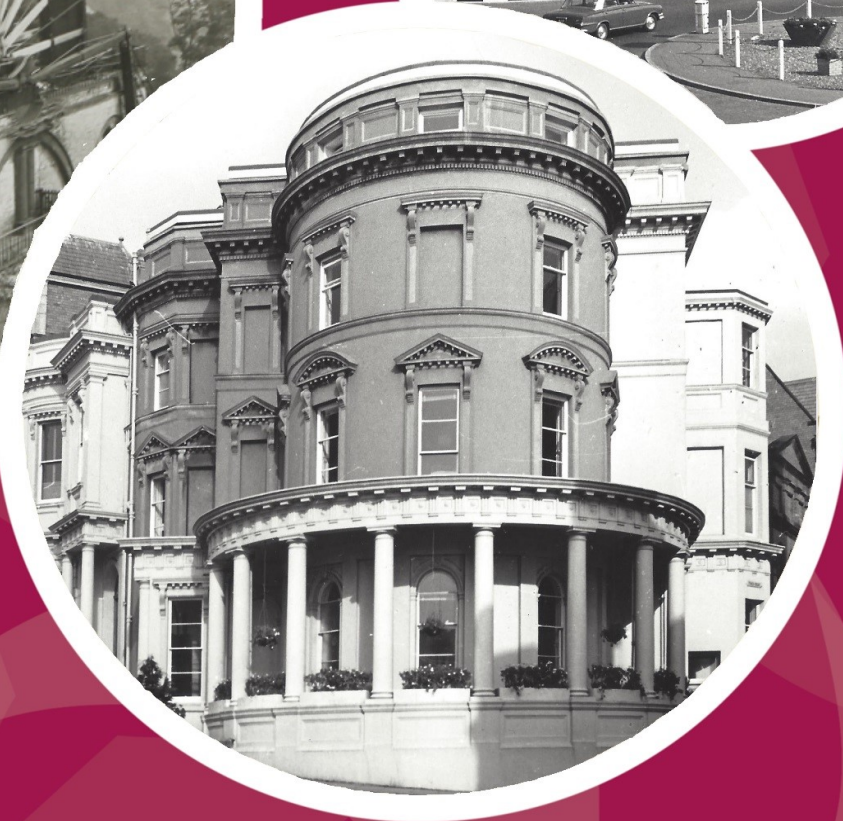
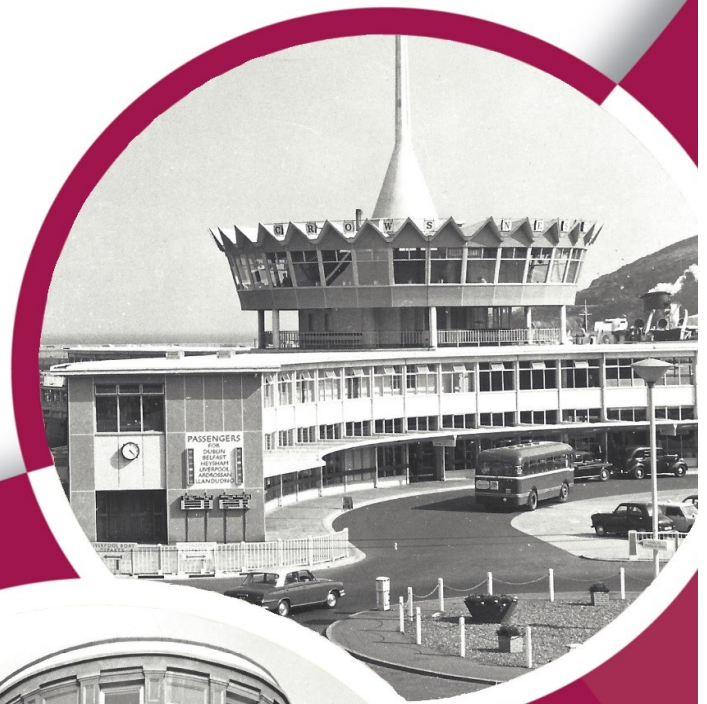
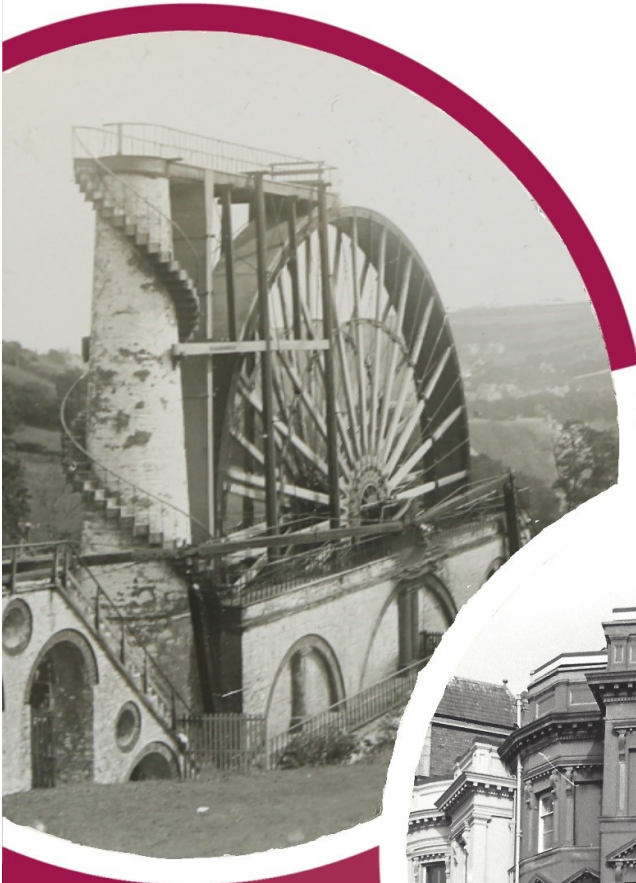




