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“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change.”

Charles Darwin 1809-1892





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Darren Horrox



# Welcome

Darren Horrox

For this edition of ! Magazine it makes a change that it's our own company which has made some of the headlines in recent times, with our success at the Isle of Man Newspapers Excellence Awards.

To be given the honour of winning the much-prized Conister Bank award for customer service was, indeed, a privilege and it says a great deal about how the outside world looks on Bridson & Horrox. It was wonderful to be short-listed, but a true honour to take the award and I would like to publicly thank all our team for their consistent enthusiasm and energy for the business over many years. The customer service award is a reflection on everything that we have achieved.

This edition once more includes a series of very interesting words from some leading business personalities in the Isle of Man - and helps puts some faces to names that are well known in business and professional circles.

The Principal at King William's College talks about his lifelong passion for teaching; the managing director of MannVend explains how she gave up a career in the media and chose the coffee business instead and there's a fascinating look behind the scenes at the Manx Blind Welfare Society.

Most moving of all, though, is the captivating article from Aaron Quinn who was motivated into action by the sudden death of a close friend and went on to endure the body-crunching agony of riding a bicycle on the mountainous roads of the Tour de France. It's a story of true inspiration.

And then there's the finance expert who reveals her real passion is for saving the environment, whilst another financial man reveals that he has twice taken part in the famous bull running event at the Fiesta San Fermin in Pamplona, Spain - and lived to tell the tale!

It's another really interesting magazine - I'm sure you will enjoy it.

Let us know what you think about ! magazine. Please contact me at:

[comments@bridson-horrox.com](mailto:comments@bridson-horrox.com)





Aaron Quinn



# Its all about me, but it shouldn't be . . .

by Aaron Quinn - Sports Development Officer, National Sports Centre

In July 2011, less than one year after purchasing my first road bike, I completed the toughest sporting challenge of my life - the Etape du Tour, which to non-cycling enthusiasts is a stage of the greatest bike race in the world, the Tour de France. I was to complete stage 19 of the 2011 tour in the Alps, following the exact same route that the pro-peloton would complete two weeks later in an enthralling final mountain stage of the race.

However, we have to go back to 2005 to understand the reasons why a non-cyclist such as myself, would even contemplate attempting such a challenge within a year of beginning to cycle. In April 2005, Craig Lunt, a well-respected, talented and popular young Manx footballer tragically passed away in his sleep due to a previously undiagnosed heart defect. As a result of Craig's death, Craig's Heartstrong Foundation was established by the Lunt family in memory of their 25 year old son and the charity has since become a popular and even life-saving local organisation, working at the heart of the Manx community.

The stage, although the shortest in the 2011 tour at 109km, was widely regarded as one of the toughest, taking in three major Alpine climbs or 'cols'. I foolishly agreed with my work colleague Gianni Epifani to take part in this event without really understanding exactly what I was letting myself in for. Before I knew it, my entry had been submitted and duly accepted. Only after my entry had been accepted, did I look at the profile of the stage which we were to complete. That's when the reality - and indeed panic - set in. "What had I done?"

All in all, to complete this stage we would have to tackle somewhere in the region of 9,000ft of climbing on our bikes! A tough few months of training lay ahead.

After a 4.30am wake-up call on race day, a hearty breakfast and a 10km cycle to the starting village, we arrived on the start line at 6.15am for a 7am start. Little did we know that with our starting numbers close to 7,500 we would not even cross the start line until 8.05am, due to the sheer volume of riders (approximately 10,000), starting in numbered groups of 500.

Finally, after 8 months of training and nearly two hours on the start line, we finally set off on a rapid 16km descent to the foot of the 5,137ft category one climb to the top of the Col du Telegraph. Full of enthusiasm and cycling on pure adrenaline, it took 1 hour 18 minutes for me to conquer my first ever Alpine mountain.

A 5km descent followed the Telegraph, which led us nicely into the jaws of the 20km Hors Catégorie climb to the top of the Col du Galibier, the summit of which - at 8,385ft - is the highest mountain top finish ever used in the tour. Nothing, not even 6-hour weekly rides on the Isle of Man or 4-hour turbo training sessions can prepare you for this climb, the last 10k of which does not drop below 10% in gradient!

Coupled with the intense heat and heavy legs, a very long, tough climb ensued. Looking up towards the summit of the Galibier was literally like looking up at a brick wall with a zig-zagging road etched into the side of it. I remember thinking "Am I meant to cycle up that?"

