

# KIAULL MANNINAGH JIU

Averil 2025 April

MANX MUSIC TODAY

## Annie Kissack RBV

**“If there is one person who truly lives and breathes Manx culture, and deserves to be Manannan’s Choice of the Year, it is Annie Kissack.”**

What a stunning way to sum up the Reih Bleeaney Vanannan for 2025!

Annie Kissack has been awarded the Isle of Man’s highest cultural honour for her lifelong contribution to creativity and education in Manx culture, with a particular emphasis on the Manx language, traditional and original song, music and choral arranging, poetry, literature and folklore.

Annie is someone who tells and shapes the stories of these shores with care, passion, and the deepest of integrity. She is one of life’s natural communicators, and her contagious enthusiasm and often no-nonsense delivery ensure that everyone, young and old, can get involved in or simply sit back and enjoy Manx music, song, and poetry. She wears her learning



lightly, though, for Annie has honed her knowledge for more than five decades and has an MA in Manx Studies from the University of Liverpool’s Centre for Manx Studies. She is equally at home in the Manx Museum archives or with her nose in old books as she is talking to people who hold a store of Manxness in themselves – and she is a good listener. All that she carries with her embodies this living spirit of the Manx tradition, as expressed in the poems, songs and music she creates; in so many ways, Annie represents the beating heart of the Isle of Man.

Annie’s interest in Manx Gaelic was first awakened by her teacher at Onchan School, Leslie Quilliam RBV, an interest encouraged by her parents who themselves subsequently started Manx lessons at night school and remained long-term supporters of the language. Annie and sister Jenny joined Mona Douglas’s Manx youth movement, Aeglagh Vannin in the mid 1960s. Alongside other children, Annie regularly participated in Manx-themed concerts, plays and competitions, including the Guild and Yn Chruinnaght. A talented singer and musician, she has represented the Isle of Man at inter-Celtic festivals from her teenage years right to the present day, as a soloist, and as part of groups such as Perree Bane dance group and Caarjyn Coidjagh Manx Gaelic choir. As an accordion, piano and whistle player, she was a founding member of the Arthur Caley Giant Band playing Manx tunes at festivals, ceilis, sessions, and weddings.

### *In this month’s edition...*

- “Fiddyl Noa” - new tune by Cara Rowles
- Shennaghys Jiu kicks off this week
- The story of the “Little Red Bird” song... so far!

Her musical arrangements and poetry have been recognised with awards and honours around the world. In 2001, she was the recipient of the inaugural award for artistic merit from the Daaue-Scoil in Northern Ireland, and in 2013 her songs and arrangements brought success for her choir, Caarjyn Coidjagh, at the Pan-Celtic Festival choral competitions. In short, she is a vital force in not only preserving and promoting, but also creatively developing the Isle of Man's rich tapestry of cultural heritage.

With a strong personality, creative mind and drive to inspire others, Annie seemingly never tires of promoting the Manx language, music and culture, both in her own time and through her long career as a teacher at the Manx Gaelic medium school, Bunscoil Ghaelgagh.

In 1989, inspired by a competition at Yn Chruinnaght, she gathered musical friends together to form Caarjyn Coidjagh (Friends Together), which has just celebrated its 35th year. The choir continues to perform Annie's arrangements of Manx songs along with her own compositions in Manx, and her output has been truly incredible. Her long-term involvement in Yn Chruinnaght was recognised by the festival committee, too, who were very proud to have her as their President for many years.

As young parents living in Cregneash, Annie and her husband Phil Gawne ensured that the Manx language was passed onto their children. The couple played a key role in establishing Manx language provision for early years, helping set up Yn Chied Chesmad (The First Step) playgroup in 1993 and developing Moonjer Veggey (Little People), a pre-school initiative in 1996. These early successes led to the establishment of the Bunscoil Ghaelgagh in 2001, driven by the growing demand for a Manx language primary school.

Annie's commitment to the Island's culture is also reflected in her creative and educational contributions. Her songs range from fun and catchy to serious and contemplative; she can pen a simple rhyme to aid learning in the classroom, and conjure up a complex choral work that can fill a whole cathedral with beauty and wonder.

One of her most significant publications for Moonjer Veggey was Roie Mygeayrt, a book and CD of easy Manx songs which has gone on to play a key role in the teaching of the language to families and new learners. She has also produced several albums with her choir Caarjyn Coidjagh, written large-scale works such as 'Erin Gaelgagh' (Manx Mass), and contributed to music projects like Solllys, The Promised Land, and The Mona's Isle Project, as well as supporting educational resources such as Ree ny Marrey and the Coraa Choral Pack.

Annie has helped establish the Bunscoil Ghaelgagh in St Johns as a place of excellence for the Manx language and performing arts. Over twenty years, she has co-written seven Manx Gaelic musicals with fellow teacher, Aalin Clague, resulting in dozens of songs which are enjoyed by hundreds of children, their families, and the Manx speaking community alike. Her songs have been published in the Kiaull yn Theay series, and in the Christmas song book, Nollick Ghennal, and are loved and sung widely.

