences.'

'Songs are such a brilliant way of introducing people to Manx Gaelic; people always approach me after gigs saying that they're keen to go and find out more about Manx after hearing the songs.'

'For me, hearing that gives me almost as much of a rush as actually singing.'

Isla Callister will be playing fiddle with two bands, HEISK and TRIP.

'There's a bunch of Manxies coming up to play at Celtic this year which is great,' she said. 'I'll miss a few of them due to gig clashes but I'm looking forward to rounding off Celtic Connections by dancing to Mec Lir at Saint Luke's.'

Six-piece folk band HEISK, who are redefining the traditional music landscape by infusing Scottish roots with contemporary energy and a commitment to gender equality, are playing in the Tramway on January 25.

Isla said: 'We'll be celebrating Burns night this year the HEISK way - with dancing, sequins and glitter.'

'It will also mark the release of our brand new album Headstrong which reclaims the word and celebrates the strong women, witches and goddesses that inspired the music. Manx witch Tehi Tegi also gets a feature track - you can listen to the single now.'

And Isla will be playing in Glasgow-based six-piece TRIP at the New Auditorium at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on January 27.

'It's a gorgeous venue and one of the biggest Glasgow shows we will have done to date,' Isla said. 'We've been working away on the new material for our new album so audiences will be able to catch a preview.'

Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe and Daniel Quayle will be performing in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall's Strathclyde Suite on January 25 on the bill with Alana MacInnes Trio and ELIR. The duo released their debut album The Coast Road in 2022 and started touring the previous summer.

Elizabeth said: 'We're really looking forward to sharing our music at Celtic Connections this year. It will be our first time playing at the festival, although we've both attended the festival in the past.'

'It feels like a big deal for the festival to be recognising Isle of Man-based acts and it's really exciting for us to be able to contribute to that and do our bit to promote Manx music and culture abroad.'

And genre-busting quartet Mec Lir will be performing at Saint Luke's on the penultimate night of the festival, February 3. The band features Tomas Callister (fiddle), Adam Rhodes (bouzouki), David Kilgallon (keyboard) and Scots drummer Greg Barry. This year marks the 10th anniversary of Mec Lir performing.

'We're sharing the bill with Scots singer and good friend Beth Malcolm - it's set to be a real celebration of contemporary traditional music.'

They made their gig debut at Festival Interceltique de Lorient in 2014.

Original article:

www.iomtoday.co.im/news/entertainment/flying-the-flag-for-mann-at-a-festival-659976



'We're so excited to announce that we'll be playing at the Australian Celtic Festival in May as they celebrate their year of the Isle of Man and Ireland!' www.facebook.com/edbdqmusic



FESTIVAL 12-18 août 2024
INTERCELTIQUE
 DE LORIENT LA JEUNESSE DES PAYS CELTES

Matmatah • Soldat Louis
Cherish the Ladies • Rodrigo Cuevas
 The Bothy Band • Cécile Corbel • Ímar
 Celtic Odysée #3 • Julie Fowlis • Noon
 Zoë Conway • Calum Stewart • Fleuves
 Rura • Ruth Keggin • Project SMOK • Seo Linn
 NoGood Boyo • Cathy Bennett • Mec Lir • DigaBestr
 Matt Molloy • Valtos • Ryan Young • Emily Jane White
 Duncan Chisholm • An Danna Dub • Silvia Quesada • ...

53^{es} EMVOD AR GELTED



After the annual Cammag match (St John's, 26 Dec 2023), there was a trad music session in the Tynwald Inn. Many of the Manx musicians live or study across (off Island!) but were back in the Isle of Man for Christmas. Photos: Valerie Caine & Brook Wassall

RESEARCH NEWS

'Mona Douglas remembered'

A new playlist of oral history memories of one of the most important figures in Manx culture, Mona Douglas. Inevitably, when you carry out oral history recordings with people involved in Manx language, dance, music or wider culture, across the past 50 or so years, one name always comes up. Mona Douglas.

So we've been collecting in little memories of her over the past few years, but we only just thought to tie them together into one collection:

<http://tinyurl.com/vfy7db5y>

Gura mie eu, David Fisher, Joan Cowell, Ernie Cleator and members of Cliogaree Twoaie!

All interviews are available to be enjoyed in full amongst 150+ others on the Culture Vannin website: <https://culturevannin.im/watchlisten/oralhistory/>



Tallest on the right! The girls' choir which sang at Ellynyn-ny-Gael at Villa Marina yesterday.