PUBLIC RECORD  
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# Annual Report 2021-2022



**Isle of Man**  
Government  
*Reillys Ellan Vannin*

[www.gov.im/pro](http://www.gov.im/pro)  
[public.records@gov.im](mailto:public.records@gov.im)  
+44 (0)1624 693569

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**DISCOVER THE ISLAND'S  
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# Foreword by the Registrar General

I am delighted to introduce this report on the work of the Isle of Man Public Record Office in 2021-2022.

The Isle of Man Public Record Office preserves our national archives collections.

Archives play an important role in a modern and democratic society.

They preserve evidence of our Government's decisions and actions, enhancing transparency and accountability in public services.

They protect the rights of citizens and Island residents, through the preservation of vital records relating to property and life events.

They promote education and life-long learning, allowing historians, researchers and the general public to engage with documentary evidence of their Island's history and culture.



The Record Office team work actively across Isle of Man Government public bodies to ensure records of long term historic value are identified and transferred to become part of the national archives. The Record Office reading room and enquiry services provide public access to these historic collections.

The Island's heritage stories are brought to life through exhibitions, tours and social media. Cataloguing, conservation and preservation activities behind the scenes ensure our national archive collections are well cared for and survive for current and future generations to enjoy.

During 2021-2022, the Record Office team have progressed a number of key strategic initiatives. The refurbishment of one of two archive stores has provided urgently needed space to allow the continued selection and preservation of archives for the next 5 years.

We reached a key milestone in our project to establish a Digital Archive, with the commencement of the tender process for digital preservation software and storage. This crucial work will allow us to preserve the Island's 'born digital' national archives alongside our more traditional paper collections.



# Report of the Public Records Officer



## Introduction

The Isle of Man Public Record Office preserves the national archive collections from Isle of Man public bodies, under the Public Records Act 1999 and the Public Records Order 2015.

Our mission is to select and preserve records of historic and cultural value and make these available to improve Government transparency, and to encourage and support research, learning and exploration of our national heritage.

We emerged into April 2021 at the end of the third 'Stay at Home' circuit-breaker mandated by the Isle of Man Government to limit the spread of Covid-19. Our team were able to return to the office and we welcomed researchers back to our reading room to consult records.

2021-2022 has been a year of substantial change for the Record Office, dominated by the major refurbishment of our archive store at Unit 3 Spring Valley, which took place between June-December 2021. You can read more about this on page 6 of this report.

# All change in the archive store

During 2021-22, our Public Record Office archive store at Unit 3 Spring Valley was refurbished to provide desperately needed additional space for storing archive collections. We hope this will be sufficient for a further 5-7 years worth of growth.

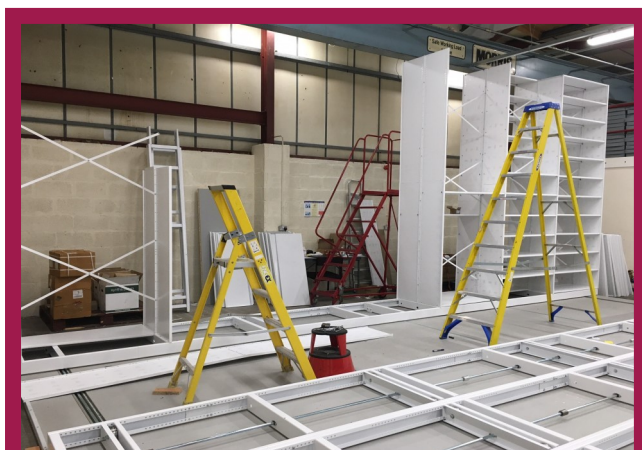
The refurbishment involved the careful movement of over 2.5km (the equivalent of 7000 boxes) of our archive collections, dismantling of all the old shelving, installation of new high-density mobile shelving, and the replacement of all lighting with LED fittings.



