

# KIAULL MANNINAGH JIU

Toshiaght Arree 2025 February

MANX MUSIC TODAY

## “Kirree Veg”: Arrane Son Mannin’s winning song!

Last Saturday (18th January) there was a great turn out for this year’s **Arrane Son Mannin** competition.

This year’s winning song was performed by ‘Thurrick’, Sue Harrison and Rob Middleton, who will now represent the Isle of Man in April at this year’s **Pan Celtic song competition** in Carlow, Ireland.

Judges spoke highly of the winning song, “Kirree Veg” (Little Kirree), written by Sue Harrison, commenting that the song was well performed and the lyrics had a strong story rooted in Celtic storytelling traditions.

The Arrane son Mannin competition is organised by Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh with kind support from Culture Vannin.

Entries for Arrane Son Mannin 2026 will open in September 2025, follow Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh for more information.

Sue Harrison and Rob Middleton with judges Annie Kissack and Peddyr Crellin

(Image: Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh)

More info: [www.facebook.com/groups/189022277929020](https://www.facebook.com/groups/189022277929020)

<https://ycg.im/>

### In this month’s edition...

- *Learn a Taizé chant in Manx*
- *Manx music in ABRSM harp exam syllabus!*
- *Oral History with Ronnie MGowan from The Phantoms*



Culture  
VANNIN





**Arrane Son Mannin - Song for Mann**, included performances from Un Chora Gaelic choir, harpist Resa Brown accompanying Sarah Mercer, mini members of Skeddan Jiarg, Frank Joughin and Jamie Smith, ASM song winners Rob Middleton & Sue Harrison, plus an impromptu ceili!! *photos by Valerie Caine*

# AUNDYRYN KIAULL-THEAY VANNIN / MANX FOLK AWARDS 2025

Young people are being invited to celebrate the Isle of Man's rural traditions and vibrant cultural identity by entering the Manx Folk Awards (Aundyryn Kiaull-Theay Vannin) in March.

More than 1,000 school children showcased their talent and passion for traditional Manx music, dance, song, and language in 2024.

This year's five-day programme, organised by the Department of Education, Sport and Culture, and Culture Vannin, will get under way in venues across Douglas and St John's on Thursday 20 March, and this year's theme is the Manx countryside and farming.

Jo Callister, organiser and DESC Advisory Teacher for the Manx Curriculum, said: "The Manx Folk Awards have earned a reputation for their inclusive and welcoming atmosphere by focusing on participation and enjoyment, rather than competition and formality.

"The support and dedication of teachers plays a huge role in the success of the awards, and we are immensely grateful for their continued enthusiasm."

Fellow organiser, Dr Chloë Woolley from Culture Vannin, added: "The event celebrates the creativity, talent, and living culture of our young people in a way that's fun, inclusive, and accessible. This year's theme provides a wonderful opportunity to explore the stories, music, and traditions of farming and rural life that are central to our Island's heritage."

Each day a special 'Folktastic' award, sponsored by the Malcolm Scott Dickinson Charitable Trust, will be presented to a student who delivers an exceptional performance, demonstrates creativity, or makes a contribution that embodies the spirit of the event.

Young people can register for more than 90 different classes online, or through their school, before 7 February.

For more information, including the full schedule and entry details, please visit

[www.manxmusic.com/schools/manx-folk-awards/](http://www.manxmusic.com/schools/manx-folk-awards/)



## **CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES - Friday 7th February!**

**Thursday 20th March KS1&2 Recitation/Manx language (St Johns)**

**Friday 21st March KS1 & Preschool (Douglas Kensington Arts & Rosemount Church)**

**Sunday 23rd March Secondary (Douglas Kensington Arts)**

**Monday 24th March KS2 Instrumental (Douglas Kensington Arts & Rosemount Church)**

**Tuesday 25th March KS2 Song & Dance (Douglas Kensington Arts & Rosemount Church)**

Watch a selection of films from previous Manx Folk Awards:

[https://culturevannin.im/watchlisten/videos/video\\_archive\\_index/](https://culturevannin.im/watchlisten/videos/video_archive_index/)



