



LAXEY HARBOUR BY LIAM MILLER

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Laxe Views

Free community newsletter
Issue 28

JUNE 2016

Bridge completion date is end of September

THE old Laxe Bridge replacement was due to open as this newsletter went to press.

But the highways authorities say this is just a temporary measure to accommodate TT festival traffic.

The Department of Infrastructure says the bridge linking the two sides of Laxe will close again on Monday June 13 so it can be properly completed – and it might be the end of September before it reopens.

Throughout the festival, the road will be open to all vehicles, including motorcycles and cars, but with a weight limit of 7.5 tonnes to take into account the temporary surface.

The DOI's asset engineering manager Aidan McCusker, who is overseeing the project, said: 'The programme for completion is September 30. However

there is a commitment by the project team to reopen the bridge as soon as possible without compromising the overall completion date of the project.' Mr McCusker said the new bridge could not be the solution to all the flooding issues in lower Laxe (see pages 4 and 5 for more on this).

Below: Mezeron's Silver River transported 19 tonnes of steel for the new bridge into the village via the harbour in a complex operation.



In your 8 page bumper issue:

- Pictures from the new duck race route
- We chart the progress of the road bridge since the December 3 flood
- A milestone for Mrs Midghall at the Fairy Cottage filling station
- What's on - including TT festival events

Banking with a different view

Talk to us at **Conister Bank**

At the heart of the community

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Meet the villager — Andrew Smith

Where do you live?

My wife and I moved to the Isle of Man with our two daughters in 1986 and we chose to live in Laxey where we have resided since.

I am pleased to say that our two daughters have also remained on the Island. Our youngest daughter Anna married Tommy Cowin in Christ Church, Laxey. Our eldest daughter Rebecca and family live in Lonan and Anna and family live in Douglas.

What is/was your job?

I commenced my accountancy career immediately after school and have worked within a number of industries.

I took up a position with Isle of Man Government in 1997 working within the financial services sector which included promoting the Isle of Man abroad.

My geographical responsibility encompassed all points east of Suez which necessitated a specific understanding of an exceptionally wide range of cultures and languages. As part of my Government brief I was required from time to time to organise major regional visits both for senior politicians and regulators and also for joint Government and industry personnel. I gained a wide-ranging knowledge of each region including embracing the languages for general conversation and business etiquette. I have delivered presentations in Arabic, Japanese and Mandarin.

In addition a key part of my role was arranging the hosting of influential leaders, both political and business. A number of visits to the Island of important guests were arranged during my time including Middle East Ruling Family members and the Chinese Ambassador to the UK. Another crucial element in supporting my role within China was the short term placement within Government of Miss Chen Yi, an exceptionally well qualified Chinese professional. She was of invaluable assistance to me. Although now involved in other local business activities I continue my international consultancy role and remain a contact point for many professionals both locally and throughout the Middle and Far East. I served on the Board of Laxey Village Commissioners from 1992 to 2003 but my extensive travel off Island unfortunately necessitated me to relinquish this position.

What's the most unusual job you've done?

In the late 1980s I was approached by a client requesting if I could assist with the wrestling at the Villa Marina during the summer season. I agreed to MC and time keep, so once I got to grips with the terminology, Full Nelson, Boston Crab, etc., was able to check my watch and ring the bell, the rest was a doddle! I guess working with Sir Norman Wisdom would also class as unusual if not exceptional. It was during my Government role that Sir Norman also became involved. He was a great exponent of the Isle of Man as well as his renowned comedy and keen interest in golf. This was an ideal combination to assist in promoting the Isle of Man abroad and his approach to golf certainly encouraged many businessmen to take part in the tournaments organised by us. I was also privileged to accompany him on the piano whenever he performed any of his songs.

What's your favourite part of Laxey?

I think the area from the Valley Gardens and Washing Floors along the river to the harbour takes some beating, except when the river is in flood! I also get the opportunity to regularly see the waterfall in all weathers which is often quite spectacular.