Before: Old static shelving (sufficient for storing 350 cubic metres of archives)



After: New mobile shelving (sufficient for storing 670 cubic metres of archives)



During: Mobile shelving under construction

The new shelving system was manufactured in the UK by Rotadex Systems Limited after a competitive tender exercise, and installed by Isle of Man contractors, Office Relocation Services.

The shelving complies with BS 4971: 2017, the British Standard for the conservation and care of archive and library collections.



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# New accessions

During 2021-2022 we continued our work with public bodies to identify, select and transfer records of historic value to the Record Office.

The refurbishment of our archive store at Unit 3 Spring Valley limited the amount of new records we were able to take in. However this project was completed in December 2021, and the first 3 months of 2022 have seen a return to more normal levels of accessions.

## Section 3(4) accessions

During 2021-22, we accepted 11 completely new accessions, totalling 5.21 cubic metres (the equivalent of approximately 104 large boxes).

These accessions were transferred under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1999,

New accessions are generally available to the public for research, although there may be some legal restrictions on access where records contain personal data or sensitive data.

## Consignment to accession transfers

Many records within the Public Record Office stores are held as consignments under section 3(8) of the Public Records Act 1999. These consignments remain in formal ownership of the creating public body. They are generally not accessible to the public without the consent of the record owners.

Assessment and full transfer of these collections to the Public Record Office is a key priority for the Record Office team, as we wish to ensure these records can be made available to the public as soon as possible.

During 2021-22, we continued our work to undertake assessment of these consignments. Nine consignments (1.87 cubic metres of records, the equivalent of 38 large boxes) were assessed and fully transferred to the Record Office as accessions, including a substantial number of High Court summary jurisdiction case records from 1952-2001.

A full list of the accessions (new record transfers) received by the Public Record Office in 2021-22 can be found in Appendix A. Enquiries about new accessions should be directed to our team on 693569 or by e-mail to: [public.records@gov.im](mailto:public.records@gov.im)



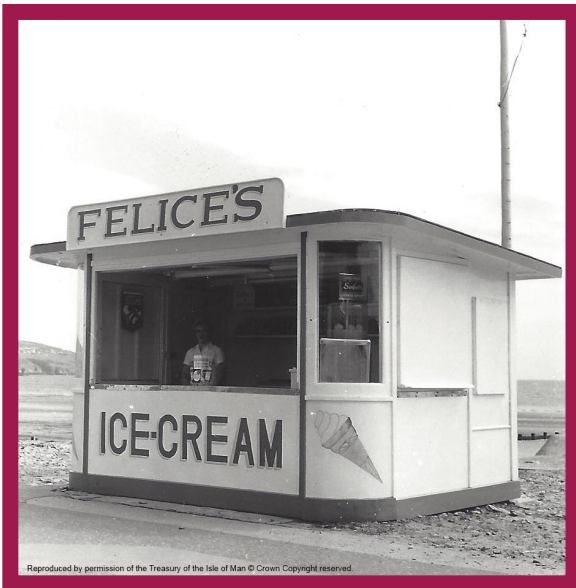


# New collection highlights

## Department of Trade and Industry photographs (A220)

In March 2022 we received 4 boxes of photographs related to the work of the Department of Trade and Industry (1996 onwards), and its predecessors, the Department of Industry (1986-1996), the Industry Board and Industrial Office (1961-1986).

Dating principally from the mid-late twentieth century, the photographs, taken for publicity purposes, show scenes of industry across the Island, including manufacturing, trade fairs, factory and housing developments.



