



Manx National Heritage  
*Eiraght Ashoonagh Vannin*

**Library & Archive Service**

## SOURCES FOR FAMILY HISTORY

### Public Information Sheet No. 1 July 2009

#### 1. General

Researching your family history can be an exciting hobby and most of the sources for the study of Manx genealogy are available in the Library. Many of these are held on microfilm or microfiche in the Reading Room. Please note that there is no need to book a reading machine in advance. If you need assistance the staff will be only too happy to help.

This information sheet outlines some of the available sources held in the Library, [Civil Registry](#) or [Isle of Man Public Record Office](#) .

A good introduction to family history is *'The Manx Family Tree: a guide to records in the Isle of Man'*, by Janet Narasimham (3rd Edition 2000) ISBN 0 9523 9630 0. This 60 page booklet gives guidance on how to set about research and the types of records available and can be purchased at the Manx Museum shop (price £7.50 + postage), or from the [Isle of Man Family History Society](#):

"The Isle of Man Family History Society was formed in January 1979 to encourage the study of genealogy and family history, particularly within the Isle of Man. Being a member of the society benefits all those researching their families, whether they are Manx born or not. Members living abroad will find it rewarding to discover their Island heritage in this manner"

SECRETARY: Pat Nicholson, 4, Eleanora Gardens, Douglas. IM2 3NR  
Email: [paninman@manx.net](mailto:paninman@manx.net)

<http://www.iomfhs.im>

Internment: Please note that we provide a separate [bibliography](#) of sources of information for people interned on the Isle of Man during the First and Second World Wars.

## 2. Sources

- **Civil Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths and Adoption.**

Records of the compulsory registration of births and deaths began in 1878 and for marriages in 1884. Certificates can be obtained, for a fee, from the:

Civil Registry	
<b>Address:</b>	Deemsters Walk Buck's Road Douglas IM1 3AR There are also Registry Offices at Castletown, Peel and Ramsey <a href="http://www.gov.im/registries/general/contact.xml">http://www.gov.im/registries/general/contact.xml</a> for contact details
<b>Tel / Fax:</b>	01624 687039
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:civil@registry.gov.im">civil@registry.gov.im</a>
<b>Web Site:</b>	<a href="http://www.gov.im/registries/general/civilregistry">http://www.gov.im/registries/general/civilregistry</a>

The Civil Registry also maintains the Isle of Man's Adopted Children Register.

The Library does not hold and cannot supply certificates but has a microfiche copy of the indexes of births, marriages and deaths, covering the period 1878 to 1993. There is also a copy online at <http://manxBMD.com>

Non compulsory marriage certificates were issued from 1849 for dissenters who chose not to have their union solemnised in a parish church.

- **Manx Parish Registers**

In 1910 all parish registers were passed temporarily to the General Registry in order that handwritten copies could be made of all records prior to 1849 by government staff. These copies together with original registers spanning 1849–1883 were subsequently microfilmed in the late 1940s. Together with indexes arranged by parish for baptism and marriage entries, they are available for family history use in the Library. The [Isle of Man Family History Society](#) has produced detailed transcripts of burial registers, which are available in the Reading Room.

- **Non Conformist & Roman Catholic Churches**

The library holds some registers and other records for local nonconformist churches and chapels, together with some Roman Catholic registers. These are not name indexed and are incomplete.

It is worth noting that by law nonconformists were required to marry in parish churches until 1849. After this they could marry in their own churches in the presence of the Deputy Registrar in whose records these marriages were entered. Hence before 1849 most if not all nonconformist marriages should appear in the parish registers and after 1883 in the records of compulsory civil registration.

- **International Genealogical Index**

This has been compiled by the [Genealogical Society of Utah](#), funded by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (The Mormon Church) and is an alphabetical listing by surname of entries compiled from church registers relating to baptisms and marriages. It is a useful way of finding which of the Island's parishes to check for your ancestors. This index is regularly updated and is available world-wide on line at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) and in the church's family history centres. The Library has a copy on microfiche for consultation.