Ellyn ny Gael perform at the Villa Marina 1960 - thanks to Stephen Miller for sending in

“MODERN NITE’ AT PORT ERIN” (1960)

A novel show in aid of the National Children’s Homes is being presented at the Port Erin Legion Hall next Friday (Sept. 23rd). It is described as a “modern nite” and will feature a number of young artists mainly rhythm groups. They include the Suedettes, the Zephyrs, the Sinners, the Meteors and the Hayseeds, Jimmy Maddocks and his trio along with magician Gus Alligan, Granville Christie and Norman Mills. Mr Jack Nivison, M.H.K. will be the compere and it looks like being a real rip-roaring night. For the young people in particular this should be a big draw.

[News from the South] ‘Modern Nite’ at Port Erin.” *Isle of Man Examiner* 15 September 1960: 9f.

A new world of music making on offer at the Port Erin Legion Hall, and the names of Manx groups to pursue further.

STEPHEN MILLER RBV

THE DANCES - Excerpt from ‘...while the others did some capers’: the Manx Traditional Dance revival 1929 to 1960 by Cinzia Curtis:

3. Unpublished Dances

3.1 The Mollag Dance.

There are no complete notes, descriptions or demonstrations of this dance, and it is possible that many fragments associated with it are in fact remembrances of other dances, such as White Boy’s, Bwoaill Baccagh or the Salmon Leap.

The dance was performed by a group of men on St Stephen’s Day and was said to inspire great fear in those who saw it. Each town had their own Mollag Band, as the groups of men were known. In 1935 Douglas collected a figure of a dance where the men struck one another, the informant remembering an incident where her son had broken his nose and smashed his jaw whilst performing. Stowell was informed of this and wrote the figure down, and it was said to be danced to the tunes of Hunt the Wren or Cutting the Turf (MNHL 09545 Box 21). However this fragment has not been found in Douglas or Stowell’s notes and has not been identified as relating to another dance. In Douglas’ 1937 paper the dance is associated with fishermen in Castletown, and later general townsmen and was said to cause great terror and was thought to be magical and druidical. In an address to Rushen Internment Camp in 1940, Douglas refers to a movement in which a turnip is pierced with swords and carried off as a trophy in place of an enemy’s head (MNHL 09545 Box 5).

This description is expanded slightly in Douglas’ paper for the Scottish Anthropological Society in 1948 where she says that the dance survived until recently in Castletown and that she hoped to complete the description soon. It was performed after the Wren Boys and was danced to the same tune. The dance was in the form of a circle, the men performing a kind of spiral action with their bodies and occasionally jumping and shouting, although hands were not joined. The costumes were described as very similar to those worn by the White Boys; white tunics with rags of cloth sewn on and tall hats. In 1957 in The Folklorist Douglas has evidently gathered further information. It was known that each town had a Mollag Band of eight or ten men and they wore rough white suits, open sleeveless coats and capes, tall blue or black felt hats as used to be manufactured in Ballasalla, cross gartering and they covered themselves in ivy and other greenery. They would dance through the streets shouting and leaping, and Douglas is sure that the stamping high reel step is included, although she offers no evidence for this.

In a manuscript meant for publication in Yn Lioran (date unknown) the most complete description of the ritual can be found although there is still no complete dance, reportedly because observers were too scared to watch properly. Each town and village is noted to have its own team and version of the dance. The use of white in the costumes appears to be a common factor; Castletown wore white trousers and blue sweaters, Ramsey wore white suits and black cloaks and wore high crowned blue or black felt hats. Each team was said to carry long staffs that were used in the dance and the staffs and dancers were decorated with ivy and other greenery. Each dancer was said to carry a ‘mollag’, or tar covered inflated pigs bladder used as small buoys, either on a string or attached to the staff, which they used to bang on doors, and sometimes people, as they passed. Each team seemed to have had a character called a fool, who had a blackened face and was often dressed as an animal. The important part of the dance appears to have been the high leaps and shouts at rhythmic intervals. It appears that this tradition also appeared in Ramsey, as dancers from this Parish reportedly would not associate with the sinister group, and elsewhere children were threatened with the Mollag Band if they misbehaved.

The fool was individual to each place and remembered quite clearly. In Maughold he was a sheep in a sheep skin with horns that butted people, Dalby it was a pig called Sonnys meaning good luck, in Castletown he was Bimbo the Bear and performed tricks including a death and resurrection pattern, and in both Douglas and Ramsey was a Sambo, similar to that in the White Boys. Douglas was shown a Mollag suit and sketched it. The information on Castletown team was collected by Stowell from Miss E Corrin whose father had been in a Mollag Band, and passed on to Douglas. The article appears to be accompanied by a song and demonstration of the ‘tripping step’ but these are not now extant.