What's your greatest passion?

I continue to promote the Island in all its aspects whenever possible. Laxey obviously has a special part to play and Lady Isabella and Lady Evelyn feature greatly during my positive discussions with whosoever. I believe in a general passion for a fulfilling life built on the foundations of hard work, faith and family.

How do you spend your free time?

I have been an active member of the Salvation Army since 1987. Since 2003 when the Laxey Fair almost ceased I have played a major role in sustaining and organising the fair each year. I believe this is a great opportunity for Laxey to showcase its enduring history and culture. It could be so easy to lose such an important part in celebrating the Island's heritage.

Given your experience, what are your thoughts on the Manx Government's current need to increase industry and investment in the IOM?

For any nation to survive it is crucial that Government policies remain constant. We are obviously influenced by outside events but a clear and robust strategy would certainly give everyone the confidence to set up and conduct business in the Island. In a world of continual financial turbulence it is exceptionally difficult to convince major investors to commit to something that they may know little about, so confidence and stability are major factors. The old adage "It's not what you know but who you know" or "Guanxi" in Mandarin remains true today.

If you had one wish for Laxey, what would it be?

It would be great to see a more cohesive community. People who I have met around the world would give their eye teeth to live in such a peaceful and beautiful place. I would hope that everyone living in or visiting Laxey would recognise its star qualities and seek to promote and enhance them wherever possible.

Describe your ideal day

It's great to wake up on the right side of the turf! Keep active. Keep positive. In an age when we are all looking to conserve energy it's easier to smile rather than frown!

What's on...

TT meet and skeet – Thursday of race week on Laxey promenade from 12noon to 4pm at the prom café. An informal, free event for anyone who can drive their interesting, unusual or vintage bike or car to the prom. Shake your keys at the café proprietor and you'll get a free pork bap or ice cream.

TT photo exhibition – from now until June 11, every day including Mad Sunday from 9am to 5pm at the Laxey Woollen Mills on Glen Road. Pictures and paintings guaranteed to amuse bikes fans. Free admission.

TT fun fair – Douglas promenade from June 2 to June 12, 1pm to 11.30pm.

TT Red Arrows display – over Douglas at 7.30pm on Tuesday June 7.

Car boot sale – Saturday June 4 on Laxey Prom.

Sam Barks – Laxey's very own Hollywood star is appearing at the Gaiety Theatre on June 11. Tickets £23.

Mariners' Choir service – Sunday June 12 at Laxey Methodist Church on Minorca Hill, starting at 6.30pm. Service followed by supper and a community singalong. All welcome. Donations to church funds appreciated. Hear this male voice choir established over 40 years.

Local election – Thursday June 14 to find two Lonan members for the Garff board.

Sponsored walk – Friday June 17 on Douglas Prom, organised by the Live at Home Scheme (see page 5).

Meet and Mingle – coffee morning on Tuesday June 21 organised by

Laxey and Lonan Live at Home, at Christ Church, Laxey from 10.30-12noon. All welcome.

Forest nursery open days – at the Pavilion in Laxey, organised by the Children's Centre:

Wednesday June 15 – 11am-1pm
Thursday June 16 – 5pm- 8pm
Saturday June 18 – 10am –2pm

Laxey Fair – Saturday June 25 in the Valley Gardens, with entertainment on the stage from the children of Laxey School, stalls, refreshments.

Do you have an event you'd like to see listed in our What's On guide? Simply email laxeyviews@gmail.com

Pictured below: bikes day on Laxey Prom during TT 2015



UNIQUE DINING EXPERIENCES AT THE ISLAND'S HIGHEST POINT



Tram departs Derby Castle at 18:40

Snaefell Summit MIDSUMMER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

Saturday 25th June 2016

Ride the Sunset Tram and celebrate the Midsummer Solstice with The Vikings of Mann

After a buffet dinner join the Vikings of Mann in a torch light procession to the summit as they invoke the Norse Gods to celebrate the power of the sun at its height. Attach your blessing to the spell tree which will be cast into the bonfire to bring fertility and prosperity to men, women, crops and herds.