In more recent years, Annie has been rightfully recognised as a poet, actor and playwright. She was crowned the fifth Manx Bard in 2018, publishing her collection of poems, Mona Sings in 2022, as well as having poems published in various international anthologies. Her poems describe the Isle of Man's landscape, people and the sense of place, and this is also reflected in her plays, such as In-Between Times. An authority on the Manx dialect, she is often consulted by the BBC and recently voiced one of the characters in their radio play of Hall Caine's The Manxman.

An encouraging voice to all who seek to discover Manx culture, Annie's impact on the Isle of Man is immeasurable, and she is most deserving of the Reih Bleeaney Vanannan award. The Island is certainly richer for her contribution to Manx culture, for all that she has done and continues to do.

The Reih Bleeaney Vanannan or Manannan's Choice of the Year is the Isle of Man's highest cultural honour, awarded by Culture Vannin, and decided by a selection panel made up of representatives from Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh, Yn Chruinnaght, Manx National Heritage, IOM Arts Council and Culture Vannin itself.

Annie was presented with the medal at a concert at Barregarrow Methodist Chapel, along with £500 prize money from Culture Vannin. She nominated Moonjer Veggey Manx language educational charity for a further donation of £500.

PHOTOS & INTERVIEWS: <https://culturevannin.im/rbv/annie-kissack-887060/>





# SHENNAGHYS JIU 2025

3RD - 6TH APRIL

## 2025 Performers

Gerry O'Connor

Kekezza

Teeval

Share na Veg

Jamie Smith

Fochabers

Lucy Gilmore

Ny Fennee Ceilidh Band

Ny Claarseyryn Twoaie

Mark Lawrence

Arabella Ayen

Ny Fennee

David Kilgallon

Echoes of Killarney

Beccy Hurst

The McKeaney Sisters

Skeddan Jiarg

Manx Trinity School of Irish Dance

Scran

Loïc Heurteaut

Perree Bane

VIEW THE FULL PROGRAMME:

<https://shennaghysjiu.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Shennaghys-Jiu-2025.pdf>

In Association with

**CORLETT'S** PRESENTS...

**A CELTIC MUSIC SHOWCASE**



**Teeval**



**The Echoes of Killarney**

**Gerry O'Connor**

**SUNDAY 6th April - 3PM**

**TICKETS £15**

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [WWW.CENTENARYCENTRE.COM](http://WWW.CENTENARYCENTRE.COM)  
OR FIND US AT [WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM](http://WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM)  
TICKETS ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE DOOR (UNLESS SOLD OUT)

**Culture VANNIN**

**SHENNAGHYS JIU**

AT THE COURTHOUSE, RAMSEY



10.00 A.M. -	NY FENNEE HARPISTS	
10.40 A.M. -	BECCY HURST	
11.00 A.M. -	THE ECHOES OF KILLARNEY	
11.30 A.M.	KATHLEEN MACDONALD & ANGUS GILPIN	
12.00 A.M. -	KEKEZZA	
12.30 P.M. -	FOOD AND FOLK	
1.30 P.M. -	PERREE BANE	
2.00 P.M. -	TRINITY SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCE	

**2025**

TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE COURTHOUSE, RAMSEY

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SAT	5TH APRIL	10.00 AM	2.30 PM
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KINDLY SPONSORED BY:

**Culture VANNIN**  **CORLETT'S**  **THE FYNODEREE DISTILLERY** 

J.J. Byrne Barbers, Millichaps, The Mitre, W.E. Teares Butchers, Beach Cottage, The Central, James Lee Shellfish Ltd

# Manx Folk Awards Review 2025

## Aundyryn Kiavull-Theay Vannin 2025



**Over 1300 entries**

**5 days**

**97 classes**

**12 choirs**

**29 schools**

**363 dancers**

**575 singers**

**21 harpists**

**15 adjudicators**

**9 brass & woodwind players**

**& 2 organisers....**



With grateful thanks to Kensington Arts, Trinity Methodist Church, St John's Methodist Hall & Royal Chapel Hall and the Malcolm Scott Dickinson Charitable Trust. And to Paul Boulton and Caitlin Bennett. Gura mie eu.

Friday 21st KEYSTAGE 1	Sunday 23rd SECONDARY	Monday 24th KEYSTAGE 2	Tuesday 25th KEYSTAGE 2
Malcolm Scott Dickinson Charitable Trust FolkTastic Winner: Buchan Pre Prep School Choir	Malcolm Scott Dickinson Charitable Trust FolkTastic Winner: Resa Brown	Malcolm Scott Dickinson Charitable Trust FolkTastic Winner: Arbory School	Malcolm Scott Dickinson Charitable Trust FolkTastic Winner: Cronk y Berry School

You can enjoy some of the highlights with the MFA photo album here:

<https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjC66rK>

More to come soon...