- **Census Returns**

Microfilm copies of the Isle of Man census returns for 1841 – 1881 and microfiche of the 1891 and 1901 enumerations are available at the library. These returns record each person in a 'household', the relationship of every person to the 'head of household', ages, occupations and places of birth. For information about census data availability up to and including 1911 see the following links:

[www.1911census.co.uk](http://www.1911census.co.uk)

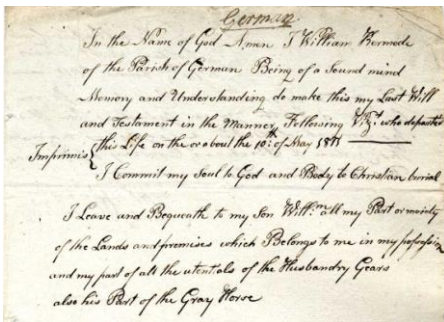
<http://www.1901censusonline.com>

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/census/>

The [Isle of Man Family History Society](http://www.iomfhs.im/) has published transcripts of all of the 1851 and 1881 censuses. Indexes to the 1841, 51, 61, 71, 91 & 1901 Censuses in printed form, compiled by the late Brian Lawson, are available in the Library and also on the IoM FHS website at: <http://www.iomfhs.im/default.aspx?CategoryID=22>

The [Genealogical Society of Utah](http://www.genealogy.com) have name-indexed the 1881 census and a microfiche copy is in the Library. In addition some parishes and the town of Ramsey have been indexed for the intervening decades by private researchers and these hard copy indexes are available at the Library Enquiry Desk.

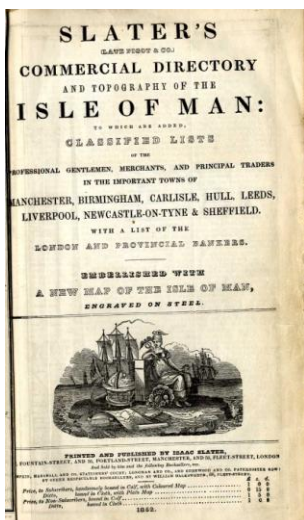
- **Wills**



Many people in the Isle of Man left wills. These are often a good source of family relationships and sometimes include an inventory of personal effects. The library holds wills for c.1600 to 1910 and microfilm copies to 1916. Later wills can be consulted at the [Deeds & Probate Registry](#), but may need to be ordered in advance. The majority of the wills have been indexed though there are still gaps in the 17th century.

- **Directories**

The Island never had an equivalent of the 'Kelly's' series, but is included in a number of early British directories. Some examples held (all at Library Ref. L10) are:



- Holden 1811
- Pigot 1824, 1837, 1843
- Slater's 1846, 1852, 1857
- Thwaites 1863
- Brown's 1882, 1894
- Porter's 1889
- Bent's 1902, 1907
- Barrett's (Borough of Douglas) 1955
- Barrett's (Isle of Man) 1963

In addition there is an early list of Inhabitants of Castletown c.1751 listing nearly 900 people.

Archive Ref MS 01770 C

- **Biographies – Library Sections G88, G90 & G91**

From printed books to short articles, there are a large number of entries catalogued alphabetically in the card index to these stock classes in the Library.

N.B. 'Manx Worthies or Biographies of Notable Manx Men and Women' compiled by A. W. Moore, 1901, on open shelf. Library Ref: G4

'New Manx Worthies' by Dollin Kelly is kept behind the Library Counter. Library Ref: G4/17f

- **Dictionary of National Biography & Who Was Who? 1900 – 1990**

Sets of both of these are on the Reading Room shelves and they have cumulative indexes for the twentieth century. A small number of prominent local people rate entries in them. They are also available in most large British public libraries. Library Ref: 920.042

- **Manuscript Sources**

For unpublished research notes and articles about families and individuals, check the card catalogue in the Reading Room using the personal name indexes to the manuscript collections.

Archive Ref: MD 20 and other references

N.B. As with any personal research these manuscript sources can be inaccurate and researchers should check the information given.

- **Electoral Voters' Lists**

1867–1915, 1919/20, 1950–84 (incomplete)

Archive Ref: MS 09842

1985–2004 (incomplete) at IoM Public Records Office

2005 to date Archive Ref: MS 11110

Douglas Burgess Roll 1924/25

Library Ref: F71/16X

NAME	CHRISTIAN NAME	PLACE OF BIRTH	NATURE OF QUALIFICATION
1	James P. H. ...	Douglas	Proprietor ...
2	James Edward ...	Belleek	Proprietor ...
3	James Edward ...	Castle ...	Proprietor ...
4	James William ...	Castle ...	Proprietor ...

