

mee luanistyn - august 2012

STRONG MANX PRESENCE AT EUROPE'S LARGEST CELTIC FESTIVAL



Festival Interceltique de Lorient in Brittany is one of the world's largest Celtic festivals - in Europe, it certainly is the giant, with around 800,000 visitors over 10 days catching the very best in Celtic music dance, language and culture. The festival is also a great opportunity for business and promotion and for being spotted! Manx performers include



Barrule, Ny Fennee, Mactullagh Vannin, Ruth Keggin & Dave Pearce from Nish As Rish, Turrys and David Kilgallon & Russell Gilmour - all representing the Isle of Man at Festival Interceltique Lorient in Brittany this month. Artistic representation has been organised by official delegate to the festival, Aalish Maddrell, and the Isle of Man will also send a pavilion staffed by volunteers, promoting Manx produce, souvenirs as well as Manx culture. <http://festival-interceltique.com/>



views from the IOM pavilion when the Mollag Band were playing





Yn Chruinnaght 2012

Here are just a few images from Yn Chruinnaght Inter-Celtic Festival which was a tremendous success. With the support of a whole team of volunteers and fabulous performers from all six of the Celtic countries, the festival saw packed out venues and involved an extensive outreach programme (see next page). There are too many highlights to mention here, so for a full review of the eight days of the festival, check out the Programme/Claire on:

www.ynchruinnaght.com

The festival committee is incredibly grateful to everyone who supported the festival, including those who helped to fund it: IOM Arts Council, Manx Heritage Foundation, Manx Telecom, Malcolm Scott Dickinson Trust



Yn Chruinnaght educational outreach

In the week leading up to Yn Chruinnaght, three musicians from England's Folkestra visited the Island. The talented young trio went under the name JFK (James, Frankie and Karl!) and they gave short performances to children at Fairfield and Anagh Coar schools. Playing fiddle, guitar and melodeon, the young musicians wowed students with exciting sets of tunes and a sing-along version of "Have you Seen the Muffin Man!" Thanks to good weather, JFK also busked to shoppers in Strand Street and performed at the Port Erin Beach Festival during their stay. With thanks to Heather Booth from Perree Bane for putting us all in touch!



More school visits during festival week

Rinceoiri an Chlair went to Victoria Road School in Castletown with Irish song, music and dance. Starting in soft shoes, the change to heavy shoes gave the audience a shock of delight – the noise on the wooden floor was amazing. But that wasn't all. Their leader, Patricia Brady-Mullins, gave camáin and sliotair (camogie sticks and balls) to the school. With county players in the dance side, they demonstrated the game to the school's sports teacher. The group from Kilmurry, Co Clare, found the visit very rewarding, Patricia commenting that it was a delight to perform to such an interested and attentive group of children.



Welsh singer Caryl Parry Jones and guitarist Christian Phillips visited the Manx Gaelic medium school, Bunscoill Ghaelgagh during Yn Chruinnaght festival. Caryl taught several songs in the Welsh language and helped the children compose a new song using Manx and Welsh greetings.

Manx Fairy Tales Concert for Ramsey National Week by Sue Woolley

The audience arriving for Ramsey National Week's Manx Fairy Tales concert felt as though they were stepping back in time and entering an old fisherman's cottage, complete with a fire blazing in the choillagh and 'pot dogs' on the mantelpiece. This was thanks to a stunning backcloth painted by Deborah Taubman. Annie Kissack introduced each item, explaining how it linked-in to Sophia Morrison's folk story collection, published just over 100 years ago, featuring such familiar characters as the Buggane of St Trinian's and the Moddey Doo of Peel Castle.