The children and staff work so hard to get ready for the Folk Awards and there is such a lovely buzz in the run up to the event.

We were made to feel really welcome at the Kensington Arts – what a fabulous venue.

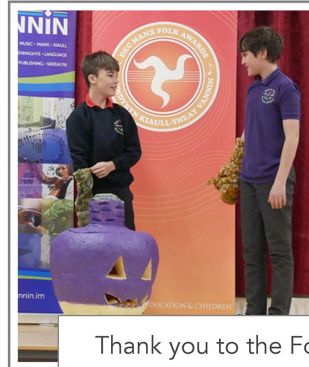
Thank you so much for all your help and support over the past years, I feel like I have come a long way from the first time you came to help me muster up something that could be an arrangement. Our large folk group at school is as dishevelled as ever and my conducting doesn't look any less odd, but super pleased the children are so committed and excited about it!

The folk awards take so much organisation, Chloë and SisterJo do an absolutely amazing job pulling it all together. It's such a wonderful, supportive event to showcase children's talent and hard work.

It was the best surprise to get the Folkastic Award, so proud of where we have come with folk music at Arbory!

Thank you very much. The children loved the experience and for many of them it was their first competition experience.

I just wanted to say a huge thank you and congratulate you all on the Manx Folk Awards. They have clearly grown and grown and the standard of performances today was outstanding.



Thank you to the Folk Awards organisers for creating such a relaxed performance opportunity for the children



The experience has been immensely rewarding, allowing students to develop their confidence, refine their skills and deepen their appreciation for Manx culture.



Really positive and fair adjudication done in a lovely relaxed environment.



**MOYLLEY AS SOYLLEY**

Three solo dancers received special certificates from Rachel Clarkson on behalf of the Manx Folk Dance Society:

**Kitty Kilgallon KS1; Millie Harrison KS2;  
Lowenna Joughin KS3-5**



Films from the 2025 MFA: <https://tinyurl.com/8cpn6yud>  
and <https://tinyurl.com/ykbnjdjr>

# Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering: A Celebration of Music, Dance & Culture

This summer, immerse yourself in the heart of Celtic music and culture at Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering, taking place from 21st – 27th July 2025 in the picturesque town of Peel and the Island's capital, Douglas. The festival brings together outstanding musicians from across Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, and the Isle of Man for a week of concerts, ceilis, sessions and the chance to explore this enchanting island.

The 2025 lineup is set to be one of the most exciting yet, featuring powerhouse performances from RURA, Calum Stewart Quartet, The McGoldrick Family, Rachel Hair & Ron Jappy, Avanc, The Annie Baylis Band and The Brim. Festival favourites The Mega Manx Ceili Band return to get everyone dancing, while the Celtic Myths & Legends showcase will weave magical storytelling through Celtic language, music and song.

For those looking to dive deeper into their craft, festival workshops offer an opportunity to learn from top musicians, with sessions in traditional music, song and dance led by this year's stellar lineup.

Beyond the festival, the Isle of Man is an explorer's paradise, offering breathtaking coastal walks, scenic cycling routes, and a fantastic food scene. Whether you're wandering ancient castles or soaking up the festival atmosphere in Peel's lively pubs, there's something for everyone.

Saving 15% overall, the Festival Pass is great value at £73 per person, and includes entry to the following events:

- **Monday 21st July: RURA with Tree ny Kiare**
- **Tuesday 22nd July: Song Night**
- **Wednesday 23rd July: Family Ceili**
- **Thursday 24th July: Celtic Myths and Legends Concert**
- **\*Friday 25th July: Mega Manx Ceili**
- **Saturday 26th July: Calum Stewart Quartet with Smooïnaghtyn Mie**

\*Please note that there will also be an acoustic concert on the Friday evening in St Johns Royal Chapel with harp & guitar duo Rachel Hair & Ron Jappy, plus young Manx harp group Claasagh who will perform Rachel's Archibald Knox inspired work, 'The Deer's Cry'. This acoustic concert is not included in the Festival Pass.

**BUY FESTIVAL PASS:** [www.tickettailor.com/events/ynchruinnaght/1649543](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/ynchruinnaght/1649543)

Other acts to be featured throughout festival include The McGoldrick Family, The Annie Baylis Band, The Brim, Avanc, Ellie Beaton, The Barleyshakes and tonnes of Manx acts. Plus, loads of free gigs, sessions, workshops, talks, etc.

*Individual tickets coming soon....*

INTRODUCING

YN CHRUINNAGHT

**Celtic**

GATHERING

21st - 27th July 2025

ynchruinnaght.com

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

RURA  
THE MCGOLDRICK FAMILY  
CALUM STEWART  
RACHEL HAIR & RON JAPPY  
AVANC  
THE ANNIE BAYLISS BAND  
THE BRIM





## Music Pathways: Exploring the Modern Industry - Public Session 2 – So, You Want to Release Music?

This session will take place on March 31st, 2025, from 7:30-9pm at Kensington Arts in Douglas.