£39pp including tram travel from Douglas or Laxey

(children 10 and over welcome - full ticket price applies)

There will be regular trams between the Bungalow and the Summit from 21:00 for those who wish to just join the Vikings of Mann. Tram only: £10pp from Bungalow

Book online at www.rail.im or call the Welcome Centre 01624 662525

Credit and debit cards accepted. All evening events must be booked in advance. Disclaimer: All events subject to weather conditions. Operational constraints may apply.

For enquiries call the Summit Restaurant: 01624 673631
Email: summitcateringltd@gmail.com www.rail.im Follow us at [f /snaefellsummitdining](https://www.facebook.com/snaefellsummitdining)




Left to right: work gets under way to retrieve the bus that destroyed the old bridge; the view from the temporary footbridge; steel girders link the two sides of the river; reinforcement steel creates metal cages; the concrete pour into the cages gets under way.



New bridge won't solve Laxey's flooding issues

HOMES and businesses were devastated by the flash flooding caused by torrential rain on the late afternoon of December 3.

The river broke its banks, with trees and debris washed down towards the harbour, and the double decker bus that went through the road bridge created a dam, causing the water to rise even higher.

Businesses are still counting the cost and some homeowners are not yet able to return to their properties.

Work needs to be done upstream of the new bridge to help prevent future flooding, according to Aidan McClusker, the engineer in charge of the new bridge project.

He told Laxey Views: 'Although the capacity of the new bridge has been maximized, given other design restraints in linking the new bridge to existing infrastructure on the north and south abutments, it is not the solution to all flooding issues in lower Laxey.'

'In my opinion many of the flooding issues could be vastly diminished by implementing improved protection on the existing riverbanks upstream of the new bridge. This may be done by designing and constructing the riverbanks with an increased freeboard.'

- Pictured left: the temporary surface is laid that will enable the bridge to open for the TT festival.

Your photos

THANKS to Penny Jolley for sending in these two atmospheric local images.

Turn to the back page to find out how the fund raiser for Christ Church went.



Milestone for Ruby

A WELL known member of the community, Ruby Midghall has just celebrated a remarkable milestone.

She's been serving motorists from the Fairy Cottage filling station for 50 years – and she's continuing to offer the unrivalled personal touch and competitive prices that keep customers coming back year after year.

Ruby says it's nearly 15 years since she last took a holiday. She opens the station seven days a week and is only closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Ruby, pictured at work, opened the business with her late husband Henry in 1966 when they bought the filling station and the adjoining cottage. Over the years they have provided airport taxi services and a minibus service to Laxey Wheel – but the filling station has always been the heart of the enterprise.





Changes and fund raising events for local charity

OUR very own Jackie Bridson, one of the Laxey Views editorial team, has been appointed manager of the Laxey and Lonan Live at Home Scheme, which helps older people maintain their independence and avoid social isolation and loneliness.

It follows the retirement of Anne Duggan who had been in charge of the scheme since its inception.

Jackie says: 'Her time in Laxey ended quietly, as Anne hates fuss, in April. Although a massive loss to Laxey and Lonan, she is continuing to work within Live at Home's Northern Scheme, developing the new 'Men in Sheds' initiative. 'Anne was much loved by the members, volunteers and supporters of the Laxey and Lonan scheme and she will be missed by all.'

There will be a goodbye and thank you lunch held in July for Anne and it is hoped that many will be able to go along and give her a proper send off.

Jackie has worked within the scheme for the last year as its assistant manager and she is hopeful that she is able to continue the successes that Anne brought to the scheme.

She says: 'Anne is such a big act to follow – I hope that I can continue her legacy and keep the scheme vibrant and as successful as it has been so far.'

The process is now under way to recruit a new assistant manager.