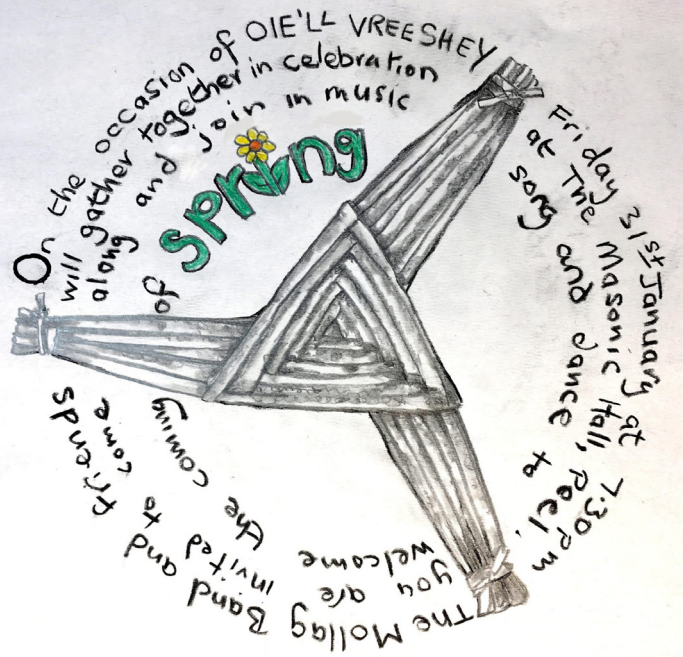
# Family Bingo Night

Friday 31st January



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

Free Admission



On the occasion of OIE'LL VREESHEY  
Friday 31st January at 7.30pm, The  
Mollag Band and friends will gather  
together in celebration at the Masonic  
Hall, Peel. You are invited to come  
along and join in music, song and  
dance to welcome the coming of  
SPRING! Donations welcomed.

## Folk and Roots Music at The Institute 2025

The Big Wheel Blues and Roots Club

MARCH  
9<sup>TH</sup>



### KRIS DREVER & CHRIS STOUT

Two icons of Scottish roots culture in concert in Laxey!

The Institute, Laxey

Sunday March 9th 2025  
Doors open 7:30pm.

Tickets just £15 from  
[www.etickets.im/et](http://www.etickets.im/et)

PHOTO CREDIT:  
@MANXLOAGHTANPRODUCE

PROUD TO PARTNER  
BIOSPHERE  
ISLE-OF-MAN

THE WELBECK

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR  
**MANX  
PRODUCE  
WEEKEND**

**28 FEBRUARY -  
2 MARCH**

13 MONA DRIVE, DOUGLAS

RSVP  
Welbeck Hotel 01624 675663  
[mail@welbeckhotel.com](mailto:mail@welbeckhotel.com)

Manx Loaghtans

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# MUSEUM OF THE MOON

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Drinks



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EXTRA ISLE OF MAN  
ARTS COUNCIL  
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60 years EVENTS

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS - MINE'S A SHANTY

**Sunday 9th February, 7pm** ~ Celebrate the arrival of this stunning art installation with music from popular entertainers MINE'S A SHANTY. Prepare to be mesmerized by the giant moon replica, and as you sing along with the shanty boys, indulge in delicious canapes, with wine or soft drinks. Join us for an out-of-this-world experience that will leave you gazing at the moon in a whole new light.

Don't miss this unique event under the glowing lunar presence.  
Tickets £20: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhtc746>

**ELIZABETH**  
DAVIDSON-BLYTHE  
& DANIEL QUAYLE

**SAT 15 FEB**  
PEEL CATHEDRAL • 8PM

£10 • TICKETS & INFO - TRAD.IM

MIDNIGHT MANGO

The search is on to find the next  
**MANX YOUTH BARD**

A unique opportunity to take part in continuing the prestigious cultural legacy of the Isle of Man, and promoting the Island's unique heritage.

Full details of how to enter can be found on the Manx Bard Facebook page: [facebook.com/ManxBard](https://facebook.com/ManxBard), or by emailing [manxbard@gmail.com](mailto:manxbard@gmail.com)

Entries to be received on or before midnight on Friday 28th February 2025.  
Competition and inauguration - evening of Friday 7th March 2025.

|  |   |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|
|  |   |  |   |  |   |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Manx Youth Bard:<br>Holly MacRae | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Manx Youth Bard:<br>Xander Shirriff | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Manx Youth Bard:<br>Britha Yasodaran | 4 <sup>th</sup> Manx Youth Bard:<br>Ivo Petrova | 5 <sup>th</sup> Manx Youth Bard:<br>Hadassah Smith | 6 <sup>th</sup> Manx Youth Bard:<br>Nekall Kilani |

An iconic cultural post, kindly sponsored by Aura Bar & Bistro.  
With special thanks also for continued support from Isle of Man Arts Council and Culture Vannin.

Sponsored by Supported by

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# Concert & Fest Noz with *Neear Nesañ*

Saturday 15th Feb Onchan Parish Hall 7pm

Lors Landat / Thomas Moisson / Adam Rhodes / David Kilgallon

Neear Nesañ bring to you a one off night of Breton & Manx musical entertainment, featuring Manx musicians Adam Rhodes & David Kilgallon and Lors Landat & Thomas Moisson from Brittany.

Their concert showcases the effortless blend between music of the Isle of Man and Brittany.

Visiting Breton musicians, Lors & Thomas will later get everyone up their feet for Breton Style Ceili 'Fest Noz' - not to be missed!

BYOB

£15 / £7 KIDS



TICKETS: <https://tinyurl.com/3jebahpt>

Thanks to the Isle of Man Arts Council for supporting the visit of these fantastic musicians.