This FREE solo session, hosted by Callum Rowe, is for local songwriters, producers, recording artists and anybody wanting to put their music out into the world. It will help people to understand music distributors (how to upload your music to various platforms), royalties (how to earn from released music), and gaining radio coverage via BBC Introducing.

Callum will also go through how to put together an EPK, and will look at how record deals work as well as the recent rise in independent artists, weighing up the pros and cons of a DIY music career by using some case studies of artists that have risen through independence recently.

Secure your free spot here -

<https://kensingtonarts.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/873670700>

**ISLE OF MAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA & SLAITHWAITE PHILHARMONIC**  
present an  
**EXTRAORDINARY CONCERT**

**Mahler : Symphony no. 1**  
**Britten : Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra**  
**& music by Chabrier, Mussorgsky & Haydn Wood**

**Leaders :**  
Juliet Tranter  
Matthew Chadbond

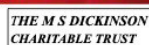
**Conductors :**  
Graham Kirkland  
Benjamin Ellin

**Narrator :**  
Charles Guard

Tickets on sale from 10th March  
Circle - Adult : £20, Concessions : £18, Child : £5  
Stalls - Adult : £18, Concessions : £16, Child : £5  
Tel : 600555 [www.villagalety.com](http://www.villagalety.com)

**EXTRA ISLE OF MAN ARTS COUNCIL ORDINARY 60 years EVENTS**

**SATURDAY 17TH MAY 2025**  
**VILLA MARINA 7.30PM**



## The Manx Music, Speech & Dance festival

\*Entries closing date 1st Feb 2025\*

Villa Marina, Douglas  
from 26th April - 3rd May

<https://www.manxmusicfestival.org/>

[www.facebook.com/ManxMusicFestival](http://www.facebook.com/ManxMusicFestival)





## KNOWING OUR PLACES

A Talk by Annie Kissack, RBV, the Fifth Manx Bard

Guild Room, adjoining Peel Methodist Church  
Atholl Street, Peel  
2.30pm Saturday 5th April

ALL WELCOME

Annie will talk about the background to her poetry and read to us some of her work, which ranges from the wry and amusing to very moving as she explores a range of subjects associated with the Island.

banglanc mannagh y chothas, lym celciagh  manx branch of the  
celtic congress

Live Roots Music IOM presents:



Playing iconic Bluegrass and Blues classics  
With local support from John Gregory AKA Blue John

 ERIN ARTS CENTRE **SOLD OUT**  
www.ticketsource.com  
FRIDAY 4TH APRIL  
Doors open 7PM, show starts from 8PM

LAXEY INSTITUTE\*  
SATURDAY 5TH APRIL  
Doors open 7:30PM,  
show starts from 8PM

ATHOLL ROOM (PEEL CENTENARY CENTRE)  **SOLD OUT**  
www.etickets.im/bjm  
SUNDAY 6TH APRIL  
Doors open 7PM, show starts from 8PM

 **TICKETS AVAILABLE!**  
www.etickets.im/bjm

\* Celebrating the music of 'O Brother, Where Art Thou?'

Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering

## Coffee Morning

• Kiaull as Caffee •  
*Music and Coffee*

Saturday 10th May

 10am - 12pm 

Ebenezer Hall • Kirk Michael

Have a cup of tea and a slice of cake whilst you listen to lovely Manx music and singing.

£1 entry fee includes a cup of tea or coffee

~ Cake stall and raffle ~ .

All proceeds go to supporting the Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering Festival for 2025.

More info on the website below

[www.celticgathering.im](http://www.celticgathering.im)



Central Hotel, Ramsey Sat 5th April at 5pm



SAVE THE DATE!

<https://makemusicday.org/>

MAKE  
MUSIC

ISLE OF MAN  
Laa Jannoo Kiaull  
JUNE 21





*Have you recently completed any amazing Manx themed art or poetry?*

*Have you entered the Manx Folk Awards or the Guild?*

*Have any of your students done any extraordinary community work?*

The North American Manx Association (NAMA) is once again presenting awards for outstanding achievement in Manx language, art, music and dance by young people under the age of 18 years on the Isle of Man, along with two additional awards for older recipients, these include a community award.

The awards are arranged in five categories and for each category a silver medal has been minted for presentation to suitable candidates.

- Outstanding achievement in Manx music and/or dance
- Key Stage 3 - 5; Outstanding achievement in Manx Language
- Key Stage 1 & 2; Award for commitment to Manx Language
- Outstanding achievement in Arts and Crafts
- Outstanding contribution to Manx Culture by a student under 18
- Outstanding contribution to Manx Culture by a student over 18
- Outstanding contribution to Manx Culture by a group of young people under 25
- Manx Community Award

Nomination form on [www.manxmusic.com](http://www.manxmusic.com)

**The closing date for nominations is Friday 9th May 2025.**

**The awards will be held on Thursday 10th July 2-4pm in Douglas**



MANX MAY DAY AND EVENING FIRE FESTIVAL

# Sunday 4th May

BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND

## Peel Beach & Promenade

2.00pm - Music & Food / Viking Games  
8.45pm - Fire Show - 10.00pm - Fireworks

SPONSORED BY

ELEMENT ISLE



FREE EVENT - SUITABLE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



**Oie Voaldyn Veg**  
Summer/Winter fancy dress parade  
**Sunday May 4th 4pm**

Meet at Fenella Beach Peel at the slipway for 3.50pm  
All children must be accompanied by an adult at start and finish of parade.