Having made it to the top of the Galibier, and successfully completing the ridiculously steep descent off the other side, I headed on towards the third and final Alpine mountain and the finish line.

Over 4 hours had now passed and I had finally made it to the foot of the infamous 21 hairpin bends and the 6,069ft Hors Catégorie climb to the top of Alp d'Huez, the most famous climb in the world of cycling. The next hour and three quarters for me can only be described as hell on a bike!

It was after midday now and the temperatures in places were touching 40 degrees and the only way was up! I had exceeded all my expectations just by getting this far and in one piece. All that lay ahead of me and the finish was the notorious 8 mile climb over 6,000ft up to a ski resort! Great!

At this stage, parts of my body which I never even knew I had were causing me severe pain. I was seriously over-heating; I was struggling to breath due to the altitude; I could hardly turn my pedals as my legs were in bits. But this pain

and suffering was nothing compared to what Craig's family had been through after Craig's untimely death in 2005. This, together with a famous quote from Lance Armstrong "Pain is temporary. It may last a minute, or an hour, or a day, or a year, but eventually it will subside and something else will take its place. If I quit, however, it lasts forever" is what spurred me on to the finish.

After over 8 hours spent on the bike, 9,000ft of climbing, a maximum heart rate of 196bpm, an average heart rate of 170bpm, a total of 7,100 calories burned and some severe sun burn, I finally crossed the line at the top of Alp d'Huez to complete my Etape du Tour, raising over £1,500 for Craig's Heartstrong Foundation in the process.

The purpose behind Craig's Heartstrong Foundation is to raise the awareness of, and the necessary funding, to enable the heart screening of men and women between the ages of 14 and 35 here on the Isle of Man. These screenings will enable the charity to detect, and treat accordingly, any possible symptoms of long QT syndrome or hypertrophic and dilated cardiomyopathy in individuals, thus helping prevent Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) whilst providing a healthy future for our Island.

It is often said that inspiration is usually something we only find within, through the course of tragedy or adversity. It often takes such adversity to occur in our lives to change our outlook and to inspire us to do something worthwhile, and Craig's death certainly did that for me. In a friend's passing at such a young age, I realised the value of that inspiration and the appreciation of life as we know it.

Please visit

[www.craigsheartstrongfoundation.co.uk](http://www.craigsheartstrongfoundation.co.uk) for further information on upcoming screenings and fund raising events.



John Sheridan



# How do you communicate with your customers?

by John Sheridan, Group Sales Manager - Bridson & Horrox

In these times of more focused attention on marketing and advertising - and particularly how expensive this can be - it is a necessity for all companies to examine all the opportunities - and perhaps some options which have not been considered previously.

## **One such solution answer is at hand . . .**

Direct Marketing using Direct Mailing Solutions from Bridson & Horrox.

As a direct marketing company, the mailing services offered by Bridson & Horrox involve meticulous planning and creative skill. The ethos behind the service is that we work alongside you and your business so that your marketing requirements are not only met, but exceeded.

We can advise you on the best methods of direct marketing and all the cost options and we are used to working with clients to find creative ideas tailor-made to your specific needs.

Success in direct mail involves more than just careful targeting. Certainly, it's important that you know the market before getting involved in direct mail, but there is much more to it than simply sending out hundreds of leaflets or brochures in the hope that you will occasionally pick up new business. It doesn't work like that.

The careful assessment of the marketplace, along with the unique ability to get directly to the businesses and individuals you have targeted, is what it's really about, and that's why more and more businesses choose

Bridson & Horrox as their direct mailing company. We work with you, for you and your company, at a price that offers value and quality.

Marketing is all about understanding and providing services or products to better meet and exceed your customer's needs and expectations.

The real difference, however, is in the quality of the service provided and the experience and expertise of the people providing the service. Based on many years of experience and intimate knowledge of the Isle of Man marketplace, Bridson & Horrox produces exceptional quality direct marketing. Consequently, our clients' budgets work harder and more effectively than ever before.

Direct mailing programmes are full of intricate details. That's where experience counts as a trustworthy and experienced direct mailing company, we will cut down your workload, reduce the risk of mistakes, and make the fullest use of your available budget.

The options are flexible to tailor your mailing to any type or size of campaign, from small events to nationwide sales promotions. Choose from mono and full-colour, single or duplex printing, upload your own design or use the skills of our in-house design team. You control the quality of mailshots going out from your company by approving each campaign first. All your files are stored by us for use time and again.