N.B. Extension of Franchise: 1866 – Male property owners and tenants; 1881 – Female property owners (widows & spinsters), Male lodgers; 1892 – Female occupiers (widows & spinsters); 1903 – Female lodgers (widows & spinsters); 1919 – Adult suffrage, ex servicemen aged 18–21; 2006 – Minimum voting age lowered to 16.

For fuller detail see relevant Acts of Tynwald at **D200/1**, (Reading Room shelves).

- **Telephone Directories**

1900, 1906, 1925 – date Library Ref: B102/11

These are issued at frequent intervals but until fairly recently are very slim volumes because, until the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, most people did not have a private telephone. They are mainly of use for checking businesses or professional people such as doctors or managers.

N.B. In recent years many more telephone users choose to be 'ex directory' and are therefore not listed. Likewise, mobile phones are not usually listed.

Current UK (including the Isle of Man) telephone numbers that are not ex directory are available on-line at [www.thephonebook.bt.com](http://www.thephonebook.bt.com) . 1880 –1984 telephone listings are available through [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)

- **Cemetery Records, Burial Registers and Monumental Inscriptions**

The [Isle of Man Family History Society \(IOMFHS\)](#) have transcribed entries from the original parish registers. They have completed the monumental inscriptions and burial registers, which are arranged by parish and indexed. These indexes are available on request at the Library counter. Partial indexes to burials, prepared by Brian Lawson, are on the [IOMFHS](#) website. The Isle of Man Government has commissioned an inventory of war memorials, details of which can be obtained from the Library.

- **First World War, 1914 –1918 Roll of Honour**

This lists all known casualties, including some Manxmen who had previously emigrated and served in units from other parts of the British Empire. It gives (where known) full name, rank, unit and home address, cause and date of death. Library Ref: B114/8

N.B. A revised edition is currently in preparation for publication in 2009/10.

- **King William’s College Register 1899 – 1989**

Lists all past pupils of this public school, with, where known, a career summary, date of birth and date and place of death. Library Ref: D427

The [King William’s College Society](#) maintains a database of former pupils and staff. Email: [okws@kwc.sch.im](mailto:okws@kwc.sch.im)

- **Journal Articles**

Indexes to a variety of local journals have card indexes available in the Reading Room which are worth checking for biographical details. These include:

IOMFHS Journal	1979 – 2007	L3FAM
Manx Life	1971 – 1996	L6ML
IOM Victorian		

Society Newsletter	1980 – 2007	L3VIC
Manx Tails	1982 – 2007	L6A4

The following journals have cumulative indexes at the Library Counter:

IOM Nat Hist & Ant Soc Proceedings	1879 – date	L6
Manx Museum Journal	1924 – 1980	A365

- **Newspapers**

Manx papers date from the late eighteenth century, (with some additional coverage in the *'Cumberland Pacquet'* from 1793–1803) and are useful for biographical notes on individuals and obituary notices. The latter can inform you of the churchyard or cemetery in which a relative is interred.

Manx papers do not seem to include a lot of obituaries but they are still worth checking.

Family announcements are not usually indexed but, if a date is known, the papers can be easily searched as they are available on microfilm. The majority of modern newspapers have now been microfilmed and the Library has an extensive collection. Printouts can be made from microfilms for a fee (see separate sheet detailing our charges).

All papers are partially indexed by name and subject from 1793–c.1850 and from 1957 –1994. In addition the *'Manx Sun'* family announcements of births, deaths and marriages have been indexed from 1850–c.1865.

N.B. For off Island researchers, copies of Manx papers are also available at the:

British Library Newspaper Library, Colindale Avenue,  
London NW9 5HE.

Tel: (020) 7412 7353 Email: [newspaper@bl.uk](mailto:newspaper@bl.uk)

Website: [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)

This facility is due to close and move to the British Library's premises at Boston Spa, North Yorkshire in 2012 as part of their digitisation programme.

