



‘The great source of pleasure is variety’

Dr Johnson wrote that in *Lives of the English Poets*. While we’ve not published poetry (yet!), our offerings this year have been various and, we hope, have given our readers pleasure.

The Nation’s Station

The picture shows George Hobbs being interviewed by Bob Carswell of Manx Radio at the launch of *Stops along the Manx Electric Railway*. Pity about the prominent bottles of wine as George doesn’t drink, but they were kindly supplied by Tony Wilson whose shop, Tram Junction, hosted the launch. Tony doesn’t drink either! Tram Junction is just about as close to the MER station in Laxey as you can get and possibly closer to the tracks than is the station building. It specialises in all things to do with transport, particularly trams. (You’d never guess would you?)



Bob is a really nice chap, and a fluent Manx speaker who hosts a number of programmes on Manx Radio. His interviews are more like a chat with a friendly uncle than a dentist performing extractions, so George’s slight appearance of a rabbit caught in headlights is probably more to do with trying not to muddle his words. Thanks for coming, Bob.

At the launch George was delighted to meet Peter Watson, the grandson of the man after whom the Watson’s Crossing stop is named. Peter’s father, John F. Watson, also worked for the MER, starting as Chief Assistant Engineer in 1936 and ending as General Manager, Engineer and Secretary 1964-7. Naturally Peter was particularly interested in the Watson’s Crossing pictures in the book.

Going Viking

Take a dollop of *Horrible Histories*, add a dash of *Blackadder*, stir in a pinch of *How to Train your Dragon* and simmer over an open fire. Result: *Things to do with Vikings*. That’s if it doesn’t blow up.

We had lots of fun doing this book, not least explaining how readers could have a go at rune writing or Viking cookery and the like. We also broke our cardinal rule and *paid* to use the photograph on the front cover. It’s taken by David Gifford at Up Helly Aa in Shetland and, if you look on our website, you’ll see how splendid it is.

Natty packing and nit picking

On a day when we’d grown depressed ringing round trying to get outstanding bills paid – it has to be done – it cheered us up no end to receive the following from Mr Harold Hull:

‘Many thanks for contacting me yesterday when I made a mess of my postcode. The book arrived this morning in good order and well packaged. 3 day delivery was anticipated - delivered within 36 hours of me ordering. Brilliant service.’
Thank you for your kind words Mr Hull, we do our best.

The things people say (yet again!)

Customer (on the phone): ‘Please cancel my order for your *Invading America, 1943* as I’m only interested in memoirs of the Second World War.’
Me: ‘But this is a memoir of the Second World War.’
Customer: ‘That’s why I don’t want to order it.’
I cancelled the order...

Our next newsletter is out in January so, as has become traditional for us in October - Happy Christmas! Sara

Quote of the day

Raiding or invading leaves little time for fancy cookery and one of the main ‘packed lunches’ for Vikings was dried cod. Because cod contains almost no fat it can be dried hard and will keep almost forever as long as it’s kept dry. To use, just add water. It’s like a Viking Pot Noodle!