It would appear that, in keeping with White Boys, Mylecharane’s March, the Salmon Leap and Bwoaill

Baccagh, this dance is part of a complete tradition of male ritual dancing similar to those found in England, Ireland and Cornwall which form part of the Morris tradition. Similarities can be seen with many examples such as the blacked-up man-woman character common in many Morris sets, such as that of Winster in Derbyshire, and the entire Bacup Coco-nut dance team. Bimbo's death and resurrection ritual is similar to that found in the Padstow 'obby oss' ritual in Cornwall and to that in Mylecharane's March (Kennedy: 1949). These distinct elements are evidently what have made the dances so memorable and yet it is evidently their similarities that have made them difficult to note as they are regularly confused with one another.

READ THE FULL THESIS:

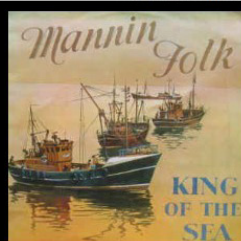
www.manxmusic.com/media/History%20photos/MANX%20DANCE%20THESIS%20Cinzia%20Curtis%202006.pdf

Kelly Records

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A Selection of Isle of Man Groups & Music Recorded by Kelly Records

Click on the various photos and text to access a range of Manx groups available on YouTube



Mannin Folk - King of the Sea (Ree Ny Marrey)
Label: Kelly Records : MAN 2
Format: Vinyl, LP, Stereo
Country: Isle of Man : Great Britain

Released: 1976
Genre: Folk, World, & Country
Style: Folk

Tracklist:

- 1 Flowers in the Valley
- 2 I Never Will Marry
- 3 Beggar Man
- 4 Mingulay Boat Song
- 5 Johnnie Miner
- 6 Smuggler's Lullaby
- 7 Donegal Danny



The Mannin Folk

The Mannin Folk have been the Isle of Man's most popular folk group since their formation in the early 1970s. This was their first album "King of the Sea" produced by Terry Clough for Kelly Records and recorded at the Eamonn Andrew's Studios in Dublin.

The band members are positioned from left to right on this photo below taken at Ramsey Harbour, IOM.

Francie Hughes :: Norman Clague
Marlene Peel :: John Liddle.



KELLY RECORDS

A recent post on Manx Nostalgia Facebook asked followers for information about this record of Ellan Vannin and The Manx Fishermen's Evening Hymn performed on the Hammond organ by Kenneth Dove from Ramsey. Do readers know any more?



www.facebook.com/groups/manxnostalgia/permalink/10161041119970049/?mibextid=uJRxr

Other Kelly Records are archived online by Terry Clough on

<https://kellyrecords.myfreesites.net/manx-musos> with lots of digitised Manx records from the 1960s and '70s to explore! Enjoy vintage songs from Triad, Mannin Folk, Green Ginger, Black Mass, Mike and Al, and a couple of tracks from the Ramsey Grammar School folk group 1976! Terry's Playlist: <http://tinyurl.com/bdzej89hm>

KMJ readers will particularly enjoy RGS Girls choir/folk group performing Smuggler's Lullaby: <http://tinyurl.com/5c4fmy2k>

& Peter O'Tavy: <http://tinyurl.com/yt7unyuK> Were you one of the young players?!

Rushen Silver Band

origins and early history [part 2]

by Maurice Powell

World War II

In December 1939 Surby band were 'enthusiastically received' at a fortnightly meeting of the Port St. Mary Band of Hope in the High Street Schoolroom and 'greatly contributed to the success of the evening.' In January the following year the band played at a Jumble Sale and Concert at the Arbory Parish Hall under the auspices of the Mothers' Union. The hall was packed to capacity and each item was loudly applauded. 'The local talent displayed . . . was of a singularly high standard, especially the playing of the Surby Band with its own "George Formby" ukelele and all'.*

* *Isle of Man Examiner* 26.01.1940.

'Surby Band's selections of popular airs were much enjoyed' in March at the Port St. Mary Band of Hope closing meeting for the winter session. In December the band was present at the Juvenile Tea and Entertainment of the Mona Rushen Rechabite Tent and, in addition to selections of popular pieces, there was an accordion duet, and a concertina solo.