Annie and Clare Kilgallon opened the programme with their haunting duet, Arrane y Lhondoo (Blackbird's Song). The programme continued with lively dancing of Hunt the Wren by Auldyn Infants and an instrumental medley by Scoill Ree Gorree's Share na Veg, showing that the tradition is well and truly alive. Cliogaree Twoaie choir took up the story, singing Manannan's Song, based on legends of the Sea-God, Manannan Mac-y-Leir. After a break for a Manx 'tay' provided by members of Ramsey Heritage Trust, the second half opened with Fantasias on Manx Folk Tunes for clarinet and piano by the talented Tim Price, who will shortly graduate from Bangor University with a 'first' in Composition. Tim was accompanied on piano by Frank Woolley. Although a departure from the familiar, the music was greeted by warm and enthusiastic applause. Continuing the folk tale theme, the choir sang Snieu Qheeyl Snieu, from 'The Lazy Wife' and Ushag Veg Ruy (Ballad of the Little Red Bird). Choir member Marlene Hendy stepped out of the ranks to give a plaintive solo in Manx, 'Padjer Columb Killey' (St Columba's Prayer), which was a fitting way to end the evening.

Fantasias on Manx Folk Tunes for clarinet and piano by Tim Price

For the past three years, I have been studying music at Bangor University in North Wales. The course at Bangor enabled me to specialise in Composition, while still giving me the opportunity to work in other areas, such as solo performance on clarinet and various areas of musicology. As well as studying more well known composers like Debussy and Stravinsky, I had the chance to look into the Welsh Composers of the 20th century. Seeing the ways that some of these composers had used influences taken from traditional Welsh music to create new music with a definite Welsh flavor inspired me to start thinking about ways that I could do a similar sort of thing with Manx music.

My first chance to try this came when I was planning the programme for my final year recital. I had already decided that I wanted to play something by one of the Welsh composers I had studied in my second year (I ended up choosing Prelude, Arioso and Dance by Mervyn Burtch), and I thought it would be great if I could write a Manx piece to go with it. The result of this was Fantasias on Manx Folk Tunes.

My 'Fantasias on Manx Folk Tunes' is a three-movement piece, with each movement being based on different folk tunes: Snieu wheeyl snieu, Ushag veg ruy, and the Mheillea. I wanted to do something that would be more than just an arrangement of these tunes, so I decided to try and reinterpret the melodies, taking small fragments from them developing them using some of the techniques I had picked up from studying the composers I have mentioned. I chose these particular melodies because I already knew them from when I was a child. While it might seem like it would be easier to work with melodies I didn't know (as I wouldn't already have ideas of how they should sound), I wanted to use the ideas I had to help me.

The starting point in composing this was the second movement, 'Ushag veg ruy'. Once I had worked out a way of getting this movement to work, I was able to move on and use similar techniques in the other two movements. I used various modern types of harmonies, which I'd learned from studying composers like Stravinsky, including chords built with stacked fourths (instead of thirds), bitonality (using two keys at the same time) and even Stravinsky's "major-minor equivocation" (a complicated way of describing a chord with both the major and minor third) at one point in the first movement. This helped to give the piece quite a modern sound, bringing old and new styles together.

The piece seems to have been received quite well so far, but I have other ideas on how I can move on from this piece. As well as a couple of ideas I've had for programmatic instrumental pieces based on the history and landscape of the Island, I'd like to look further into Manx music, to see how I could experiment with bringing some of the characteristics and other elements into my own style. I will be returning to Bangor in September to continue my studies with a Masters in Composition.



Erika Kelly and her new Lyon and Healy electric harp which has been funded by a grant from the Manx Heritage Foundation: www.manxheritage.org

Erika is officially a YouTube sensation. Having grown up playing traditional music with Mike Boulton, she has in recent years carved her own path by developing compositions and a range of covers which have been acknowledged (and loved) by the original songwriters. She has recently started working in a duo with guitarist and bouzouki player, Malcolm Stitt.

Check out Erika's YouTube channel:

www.youtube.com/user/dasloverly

Erika recently featured at the MHF-DEC Gaiety concerts for school pupils - there she played traditional tunes on harp and whistle... read about it below...!

