



### Various projects are coming to fruition. Read on!

#### It's nearly here!

The senior partner's eagerly-anticipated (oh yes it is, George) book about the engineering of the Manx Electric Railway is nearly available. In fact, by the time you read this, it might well *be* available. Delivery is imminent, but we can never be absolutely sure when it's going to arrive, as we live and work on an island and boats are cancelled in stormy weather...

The Isle of Man's heritage railways are famous for their age, appearance and apparent immutability. But appearances can be deceptive. *Power, Poles & Platelaying: keeping the Manx Electric Railway on track* examines the civil, structural and electrical engineering behind the well-known facade and shows how the well-loved Victorian and Edwardian electric railways are supported by twenty-first century railway practices.

The book is also packed with rare, and, in many cases, historic photographs, showing changing working methods, as well as seldom-seen and visiting vehicles.

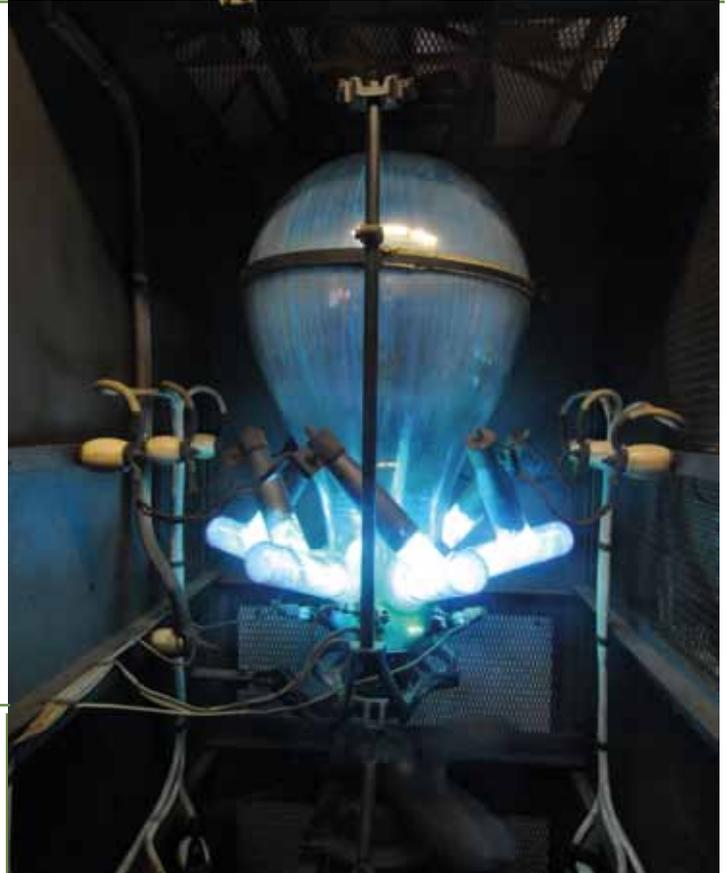
#### On Location

The junior partner has an excellent face for radio. This did not deter Culture Vannin, responsible for promoting Manx culture and heritage, from filming her wearing her (metaphorical) bardic hat.

The idea was that each of the Manx bards should read one of their poems about a particular part of the island, at that location. The fourth Bard was asked to do 'Top Right-hand Corner' about Maughold parish (see page 54 of *My Year as Manx Bard*). Filming was... interesting.

On a crisp day in late January I went to meet the film crew in the Maughold Head carpark. Except that there are two carparks. Naturally we were waiting in different ones. When I eventually went in search of 'the crew' I found that he (just one man) had started without me on artistic background shots. He did eventually get round to filming me and his sound equipment was so sensitive that he asked me to take my coat off as the zip rattling in the wind was a distracting percussive accompaniment.

In no sense am I a performer. Declaiming poetry on a windswept headland to an audience of slowly-chewing sheep, not-very-interested dog walkers (their dogs took more notice), a thwarted drone operator who thought the area would be uncluttered by superfluous people, and various curious seagulls made me feel such a prune.



*The funny-looking object above is a mercury-arc rectifier, one of the last working in the world which, until recently, powered the trams of the Manx Electric Railway. The apparatus is about a metre high. This is one of the photographs we didn't use in Power, Poles & Platelaying*

#### P(r)oo(f)!

Having made my witty remark about 'should that be "guano"?' in the last edition of the newsletter, I've been told by one of our readers that, actually, no, it shouldn't be. Apparently guano is not any old bird poo but specifically the phosphate-rich poo of seabirds. Our correspondent photographed some of the remains of a basic rail set-up associated with guano collection on Ascension Island in the 1970s, a commercial venture that never took off (groan).

So, Covent Garden birds probably produce common or garden poo. Thank you, Geoff!

I've never thought that it was a good idea to combine flight and incontinence anyway.

Best wishes  
Sara

#### Quote of the day

If you stand on the rocks to the north of Niarbyl beach you are standing on the same rocks as those in the Adirondack Mountains in New York.