



Faill erriu dys Gaelg Vio -Welcome to living Manx

Cooish Review, 2009

I thought I would use this edition to recap the events of this years **Cooish**. Before I do that, however, I would like to say a big **Gura mie eu** to all those who helped with the organisation of this year's event. It doesn't get any easier but I trust it was a Festival that made all the hard work worthwhile.

Another **Gura mie eu** goes out to those who provided both financial and other support for us this year. As ever the festival wouldn't happen without the **Manx Heritage Foundation**; I know how much the language community appreciates its debt to the continued support of the Foundation (www.manxheritage.org).

Thanks must also go to **Cains** and the **Arts Council** for their support and also, as ever, **Manx Telecom** for their publicity and **Manx Radio** for their extensive coverage.

Jeheiney 6^{oo} Mee Houney

As a prelude to the Festival we were lucky to be visited by Marcos Mac Ruairí from Downpatrick in Northern Ireland. Over the last few months we have been

working to develop close links with the language Community there; hopefully, we'll be visited in 2010 by a group of children and teachers from their Irish Medium school. As a prelude to that Marcos was able to share with teachers and parents from the Bunscoill practical advice for encouraging parents and children to use their Manx outside of a classroom situation. This is a key language development area which we hope to progress over the next few years.



Marcas and Cathy Clucas

Jesarn 7^{oo} Mee Houney

We had a very successful day on the Saturday at Eary Cushlin. Although a number of people couldn't get through the rather extensive roadblocks in the area, which were in place courtesy of the Rally, a good crowd of learners and speakers ignored the warnings of roads

closed! The evening featured a good music session that was continued at the Thie Bane in Purt ny h-Inshey.



Jelune 9^{oo} Mee Houney

In many ways the highlight of the week's events was the official launch of the Manx Gaelic Youth Group - **Possan Aeglagh** – at the Youth Centre in Peel. This fitted in well with the work Marcas helped us with and is an important next step for the language: it's vital children have the opportunity to use the language outside of a school environment. Cathy Clucas is the Manx Gaelic leader at the group and thanks must go to those who are helping her with this project and the IOM Youth Service for their commitment to the language. Last week there were 16 children at the regular Monday night sessions; this is very encouraging.



Jemayrt 10^{oo} Mee Houney

Tuesday saw an excellent session for learners at the Rovers between 1.00 and 2.00 and another conversational class at Java from 4.00. Both these are regular events on the Manx Gaelic Calendar now and are part of our move towards a professionally ran adult language programme. Let me know if you'd like more information about this.

Jecrean 11^{oo} Mee Houney

One of the recent additions to the Cooish festival and one which goes from strength to strength is the annual **Arrane son Mannin – Song for Mannin** Competition which showcases some of the best Manx talent on the music front. This year the competition was won by **Cabbyl Ushtey**



whose song was inspired by this fantastic picture taken by the compser , Andy North,.

Jeant dy mie!

Jerdein 12^{oo} Mee Houney

One of the highlights of the Cooish for fluent speakers is the annual **Gaaue lecture**. The Gaaue was one of the last native speakers and this lecture held in his honour is delivered through the medium of Manx Gaelic.



This year's saw a really fascinating and entertaining lecture about the history of Venice delivered by Bob Carswell.



Continued support from Manx Telecom

Jeheiney 13^{oo} Mee Houney

As ever Friday is probably the busiest day on the Cooish programme. Matters weren't helped by the rather inclement weather but we had a great turnout for



the Cooish Concert at the Centenary Centre in Peel. As ever we were joined by a number of excellent musicians from Ireland and Scotland. From Nerin we were fortunate to

have Aodán Mac Shéafraidh, Maeve McKibben and Deaglan O Doibhlin and from Nalbin, Mairi MacInnes, Sineag MacIntyre and Mark Sheridan.

A fantastic evening, which also included some of the best Manx music around, was finished off with a great session in the White House.

Jesarn 14^{oo} Mee Houney

Over the years the Cooish has welcomed a number of fantastic speakers from around the Celtic world to deliver the **Ned Maddrell Lecture**. This year was no different and we were extremely pleased that Jenefer Lowe, from the **Cornish Language Partnership**, was able to attend and provide what was a fantastic overview of the language situation in Cornwall. There was certainly much food for thought and a number of ideas which we could take on board here in Mannin.



Jenefer being interviewed for Manx Radio

Whilst the Ned Maddrell lecture was taking place in St John's our Irish musicians were helping out with the Monthly **Bree** sessions for young musicians at Greens in Doolish.

A Gaelic Song Workshop, led by Mairi



MacInnes, followed the Ned Maddrell Lecture itself.

That evening saw the Festival come to a lively conclusion at the Albert in Purt le Moirrey. There are no actual pictures of the revelry that followed as I thought I had best protect the reputations of some people!

Other Cooish News

During the Cooish we always try and raise the profile of the language and we were lucky to get good press coverage during the Festival. Thanks to those at

Manx Radio in particular for this but Manx Telecom's continued support - especially with their text messaging service - is a real asset for us all in the language community. This year too we



had a good article about our weekly classes at IOM Post Office and I must thank everyone there for their continued support.