David Kilgallon says:

*The Neear Nesañ trip is really about getting back together after a bit of a break. We're going to be producing new material, and visiting schools to talk about the links between our Island and Brittany... we aim to visit six thanks to the Arts Council for sponsorship.*

*At the weekend we'll be playing in Fyn Bar in Ramsey where there is also a Valentine's themed evening! And Saturday afternoon (time tbc) will see a free Breton music workshop, then concert starting 7pm followed by fest noz 8.30pm in Onchan Parish Hall.*

WATCH Neear Nesañ: A Breton-Manx Collaboration: <https://tinyurl.com/2exudea2>

WATCH the Breton-Manx Collaboration concert: <https://tinyurl.com/yrn3yp2s>





The Kegeesh Ommidjagh [foolish fortnight] continued well into January with a selection of entertaining Oie'll Verrees in Fyn Bar, Ramsey (organised by Shennaghys Jiu), Laxey Christ Church (Yn Cheshaght Ghailckagh) and Arbory Parish Hall (Moonjey Veggye).

Top left clockwise: Aalish Kilgallon singing "The Mother's Carol" in Manx; The Lockdown Lovelies with their amusing Manx music hall ditties; and Manx tunes from Amy Palmer, Owen Williams and James McNulty.



Left: Caarjyn Cooidjagh singing in Laxey.

Photo credit: Valerie Caine



## Manx music on the syllabus!

Congratulations to **Rachel Hair : Harp Player** whose harp arrangement of 'Chyndaa yn Bwoailley' appears in the newest ABRSM exam syllabus!

Rachel writes: "This is the tune used for the Manx couple dance of the same name. I think this is the first time a tune from the Isle of Man has been included in the harp syllabus, and mmm, trying to find out if it's also the first Manx tune ever to be included in any ABRSM syllabus".

What an enormous achievement, especially as it means that people taking their Grade 2 exam will be playing Manx music all over the world!

The tune is from 'Journey with the Harp from Home,' which is one of Rachel's many books containing Manx music for harp. More information is available from:

[www.rachelhair.com](http://www.rachelhair.com)

More information about the dance & tune:

<https://manxmusic.com/learn/dances/chyndaa-yn-bwoailley/>

*Composers from the Isle of Man with original pieces featured in ABRSM and Trinity exam syllabuses include Dave Rowles for drum kit and Peter Kneale for trombone and tenor horn.*



## NEW SINGLE from

Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe

& Daniel Quayle

## Dawn & Dusk

Out Now!

[>>](http://emubands.ffm.to/dawnanddusk)



Spotify  
Manx Music  
Playlist  
<https://tinyurl.com/c4c247wd>



# Harrish y Cheayn - Across the Sea

## NORTH ATLANTIC SONG CONVENTION

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND, 11-13 APRIL 2025

*"Connecting Cultures Through Song"*

Workshops | Song Circles | Concerts | Panels | Discussions | & More

[www.northatlanticsong.com](http://www.northatlanticsong.com)



Access Folk

Traditional Music to Run

TRACS



[www.northatlanticsong.com](http://www.northatlanticsong.com)

Manx Gaelic singer Ruth Keggin will be taking part in the convention.

Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe  
& Daniel Quayle **have lots of  
international gigs coming up...**

22 MAR 2025 The Niel Gow Festival, Dunkeld,  
Scotland

01 MAY 2025 Shetland Folk Festival

03 JUN 2025 Fiery Bird, Woking, Surrey

04 JUN 2025 Cafe #9, Sheffield

05 JUN 2025 Chapel Arts Centre, Bath

06 JUN 2025 Prema Arts Centre, Dursley,  
Gloucestershire

13 JUN 2025 The Mix Helston, Cornwall

14 JUN 2025 Gower Folk Festival, Wales

23 AUG 2025 Between the Trees Bridgend, Wales

24 AUG 2025 Found Festival, Buckinghamshire

<https://trad.im/shows/>

### Festival Interceltique de Lorient

Salon - Alan Stivell - Le Vent du Nord & l'ONIB

Colum Stewart & Celtic Odyssey #4 - Talisk

Míamh Dúnná - Red Hot Chili Pipers - The Kilkennys - Startjenn - Lónasa

Mary Bergin - Red Cordell - Xobler Diaz - Norman-Martin Quintet

Molwenn Kerbell - Flock - Allenda - Annie Boyles - Ndika - Élodie Joffré

Ylli - Gross - Soirée Bouge (en Celta) - Astru Blou - TRIP - Kathleen MacLennan

Buain Baidé - Baidé - Tacki Frogs - Bring Ceannasa - Taff Baglin - All Harbor



# RESEARCH NEWS

Each month, Dr Chloë Woolley, Manx Music Development Officer at Culture Vannin, looks at a well-known Manx song and its history.

## Invocation to St. Bridget – A song of good fortune on the household

The 31st of January marks Oie'll Vreeshey; the Eve of Saint Bridget's feast day. In the past, it was believed that the saint would wander the Isle of Man that evening searching for a place to sleep.

A big candle was lit, spare bed made, and bread, cheese and ale were left out on the table with the door open all night. Next morning, if the food had gone and the bed had been slept in, then your household would benefit from good fortune.

