



NEW BOOK: *A KEY TO TYNWALD*

The Key to Manx government

Tynwald arose out of the need to ensure fairness in a market place.

Scandinavian communities met to trade goods, livestock, gossip and, occasionally, blows. To ensure matters didn't get out of hand, the most important men in the area got together to lay down some basic rules: don't cheat, don't steal, don't run off with someone else's girl/wife/mother and don't kill each other. Such law-giving meetings were called a *ping* or Thing. The Thing field was called *ping-völlr*, which over time became Tinvaal in Manx and Tynwald in English.

This book covers the history, the ceremony on Tynwald Hill, and discusses the workings of Tynwald today. We also

contacted the seven other countries which still have 'Things' based on Viking traditions.

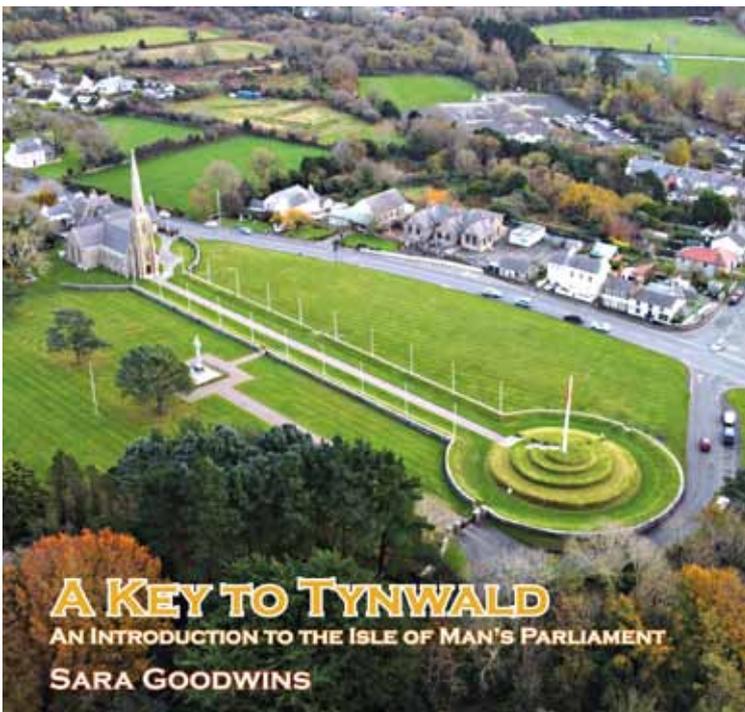
Did you know:

- The Isle of Man was the first country to grant votes to women. New Zealand is usually stated to be the first country to enfranchise women, but Manx women were voting twelve years before their Antipodean sisters.

- The Tynwald Hansard team also produces transcripts for the parliaments of Guernsey, Gibraltar, Alderney, Sark, and the Turks & Caicos Islands.

- The idea of a Thing, with its political overtones, has come into English in the word 'hustings', where candidates for election address those who may (or may not) choose to vote for them.

We don't usually put the front cover of our books in our newsletter, but this is such a fabulous picture we thought we would. Jon Wornham of Island Images is an expert drone operator, writer of *Mann with Altitude*, and, very kindly, provides aerial shots to us from time to time. Thank you Jon.



Oops!

On page 36 of *Castletown; past & present* we say that 'the Southern Neighbourhood Policing Team moved to 27 Malew Street.' They didn't. The information came from the police station itself when I rang them, but it's still wrong. (Surely they knew where they were going?!) Fortunately the gentleman who lives at 27 Malew Street has seen the funny side of the confusion, although he is muttering about charging them for the biccies they've been eating. For those interested, the Castletown police can be found at the Civic Centre in Farrants Way. Our apologies to all.

Wheely prepared?

Over the winter work takes place on Manx infrastructure to prepare for summer visitors. In particular we've noticed gangers and wire crews checking and repairing the heritage railways. George Hobbs' book *Power, Poles and Platelaying* covers the way the nineteenth century Manx Electric Railway has adapted to twenty-first century technology, yet still retains its heritage appearance. The book is aimed at engineers and transport enthusiasts, but also contains details which the average traveller doesn't even consider. From page 75 for example: 'The small diameter of the MER trolley wheel means that it spins at a relatively high speed. Taking the contact diameter as 2.36in (60mm), and assuming no slippage, then over a single journey between Douglas and Ramsey the wheel rotates about 150,000 times, an at average speed in excess of 2000rpm, during the hour and a quarter journey.' No wonder they wear out.

Overheard in bookshop

'It must be hard to be a writer.'
'Yes. But then it's hard to be.'

Don't forget to look at our blog!
Best wishes Sara

Quote of the day

Do you get pocket money? Of course you do!... But money is quite a new invention. People used to swap something they had for something they wanted; it's called bartering. Now that's fine for some things – bartering a bag of turnips for a couple of eggs for example – but difficult to do all the time. Imagine turning up at Shoprite with a cow on a lead to swap for groceries for the month...