Manx Music Concert for Schools at the Gaiety Concert by *Chloe Woolley*

During Yn Chruinnaght week, Chloë Woolley (MHF) and Jo Callister (DEC) organised two performances of Manx music and dance for 900 school children in the spectacular Gaiety Theatre. The daytime concerts featured Manx trad power trio Barrule, dancers Grainne Joughin and John Kilgallon, harpist and whistle player Erika Kelly along with MCs Liam Moorhouse and Lewis Kelly from Simply Stupid Circus.

Virtuosic musicians Barrule wowed the young audience with lively clap-a-long numbers such as 'Mylecharaine's March' and 'Euro-pop Vona', plus an action-song version of 'The Laxey Wheel'. Grainne and John performed the face-slapping dance 'Return the Blow' as well as dazzling solos 'Men's Stick Dance' and 'Women's Jig'. Between the music and dance acts, Liam and Lewis provided plenty of slap-stick humour while they juggled fruit and vegetables and had a disastrous Manx dancing lesson with Grainne! As a welcome break amongst all the excitement, Youtube sensation Erika evoked absolute silence around the theatre with her beautiful renditions of 'Dooraght' on Celtic harp and 'Gyn Ennym' on whistle.

Organised and funded by the Manx Heritage Foundation, free tickets were offered to all Manx schools and the DEC arranged transport to and from the concerts. After a very enthusiastic response from schools, it is hoped that the concerts will become a regular event. As well as being educational, the variety show format was a fun way to introduce traditional music and culture to children of all ages around the Island.



"THE WHEEZY CONCERTINA" THE CELEBRATION OF THE MHELLIAH

by Stephen Miller

Canon John Kewley is an important figure in the history of Manx vernacular song as the "inheritor" of the personal papers of Dr John Clague later depositing the four tune books as well as a number of the Doctor's notebooks in the then Manx Museum Library. In 1923, he published a piece based on his reminiscences of country life that included the following passage:

And the harvest. How different from the present. How laborious and wearying the reaping, the "shearing" I suppose we ought to call it, with scythes and sickles; the juvenile limbs aching with making and laying bands; the inexhaustible supply of "Quayle and Usher," necessary to quench the reapers' not altogether unwelcome drought; the Mheillea at the end; the supper; the dancing on the barn loft, carefully dusted for the occasion; the wheezy concertina, which had to do duty for the fiddle, because the fiddlers had become few; the jough; the regret when it was announced that it was time to go home; the eager looking forward to next year's Mheillea.

Such a description reminds us of the connection of the performance of song and dance to social occasions and the calendar, here the end of the harvest, the most important event in the farming year. Note Kewley's comment that the concertina had come to replace the fiddle player, one such as "Phillie the Desert" (Philip Caine) who was recalled in an interview as late as 1962: "They were great for fiddlers in them days. Phillie the Desert would play for the dancing—he was one that was going round to play [...]."

Dancing was an important part of the Mhelliah as Thomas Quayle recounted much earlier in 1812:

The Manks peasantry being much attached to dancing, it is a constant practice on the evening of the day on which the last corn is cut, for the farmer to call in a fiddler or two. Laborers, young and old, then assemble; and often the family and friends of the farmer himself join in the merry dance. The reason of fixing the period of this festivity, which is called the mellow, not at harvest-home, but on the day when the last corn is cut, is probably because the females' share of the labour then ceases, and they disperse. During the dance, a diminutive sheaf, formed of the last cut corn, bound with ribbands, which had been borne in procession from the field by the queen of the mellow, passes from hand to hand among the young woman, and in dancing is waved above the head. English country-dances are still unknown to them. Jigs and reels, in which four or five couples join, take their place, the fiddler changing his tune, and often playing one of the few national lively airs, preserved from early times, resembling strongly in character the Irish.

As ever, one is left to tease out the meaning in such an observation that "English country-dances are still unknown"—so what then were they dancing? "Jigs and reels" we are told, but from which tradition? The "few national lively airs" remind Quayle of Irish folk tunes—again, where had he heard them in order to make his conclusion? Are these Irish itinerant musicians visiting the Island that he had witnessed? Such questions are likely to remain open ones.