**Fancy dress prizes:**  
\*For Winter: pram/buggy, best 5 and under  
best 8 and under  
best 11 and under  
\*For Summer: pram/buggy, best 5 and under  
best 8 and under  
best 11 and under

QR to Oie Voaldyn website



### CALLUM BREW PRESENTS:

Inside The Mind Of Songwriters!!!

### Charity Live Music Event



DATE: 10 May 2025

VENUE: Black Dog Oven, Peel

Time: 2pm

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO:



Other Performers Include:  
Mike Wade & Ian Allen  
Heikki Koistinen  
Theresa McNulty  
Jon Lightfield

And So much more!!

# THE SOUND OF MANN

Isle of Man Primary Schools in Concert

Tuesday 17th June 2025  
VILLA MARINA ROYAL HALL - 7pm

With support from  
**Culture VANNIN**





# kiaul1 noa



Chibbyr from Yn Cholloo

by Meayll

NEW RELEASE

Meayll [Gyp Buggane, Juan Maddrell & Joff Whitten] was a band formed for a project to write and record a set of original music on the Calf of Man.

For Yn Cholloo: *we recorded the vocals by chanting in an underground water reserve / well, the microphones were setup at one end of the well and we chanted at the other end.*

Drums - *The drums were played on the Foghorns by the Lighthouses*

Fiddle - *The fiddle sound was recorded by holding the fiddle into the wind and recording the resonant sound produced*

Guitar - *Guitar drone recorded inside the Grain Silo at the Farmhouse*

*The above sounds were then merged together into a short piece of music*

Chibbyr is Manx / Gaelg for Well / Spring

LISTEN: <https://meayll.bandcamp.com/track/chibbyr>

MORE TRACKS: <https://meayll.bandcamp.com/album/yn-cholloo>

## Uiseog ~ Ushag Veg Ruy - Huartan from Belfast

[www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61555357964690](http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61555357964690)



Huartan's latest single, 'Uiseog', is a fresh take on 'Ushag Veg Ruy,' a traditional lullaby from the Isle of Man. It tells the story of a little red lark seeking warmth during a harsh winter. After suffering several sleepless nights in the cold, the tiny bird finally finds comfort between two leaves.

Alongside the traditional song's theme of finding refuge in a harsh and unkind world – a sentiment we can all relate to in these challenging times – Uiseog's cover art also takes inspiration from the words of Bobby Sands: "Suffering the loss of her liberty, the lark, a delicate songbird, will no longer sing her little heart out. Her tyrant, the man committed to her imprisonment, may pressure, and even torture the bird to comply to his wishes and change herself to suit his pleasure or benefit. And still, the lark will refuse."

WATCH / LISTEN: [https://youtu.be/ZanpAVsMQ28?si=\\_vJzn3ATa1SdbI0V](https://youtu.be/ZanpAVsMQ28?si=_vJzn3ATa1SdbI0V)

Read about Ushag Veg Ruy / Little Red Bird in the RESEARCH pages >>



Spotify Manx Music Playlist

<https://tinyurl.com/yckzsa79>



## Harrish y Cheayn - Across the Sea



*My Misty Isle* – a new song dedicated to the Isle of Man and written by David Kemp. David was born in Ramsey and lived in Andreas until his family migrated to Australia. *My Misty Isle* is composed “in memory of some of the magic places I visited on my 2015 and 2018 trips to the Isle of Man”. <https://youtu.be/jMpGNuQl9Lg?si=lioNxxwqu7MKFR3FJ>



**Happy 20th Anniversary to Shenanigan's Banned!** This rip-roaring folk band specialise in trad Irish, Manx songs, rollicking ribald ballads and a variety of sing-along type songs, and they hosted a birthday bash concert in Laxey earlier this month!!

<https://tinyurl.com/5aymmvh2>



# RESEARCH NEWS

An article for *The Manx Independent* (20th March 2025) written by Dr Chloë Woolley, Manx Music Development Officer at Culture Vannin.

## Little Red Bird - the island's most popular and well-travelled lullaby

Our feathered friends feature in a good number of old Manx folk songs, with the blackbird, cuckoo, dove and cormorant all inspiring songs. Not all are happy tales of course, as the tiny wren gets hunted every St Stephen's Day and St Catherine's poor hen comes to a sticky end in "Kiark Katreeney Marroo" (Catherine's Hen is Dead)!

However, the Isle of Man's most popular and well-travelled lullaby tells the story of a "Little Red Bird" and its trouble trying to find a place to sleep for the night.

