



## Making History

Many of our books are concerned with the history, not only of the Isle of Man, but with the surrounding islands too. It's rare to be present when history is created however. See below...



### But... but...

At our local tramstop is a small green chair, with MER (Manx Electric Railway) painted on it (see picture left). Waiting for the tram one day I was joined by a lady I'd never seen before. She was looking at the chair and then remarked to me: 'my grandfather lived in a cottage down the road and often used to come up here to watch the old trams go past. He used to bring a kitchen chair with him to sit on. After he died we painted it up and put it up here as a memorial to him.'

Isn't that a lovely story? Yes, I think so too. The only problem is that it is entirely untrue. I can be sure that it is untrue because I put the chair there. I found it, painted it and

installed it to provide somewhere to sit outside when waiting for the tram: there is a bench in the shelter (rumour has it that it was rescued from a tram), but on a nice day, sitting outside is much more pleasant. The shelter is damp!

Don't misunderstand me; the lady, whoever she is, might genuinely have thought that the story she was telling me was true. My point is that this is a tiny but brilliant example of how history is made. There are now two 'chair stories', both of which might be retold and might even appear in print. Of themselves, either could be right. In years to come, if they are remembered, historians might argue over which is the true one.

### Take Two...

In the STOP PRESS column of the April newsletter we mentioned that *Two Fish for the Summit*, another in our Hoofprint series, had been delayed by bad printing. A substitute printer took over the work and did a superb - and fast - job (are you reading this, Bill?).

Consequently *Two Fish* is now available. Subtitled *Life and Work on the Manx Mountain*, it gives the background to everything that happens on Snaefell. The railway goes up it, the TT goes round it, the mine went under it, sheep farming happens all over it, and the Summit Hotel, radio masts and air traffic control communications cluster at the top.

And the title? While speaking with Snaefell Mountain Railway staff to research the book, the call came over the radio 'two fish for the summit'. The hotel needed them for a special dinner and, like everything else, the only way to get them up the mountain was on the Victorian railway...

### Fame at last!

The senior partner in Loaghtan Books was coming home from Ramsey by tram when the bloke sitting near him started to chat. But this was no ordinary conversation. Stephen McClarence is a travel writer for *The Daily Telegraph* and was visiting the Isle of Man to write about it. (Let's hope he was also enjoying himself.) A brief interview with George subsequently appeared in Steve's article in the *DT* on 27 May. Google 'Stephen McClarence' and you'll find it.

Tim Elliott wrote on 24 Sep 1938 that 'a man who makes any newspaper his bible is a fool' (p 150 of *Tim's Wars*). He's not wrong, but Steve writes extremely well - have a look.

Best wishes  
Sara

### Quote of the day

'The ship's cat on the royal yacht *Britannia* was a tabby Manx cat, presented to the Queen Mother when she visited Castletown in 1963. It was named, appropriately enough, *Schickrys*, which is Manx for 'sure' or 'certain'. Not only is it a good omen for a mouser, it's also the Castletown town motto.