For that same year in which Quayle's account was published, there is an account of the Mhelliah in a dairy kept by Josepha Dalby of Ballacooley Lodge, Kirk Michael:

When the last bundle of wheat and barley is cut, it is tyd up and ornamented with long streamers of new ribbon. The person who cuts it has the bundle and dances all night with it in her hand. It is called the Mhelliah, which everybody who has a farm gives, with abundance of strong beer.

The previous year, 1811, George Woods had been present at a Mhelliah on the Calf of Man:

The day which I spent on this retired but hospitable island, was the harvest-home, the meller of the Manks, a time of jubilee. The labourers had plenty of ale, and the master dealt out his excellent rum with a cautious, not sparing hand. Though of ten or twelve people all were merry, none was absolutely intoxicated. A dance in the barn concluded the festivity of the day: and Mr Gourlay conducted me to the opposite shore in his own boat.

The Mhelliah, however, was later to come under pressure from the influence of Methodism:

The same night the Melliah supper was held in the big barn. There was plenty to eat, but no strong drink (for "himself" was a teetotaler); there was singing, but no dancing (he was a local preacher, and high up on the Plan-beg).

And this from 1880:

The day being finished, the shearers proceeded on their way home, where a supper was provided, and after supper sports were commenced, frequently including music and dancing, and plenty of beer &c. But these things have died out, and now-a-days if there is a harvest supper at all it is when the corn is all saved, and very properly so.

One readily notices the moralistic tone there—"very properly so," the reformation of vernacular culture. That this in the Island was to come under such pressure was already seen with the extract

above. Sophia Morrison reporting to the Manx Language Society in 1905 about the activities of the recently purchased phonograph mentioned a major problem she had encountered in collecting material:

One difficulty in the way of obtaining the material which we want, has been, as I have found by experience, the unwillingness of our intensely earnest and religious peasantry to speak into the instrument such “boghtynid” as folk-stories and sayings and secular songs. They prefer that such a serious thing as a record which is to be handed down to posterity shall consist of Hymns, Scripture, or Carvals.

The passage ends: “One who knows them can understand the feeling, but, for the purposes of the M.L.S. more frivolity is to be desired.” That was not to be forthcoming from John Nelson, one of the collectors with the phonograph, as Morrison wrote in 1905 to J.J. Kneen:

I have done my best to persuade Nelson to give us some every day jig-jog yarns in homely Manx—but he looks upon that kind of work as just so much ‘boghtynid’—his one ambition being to translate Moody & Sankey. It is such a pity as we have so much of that wishy washy stuff in Manx—and of no real value.

This was in answer to Kneen’s letter earlier that month where he commented that “I wish that Mr Nelson would turn his attention to secular songs instead of sacred songs, our secular songs are very limited, but of sacred songs and carols we have go leór.”

In 1895, W.H. Gill had written that “the old tunes were being replaced by the tunes of the London music halls,” in his lecture before the Musical Association. Change had come much earlier from another direction, as the schoolmistress of Baaregarroo, Agnes Wicksey, recorded in the school logbook for 1874:

Singing not so good; one boy, who has been converted at the “revival meetings” held in this Chapel at the present time, refused to sing school songs, as he thought it wrong to do so.

That player then with his “wheezy concertina” was upholding a vernacular song culture that was under threat, one from within and not as Gill saw it without. One hopes that he played his tunes with vigour and that his audience danced with strength against this tide of change.

Stephen Miller, Vienna

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Tynwald Fair Day celebrations



Just some of the musicians and dancers who performed on Tynwald Fair Day on the fair field and at Tynwald Mills



Barrule CD launch

Barrule will launch their debut album on 18th August at the Centenary Centre in Peel. Support comes in the form of virtuoso Welsh acoustic guitarist Dylan Fowler plus a local act (tbc) and Barrule will also be joined onstage by special guests.