- **Isle of Man Examiner Annuals, 1900 – 1979**

These include an annual chronology Events of the Year which often mentions individuals. For the First World War it includes a large number of photographs and brief personal details of servicemen killed in the previous year. For the Second World War it has a roll of honour for each year. Library Ref: L9EX

- **Norris Modern Press Yearbooks, 1906 – 1972**

These have detailed listings of public officials.  
Library Ref: L6N1

- **Land and Property Records**

The system used to record ownership of land is somewhat complicated but incomplete series of records exist mainly after 1511. The Setting books (Libri Assedationis) are arranged by parish giving the names of the landowners and the lord's rent paid. Changes of ownership through sale, inheritance, bankruptcy etc. are recorded in the Wast books (Libri Vastarum).

Both these series are microfilmed and available for consultation but it is advisable to familiarise yourself with the land holding system before jumping into the original records. Bear in mind also that barony and abbey lands have their own specific series of records.

There is also a substantial collection of deeds from the late 17th century to 1910, (later ones are at the [Deeds & Probate Registry](#)), and these are indexed by parish and then by name of the grantor (i.e. seller). Grantee (i.e. purchaser) indexes exist at the [Deeds & Probate Registry](#) from 1911.

- **Parish / Place Histories**

Bride, Maughold and Ramsey have detailed histories by W & C Radcliffe. These publications contain information about many families from these areas.

History of Kirk Maughold	Library Ref: F64/148
Kirk Bride: a miscellany	Library Ref: F64/157
Shining by the Sea: History of Ramsey 1800–1914	Library Ref: F72/14

All of these are on the Reading Room shelves.

There is also a detailed book about Andreas by Sally McCambridge                      Library Ref: F75/1/7q

- **Holiday Guides**

In the heyday of Manx tourism when the Island was the getaway place for much of the North West, Scotland and Ireland, a surprising number of places issued small guide books. These are useful for holiday premises and their proprietors although not everyone advertised as you usually had to pay to be included.

Guidebooks were issued for the following places,  
(Library Ref in brackets):

Castletown (F73), Douglas (F71), Laxey (F78), Onchan (F79), Peel (F74),  
Port Erin (F77), Port St Mary (F76) and Ramsey (F72).

There are also the whole Island Guides published by the Tourist Board, which were issued for most years and list registered accommodation (B266).

- **Monumental Inscriptions**

[The Isle of Man Family History Society](#) has a programme of transcribing the inscriptions from graveyards and publishing them in book form. The Library has a full set of these. They often provide vital clues to family relationships.

- **Ecclesiastical Court Records**

Presentments: If you only find a mother's name in the register of baptism there is a chance of finding details of the father in these records. The series spans up to 1874. Early presentments (1659 –1790) are available on microfilm in the Reading Room.

Church Court Orders 1790s–1918: these include the names of fathers affiliated to a child and possibly charged with lying in expenses. An index to orders 1815–1918 can be checked by asking Library staff to assist or using a genealogist or local researcher to check.

- **Other Records**

There are a variety of additional sources in both manuscript and printed form. It is necessary to refer to the indexes held by the library to access these and more details are available in the booklet *'The Manx Family Tree'* referred to above.

- **People Associated with Particular Employers and Occupations**

They may appear in company or organisation histories, for example the Police, Railways, Lifeboats, the Steam Packet Company, and the Douglas Centenary Book 1896–1996. Please check under subject in the library card indexes.

- **Genealogical Research Service**

We do not provide a genealogical research service but can supply details of Manx genealogists any one of whom will, for a fee, undertake research on behalf of private clients.

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<b>Manx National Heritage</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	Douglas Isle of Man IM1 3LY
<b>Telephone:</b>	01624 648000
<b>Fax:</b>	01624 648069
<b>Email Address:</b>	<a href="mailto:library@mnh.gov.im">library@mnh.gov.im</a>
<b>Web Site</b>	<a href="http://www.gov.im/mnh">http://www.gov.im/mnh</a>

**Opening times:** Monday to Saturday, 10.00am to 5.00pm, and all Bank Holidays (except Christmas and Boxing Day); Tynwald Day – 2.00 to 5.00pm. Closed Sundays and for one week in late January