"Invocation to St. Bridget," a Gaelic song collected by Mona Douglas from Mrs Bridson of Glen Maye, denotes how revered this saint, known as 'Breeshey' in Manx, was in the Isle of Man.

These words were sung at the door before the household retired to bed...

*Vreeshey, Vreeshey... Tar gys y thie aym noght... Oh, foshil-jee yn dorrys da Breeshey, As lhig da Breeshey cheet stiagh... tar oo gys y thie aym noght.*

Breeshey, Breeshey... Come to my home tonight. ... Oh, open the door to Breeshey, And let Breeshey come in... Come to my home tonight.

Additional verses were recently composed by Greg Joughin and Julie Matthews from The Mollag Band, and you can join in with the song at their Oie'll Vreeshey concert on the 31st January in Peel Masonic Hall. The song is available to learn on [manxmusic.com](http://manxmusic.com), with recordings to enjoy by Emma Christian, Ruth Keggins and Isla Callister.

Patron saint of the parish of Bride, Bridget came to the Isle of Man to receive the veil from Saint Maughold and she founded The Nunnery in Douglas. She was its first Abbess, and it's believed that she ended her days there, with her body later being transported to Ireland for burial besides Saint Patrick and Saint Columba.

"Chibbyr Vreeshey" or St. Bridget's Well still remains on The Nunnery grounds, where it was said that an attendant had lived in fear of the fairies and their beautiful music heard at the well, after a terrifying encounter with them left her blind!

Saint Bridget's Day, or Laa'l Breeshey, on the 1st of February marks the start of spring, and Victorian composer and folksong collector William H. Gill composed this song in her honour: Welcome Bridget, to our dwelling! At one open door we stand; Filled with hope our hearts are swelling, Filled with flowers in every hand.

So, sing the invocation on the 31st January and ensure you make Breeshey feel welcome in your home, and you'll be guaranteed to have good fortune for the year ahead!

**LEARN THE SONG:** [www.manxmusic.com/learn/songs/invocation-to-st-bridget/](http://www.manxmusic.com/learn/songs/invocation-to-st-bridget/)

**Mooijer Veggey activity pack to download:** <https://tinyurl.com/44b94ycj>

Photo: Banner featuring Saint Bridget, taken by Culture Vannin from within Kirk Bride.





# Bronze Sculpture Commemorating 'Mother of Manx Music'

Monday 4th January 2025 marked 100 years since the death of Miss Mary Louisa Wood, founder of the Manx Music Festival



A special event commemorating Miss ML Wood (1839-1925) took place on the 4th at St Matthew's Church in Douglas, featuring the unveiling of a bronze bust of the 'Mother of Manx Music', created by local artist Stephanie Quayle and displayed on a custom wooden plinth created by local artist Graham Hall.



The bust can be found under the St Cecilia stained glass in St Matthew's ladies' chapel. Biography: <https://tinyurl.com/3cru8pe2>

photo credits - Zoe Cannell & Manx Music Festival

## 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](https://www.facebook.com/ManxMusicFestival)





Born 1839.



Died 1925.

THE LATE MISS M. L. WOOD. A.R.C.O.

## PROPOSED MEMORIAL FOR MISS M. L. WOOD.

### MUSICAL TUITION FOR STUDENTS.

[Reprinted from "The Isle of Man Times," April 8th, 1925.]

The Committee of the Manx Music Festival have had under consideration the question of a memorial to the late Miss M. L. Wood, and some appropriate and lasting recognition of her great work for music in the Island, and of the affection in which she was held by the Manx people. It has been finally decided that steps should be taken to raise a fund to be known as the "M. L. Wood Scholarship Fund," the income from which should be devoted to the payment of the musical tuition fees of Manx boys and girls who justify themselves at the Music Festival. Representatives have been appointed in every district of the Island, except Douglas, to whom will fall the task of raising funds, either by means of concerts or individual subscriptions, or in any other way, as each district may think fit.

The Music Festival Committee felt that to ensure the success of the scheme the sympathies of "The Isle of Man Times" should, if possible, be enlisted, and a deputation waited upon the late Mr J. A. Brown with that object in view. Our late Editor, with his accustomed generosity, at once promised to give the memorial the fullest support, and to allow subscriptions to be sent to "The Isle of Man Times," the firm acting as Treasurer to the Fund. Similar appeals made through the columns of "The Isle of Man Times" have always met with unvarying success, and the members of the Music Festival Committee feel that the success of this appeal is assured.

Collecting boxes will be placed in convenient places in The Palace during the Music Festival week, and

donations may be placed in these boxes. A slip will be published with the programme, drawing attention to the memorial. Subscriptions may be sent to the persons whose names appear in the appended list, and to the office of "The Isle of Man Times." As the busy season is at hand, the fund will be kept open until well on in the autumn, so as to enable the concerts, etc., to be arranged in the various districts with more chance of success.

The following is the list of persons to whom subscriptions may be sent:—

Douglas: "The Isle of Man Times."