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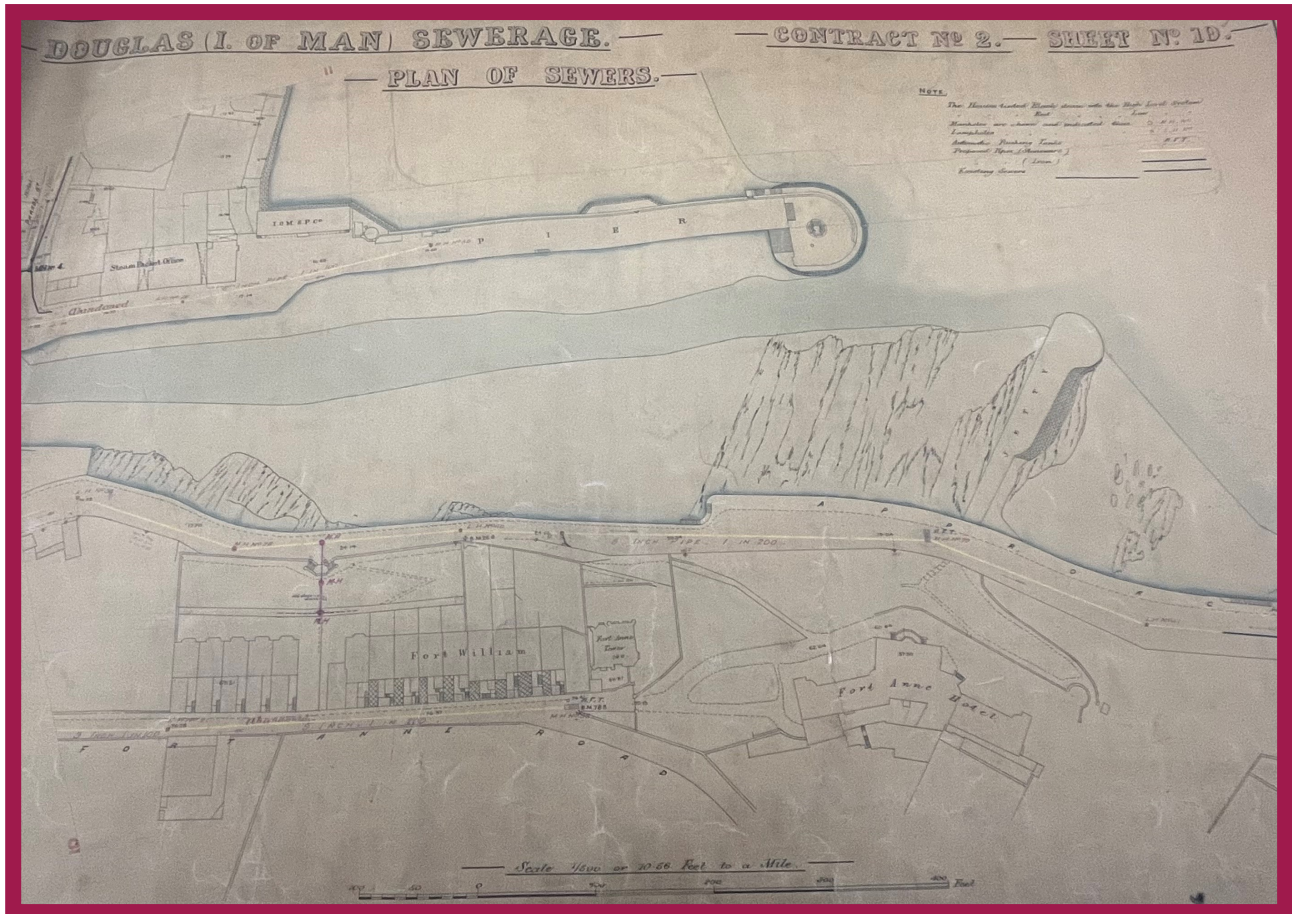
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# New collection highlights

## Douglas Borough Council: plans and blueprints (A219)



In February 2022, we were delighted to accept 159 drawings, plans and blueprints from the Douglas Borough Engineer & Surveyor's Department, dating from 1867-1998.

These plans depict sewer and water infrastructure, the development of the Willaston Estate from 1949-1968, proposed boundary extensions to Douglas Borough from the 1960s-1980s, and Douglas Borough wards and polling area boundaries.

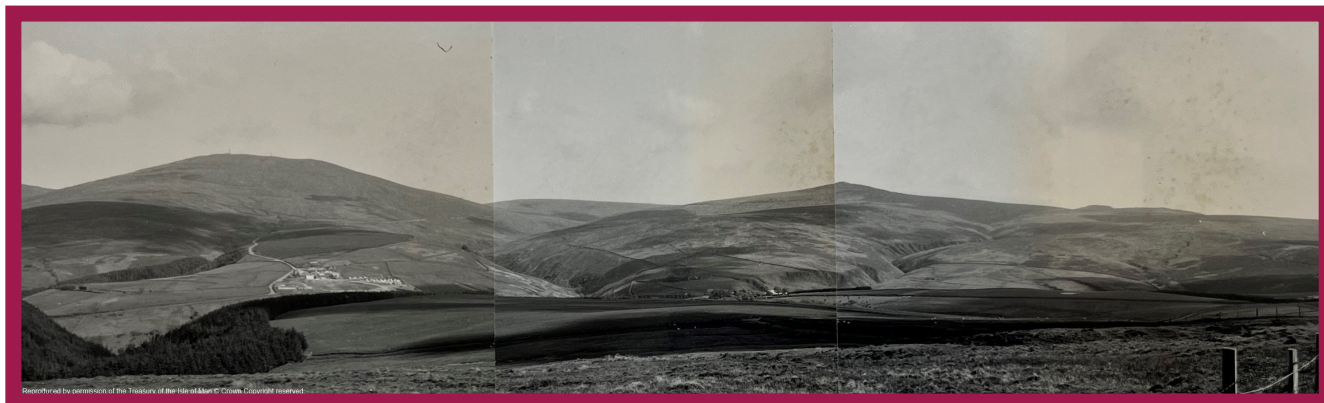
Unfortunately some of these plans were in poor condition when transferred to us and require conservation treatment before they can be made available in our reading room.