Success in direct mail involves more than just careful targeting. It helps you sharpen up your mailing lists. You can even get the most out of your lists by tailoring different messages to different clients and prospects. That's why more and more businesses choose Bridson & Horrox as their direct mailing company.

For more information about our Direct Mail Services please contact our Sales Team.

[sales@bridson-horrox.com](mailto:sales@bridson-horrox.com)



How do you communicate with your customers?



Martin Humphreys



# No greater thrill - or risk

by Martin Humphreys, Principal - King Williams College

I came to teaching late. I taught my first history lesson when I was 34. It was a complete disaster, but more of that later. I have always felt that those who come to teaching after another career have a particularly acute insight to the peculiar privilege, power (and awesome responsibility) of being unleashed on impressionable minds.

Teaching is a joyously free calling. Somewhat solitary – we do it alone and mostly out of sight (of adults). For company we have just our subject, desk-bound youth and the very daunting realisation that arrayed in front of us lie sharper minds than our own. There is no greater thrill - or risk - than walking into a classroom with just an idea and engaging for 40 minutes in the cut and thrust of youthful enquiry.

These days it is heresy to say so, but I am not a huge fan of lesson plans, schemes of work or assessment objectives. They have their place, but bureaucracies create their own terminology, and the education bureaucracy is amongst the most loquacious. When the mark schemes are fatter than the text books, something has gone seriously wrong. When we teach rigidly to the exam and not to foster enthusiasm and a love of learning, we (and the misfortunates we spoon-feed) become dullards. When the Sixth Form becomes a relentless succession of modules, remarks and retakes, why are we surprised that the spark dims in childrens' eyes?

As the Principal of an IB school I clearly have an axe to grind, but after 16 years of A Levels, the International Baccalaureate is such a breath of fresh air.

Two teachers (of history, naturally) have had a profound effect on my life. Both old school, both extraordinary. Michael Kidson at Eton never taught a lesson without Dougal the Springer spaniel at his feet. He never referred to notes or a text. Acerbic, shrewd and wise, he got me to Cambridge. I still remember his quip about Palmerston's Ugandan proclivities. Arnold Ellis at Shrewsbury was a legend of that school's history department. He once taught an

entire year's course on the Great War without arriving at the outbreak of hostilities. A lesson planner he was not, still less a course planner; but kind, erudite, witty and inspirational. He got me into teaching. These were unrepentant Great Man historians, and great men they were too. They taught with passion because they loved their subject. They never attempted to "understand" their pupils; rather their pupils sought to understand them.

As a thirty-something banker with a history degree and who still loved reading history, I naively believed that if I could chair a meeting stacked with lawyers and accountants (and the odd minister), it would surely be straightforward to explain the Schleswig-Holstein Question to a bunch of Sixth Formers. How wrong could I have been? The scariest bit about teaching is not the realisation that you've "lost" the class (and it happens to everyone) but the growing sense of panic as you ponder trying to find them again - thrice weekly - for the foreseeable future.

So what of that first lamentable lesson? I was undone, not by clever Oxbridge types, but by a very polite thirteen year-old King's Scholar at Eton. I had taken three weeks off between banking and teaching. Eric Anderson had offered me a job at my old school to cover the teaching load of the Head of History, who was taking a sabbatical. That demob happy teacher sent me a hand-written note as follows "Term starts 7th January. History Faculty meeting 5.30pm, 6th January. Your divs (sets) as follows. Lower Sixth – 19th Century English ... Great Reform Act through to Gladstone and Disraeli (don't bother too much with Foreign Policy – just distracts). GCSE – Between the Wars ... Versailles Treaty, rise and fall of Weimar, rise of Nazism ... all that stuff. Fourth Form – canter through British History ... Normans through to Glorious Revolution (keep it simple and be stern – lively lot). Third Form ... Romans in Britain (they did Greece last term). Good luck.

And that was that.

There followed three weeks of fear-driven reading and noting. A desperate attempt to ingest enough history to be credible. And with so little time to prepare, I concentrated on the A Level and GCSE sets. I thought I could just improvise with the Third Form.

Thus it was that I found myself facing a class of thirteen year old King's Scholars with only the sketchiest notion of what to tell them about the Romans in Britain. I had no choice ... time to play for time.

"What did you cover last term?", was my opening gambit. "The Tales of Herodotus, Sir." They intoned. Tricky moment. My knowledge of Herodotus is scant indeed and gleaned principally from the Ralph Fiennes' character in *The English Patient*. Awkward ... so play for more time ... time to write something on the white board: very schoolmasterly.