The Ballafesson Wesley Guild social evening in February 1941 was once again enhanced by the presence of the band who gave a number of selections of popular pieces and mouth organ solos from Mr. Ernest Broadbent. There were similar events in March and November, and in December, a Juvenile Tea and Entertainment of the Mona Rushen Rechabite Tent. Popular selections, choruses, mouth organ and accordion pieces also featured at the Ballafesson Wesley Guild social evening in November 1942, and in December 1944 it was announced that 'The Surby Band proposes to serenade the district this Christmas' and make collections in aid of Noble's Hospital.

The post-war years

After the war the band continued to fulfil its regular engagements with the Rushen Juvenile Tent of Rechabites and Ballafesson Wesley Guild as it done without interruption throughout the years of conflict, almost certainly because most of the members were beyond the age of conscription. Between 1945 and 1950 two new conductors were associated with the band: Robert (Bob) Bridson, a cornet player who succeeded Jack Clague in 1947, and Maurice Duggan who succeeded him in November 1948. The Old Christmas Eve Service (Oeill Verrey) was celebrated at Kerrowkeil Methodist Church on 5th January 1947 when the band played several carols, and in April that year the annual tea and concert at Lower Foxdale Sunday School was enjoyed by 'friends from Ballafesson and the Surby Band'.

In January 1948 the band played selections at Arbory Parish Hall and led the community singing at a concert, the proceeds of which were devoted to the band's instrument fund. This is the first reference to the band endeavouring to acquire 'new instruments' at least some of which I assume were brass!* The band was present dispensing seasonal music in Colby on 19th and 26th December and in Douglas playing for the Old Folks Christmas at the House of Industry.

The first occasion brass instruments are specifically mentioned in connection with Surby Band was in the *Isle of Man Examiner* of 14th January 1949 when the band played at the Old Christmas Day Service at Kerrowkeil Chapel and included a trombone solo and a cornet duet in their programme.

* Some sources say that brass instruments first appeared in the band in 1945, although the band's website says 1944. Another source suggests that the band acquired an old brass cornet and three other brass instruments in August 1939, but I have been unable to verify this.

This article will continue in the next KMJ and be available in full on manxmusic.com soon



Mr Leighton Stowell (in white in centre of picture), headmaster of Ballasalla Primary School and leading Island folk dancer, shows his versatility by taking part in the rock 'n' roll session at the school on Friday, thoroughly enjoyed by foreign students who visited the Island under the auspices of the British Council.

Ballasalla goes Rock n Roll 1960 - spot Leighton Stowell!!

What is dance's value as a vehicle of propaganda under dictatorial and democratic governments?

This questionnaire asks global citizens to comparatively understand their dance experience under differently styled governments such as those in power in the UK, Spain and Russia. Please note that you don't have to be a dancer to complete this questionnaire but some questions with an upwards arrow (^) are directed towards those who have had dance experience. You can skip these questions if they do not apply to you. The study hopes to conclude that democratic and dictatorship governments each follow strategies that the other might adopt when funding dance as a political strategy.

<< A student at Performers College in Birmingham is conducting a short survey on national dance to help with their dissertation. If you'd like to take part, follow the link below.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfrPC_iXs426Pf_dwvGyjjP5Sl2-9lqk39d0hm1xZZbiENsDA/viewform?usp=sf_link



Perree Bane performing at Cregneash back in 1989. Photos by Ian Allen.

The Organist and the Agitator

Dr George Tootell in Germany

by Maurice Powell

A few days after the Isle of Man Symphony Orchestra's Gala Concert at the Villa Marina on 3rd December, a member of the audience and a regular listener to my Manx Radio programme 'A Little Light Music', Joan Cross, sent me an extract from a book entitled *Theatre Organ World*.* This now rare book consists of interviews with famous theatre and cinema organists, brief biographies, reminiscences and anecdotes from of their colourful lives, and advice to young organists, and featured a fascinating article by Dr George Tootell,** a well-known cinema organist and composer on the Island, about his visit to Germany in 1927 and 1928.

* *Theatre Organ World*, edited by Jack Courtney, Theatre World Publications, 1946 (p.94, 139-41), 'Cinema Organists and their instruments "Spotted" for your information and entertainment by famous writers, artists and musicians'.

** See Maurice Powell, *Dr George Tootell and A Legend of Man*, manxmusic.com February 2022.

Dr Tootell made his first appearance as a theatre organist in Germany at the Phoebus Palast, Nuremberg, in October 1927, and before an audience of 2,000 people performed 'an elaborate Fantasia on themes by Wagner and Liszt of his own composition, which caused an alarming uproar which to his relief turned out to be only excessive enthusiasm. He also played for German news reels and gave a series of Sunday recitals. He left Germany in January 1928 but returned that Spring for a five-month tour commencing in Berlin before moving on to Bratislava, Nuremberg and finally Munich.