"Ushag Veg Ruy" in Manx, "Little Red Bird" has been recorded and published countless times, and is a set song in the forthcoming DESC Manx Folk Awards.

Each chorus, the singer asks the bird where it slept last night. The answer: "on the top of a briar... on a bush... on the ridge of a roof"... And oh! what a wretched sleep!"

In the final verse, the bird eventually finds a comfortable nights' sleep, wrapped up between two leaves.

At least three different melodies have been collected in the Isle of Man.

An early version is a playground skipping or ring-dance, and another is a cradle song featured in WH Gill's *Manx National Songs* (1896) as "Hush, Little Darling".

Nowadays, the most familiar melody is a lullaby noted in the 1920s by PW Caine who'd learnt it from his father. Mona Douglas included this version in *Twelve Manx Folk Songs* volume 2, with piano arrangement by English composer, Arnold Foster.

Published in London in 1928, this book brought the song to a wider audience. It was included BBC Singing Together radio series for schools in 1959 and again in 1986, and features on an early 78 gramophone record.

Mona Douglas observed that "the traffic was by no means all one way, and that one of the songs that the Scottish Gaels had taken to was the Manx lullaby "Ushag Veg Ruy". This gave rise to "Uiseag Bheag Ruadh" being sung on TV by Scottish singer Anne Lorne Gillies and it being performed by a children's choir in the Royal National Mòd. Likewise, it has been heard being sung in Ireland and as far as New Orleans!

Where a bird or lover has slept or is travelling is a universal theme in folk song which often follows a question and answer structure. "Little Red Bird" is linked to Irish song, "Cé a chuirfidh tú liom" (Whom will you send with me?) and it's not dissimilar to Lead Belly's 1940s blues hit "In the Pines", with its chorus; "My girl, my girl, don't you lie to me. Where did you sleep last night?" An American folk song possibly from the civil war, "In the Pines" was later recorded by grunge band Nirvana.

Over the years, "Little Red Bird" has been recorded by Manx artists including Brian Stowell, David Fisher, Emma Christian, Moot, Ruth Keggin and Bernard Caine, and it continues to inspire, with recent interpretations being "Uiseog" by Belfast-based 'tradronica' band Huartan, and a version by Austrian duo, Spinning Wheel, who learnt the song from manxmusic.com! The song has inspired art too – the little red bird is beautifully illustrated by Archibald Knox in the 1924 edition of *Manx Fairy Tales*, captured on camera by Mark Kinrade, animated by Anna Soloveva, and is the cover of Huartan's new single! Our little red bird continues to fly far and wide!

Photo credit: "Uiseog" by Huartan - cover art by Cian Hogan

LEARN the song: <https://www.manxmusic.com/learn/songs/ushag-veg-ruy/>



## A Forgotten Child Entertainer

by Maurice Powell

Countless young performers have taken part in countless pantomimes, variety and musical shows and entertainments large and small, and their names appear in hundreds of reports of these events in the local newspapers from the 1890s, the decade when the Isle of Man tourist industry finally got into its stride. A handful of these child entertainers became well-known throughout the island and one such was Harry Smith, a photograph of whom survives in the picture archive of the Manx Museum.\*

\* Reference PG/7815/1, c. 1902. The photograph may depict him in a pantomime role, or dancing his famous Cake Walk as he is holding the hand of a just visible young dancer next to him. A second photograph, PG/7815/4, shows Harry in full Highland costume together with his two brothers and sister.

Harry was born on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1894, the eldest of four children of Alf (Alfred) Smith (born c. 1872), a well-known amateur entertainer, and his wife Margaret.\* Alf was sometimes billed as an acrobat with 'an Island-wide fame', a singer of comic songs, a dancer, a performer in comic sketches and a member of the Douglas Amateur Minstrels, of whom Harry Wood was the musical director and at whose entertainments the young Haydn Wood often contributed a violin solo during the 1890s. The first reference to young



Harry Smith himself in the local newspapers is in the *Peel City Guardian* of 27<sup>th</sup> January 1900 when the Mona Variety Company made their debut at the Peel Centenary Centre with a two-hour entertainment having recently performed at a concert in Glen Helen in aid of the Boer War Fund. After the tea interval father and son 'completely entranced' the crowd with 'wonderful feats of acrobatic 'manoeuvring' culminating in balancing young Harry on the top rung of a ladder. Harry then appeared as 'Gussie' the clown and Alf Smith 'gave an excellent exhibition of sword drill'. Harry was presented with a medal as a token of appreciation, and it was predicted that the five-year-old boy had 'a bright future.'

\* In the 1901 Isle of Man Census his profession is listed as 'Foremen Engineer, appointed Isle Phone Company', living at 5, Richmond Grove in the Parish of Onchan. Harry is mistakenly referred to as 'Henry' in the Census.

