



LOOKING BACK... AND FORWARDS

As we were looking back to plan reprints and revisions of books near to going out of print, we thought we'd look further back to see what was happening on other 11 Julys. It's a different world.

This day, 73 years ago

Clifford Cole, radar expert in the demonstration anti-aircraft battery sent by Churchill to the US wrote: 'We arrived at Camp Davis, North Carolina at 0200 hours of 11 July 1943... Imagine having lived in a blacked-out country for four years, and then suddenly arriving at a railway siding and stepping out of the train into the glare from forty lorries with headlights, spotlights and side lights all blazing. It took us some moments to realise what it all meant. However, we gathered that the lorries were there to transport the men and kit to the camp, so in they all piled. Ten jeeps and six sedan cars were there for the officers and their kit, and in no time at all, we were on our way to a breakfast of real orange juice, bacon and two eggs, jam and toast. You can well imagine how much it was appreciated. To see two eggs on one plate was almost a dream come true after the rationing in England.' Page 18, *Invading America 1943*.



How NOT to win friends and influence people...!

As many of you know, we're running out of copies of *A Brief History of the Isle of Man*. The book is still very popular so we're revising and updating it with lots of new text and new pictures. We wanted to include photographs of Bemaken Friary – which we didn't include last time – and so needed to visit its disused church in the middle of what is now a farmyard. We approached an old chap cleaning a muck spreader and asked him whether he would mind very much if we had a quick look. He was extremely helpful and showed us all round it, inside as well as out, and talked very knowledgeably about it, as well as making some piquant comments about current affairs.

It gradually became obvious not only that he was a person of some knowledge but also that he expected us to know who he was. He even mentioned his father's name (Cringle), probably to give us a hint, but, with monumental tactlessness, we still didn't get it. We parted with good will on both sides and when I got home I looked him up.

Well, it seems that our muck-spreading Mr Cringle is Noel Cringle, former Speaker of the House of Keys, former Member of the Legislative Council, (the Manx parliament's lower and upper houses respectively), former President of Tynwald, writer of much of the Manx law, Life Member of the Island Games Association, Chairman of the Manx Music Festival and OBE to boot. Photographs usually show him in suit, gown and bell-bottom wig, and not in muck-stained trousers and grubby beanie, but it's still like not recognising royalty. Oh dear.

Men of Mystery

A number of people have written to ask why some of the MER crew featured in *Manx Electric Railway; Past & Present* are named, while others are not. It's our attempt at tact.

As we don't know how MER management feel about us identifying their staff, we don't include their names in our books. Anyone named usually no longer works for the railway. So if Paul (page 57) or John (page 123) or anyone else is reading this, that's why...

Best wishes, Sara

Quote of the day: this day, 101 years ago

'Sun 11th Jul [1915; trenches near Ypres] Digging 12 till 1.30 am. German bombardment at 5.30. West Kents evacuate Q1 trench, but return. Post Fatigue in evening, and to Scottish Woods.'

Page 38, *Tim's Wars*