Manx Gaelic Cartoon

With cartoonist Gary Myers we are also working on developing a Manx Gaelic



Cartoon series for learners and also a Manx Gaelic You Tube presence. This is still in the early stages of production but we managed to get our first learner's cartoon up and running during the Cooish. Featuring everyone's hero, Manannan, and some of his friends, we hope it will offer a light-hearted introduction to the language. The cartoon can be viewed at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/GaelgTube>

Finally, please find below our Cooish leaflet explaining why Manx is great!



10 REASONS WHY MANX IS A WASTE OF TIME / EFFORT / MONEY

1. The language is dead.

Well it never died! Although declining as a community language between 1870-1920, the language was always spoken throughout the 20th century, although admittedly by a declining number of native speakers initially and later language enthusiasts. Languages decline in usage not because they are inferior but because of complex economic, social and political factors operating against them; a change in this context can see minority languages playing a more important role in their community. This is the case today in the Island. Moreover, those who believe Manx Gaelic can't handle modern terminology often aren't aware that there is no English word for Café, Tattoo or Bungalow and that it's only in the last 30 years that English has developed the vocabulary necessary for the Internet.

2. The Government has enough to worry about without financing Manx.

Indeed! The language received pretty much no state assistance for the 1500 years between 400 and 1990! We are overdue a few pounds. The only financial support for the language today comes from the Manx Heritage Foundation and the Dept. of Education. The indigenous language/culture/music of the Island receives very little support in comparison to 'high art' and sport on the Island.

3. Children should learn proper stuff at school and not waste their time on Manx.

Although there are key skills to be learnt at school, education is very much about broadening the horizons of children, encouraging them to find out about the world we live in and developing good 'citizenship' skills. The language and accompanying culture can provide a 'rooted' identity for students and can illustrate the links between the traditional and modern, global and local. Moreover, cultural and environmental degradation often go hand in hand. Disappearing rainforests and disappearing languages have a similar story to share and this is a story we will need to be educated about.

4. We should learn French/Mandarin instead.

We have enough room in our heads for several languages. By learning Manx it doesn't mean we can't fit Spanish in too. Most speakers of Manx know several languages and are probably much more multilingual than the rest of the population. The children at the Bunscoill have learnt French through the medium of Manx whilst they have also been introduced (pen friends etc) to Irish and Scottish Gaelic. They are likely to be keen linguists of the future. Manx speakers often note the irony of being told they should speak other more 'useful' languages by monolingual English speakers.

5. Manx is socially divisive.

Manx is not exclusive. You don't have to be called Juan Kaighen from Cregneash to speak the language. The Island has changed much recently; Manx speakers are aware that this social and economic change has generated income that has been crucial in funding many recent language programmes: they wish this to continue. Whether you are from Port St. Mary, Portsmouth, Port Moresby or Port Elizabeth but want to call this Island your home then the language is as much yours as it is Juan Kaighen's.





10 REASONS WHY MANX IS A WASTE OF TIME / EFFORT / MONEY

6. The broader Manx community will not benefit from more Manx Gaelic.

The recent up turn in fortunes for the language is a good news story for the Island. People outside of the Island are interested in these developments and it can illustrate to others that there is more to the Island than the TT races and off-shore finance. So far film crews from France, Germany, Spain, Ireland and Scotland have filmed at the Bunscoill as have 'Countryfile', BBC news and ITV. The Manx Language Officer has appeared live talking about Manx on Border TV News and has been involved in a feature with Lenny Henry on the Paul O'Grady show. Language activists have also been on Good Morning TV on ITV. This is all good PR for the Island.

7. There is no economic gain to be had from Manx Gaelic.

The Department of Tourism are using the Island's unique culture as an attraction that can add value to the Island as a destination. An increasing number of jobs require knowledge of the language whilst Moonjiner Veggey operates a successful network of nurseries and playgroups. As has been demonstrated on a small scale in the Isle of Skye and London on a metropolitan level high worth individuals, whilst predominately moving to an area for economic reasons, generally stay in a location because of the backdrop of culture/arts/environment/education. The language and culture of the Island is something that the intellectually curious (and by definition the talented and economically active) see as something that is attractive and different about the Island.

8. There is no demand for Manx.

The 2001 Mori poll recorded that 19% of people were interested in learning Manx and another 5% very interested. The recent Culture and Heritage Survey conducted for the Branding exercise indicated that 75% of people thought that language and culture were important for national identity; nearly 50% would like to be more involved with Manx culture; nearly 75% had some agreement that there should be more funds to promote the language; 86% thought there should probably be more encouragement for children to learn the language.

9. Gaelic is of no benefit to local business.

In a competitive market place 'localism' can increasingly 'add value' to a company and give it an edge over non-Manx competitors. The recently produced *Manx for Business* illustrates ways in which the language can 'add value' and spread good will to Manx businesses at very little or no extra cost. The key is to use the language in ways that are appropriate and relevant.

10. Manx is a thing of the past and has no modern relevance.

Manx is very much a modern language with an ancient history. The Bunscoill illustrates the benefits of bilingual education; the language is providing good PR for the Island; linguists from Norway, Jersey and elsewhere have visited the Bunscoill to find out more about our education methods; the language can distinguish the Island from other jurisdictions (they don't speak Manx in the Isle of White). Many commentators (Jeremy Paxman / Paul Krugman et al.) have stressed the importance of a positive national identity in creating a competitive edge for jurisdictions. The Manx Gaelic narrative in our Island is one that has a right to exist and should be given 'Freedom to Flourish'.