We next hear of Harry from a report in the *Mona's Herald* of a concert in October 1903 in aid of the St. Mary's (Church) Schools in the Wellington Hall, Douglas, when he and his partner Eveleen Lund danced a Cake Walk\* and father and son danced a sailor's hornpipe. Harry and his young companion repeated their Cake Walk routine at the Empire Theatre, Douglas, in November during the interval of the Dartrey Repertoire Company's presentation of the villainous melodrama *Lady Audley's Secret* and were well received. Before the year was out, they participated in a Calk Walk Competition at the Derby Castle at end of November, and in



December at a variety show at the Wellington Hall when the pair were awarded first prize at another Cake Walk Competition, and 'Little' Harry danced a Jig.

\* See Maurice Powell: *That Takes the Cake*, manxmusic.com.

Master Harry Smith and Miss Smith, possibly his younger sister Elsie, performed a Cake Walk and danced a hornpipe at the annual Oddfellows Tea at the Oddfellows Hall, Douglas in January 1904, and Eveleen Lund and Harry, 'two very clever children', who, according to the *Isle of Man Times*, brought 'charm to the ensemble'. The following month the pair won great success when playing the title roles in the Manx Fairy Extravaganza *Babes in the Wood* at the Gaiety Theatre with 'such a verve and winsome grace that one would fain catch them and hug them'.\* Master Harry, Master Willie and Miss Elsie Smith appeared at the annual Port St. Mary Football Club Tea and Concert in March and performed their Cake Walk.

\* Dubbed 'the Manx Gilbert and Sullivan' in the local newspapers, the music was arranged by Harry Wood and the play was written by William Hanby. One popular song survives from the production: Harry Wood's *The Pride of Port-le-Murra*.

Later that year *The Mona's Herald* carried a report of a meeting of the School Board before the High Bailiff when Alfred Smith was fined three shillings because the poor attendances of young Harry and his brother Cecil (possibly William's middle name) at school as they were on one occasion 'engaged in some kind of charity performance'.

### Little stars shine the brightest



In January 1905 Harry and his siblings took part in the Minstrel style entertainment *The Gay Little C\*\*\*\** at the Empire Theatre, and according to the *Manx Sun* Harry sang a song, took part in a Cake Walk and performed three national dances: a Hornpipe, a Scottish Reel and an Irish Jig. National dances in appropriate costumes now became Harry's most popular routine. The entertainment at the Gaiety Theatre in March was a benefit concert for Alf Smith and featured a Cake Walk Competition, Plantation Frolics, C\*\*\* Songs, Big Boot Dancing *a la* Little Tich and Sand Dancing. The event was arranged by F. C. Poulter\* with Haydn Wood leading the band. Harry, Alfred, Elsie and Willie all took part, with Harry performing his national dances in costume.

\* See Maurice Powell: *Charles Frederick Poulter*, manxmuisc.com.

Cake Walk competitions at a 'Boys' Benefit entertainment at Buxton's Pierrot Village, Central Promenade, in September were followed in December an 'At Home' and special tea hosted by newly elected Councillor D. Flynn (Victoria Ward) for eight hundred children with entertainment from a gramophone, a diorama, limelight views and costume dances from Master Harry Smith. The year ended with a St. Stephen's Day Loyal Good Anchorage Lodge of Oddfellows Reunion with Ramsey Town Band and Harry performing his national dances.

The next few years seem to have been leaner ones for entertainments that the Smith family took part in. A concert at the Industrial Home in February 1906 featuring 'that clever dancer' Master Harry Smith; Frederick Buxton's Benefit Entertainment at the Pierrot Village in August 1906 and a Douglas Head Minstrel show in August 1907. Eight hundred people attended the Douglas Boarding House Association annual winter concert, dance and whist drive at the Derby Castle in January 1908 including Harry and his sister, and in April that year Harry played the part of Joseph in the pantomime *Cinderella* at the Gaiety in aid of the Boot and Clothing and Free Dinners to Poor Children Funds.

The last references in the local newspapers to Harry and his family occur after an Empire Day Boy Scout Display in 1910 at the Gaiety Theatre during which 'Scout W. Smith and Guide Elsie Smith performed a jig', and Master Harry represented England in the presentation of the colours. Finally, in September that year, Masters Fred (not a family member) and Harry Smith gave a pincushion to Miss Kathleen H. Thornevell on the occasion of her marriage to Mr Bertram Edward Sargeant, destined to be a figure of some importance in the political life of the Island until after World War II.

There is no reference to the Smith family in the 1911 Isle of Man Census.

