



Rain stops play?

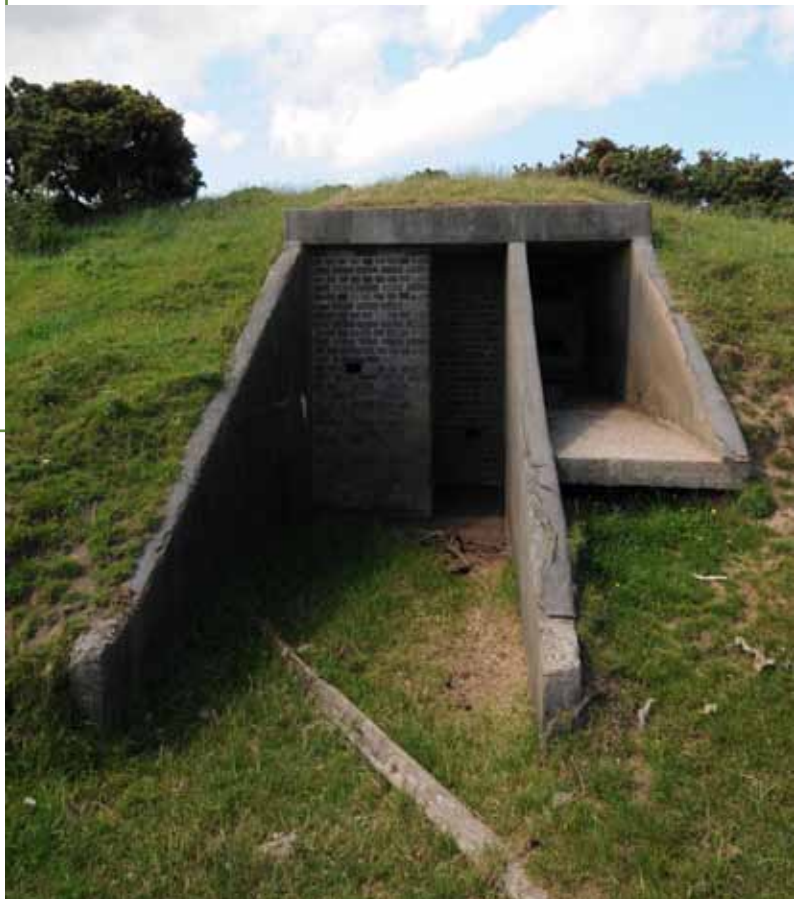
Well, not quite. The unusually wet weather has, however, ruined our photographic schedule. It doesn't sound much of a problem, but no photographs means our books can be delayed.

It's amazing what you can see...

...on the Isle of Man. On the right is a Second World War bunker, now a playground for sheep, but which once formed part of Britain's radar defence. Built early in 1940 the bunkers would have shared the fields with transmitter and receiver masts and accommodation blocks for the 125 personnel.

The bunkers feature as 'B' in our *A Manx A-B-C-Dery*, but we are revisiting them as we currently revise *A Brief History of the Isle of Man*.

They are astounding reminders of the past.



Who'd be an author...

Loads of people want to write, and some write very well, but I always warn them that the images of writers starving in candle-lit garrets is entirely correct. A few writers will be hugely successful (take a bow J.K. Rowling) but most will not be able to make a living from their writing. Fame will not follow you and riches are unlikely to be yours. Take a case in point:

On 6 September 2022 writer Lemn Sissay, official poet of the 2012 London Olympics and Chancellor of the University of Manchester 2015-22, was travelling on the tube in London. He noticed that his poem *Dei Miracole* - it's good, look it up - was on display as part of the 'Poems on the Underground' initiative. Sissay took out a pen and signed the poem. No-one in the crowded carriage batted an eyelid. He then took a selfie with the signed poem. The commuters continued indifferent.

But is this so bad? The important thing, surely, is the work, not who does it. Page 95 of *My Year as Manx Bard* says: 'the writer doesn't really matter. It's the writing which matters, and therefore too much stress on the writer is actually wrong. It's a little like having children. You bring them into the world, make sure they have everything they need, and then usher them out to venture on their own. I feel that any form of writing is like that. It should stand on its own (metrical!) feet'.

Drawing diagrams

We pride ourselves on coming up with witty titles for our books. We have *A De-tailed Account of Manx Cats* (Manx cats are tailless), *Three Legs Good* (about the Manx three-legged symbol and a nod to George Orwell's *1984*), *Cross Purposes* (mediaeval carved stone crosses litter the island), *A Key to Tynwald* (Manx politicians in the lower house are Members of the House of Keys) - well, you get the idea.

It wasn't until recently that we discovered that there is a Diagram Prize for Oddest Title of the Year. Previous winners have included *Living with Crazy Buttocks* (2002), *The 2009-2014 World Outlook for 60-milligram Containers of Fromage Frais* (2008), *Goblinproofing One's Chicken Coop* (2012) and *Is Superman Circumcised?* (2021).

We're not going to enter.

Best wishes
Sara

Quote of the day

The [Dreemskerry Manx Electric Railway] shelter is unique in that it has a domestic style closing door. Occasionally local farmers move sheep along the line and it is not unknown for a tup to be temporarily incarcerated inside the shelter, the door secured by a bungee.