Start time 7:30pm

Tickets £7.50 in advance, £10 on the door.

Tickets on sale in July from the usual outlets.

The launch will give you the first chance to purchase the new album at a special launch price. If that wasn't enough, there will be complimentary homemade cakes in the interval!

www.barruletrio.com

Manx bands a hit at Port Erin Beach Festival

Ruby & Beccy, Turrys, Skeeal and visiting band JFK entertained the crowds on Port Erin Beach for the festival organised by Aubrey Brooks on Friday 13 July. Aubrey wanted Manx music to be a part of the festival and was delighted with the variety of original and traditional material presented. Visiting students JFK from Cumbria and Newcastle completed the line-up. The event was supported by the Manx Heritage Foundation and introduced by its chairman, Phil Gawne MHK.



Scollag Aeg premiere at St German's Cathedral

St German's Cathedral was packed out for the premiere of Paul Dunderdale's new work for the IOM Wind Orchestra on Tuesday 10 July. 'Scollag Aeg' was commissioned by the Manx Heritage Foundation in celebration of the work of Mona Douglas, who collected the original song from which the new work took its inspiration. Manx Sound recorded



the premiere for the Foundation for the archives. It will be made available once it has been extracted from the overall concert recording.

More details are available online:

www.iomwo.com

*IOM Wind Orchestra
in the cathedral under
the baton of Paul
Dunderdale*

Mona's Isle

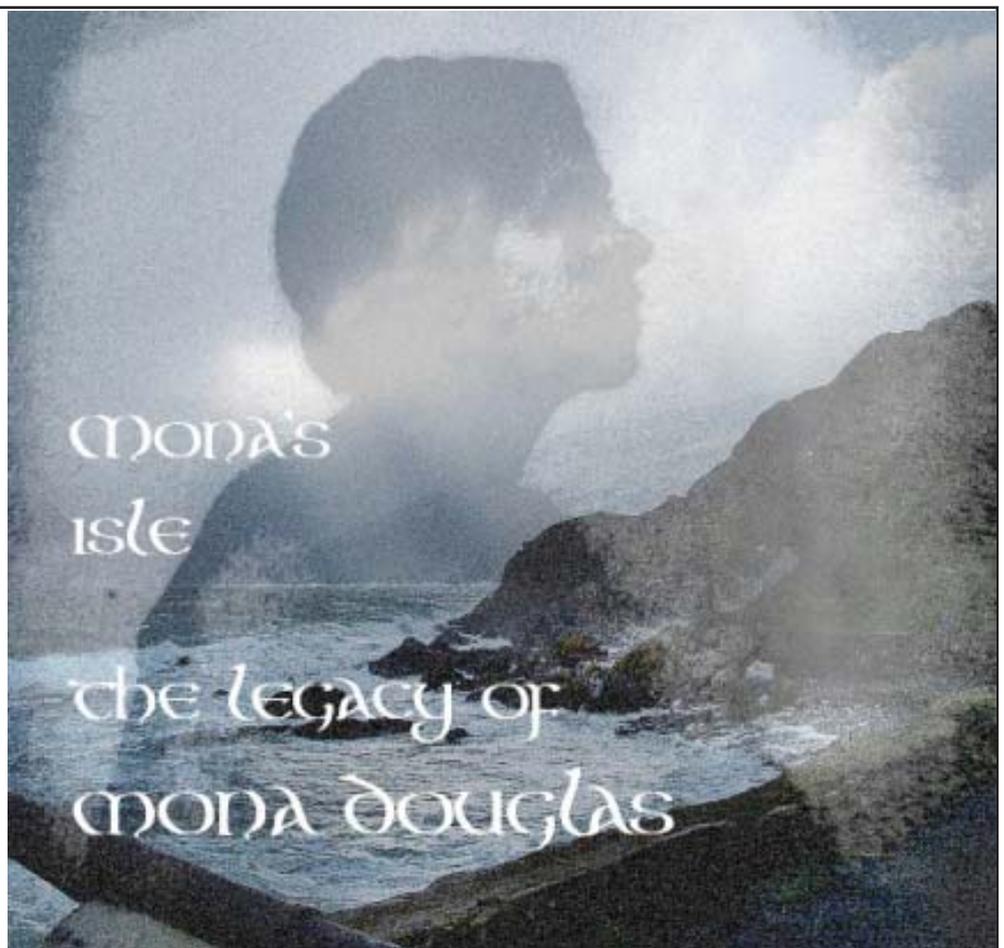
A concert celebrating
the life and work of
Mona Douglas
in music, dance
and new original song