This accession compliments another large deposit of Douglas Borough Surveyors' plans preserved within our national archive collections (accession reference A99). Both accessions are currently being listed by our team. Together, they will allow future researchers to chart the development of public works in Douglas from the 19th century onwards.

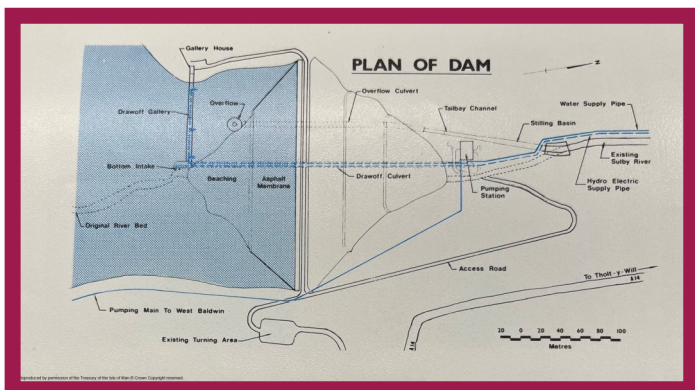
# New collection highlights

## Isle of Man Water and Gas Authority: Sulby Reservoir (A211)

This small file, transferred to the Record Office by the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture Planning division, contains reports, plans and photographs relating to the construction of the Sulby reservoir in 1981.



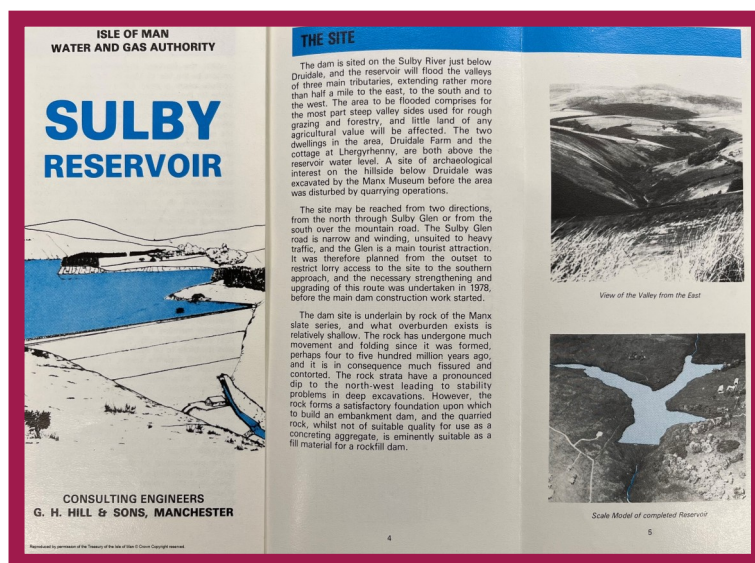
Panoramic mounted photographs show the landscape around the reservoir.



Two sectional elevations and layout plans (not pictured) prepared for the Isle of Man Water and Gas Authority show the original design of the reservoir.

A colour printed leaflet includes site plans, cross-section diagrams of the dam and an overall description of the scheme.

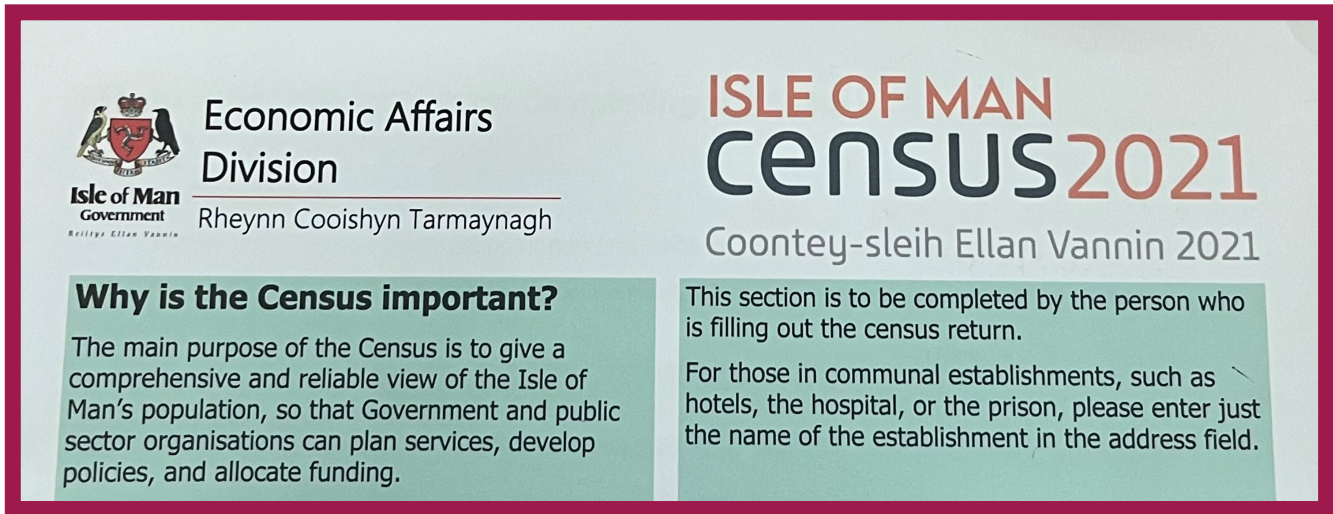
Finally, the file also includes a typed report with recommendations on landscape and amenity issues relating to the reservoir site.