Meanwhile, the charity is planning a host of events over the course of the next few months on an island-wide basis as well as locally.

From June 13 to 17, Live at Home is celebrating its 'Best for AGES' campaign, culminating on June 17 with a sponsored walk along Douglas Promenade from the War Memorial to Summerhill, starting at 2pm.

Jackie says: 'There is no need to be a member of a scheme – though, of course, all members and volunteers are all wanted and welcome! This event is a celebration of aging. It aims to show what those over 60 CAN do rather than what they CAN'T. No specific distance is required, just get involved.'

Transport can be arranged to get to the venue and there is much hope that the weather will be kind on the day. Anyone who wants to join in and raise funds for Live at Home can contact Jackie on 861691 or 497603.

The scheme has also just launched a local Facebook page that will provide regular updates and information about local activities and requests for help, which can be found as Laxey and Lonan Live at Home on Facebook.

Said Jackie: 'Please like and share away. If there is anyone willing to become involved in the Scheme in any way as a volunteer then please think about getting involved and let me know on the above contact numbers. There is a real need for any level of help that would be available from people, particularly as the membership of the Scheme continues to grow. It is an extremely rewarding scheme to become involved in and is a great way of getting to know people in the local community.'



Great weather for ducks and kids

THE local community took to changes to the annual Great Laxey Duck Race like, well, ducks to water!

Children had a fantastic time getting wet as they were able to get into the river from the new start line by the Ballacregga Cornmill and Salmon Centre and follow the ducks down to the finish line at Cooil Roi on the Valley Gardens.

Some parents braved the river alongside members of Laxey fire brigade but most were happy to walk alongside and watch the action in an event that raised more than £2,000.

The duck race is organised by the Laxey and Lonan Heritage Trust and had traditionally been held on Easter Sunday. However, it was decided to revamp the event this year to maintain its attraction.

There were children's activities at the fire station, visiting vintage vehicles and street entertainers. All the money raised from this year's duck race will go towards the repainting of the Lady Evelyn waterwheel in the Valley Gardens, which this year celebrates its 10th anniversary.

Organiser Gail Rock said: 'We will be following the same format next year - and improve on it - as it is easier for the firemen and a lot safer for the general public.'

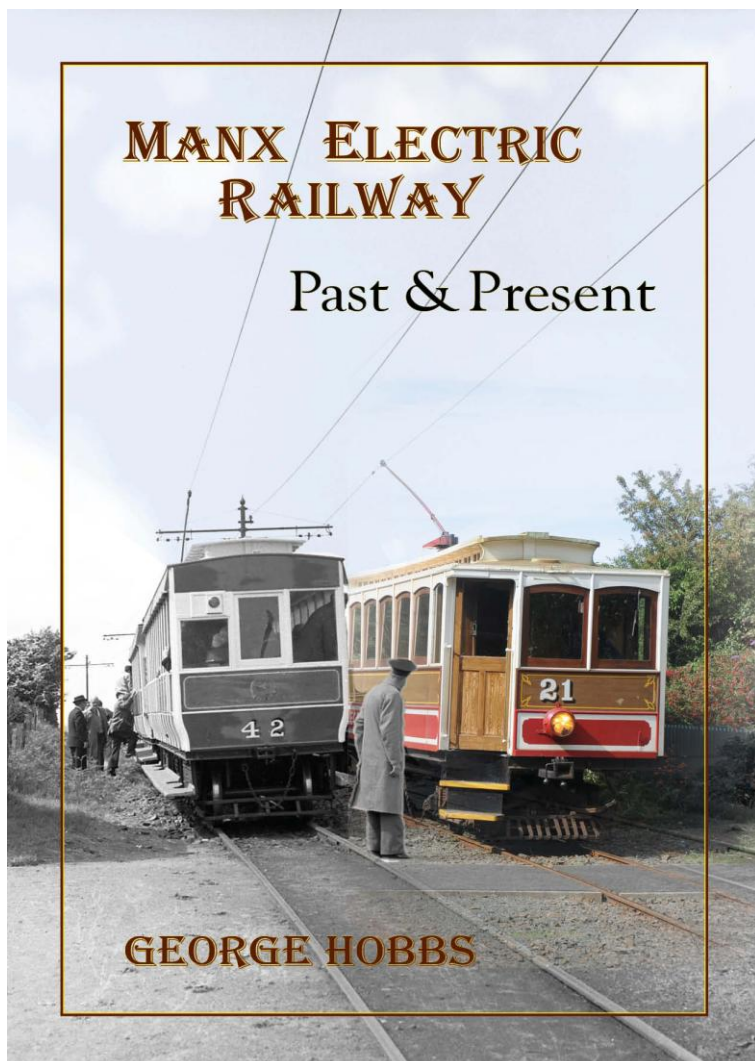
The event went very well, though we were a bit short staffed due to it being held a week late.