### Andreas, March 2025

#### THE HALLELUJAH BAND (1883)

SIR,—If the Hallelujah Band is going out of existence in Castletown, surely that is no reason for showing such an evil spirit towards the ministers of prosperous churches in the town and neighbourhood. On Tuesday evening, there was a meeting held in the Town Hall, for the purpose, I presume of doing good. All went off as usual until one great gun got up, who has been pushing himself to the front of late, much to the annoyance and disgust of those who know him. Well, this orator, in the course of his address, charged a clergyman residing a little distance out of Castletown, with threatening his servants with instant dismissal if they went near the meetings of the Hallelujah Band. The impression left on the minds of the audience was, that the clergyman referred to was the respected vicar of the parish. If it is true (which is very unlikely), surely the time of the Band could be occupied better than by abusing a gentleman who has done them no harm. Anyone who knows anything of the vicar, will not believe such a statement, although it came from a person of title; and he must remember that a Castletown audience will not listen to a disparaging word said against their worthy vicar, who, by his Christian example, by his liberal spirit, and by his noble actions, has endeared himself to all his parishioners, dissenters as well as churchmen. My object in penning these lines is not to bring this under the notice of the vicar (who I should hope would not demean himself by noticing such an attack emanating from such a vile source), but rather to warn the officers of the Band against such conduct, as it brings discredit on those in command as well as on the Band as a whole. I would earnestly recommend them to put a stop once and for ever to the wind-bag of Tuesday night, and they will thereby raise themselves again in the esteem and estimation of the public, and, if not annoyed by any more abuse, greater number of people will attend the meetings. I do trust the officers of the Band will take the hint, and not put an untimely end to their usefulness in Castletown by allowing such things to occur.

AMICUS.

May 30th, 1883.

Pseud [signed as "Amicus"]. "[Letter to the Editor] The Hallelujah Band." *Isle of Man Times* 2 June 1883: [3]f.

The Hallelujah Band first appeared in the Island in 1882, and was a Temperance movement that attracted adherents in the literal hundreds judging from contemporary reports in the Insular press and is a topic for further study. It later gained a base in Ramsey in the North, where it established an Assembly Room at the Methodist New Connexion Chapel on Bowring Road. As can be seen by the letter, not all welcomed the coming of the Band and music making can divide as well as unite.

STEPHEN MILLER RBV



# TRANSCRIPTION OF THE MONTH

see [www.manxmusic.com](http://www.manxmusic.com) for more printable pieces of Manx music

## Fiddyl Noa

Cara Rowles

5

10

15

### *Fiddyl Noa – New Fiddle*

A brand new tune written by Cara Rowles, who won the KS2 class for a new composition in the Manx idiom at the 2025 Manx Folk Awards.

Cara had recently taken possession of a new *Joughin Violin*, hand built from sycamore and oak from Kirk Michael, with a top plate made of reclaimed pine from the Laxey Wheel renovations!

Here is Cara with the fiddle maker, Greg Joughin!

*Joughin Violins* are available to buy in Mannin Music in Peel.

[www.facebook.com/JoughinViolins](https://www.facebook.com/JoughinViolins)

[www.manninmusic.shop/](http://www.manninmusic.shop/)



# CALENDAR

## APRIL

3 - 6 Shennaghys Jiu, Ramsey & Peel  
<https://shennaghysjiu.com/>

5 Knowing our Places – talk by Annie  
Kissack RBV, 2.30pm, Peel Methodist Guild  
Room

11 – 13 North Atlantic Song Convention,  
Edinburgh

26 – 3 May The Manx Music, Speech &  
Dance festival [Guild]

[www.manxmusicfestival.org/](http://www.manxmusicfestival.org/)

## MAY

4 Oie Voaldyn, Peel

10 Yn Chruinnaght Kiaull as Caffee – Coffee  
Morning, Ebenezer Hall, Kirk Michael,  
10am – 12pm £1

10 Inside the Mind of Songwriters, in aid of  
Isle Listen, Black Dog Oven, 2pm

17 Isle of Man Symphony Orchestra  
concert, Villa Marina, 7.30pm

## JUNE

17 The Sound of Mann, Villa Marina, 7pm

21 Laa Jannoo Kiaull / Make Music Day

27 Laa Columb <https://www.laacolumbkilley.org/>

## JULY

7 Tynwald Day

21 – 27 Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering

[www.celticgathering.im](http://www.celticgathering.im)

## AUGUST

1 – 10 Festival Interceltique de Lorient

## SEPTEMBER

23 European Folk Day

<https://www.europeanfolkday.eu/>

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

[www.manxmusic.com](http://www.manxmusic.com) & keep in touch at  
[www.facebook.com/groups/manxmusicanddance](https://www.facebook.com/groups/manxmusicanddance)

**MON** 8pm Trad session at The George Hotel, Castletown

**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. (Bufs) Club, Ramsey

**FRI** 8.30pm Trad session at The Mitre, Ramsey

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

Each **SUN** 12.30-4 Trad session:

**1st Sunday** of Month Laxey Sailing Club

**2nd Sunday** – Douglas Venue

**3rd Sunday** – Blackdog Oven, Peel

**4th Sunday** Woodbourne Pub, Douglas – Slow session 4pm – 6pm

Stay up to date: [www.facebook.com/TradMusicWeekendIsleofMan](https://www.facebook.com/TradMusicWeekendIsleofMan)

~ SESSIONS ~

~ SESSIONS ~

## culture vannin

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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