# New collection highlights

## Isle of Man 2021 Census: paper census returns (A224)



 **Economic Affairs Division**  
Rheynn Cooishyn Tarmaynagh

**ISLE OF MAN**  
**census2021**  
Coontey-sleih Ellan Vannin 2021

**Why is the Census important?**  
The main purpose of the Census is to give a comprehensive and reliable view of the Isle of Man's population, so that Government and public sector organisations can plan services, develop policies, and allocate funding.

This section is to be completed by the person who is filling out the census return.  
For those in communal establishments, such as hotels, the hospital, or the prison, please enter just the name of the establishment in the address field.

At the beginning of 2022, the UK National Archives in conjunction with Find My Past, released the historic census returns from the 1921 Census allowing us to explore the history of Island residents 100 years ago.

Whilst historic census returns for the Island are held in the UK, the Isle of Man Public Record Office preserves modern Isle of Man census returns and interim census returns from 1966 onwards.

We were excited in March 2022 to receive the first deposit of records from our most recent census, conducted on 30 May 2021. 55 boxes of household returns completed on paper forms were transferred to us from the Cabinet Office Economic Affairs division.

Residents were also offered the option to complete their census return digitally. These digital returns will also be transferred to the Record Office for preservation in due course.

Census records are not made available to the public until 100 years after their creation. Whilst closed, the records still require careful storage and preservation. The PRO team are delighted to play our part in ensuring their survival as an essential resource for future family historians and researchers in 100 years' time.

# New catalogues

Our time for cataloguing has been limited this year, due to the need to focus our resources on the refurbishment of our Unit 3 store and the mass movement and re-shelving of the archive collections (see page 6).

Despite this, we were pleased to be able to release a new catalogue for our collection of Isle of Man Courts of Justice Inquests.

Substantial work has also been carried out on cataloguing records of Michael Parish and Village Commissioners and we hope to release this catalogue later in 2022.

## Isle of Man Courts of Justice: Inquests 1800-2001 (S125 - S127)

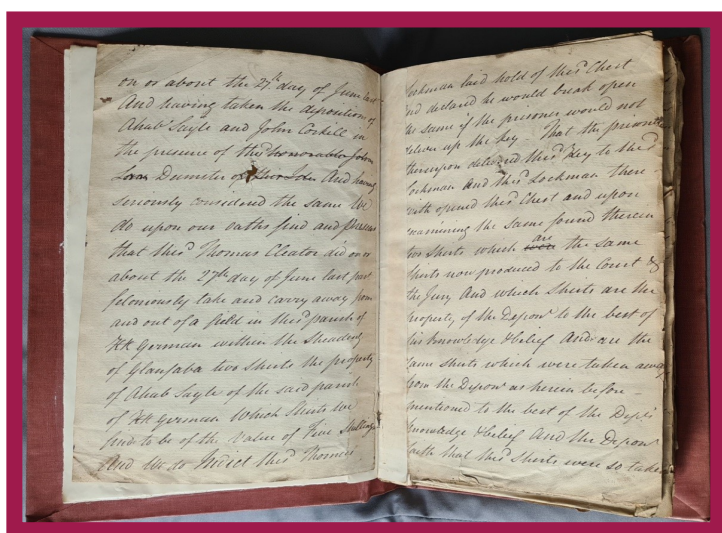
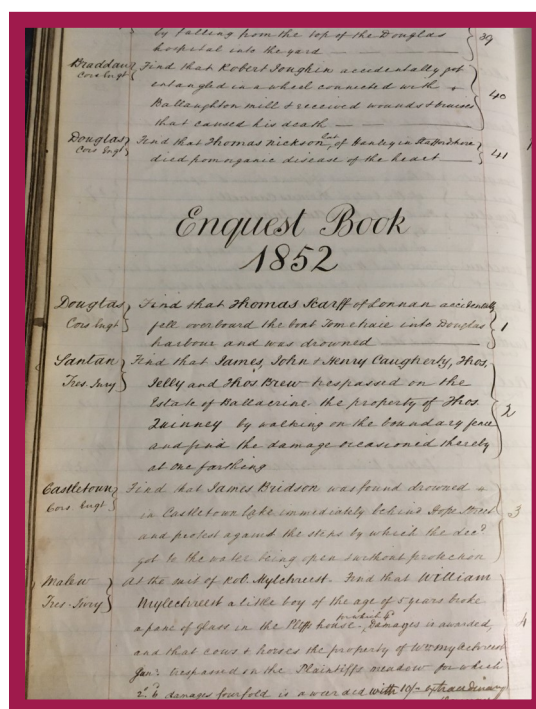
Early inquest proceedings could examine a variety of different matters.