Peel: Mr. Thomas Watterson, 13, Patrick Street; Miss E. Callister, 25, Michael Street.

Castletown: Mrs Roberts; Mr. W. H. Cubbon.

Ballasalla: Mr. W. C. Cubbon.

Port Erin, Port St. Mary, Arbory: Mr. W. H. Connall, J.P.; Mr. H. P. Kelly.

Ramsey, Maughold, Lezayre: Mrs. H. K. Callow; Mr. A. H. Teare, H.K.

Foxdale, St. John's: Mr. W. E. Callister.

Sulby, Lezayre: Mr. W. C. Southward, M.L.C., and Miss Southward.

Ouchan: Mr. W. A. Craine, North Cliff; Mrs. Keene, Falkland Terrace.

Crosby: Mrs. Gelling, Cyprus House.

Laxey: Mr. J. W. Walton, J.P.

Andreas, Jurby, Bride: Miss Connie Radcliffe, Ohio Cottage, Andreas.

Michael, Ballaugh: Mr. J. D. Kelly, Michael.



**BOOIL BACCAGH:**  
A Traditional Manx dance

GEORGE BRODERICK  
Universität Mannheim

ABSTRACT:

*In 2006 Cinzia Curtis produced a detailed MA-thesis for the then Centre for Manx Studies, University of Liverpool, on the Manx traditional dance revival. One of the dances she discusses is Booil Baccagh, a traditional dance involving sequels of knife-throwing. The origin and meaning of the name has to date remained uncertain. This short note seeks to elucidate matters.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Entitled ‘...while the others did some capers’: *the Manx Traditional Dance Revival 1929 to 1960*, the thesis first of all outlines in brief the Manx dancing tradition during the nineteenth century before discussing in detail the circumstances of the revival and those involved in it during the twentieth century. In this regard two names come to the fore: Mona Douglas (1898-1987) and Philip Leighton Stowell (1897-1978). In the second part of her thesis Cinzia Curtis discusses the known forty-four existing dances, whether traditional or composed.<sup>1</sup> The dance *Booil Baccagh* (here *Bwoaill Baccagh*) features as Dance 1.26 in CURTIS (2006: 38-39).

2. THE DANCE BOOIL / BWOAILL BACCAGH

This dance features both in *Rinkaghyn Vannin* (n.d. [1983]: 45-46) and in CURTIS (2006: 38-39). In order to demonstrate the various sequences involving the knives, we tabulate the various movements of the dance in detail, as provided in *Rinkaghyn Vannin* [n.d. 1983]: 45-46:

A dance for six men noted by Mona Douglas from various persons but a most complete description and demonstration of steps and figures were from Ceasar [Caesar] Cashen, James Quine and William Quane, Peel.

[There then follows the tune to the dance in staff notation].

Music Movements

- A1 Bars 1-8 Men dance round on a circular track and form two lines facing each other. The step is R.L.R. Flick forward instead of a hop. Each man carries a short fisherman's knife tucked into his belt.  
B1 Bars 1-8 1st man (top left) draws his knife and throws it down in front of him so that its point is embedded in the ground and it is upright. Opposite man, who should be about two feet down the line, does the same immediately after him. This is continued down the line, does the same immediately after him. This is continued down the line. Positions should then be:

|     |   |   |   |   |   |        |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
|     | 2 | 4 | 6 |   |   |        |
| TOP | * | * | * | * | * | knives |
|     | 1 | 3 | 5 |   |   |        |

**READ the full article:**

[www.manxmusic.com/media/History%20photos/Booil%20Baccagh%20G%20Broderick.pdf](http://www.manxmusic.com/media/History%20photos/Booil%20Baccagh%20G%20Broderick.pdf)



## NEW - ORAL HISTORY

### ***A conversation with Ronnie McGowan about the early years of rock'n'roll in the Isle of Man, particularly as a musician in The Phantoms.***

From the moment Ronnie first heard Elvis on the radio, he knew that this was the music for him. However, no music shops in the Isle of Man stocked guitars at that time, let alone amplifiers or sheet music. So, Ronnie and his friends who formed The Phantoms set about re-creating by ear music they heard from the radio (or in Colebourn's!). With an amplifier made by a friend in Billown, they performed the first live amplified music heard in the Isle of Man, with fiercely divergent reactions between the younger and older audiences.

From the earliest days forging a new path in the Island, through to playing alongside visiting bands like the Rolling Stones, Chuck Berry, the Hollies, the Crickets, the Shadows, Lulu and others, Ronnie describes from the inside an incredibly important point in popular Manx culture.

During the course of the conversation are discussed various subjects including: performing in the Witches' Mill, the Pavillion, Janet's Corner and elsewhere; a summer slot at the Palace performing to 2,000 people six nights a week; a near-disastrous performance before the Cliff Richard film, 'Summer Holiday'; winning a trial for Decca Records; equipment; rates of pay; the live music scene in the Island across The Phantoms' 50 years of performing; and, of course, the band's legendary suits!