It was in a Munich bierkeller that he experienced the strangest encounter of his tour, for as he was being served beer in what at first appeared to be 'a large glass salad bowl' the waiter whispered in his ear 'Adolf Hitler' and nodded in the direction of a nearby table occupied by a rowdy group of men. Dr Tootell surreptitiously glanced in their direction and noticed at once 'the figure with the wind-swept coiffure which afterwards became so notorious', the gross figure of (Ernst) Roehm, 'who later perished in a purge', and (Rudolf) Hess. He had experienced neither thrill nor alarm (as the waiter clearly had) and back in Nuremberg asked the theatre manager who Hitler was. 'Oh', he said, he's only an agitator – a wind bag!

Of other adventures in Bamberg where he learned 'what it cost to knock a policeman's helmet off', and in Vienna where he performed Honegger's superb 'train piece' *Pacific* 231 in an arrangement for organ and piano duet, he had not the space to elaborate on. However, his verdict on the Germans he met: '... in sociability and warm-heartedness, Bavaria corresponds to Lancashire'.

Andreas, December 2023.

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE MONTH

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

The theme of this year's **Aundyryn Kiaull-Theay Vannin / Manx Folk Awards** is the sea and the 200th anniversary of the RNLI. The set song for KS2 choir is "Roll Away" by Manx blues star Davy Knowles (now based in Chicago, USA) and arranged for choir by Katie Lawrence. Download the full sheet music here:

<https://culturevannin.im/media/PDF/Manx%20Folk%20Awards/MFA%202024%20SET%20SONGS.pdf>

Listen to Katie's choir sing it at last year's MFA! <https://youtu.be/VpB8xrOGjOs?si=k1MIE8RW0MvuUjzJ>

And Davy Knowles' original version: <http://tinyurl.com/45tk7wet>

Roll Away

Con Anima

Words and music by Davy Knowles
Arranged for choir and piano
by Katie Lawrence

8

S1 I've tak-en walks by the roll - ing

15

S1 sea, where the cliffs drop down to meet the big blue deep, I've breathed in the air that rolls

23

S1 ov - er these hills, I've breathed it in _____, but I've had my fill, I've got-ta

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2024

18 Jan - 4 Feb 2024 Celtic Connections

1 Biskee Brist playing at the National Art Gallery at the Manx Museum

1 Laa'l Breeshey concert, Mollag Band, Skeddan Jiarg & Caarjyn Coodjagh, Masonic Hall, Peel, admission by donation

2 Shennaghys Jiu Family Bingo Night

2 Ruby Biscoe-Taylor & Matt Kelly, Atholl Room, Peel Centenary Centre, 8pm, donations

23 – 24 The Star of India Musical, St Paul's Hall, Ramsey, 7.30pm, £10/£8

MARCH

1 – 2 The Star of India Musical, St Paul's Hall, Ramsey, 7.30pm, £10/£8

10 Battle of the Bands, Peel Centenary Centre, 6.30pm

17 – 22 DESC Aundyryn Kiaull-Theay Vannin / Manx Folk Awards, Douglas & St Johns

28 – 31 Shennaghys Jiu Festival, Ramsey & Peel

29 Spark Magical festival of creativity for children www.villagaiety.com/spark

APRIL & MAY

2 – 6 Pan-Celtic Festival, Carlow, Ireland

27 – 4 May The Manx Music, Speech & Dance Festival [Guild], Douglas

JUNE

21 Laa Jannoo Kiaull – Make Music Day

JULY

5 Tynwald Day

22 – 28 Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering www.celticgathering.im

AUGUST

12 - 18 Festival Interceltique de Lorient www.festival-interceltique.bzh/



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 Trad Session at O'Donnell's, Douglas

THURS 8pm Singing session at R.A.O.B. (Buffs) Club, Ramsey

FRI 8.30pm Trad session at The Mitre, Ramsey

FRI 8pm Trad session at The George Hotel, Castletown

Last **FRI** of month 9pm, Kiaull as Gaelg, Albert, Port St Mary

First **SUN** of month 1-4 Trad session in Laxey Sailing Club

Third **SUN** of month 1-4 Trad session in The Mitre, Kirk Michael

Stay up to date: www.facebook.com/TradMusicWeekendIsleofMan

~ SESSIONS ~

culture vannin

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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