Our sequence of case papers and entry books, dating from 1800 onwards, include:

- inquiries into matters as directed by the Deemsters’;
- tenancy matters and rent apportionment;
- boundary issues and trespass;
- watercourse issues.

They also include Coroner’s inquests into suspicious deaths.

Until 1980 on the Isle of Man, these cases were styled ‘enquests’ rather than ‘inquests’.



All our completed catalogues can be found online at: <https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/enterprise/central-registry/public-record-office/records/>

Catalogues are also available to view as paper copies in our reading room at Unit 40A Spring Valley Industrial Estate, Braddan.



# Collections care

## Locations and collections audit

The refurbishment of our Unit 3 store required the movement and re-shelving of over half of our archive collections. This involved the whole team in a huge collective effort to move the records. It also provided us with the welcome opportunity to audit these collections - checking all were present, undertaking repackaging, and creating comprehensive new locations data.

## Repackaging and preservation

One collection to benefit from our repackaging programme this year were Isle of Man Wills and Administrations 1911-1949, stored at the Public Record Office on behalf of the Isle of Man Deeds and Probate Registry.

Our Records Assistants repackaged a total of 627 boxes - transferring these historic wills from their original metal tins to acid-free boxes. Repacking is an important part of the preservation actions we take to preserve our collections. It helps protect the archives from dust, water damage (in the event of a flood), from pests, from fluctuating temperatures and humidity, and from damage from chemicals used in non-archival packaging.



Historic wills repackaged into archival quality boxes (right); original metal tins ready to go to auction (left)

In this instance, the original metal tins were unsuitable for long-term storage. Rust was starting to stain and corrode the paper and the wills inside were easily damaged by the closure mechanisms on the boxes. The original tins are now being sold at auction, raising much needed funds to help pay for further collections care work.

# Public services



Follow us at  
[@IsleofManPRO](#)

## Social media

Our social media presence continues to reach audiences across the globe, bringing Isle of Man heritage and unique archive collections to those unable to visit to enjoy them in person, and bringing greater awareness of our collections to Island residents.

By the end of the year (31 March 2022) we had 1338 users actively following the Public Record Facebook page and 872 users following our @IsleOfManPRO Twitter account.

On Twitter, we participated in the popular #ExploreArchives and #Archive30 campaign, using daily hashtags to link to different archive themes.

Our Twitter posts achieved an average of 10639 impressions per month, and an average of 470 engagements per month. Our tweets were 'liked' 1286 times over the course of the year.



On Facebook, we saw our 'total reach' almost double from the previous year, with our posts entering the screens of an average of 8408 unique users per month. We received an average of 478 engagements (user clicks) on our posts per month.



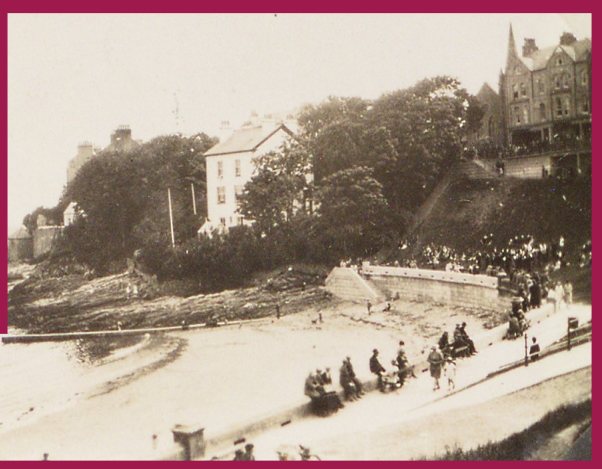


# Lives and Landmarks of Rushen

## Exhibition at Rushen Heritage Centre

In July 2021, we collaborated with Rushen Heritage Trust to provide an exhibition for the opening of their new heritage centre in Port Erin.

The exhibition, on display for three weeks, featured photographs from our collection of records of Port St Mary Commissioners, and maps and plans from across our archive collections. The event was well received by visitors, who were encouraged to share their knowledge, putting names to the many faces in the photographs.



Images reproduced with kind permission of Port St Mary Commissioners.

# Digital Archives

One of the most complex challenge facing the Public Record Office is the preservation of 'born-digital' records created by Isle of Man public bodies.