Centenary Centre, Peel

22 September

7.30pm

*Free tickets will be
available from the
usual outlets*



Young achievers receive North American Manx Association Awards *by Jo Overty, DEC*

YOUNG achievers were honoured by the North American Manx Association (NAMA). Each year, NAMA presents awards of silver medallions to under 25-year-olds who have excelled in their field.

Judging was carried out by Peter Kelly, President of the World Manx Association, and Stuart Dobson, Chief Executive Officer of DEC.

from left, Hon David Anderson MHK, Peter Kelly, the Hon Clare Christian MLC, President of Tynwald; Laurence Skelly MHK, Hon Phil Gawne MHK



The award winners – who received their medallions from Laurence Skelly MHK, past President of NAMA, were:

Music: Isla Callister-Wafer, 14, Queen Elizabeth II High School (nominated by Yn Chruinnaght) - Isla plays fiddle with the Manx Youth Orchestra, Perree Bane, Club Kiaull, Bree ('Vitality') and at Yn Chruinnaght ('The Gathering'), and was a winner at DEC's Manx Folk Awards.

Manx language: Cesar Joughin, 16, Queen Elizabeth II High School (nominated by Rob Teare, DEC Manx Language Officer) - Cesar has helped ensure that Manx is the predominant language of Club Kiaull, his school's music club, where he is a leading musician.

Manx culture (over 18): Caitlin Bennett, 20 (nominated by Yn Chruinnaght) and Maxine Smalley, 18, Queen Elizabeth II High School (nominated by Sue-ling Jaques of Ramsey)

Caitlin is a talented singer, flautist, whistler and guitarist who has participated since an early age in Cruinnaght Aeg. Since she was 13 she has helped Dr Chloe Woolley run Ballaugh School's Manx music club, helping to prepare pupils for concerts and competitions. She took over the running two years ago.

Maxine learned to dance with Bock Yuan Fannee and progressed to Ny Fennee. She coaches younger members of the group in dancing and pupils at her school in Manx culture and tradition. She has twice been runner up in the Young Dancer of Mann contest and on both occasions won the traditional dance category. She helps to organise and performs at Shennaghys Jiu and has performed at prominent events such as the Commonwealth Youth Games' opening ceremony.

Manx culture (group – under 25): Cairistiona Dougherty, of Ballaugh, and Beki Collings, of Port Erin (nominated by Yn Chruinnaght) - Both talented musicians who have represented the Island at festivals throughout the Celtic world, Cairistiona and Beki aim to make Manx music accessible to all. They tutor under 18s through Bree and started successful adult beginners' sessions at the Glue Pot pub. Cairistiona is a member of The Reeling Stones and Beki a member of The Fecktones. Both also play for Perree Bane. As volunteers, they help run Yn Chruinnaght.

Manx community: Emma Lloyd-Williams, 16, QEII High School (nominated by Dr Abdel Haddouche)

Arts and crafts: Bronte Wright, 16, CRHS (nominated by Gill Wray/Keith Pote)

Manx community (overcoming disability): Vincent Dale, 14, RGS (nominated by Suzy Lister/Linda Shimmin)

The President of Tynwald, the Hon Clare Christian MLC, gave the vote of thanks:

'We are very fortunate that, more than 30 years after their introduction, these awards continue to be presented by the North American Manx Association. Their perpetual nature ensures that we sustain the link between our young people and the descendants of those who emigrated to North America generations ago as well as with those who have made their homes there in more recent times. I hope that their medals will give the winners cause to think about our American cousins who so generously encourage the continuation and development of the culture and heritage which bind us together.'

