



### Lights! Camera! Action!... Background?

**Happy New Year! New books planned for the year include the senior partner's tome on the engineering of the Manx Electric Railway, and a short volume on Celtic crosses**



#### Wham!

On a pre-Christmas visit to London, partly to see some of our UK customers and partly for fun, we found ourselves tangled up in filming in Covent Garden. The first intimation of it was when we were stopped from browsing in some of the market stalls, as they were not selling anything, but were 'props'. Pity! They had some nice things! We chatted for a while to one of the Extras, who explained that they had been there since one o'clock that morning and were filming things back to front: they'd done the night scenes, then, as daylight appeared, those for

when it was growing dark, now they had to do the morning scenes leading up to it getting dark.

The scene they were about to do was one where the leading lady, Emilia Clarke (yes, she from *Game of Thrones*) gets covered with bird poo. All in the best possible taste of course. (And should that be 'guano' therefore?)

We hung around for a while to watch our Extra friend, with several dozen others, walk about, obviously to a set pattern, in the Covent Garden courtyard. Then they did it again. And again. And yet again.

Clifford Cole, author of *Invading America, 1943*, had some experience of film stars if not of actual filming. On page 60 he says: '...the Boston parade. A joint parade of American AA troops and men of the British Battery together with representatives of all the other services and sprinkled with sixteen stars of stage and screen. We had to arrange for a "smart looking soldier" to be an escort to one of the film stars, so got one of the British gunners all "poshed up" and sent him off in advance.' On his tour Cole met Judy Garland, Basil Rathbone and Harpo Marx, among others. The closest I got to anyone famous, was a possible glimpse of Emma Thompson in the distance. Or at least her yellow anorak. And the film? *Last Christmas*; out at the end of this year. And, yes, it is based on the George Michael song. Whatever that is...

#### Worse than verse

In December we had a very successful launch of *My Year as Manx Bard*. There were a number of amusing comments however:

'I thought bards were extinct.'

'Do you wear the bardic robes in bed?'

'What's a bard?' 'A sort of story-telling poet.' 'Go on then. Say something that rhymes...' (Oh help!)

'I thought that bard was a sort of cooking?' (I found out afterwards that it actually is! It's when you put bacon on the top of chicken or turkey to stop it drying out when cooking it.)

#### Last post

The occasional postal strike affected the Manx post before Christmas. It made us think anew just how important this service still is. The editorial in *Dear Ray*, a collection of WW2 letters, says:

'Troops were moved frequently and a mix of civilian call ups, evacuation and loss of homes through bomb damage meant that there were over 60 million civilian changes of address between 1939 and 1945... Some of the envelopes in this collection have three or four addresses written on them as Ray has been moved and his mail has chased him to his new posting.'

Best wishes  
Sara

#### Quote of the day

Pam was also shocked and a bit frightened. No Staff!

Then she thought 'serve them right'. Being Red was Rubbish, she'd always said so. If the Staff had been green – a much better colour – she was sure it wouldn't have happened.