These digital public records, where they are of long-term historic value, must be preserved as part of the national archives. Digital records are particularly vulnerable to bit-stream corruption, technical obsolescence of formats, software and storage media, and accidental or deliberate destruction at the click of a button.

In April 2021, we released a Prior Information Notice, inviting potential suppliers to submit expressions of interest for the supply of digital preservation software, digital storage and an online access facility.

The results of this exercise allowed us to explore the market and finalise our specific requirements. We began a full procurement exercise for our Digital Archive in April 2022.

2022-23 is set to be an exciting year, as we select a supplier and implement a digital archive solution to allow us to move forward with this crucial project to preserve our digital heritage for current and future generations.





# Appendix 1

## Isle of Man Public Record Office: archive accessions 2021-22

This list includes all archive collections transferred to the Isle of Man Public Record Office under section 3(4) or section 6(1) of the Public Records Act 1999 between 1st April 2021-31st March 2022.

Please contact the Isle of Man Public Record Office on 01624 693569 or e-mail to [public.records@gov.im](mailto:public.records@gov.im) to enquire about access to any of these records.

Accession number	Quantity	Title	Date range	Access status
A205	17 archive boxes, 6 banker's boxes (At the time of accession: 0.66 cubic metres)	Records of the Department of Health and Social Care: Theatre Service	1990-1997	Closed
A206	4 archive boxes (containing 19 reports). At the time of accession: 0.12 cubic metres	Records of Braddan Parish Commissioners: various reports	Oct 1990-Feb 2003	Partially Closed
A207	1 archive box (0.03 cubic metres)	Records of the Isle of Man General Registry: Court of General Gaol Delivery: Original Statements and supporting exhibits	1979	Closed
A208	17 archive boxes (0.25 cubic metres)	Records of the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture and its predecessors: Legislative drafting files and Government Circulars	1996-2021	Closed
A209	1 archive box (0.03 cubic metres)	Records of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: Information leaflets and publications	1990-2002	Open



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# Appendix 1 continued

Accession number	Quantity	Title	Date range	Access status
A210	1 archive box (0.03 cubic metres)	Records of the Department for Enterprise: Central Registry: Civil Registry: Monthly Figures of Births and Deaths	1997-2011	Closed
A211	1 file (at the time of accession: 0.06 cubic metres)	Records of the Isle of Man Water and Gas Authority: Reports, plans and photographs relating to construction of the Sulby Reservoir	1981	Open
A212	21 applications; 1 item (0.075 cubic metres)	Records of the Department of Infrastructure: Highways Services Division: Douglas Promenade Refurbishment Scheme: Gateway Bollard Designs	Oct 2018- Jan 2019	Open
A213	28 archive boxes (1.04 cubic metres)	Manx National Heritage: Records of the Isle of Man Assessment Board: minutes, copies of tithe and asylum plans and associated plans	1886-1986	Open
A214	4 archive boxes (0.12 cubic metres)	Records of the Isle of Man High Court: Matrimonial Proceedings: divorce cause lists	1939-1985	Closed
A215	2 archive boxes (0.06 cubic metres)	Records of the Department of Health and Social Security: Noble's Hospital: Medical Records: White Hoe Isolation Hospital and Sanatorium Medical Records	1959-1992	Closed



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# Appendix 1 continued

Accession number	Quantity	Title	Date range	Access status
A216	1 archive box (0.03 cubic metres)	Records of the Department of Health and Social Services: Noble's Hospital: District Nurse Reports & Registers	1923-1953	Closed
A217	1 archive box (0.03 cubic metres)	Records of the Department of Health and Social Security: Noble's Hospital: Medical Records Department: In-patient Register	1918-1929	Closed
A218	1 archive box (0.03 cubic metres)	Records of the Department of Health and Social Care: Jane Crookall Maternity Unit: Data extracted from Midwives Registers	1927-1990	Closed
A219	159 items (0.15 cubic metres)	Records of Douglas Borough Council and its predecessor: Borough Engineer & Surveyor's Department: Drawings, plans and blue-prints	1867-1998	Partially Closed
A220	At the time of accession: 0.1 cubic metres (4 outsize archive boxes)	Records of the Department of Trade and Industry and predecessor bodies, including the Department of Industry and the Industrial Office	1909- c 2006	Partially Closed
A221	10 banker's boxes (0.50 cubic metres)	Records of the Isle of Man Courts of Justice: Manx Bar Exams	circa 1936-1991	Partially Closed
A222	48 boxes (0.91 cubic metres)	Records of the Isle of Man High Court: Civil Division and its antecedents: Summary Jurisdiction Case files	1952-2001	Partially Closed
A224	55 banker's boxes (at the time of accession: 2.85 cubic metres)	Records of the Isle of Man Census 2021: census returns in paper form	2021	Closed



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