'It was very exciting once the ducks came under the bridge as we were able to give a running commentary over the PA system. We appreciate all the help we were given by those selling tickets for the event and for those who helped us on the day.'

The winner was Richard Wild with duck number 234.



New book charts changes in electric railway history



UNPUBLISHED images of the Manx Electric Railway are rare. George Hobbs was lucky enough to be loaned some archive photographs of the MER, most of which had not been published before.

Sara Goodwins of publisher Loaghtan Books said: 'George thought it would be interesting to set some of them next to modern photographs taken from the same place. It was!' She added: 'Memory plays tricks on you and it is amazing how much has changed in the half century or so covered by the photographs.'

Edwardian rolling stock dwarfed by a 'modern' building which has since been demolished; antique vehicles trundling through countryside which is now a housing estate. Ironically the old rolling stock seems to be the only thing which has stayed the same.'

The A4 size publication 'Manx Electric Railway; past & present' by George Hobbs is retailing at £19.95 is available from book shops and gift shops throughout the island.

BIG concert is big success

HELD in the middle of May, the BIG Concert Quiz at Christ Church in Laxey has raised vital funds towards the building's upkeep.

The event proved to be a huge success with nearly 100 people filling the church.

A spokesman said: 'Everyone clearly enjoyed themselves – a reluctance to go home being the sign of a good evening!'

Performers and the audience, with MHK for Garff Steve Rodan as compere, helped Christ Church celebrate its 160th birthday. The Shenanigans Light and the Laxey Handbells provided musical entertainment.



Photos by Clive Burgess, above and top right, of the entertainment.

The spokesman added: 'Lynn Fox and Gemma Varnom have beautiful voices which the church showed off in their finest, and their songs, both serious and humorous, were well received. Marion Hastings evoked the words of John Betjeman on the subject of bells and churches, and the Laxey Handbells provided music throughout the evening linked to the quiz. Refreshments were plenty and more than half the audience joined in the quiz, aiming not only for



the top three prizes but also for the engraved wooden spoon. The celebration cake looked fantastic and fittingly acknowledged Christ Church as the Miners' Church for 160 years. A special highlight of the evening was the poem written specially by the Manx Bard, Stacey Astill.' Stacey's poem is reproduced below:

This church is smaller than some, but its doors fly open wide.

It's bigger than religion, and the books on which its foundations are laid.

It is far more valuable than the stones which wrap around it.

Community lives here.

The spirit in these walls is more than holy.

The hymns reach higher than their descant.

Peace is always present. In this heart centre.

Beating, repeating, spreading warmth, part of Laxey's heart.

Slow, calm, and welcome, always ready to charm you into relaxing.

While reminding you of the past. The miners who came before.

Contact us...

Who we are Laxey Views is written by three villagers – Jackie Bridson, Joanne Clague and Kerry Sharpe.

Send us your views! Please send us your photos, news and events. We can't promise to use everything but we will try.

Email: laxeyviews@gmail.com or stop any of us when you see us around the village!

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