This interview from 11 December 2024 was recorded, mixed and mastered by Gyp Buggane at Ballagroove Recording Studios.

**LISTEN:** <https://culturevannin.im/watchlisten/oralhistory/ronnie-mcgowan-886615/>





## From Cake Walk to Shortcake Walk?

by

Maurice Powell

In March 2022 I wrote a short piece for *Kiaull Manninagh Jiu* entitled *That Takes the Cake*, which revealed the fashion in Douglas for the Cake Walk, and Cake Walk competitions - the winners really did receive a cake – a dance craze which lasted from the late 1890s until just before World War I.\* The Cake Walk had its origins in the plantations of America's deep south, and along with minstrel shows and 'black face' or 'burnt cork' entertainers, became enormously popular in Europe and featured frequently in the programmes of our large entertainment venues during the heyday of the Manx tourist industry.

\* The article contained words, expressions and phrases from a different age, not in use today, and included in the interests of historical accuracy. It can be read by those with a broad historical perspective on [manxmusic.com](http://manxmusic.com) and in the Isle of Man Victorian Society Newsletter 119, March 2023.

As an appendix to the original article, I venture to introduce you to a whimsical light music classic that I play occasionally on my Manx Radio show 'A Little Light Music'\*: *Shortcake Walk* by Sidney Torch. This engaging piece, composed for the Chappell Light Music Catalogue of short, 'catchy' pieces for radio, film, newsreel and eventually television use, begins with a Ragtime introduction leading to a 'hoedown' fiddle tune in two-time, like the barn dance or square dance, that had its origins in America's rural south, particularly Appalachia. Part jig, part reel and part clog dance, a hoedown also reflects the influence of the Scots and Irish who settled there in the nineteenth century. *Shortcake Walk* appeared in 1952 and contains a reference to the song *If I knew you were coming, I'd have baked a cake* by Al Hoffman, Bob Merrill and Clem Watts, recorded by Eileen Barton and Gracie Fields in 1950.

\* Which can be heard on Thursday evenings at 9.00.

Sidney Torch (1908-90), real name Sidney Torchinsky, was born in Russia into a Ukrainian and Estonian Jewish family, and after the family emigrated to London, learned his trade from his trombonist father who used to sit next to Gustav Holst during the composer's 'galley' years in theatre orchestras. He became a theatre organist of distinction, and during World War II, the conductor of the RAF Concert Orchestra. After the war he conducted and composed for the Queen's Hall Light Orchestra but became a household name when he created BBC Radio's *Friday Night is Music Night* (1953-72). Something of a martinet, producers, singers and instrumentalists feared the 'glare of the Torch', but others knew a different side to him: his private generosity to musicians less fortunate than himself. He was appointed an MBE in 1985, and died at his home in Eastbourne, Sussex, in July 1990 at the age of eighty-two, leaving an entertaining light music legacy to treasure.

**Andreas, October 2023.**





# Could you be the next lay member on our board?

Join our team and help to support, celebrate and develop Manx culture!

The Council of Ministers is seeking to appoint one lay member (ie non-Tynwald member) to Culture Vannin.

If you have the required skills, experience and commitment to take up a public appointment, become a charity trustee, and are available to attend daytime meetings, you may be ideally suited to this role.

A comprehensive information pack containing full details of the positions and an application form is available:

[www.gov.im//media/1387133/lay-member-to-culture-vannin-information-pack-final.pdf](http://www.gov.im//media/1387133/lay-member-to-culture-vannin-information-pack-final.pdf)

Application forms can be completed and submitted electronically via the IOM Government webpage:

[www.gov.im/categories/working-in-the-isle-of-man/public-appointments/](http://www.gov.im/categories/working-in-the-isle-of-man/public-appointments/)

If you require a printed or an accessible version of this application pack (ie large print, audio or Braille), please contact the Cabinet Office, Government Office, Bucks Road, Douglas, IM1 3PN. Telephone: +44 1624 685314 or email [publicappointments@gov.im](mailto:publicappointments@gov.im)

The closing date for receipt of applications is 11:59pm on Friday 21 February 2025.

Please note applications received by the Cabinet Office after this time will not be considered.



\*\*\*

*We will be very sorry to see Clare Kilgallon RBV leave the board - she has played such an important part in the ongoing story of Culture Vannin and has always been a valued and supportive member of the team.*

*Gura mie mooar eu Clare!!*

## “STICK TO THE OLD MELODY” (1901)

As a lover of the observance of old customs, writes “Disgusted,” I was pleased to see many boys carrying gaily decorated bunches of greenery on St Stephen’s Day, and going from door to door singing. Of course not all, in fact, very few, had the least sign of “tune” about them; but why do they not, first of all, stick to the old melody, and, more important still, why do they not learn the words? All that I could distinguish, and I heard many parties of them, was “Hunt the Wren” and “Robbin the Bobbin.” The remainder of the words was slurred over. Two of them had the audacity to come to my door singing the carol to be used before Christmas—that they hoped my pocket was full of money and my cellar full of beer, and because I refused to contribute to their funds they went away calling “Bad house; bad house.” If old customs are to be kept up, let the observance of them be more creditable than on Thursday.