"TALES OF HERODOTUS", I wrote with much solemnity. Big, bold, confident, upper case. I felt in command ... at which point the polite boy in the front row delivered the killer blow.

"Sir ..... That's not how you spell Herodotus, Sir." All credibility gone. It took a while to find that set again. I guess they are all bankers now.

So now I interview teachers and observe their lessons at King William's. And teach a bit too. Everyone should teach – it is the greatest job. So apply today. And if it's to King William's, don't forget about Dougal the spaniel.



Tommy Crowe



# Proof that we deliver!

by Tommy Crowe, Operations Director- Bridson & Horrox

CUSTOMER service is the number one aspiration which drives every high quality company in the Isle of Man today. With it, you achieve the highest standards. Without it, you simply cannot compete and in today's economic environment you may even fade out of existence.

How thoroughly satisfying it was, therefore, for Bridson & Horrox to achieve the highest accolade at the 2011 Isle of Man Newspapers' Excellence Awards and to win the highly coveted honour of the Customer Service award, presented by Conister Bank.

To achieve this was indeed an honour for the company and is the reward for many decades of operating a family-owned business and doing what we've always done for 77 years ... listening to our customers and providing them with the highest standards in service and quality.

Our standards are very high and include achievement of the most respected European and UK accolades. The company has achieved ISO accreditation for environmental management systems, and has been reassessed to the ISO 9001:2008 standard for 'quality management' for 'the management and distribution of printed and digital products and the distribution of office supplies'.

As a result of the processes put in place under ISO, Bridson & Horrox non-conformances have been reduced to less than 0.5% of the company turnover. In other words, we 'get it right' more than 99.5% of the time.

Not only are we the only Isle of Man printing services company to have achieved both awards, the environmental standard is not a UK requirement so we are among a select few British printers to have achieved this.

Saying that our people are our strength is not just a hollow cliché. The depth of the relationships with our customers is at the centre of our track record for success. That's why we continually invest in the training and development of our team, and we are very proud of our recent successful reassessment for the Investors In People (IIP) award for best practice in staff training and development.

We've found 'Investors in People' to be an excellent tool in identifying ways of improving service to customers along with company performance. With IIP, we've implemented initiatives that have had a positive and direct impact on service, production and quality. We've also seen improvements in team motivation and have reduced staff turnover.

One such initiative includes the three apprentices who have recently been taken on as part of the Isle of Man Government Department of Economic Development's scheme. The company has been working with the Government Training Centre and in conjunction with the British Printing Industries Federation, to encourage all staff to undergo a Level II NVQ, irrespective of their age or experience. The qualification will enable continuous development of the new apprentices and will provide a more professional service to customers.

We have an ongoing dialogue with our customers and we remain flexible to meet their continually changing needs. Our 'health check' service underpins this. This free examination of a customer's print and procurement practices helps to reduce total costs. The analysis covers a range of issues including storage, distribution, over ordering, obsolescence, invoice queries, supplier meetings and time away from core business activities. It delivers a series of recommendations, which guarantees savings.

An example of our partnership approach to working with customers is the pilot project we've undertaken with Noble's Hospital. By working together, the hospital has realised significant cost savings in supply storage by using online ordering and inventory monitoring.

In addition we've recently completed a survey of our customers which revealed continuing gains in satisfaction with 'overall satisfaction' achieved among 98.3% of customers and customer complaints of less than 1% of company turnover.

The company has also introduced Internet technologies to improve service. Customers can now order office supplies and furniture online easily with the introduction of Bridson & Horrox's 'Flickit' catalogue.

Customers can choose from more than 18,000 products in easy-to-navigate web pages. Features include 'how to choose' guides, complementary products located together and a comprehensive product and brand index to help our customers find the products they need.

Cuts in government spending have impacted on many Isle of Man businesses, but Bridson & Horrox was able to turn this to advantage thanks to our partnership approach to working with clients. One example is the Isle of Man Treasury's Tax division. We sat down with managers there; listened to the challenges they face and worked through a solution that would ensure all their printing and office supplies needs could be met within diminished budgets. We found new

efficiencies, reduced waste and improved inventory control which, in the end, meant the division's goals were achieved and the government's cost cutting targets were met at the same time. Another satisfied customer!