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE MONTH

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

My chaarijn gow jee tastey cair (carval)

Manx Ballads

Mrs Henry Clague, Ballanorris



*This is a gorgeous tune, especially if you don't play it strictly - it works well slower and with a singer's phrasing. The title is typical for carval tunes - My friends, take heed... - before the message is delivered! The tune was published in A W Moore's **Manx Ballads and Music** and later in **Kiaull yn Theay 4**.*

Jonathan King's Manx Music Wurlitzer Wednesday

Manx national week saw a special Wurlitzer Wednesday devoted to Manx music. Organised by multi-instrumentalist, Jonathan King, the programme included guest spots from Paul Costain and half of The Hiccups (Paul Helps, Peter Hayhurst, Phil Gawne, Breesha Maddrell and Peter Lewis).

Programming with the wurlitzer included The Manx Wedding, Rushen Funeral Hymn, a new flute and keyboard setting of 'At first when my true love I seen' and Ian Allen's 'Peeldog'. Dance tunes were played by The Hiccups until ministerial duties sent Phil Gawne back to the office!

Money raised was donated to Kemmyrk:

www.kemmyrk.im



CALENDAR

August

Thursdays in August - Manx music & dance at Villa Marina Arcade, 7.30pm

3rd-12th Barrule, Ny Fennee, Ruth Keggin & Dave Pearce, David Kilgallon & Russell Gilmour at Festival Interceltique de Lorient, Brittany <http://festival-interceltique.com/>

5th Manx music, dance and mayhem at Peel Carnival - all day FREE

12th Cliff Top Concerts at Groudle Glen (see right hand column for details), from 11am

18th Barrule CD launch, Centenary Centre, Peel, 7.30pm. Tickets £7.50 in advance; £10 on the door.

September

21st&22nd Manx music and dance at the IOM Food and Drink Festival, Nunnery grounds, Douglas from 10am

22nd Mona Douglas concert, Centenary Centre, Peel, 8pm free tickets from usual outlets nearer the time

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

www.manxmusic.com

Charlotte Traynor from the Apple Orphanage is organising entertainment for the IOM Food and Drink Festival 21st & 22nd September. If you are interested in performing, please get in touch: 315679 or email charlotte@appleorphanage.com

PEEL CARNIVAL - 5 AUGUST

Perree Bane, The Fecktones, Kipper Caley and many many more will be entertaining the crowds at the 60th anniversary of Peel Carnival on Sunday 5 August - all day throughout the town. There'll be fancy dress, floats, music, celebration and fun for all. There'll even be an exciting Celtic interlacing pavement art in chalk - the test stretches look amazing! Peel Carnival is a great family day out - make sure you head to the west for it!

Cliff Top Concerts, Groudle Glen Superb music in a stunning location Sunday 12th August

Performances all day at the Sea Lion Rocks tea rooms and visitor centre from:

11am: Al & Geoff; Contemporary Folk

12pm: Matt Creer; Singer / Songwriter

1pm: Manx Concert Brass

2pm: Ellan Vannin Pipes and Drums

3pm: The Shenanigans Banned!

PRIVATE TUITION AVAILABLE

Ruth Keggin BA, PGCE is offering private tuition for piano, flute and voice - classical and Manx. Ruth is based in the South of the Island but is happy to travel. Email all queries to ruthkeggin@manx.net

~ SESSIONS ~

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

manx heritage foundation ~ undinys eiraght vannin

For information on Manx music & dance contact:

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

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

www.manxmusic.com

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



Written and edited by Breesha Maddrell for the Manx Heritage Foundation

The Editor welcomes submissions but reserves the right to edit for style and space

PRESS: please feel free to pick up articles without named authors to spread the word about Manx culture