[“As a lover . . .” *Isle of Man Times* 28 December 1901: 6d.]

“[S]tick to the old melody” and “learn the words” were the watchwords for “Disgusted,” who, whilst welcoming Hunt the Wren on St Stephen’s Day, nevertheless was so disturbed by what he heard that he wrote to the *Isle of Man Times* in protest.

STEPHEN MILLER RBV

## Hunt the Wren 2024 photo library:

<https://culturevannin.im/watchlisten/imagearchive/hunt-the-wren-2024/>



## A Nautical Fantasia

by Maurice Powell

Readers of KMJ will know that one of my current projects is to transcribe, edit and annotate *Cavalcade of Music* (1938), Harry Wood's personal record of dance and concert music, and the variety and concert artistes, who appeared in the Palace Ballroom and Coliseum and the Derby Castle and Opera House between 1888 and 1938. Although the manuscript – which consists of forty pages, typed throughout in capital letters and containing a large number of errors and obscurities – is essentially a bland series of year by year lists never intended for publication, it nevertheless reveals fascinating insights into the range, quality and variety of the music featured in the summer entertainments available to holiday makers in Douglas during the Island's golden age of its tourist industry, and was an important source of information when producing my book about the period, *Manxland's King of Music*. \*

\* Lily Publications, 2018.

Among the countless brief references to light classical pieces – overtures, marches, medleys, idylls, entr'actes, fantasias, suites, serenades, picturesque and characteristic pieces, and instrumental solos - performed at the Sunday Sacred Concerts in 1914, I have selected just one which caught my eye, and the following is the result of my further research into this entertaining work and its composer.

### ***A Voyage in a Troopship***

A good deal of information can be gleaned from the colourful, illustrated sheet music cover of the published edition by Francis, Day & Hunter,\* designed by Alfred Concanen,\*\* and headed 'Also by the Grand Orchestra, Promenade Concerts, Covent Garden', dedicated to Dan Godfrey Esq.\*\*\* At its center is a troopship surrounded four vignettes: British troops in their red uniforms (nicknamed 'lobsters') embarking on overseas service, possibly to Africa and the first Boer War (1880-81); the crew manning a capstan; an impromptu hornpipe with a fiddler sat on top of a capstan and a storm at sea.\*\*\*\* There follows a list of all the nautical events and some of the tunes depicted in the Fantasia: *A Soldier's Tear; All Hands! Up Anchor; The Capstan Chorus; Then Fare Thee Well, Fair Portsmouth Town; The Achor's Weighed; A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea; Bay of Biscay; A Prayer in the Storm; Calm Evenings on the Quarter Deck; Eight Bells; Santa Lucia; We'll Rant and We'll Roar Like True British Sailors; Tom Bowling; The White Squall; Saturday Night on the Fo'c'sle* and *Finale: Rule Britannia*.

\* Founded in 1877, and established as Francis, Day & Hunter in 1880.

\*\* Alfred Concanen (c.1835-1886) A leading lithographer of the Victorian age famous for his illustrated sheet music covers including the iconic *Champagne Charlie* featuring the music hall artistes George Leybourne of 1867 and Burnand and Sullivan's *Cox and Box* of 1869.

\*\*\* Daniel Godfrey (1831-1903), bandmaster, composer and arranger of military band music, was for many years the bandmaster of the Grenadier Guards. His eldest son, Daniel Evers Godfrey, later Sir Dan Godfrey, (1868-1939) became a popular conductor in the field of light music, and founder, and conductor of the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra from 1893 -1934.



\*\*\*\* In 1863 the Royal Navy was commissioned to build five *Euphrates*-class barque rigged, iron hulled, 'ram bow' steamships purposely designed as troopships for the Indian Government. The vessels: *Crocodile*, *Euphrates*, *Jumna*, *Malabar* and *Seraphis*, nicknamed 'Lobsterpots', had white hulls and yellow funnels and were each capable of carrying a battalion of troops. Under sail with a fair wind the 'comfortable and well-found ships' could achieve 9-11 knots and carried thousands of men all over the world during thirty years of service

*A Voyage in a Troopship* - essentially a jaunty medley of nautical tunes and songs - was composed c. 1885 by George Miller,\* who was Bandmaster (later Senior Bandmaster) of the Royal Marines Light Infantry, Portsmouth Division from 1884. He was commissioned as Lieutenant in 1898. Miller had attained his LRAM in 1882 and his Batchelor of Music (BacMus), Cambridge, in 1892. He was awarded the Jubilee Medal in 1887 to which an additional bar was added in 1897. King Edward VII later awarded him the MVO (Member of the Royal Victoria Order) for his services at the funeral of Queen Victoria.