There is nothing particularly original, clever or special about what we have achieved. Our approach is to ignore all the 'sky is falling' protestations and keep firmly focused on meeting the needs of our customers. This has been the backbone of Bridson & Horrox's success for more than 77 years. Every objective is to improve the quality and value of our products and the strength of our service so that we not only satisfy our customers; they are genuinely delighted with our service and our company. This has held Bridson & Horrox in good stead over the ups and downs of the past three generations of life in the Isle of Man and it continues today.

We work very hard to help protect the natural beauty and environment of the Island. The company has conducted a review to address environmental issues relating to our use of fuel and disposal of waste materials. We have implemented various recycling and energy saving procedures in both our factory and our delivery processes. The company has a strong policy on recycling, particularly regarding factory waste which is recycled wherever possible.

Our suppliers are chosen for their environmental consciousness; all paper is sourced from Forest Stewardship Certified providers and furniture can be traced back to the very tree from which it was made. In addition, we offer a toner cartridges recycling service. This is all part of our achievement of the ISO environmental award.

In addition, Bridson & Horrox also partners with many Isle of Man charities and good causes. Not only does this help out the charities themselves, our involvement helps in the professional development of our team members and helps to strengthen our relationships across Isle of Man society.

Customer service is what sets Bridson & Horrox apart. The printing industry is often driven by cost and commodity and that's why during recessionary times, so many printers to go the wall. Bridson & Horrox is different. By putting customer service excellence at the centre of everything we do, we are able to not only ride out the bad times, we thrive.



Tracy Leahy



# Around the world to find a future at home

by Tracey Leahy, Managing Director - Mannvend

I consider myself to be lucky .... simply because I was born during TT Week in the 70s and my parents had decided that if I had been a boy I would have been called 'Agostini'. For that reason Tracey suits me fine!

I grew up in Croit-e-Quill Road in Laxey, attended Laxey Primary school and moved to the Buchan school from the age of 8 until I was 18. In those days it was an all-girls school with an itchy blue tweed uniform and a blue felt tricorn hat.

In 1990 I left the Island for Teesside University and a three year business communications degree. As students, the silver lining to this rather industrial location was saving whatever cash we could during the week so that we could all pile into my car (a red Toyota Turcell covered in bright yellow flowers) for a trip to the Metro Centre in Gateshead for a shopping spree or to go surfing on Whitby Beach with the University surfing club.

University also showed me another side of life. During my degree course I joined an Aid group of 12 students and travelled to a remote orphanage in Romania for a month. This was a truly humbling experience as we all lived crammed into a small dormitory while we decorated and renovated the orphanage. The children were in a terrible state; some had been badly beaten or abused and their heads were shaved because of the head lice. To see this first hand was harrowing and many tears were shed behind the closed doors of our dormitory.

It wasn't easy to cope with, but there was a great spirit amongst the students along with sheer determination to ensure we worked hard and made a difference for the children.

There were also some very uncomfortable moments, such as being followed by the secret police during our whole trip and our flights home being mysteriously cancelled. Eventually we had to escape from the orphanage in the dead of night to get to Bucharest to fly home without being stopped. As a naive 19 year old it was terrifying.

I've never been back to Romania but it's definitely "on the bucket list" and I hope to return one day. The experience certainly changed my life.

During the summer break of my second year at University I worked in the USA, in Lakeville, Connecticut at a children's summer camp. This was a really fun experience and I lived in a tent for the whole summer with 11 different children every week. Aside from the odd flash of lightning, the biggest scare came from racoons who would break in to the tent at night and forage for sweets that the children had hidden. Waking up to a big furry face with green eyes staring at you is not much fun.....

When I left Teesside University in 1993 I came back to the Isle of Man and worked every hour I could to save the money to go back-packing. I worked as a temp during the day, in a bar at night, and went to car boot sales at weekends.

By the end of a year I had saved enough to start my journey and joined my best friend from University (who is now the godmother to my daughter) and off we went with shiny new back-packs ready to see the wonders of the world - starting in India. Armed only with the 'Lonely Planet guide to India' for guidance, it was a massive culture shock and we spent our first night in a hostel that cost 50p for the night. Amazingly, we saw a huge amount of India and survived for an entire month on just £60 each.

From there, we moved on to Hong Kong and this was one extreme to the other. Thankfully we stayed with my cousin and saw some amazing parts of Hong Kong that tourists never see. Then we went to Thailand for six weeks visiting the remote islands and enjoying the white sandy beaches and breathtaking scenery.