\* See *The Musical Times*, Vol. 52, no. 823, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1911, p. 569-573 for further details of Lt. George Miller's career. His experiences as a military bandmaster appeared in Novello's 'Primer Series' entitled *A Military Band Primer*.

The popular Fantasia was in the repertoire of John Philip Sousa, the renowned conductor of the United States Marine Band, with whom Miller maintained a most cordial and enduring friendship.

There is also a slight Manx connection with Lt. George Miller, or rather, his no less eminent son George Miller Junior, who conducted the First Lifeguards Band at a Sunday afternoon concert in Laxey Glen Gardens on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1908, one of a series of band concerts in Laxey inaugurated in 1907.\*

\* See *Isle of Man Times* 15.08.1908.

Maurice Powell, Andreas, December 2024.

## Moirrey ny Cainle

A traditional Manx dance associated with Candlemas (2 February).

The dance for four couples and an additional dancer was collected by Mona Douglas, who wrote that it was traditionally performed to process the lit candles to be blessed in church.

More info about the dance & tune here:

[www.manxmusic.com/learn/dances/moirrey-ny-cainle/](http://www.manxmusic.com/learn/dances/moirrey-ny-cainle/)

<https://manxmusic.com/learn/tunes/moirrey-ny-cainle/>



# TRANSCRIPTION OF THE MONTH

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

Culture Vannin's Manx Language Development Officer, and Manx Gaelic singer, Ruth Keggin Gell, held a workshop on January 10th teaching Manx translations of Taizé chants. It was lovely to see 30 participants at Trinity Methodist Church!

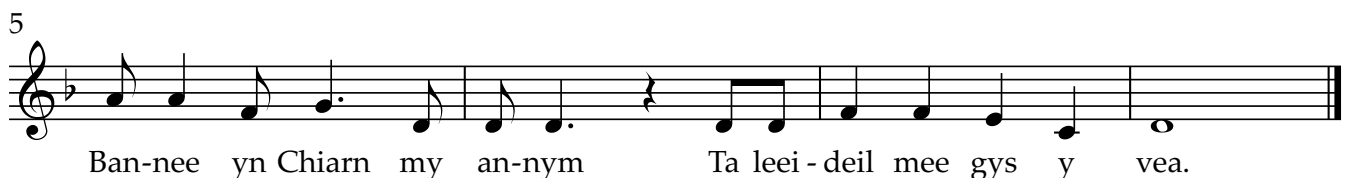
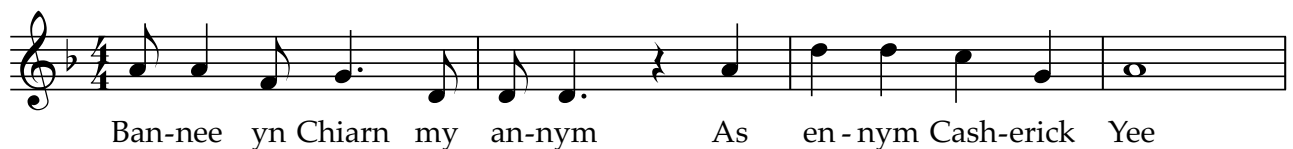
Taizé chants are beautiful meditative chants that are easy to pick up by ear due to only containing two or three lines of text. Ruth taught six chants translated by herself and fellow Manx teacher Paul Rogers. Here is one of them to learn yourselves.

Listen to a live recording of "Bannee Yn Chiarn My Annym" (Bless The Lord My soul) and other Taizé chants in Manx here:

[www.learnmanx.com/learning/spoken-dictionary/taize-chants-in-manx/](http://www.learnmanx.com/learning/spoken-dictionary/taize-chants-in-manx/)

These chants are very simple, and a lovely way to incorporate some Manx into services, for those who wish to do so.

## Bannee yn Chiarn



Lyrics translated from the original English into Manx by Ruth Keggin Gell and Paul Rogers



*Just some of the participants at the Taizé workshop*



# CALENDAR

## JANUARY

31 Oie'll Vreeshey, Peel Masonic Hall, 7.30pm, donations

31 Shennaghys Jiu Family Bingo Night, St Paul's Hall, 7.30pm, free

## FEBRUARY

8 Kris Drever & Chris Stout, The Institute, Laxey, 7.30pm

9 Museum of the Moon launch party with Mine's a Shanty, Peel Cathedral, 7pm £20

14 Breton music at Valentine's evening, Fyn Bar, Ramsey

15 Breton music workshop, Onchan Parish Hall, time tbc

15 Nesar Nesañ Breton/Manx concert & fest noz, Onchan Parish Hall, 7pm

15 Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe & Daniel Quayle, Peel Cathedral, 8pm, £10

## MARCH

9 Kris Drever & Chris Stout, The Institute, Laxey, £15 [www.etickets.im/et](http://www.etickets.im/et)

20 – 25 Aundyryn Kiull-Theay Vannin / Manx Folk Awards, St Johns & Douglas

## APRIL

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

11 – 13 North Atlantic Song Convention, Edinburgh

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

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

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, Kiull 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