We travelled overland by bus to Malaysia and Singapore where I took advantage of my parent's address book staying with friends and distant relatives wherever we could. As a back-packer the highlight of Singapore was afternoon tea at the famous Raffles Hotel, where, in those days, it was "eat all you can".

We had lived on beans and Pad Thai up to this point so we stayed there for six hours and literally rolled ourselves out!

Next stop was Java and then Bali where we made friends with other back-packers and discovered that Bali is a hot spot for young Australians to let their hair down. Needless to say, we had a great time and met some fabulous people.

Australia was my favourite country, taking in Cairns, Brisbane, Tamworth, Surfers' Paradise, Sydney and Melbourne. The Australian attitude to life is unlike any other I have experienced and I loved their laid back way of doing things. We finished the southern hemisphere in New Zealand and then it was off to the USA and Canada, seeing LA, Vegas, Seattle, Chicago, Atlanta, New Orleans, Buffalo, New York, Key West and Toronto, just to name just a few, before finally returning back to the Isle of Man.

My travels made me appreciate the Island more than ever before, not just for its own distinctive beauty but for the safety that we so commonly take for granted.



Creggan Moor



# Always something new...

Pictures by Bill Dale

I don't like the "rules" of photography, such as the supposedly "perfect" way to frame a shot, or getting the "correct" exposure.

Cameras can do magical things with the images you place in front of the lens, so experiment. It's far more fun - and the results can surprise you without obeying the rules; it happens to me today, even after all these years!

Every season of the year in the Isle of Man offers fabulous opportunities for pictures and the autumn probably remains my favourite time of the year where the sun is low in the sky and the light shines flat across the landscape early in the morning and late in the afternoon.

If you've got a camera, keep it handy. Its extremely rare that I go out without a camera in the car or for a walk in a glen or on the beach. Pictures happen in front of your eyes all the time. No camera - no picture. Missed opportunity. Simple!

I've often been asked to offer advice on photography, but I don't really like to do so, mostly because I go through phases - like all photographers - and what I really love one minute I'm not so sure about the next, as you move on and try something new.

Maybe, if there's one piece of advice I have consistently given, it's to learn how to use the camera with manual exposure. So often I have seen potentially stunning images spoiled because the camera had been set on 'aperture priority' and the image was consequently blurred because "Mr Nikon" chose a 10th of a second and it destroyed the moment.

I started with a 120 format Rolleiflex where the images on the screen were upside down and back to front with everything totally manual. Once you had wasted a couple of (very expensive) films and your heart dropped on seeing the results, it quickly taught you to get it right the next time.

Today, I still take all shots on manual. It means you don't get tricked by white light creating under-exposure or dark spots creating over-exposure. Years of experience using the camera on manual tells you that your gut feeling is pretty much always spot on.

One other thing also remains constant - my permanent love for the Isle of Man in all its seasonal changes and the simple, sheer beauty of the place where I count myself so very, very fortunate to have been born and lived all my life.

Whatever the season, whatever the weather, the Isle of Man begs photographers to be adventurous, experimental, creative. It's just sitting there on our doorstep. Get out there and give it a go.

Individual prints are also available by contacting **Bill Dale** on [www.isleofmanphotos.com](http://www.isleofmanphotos.com) or [billdale@manx.net](mailto:billdale@manx.net)





seagulls over Niarbyl

I don't like the "rules" of photography, such as the supposedly "perfect" way to frame a shot, or getting the "correct" exposure.

Bill Dale



Ayre lighthouse





February sunset over Patrick



Fleshwick coast



mountain wall.



Bill Shimmins



# An island life appreciated

by Bill Shimmins - Regional Director of RBS International

From the 'most overcrowded train in Britain' to the hills of Isle of Man, Bill Shimmins gets into gear to make the most of Island life . .

As someone who has lived in various parts of the United Kingdom over the years, I feel very lucky, in many ways, to have settled in the Isle of Man. The Island has so much to offer and, with the children growing up and more time to myself, I do my best to make the most of it.

I am thoroughly enjoying my role as regional director of RBS International, NatWest and Isle of Man Bank and over the summer months have enjoyed meeting many interesting people as I have settled into the job.

To coincide with my new role, I decided that I would make the most of Island life and get out my bike to commute to and from work. Few people in senior banking positions are fortunate enough to cycle to and from the office against the backdrop of beautiful countryside.

Living at the top of Glen Vine, it takes me 20 - 30 minutes to cycle the five and a half miles into the office and the benefits are numerous. The cycle wakes me up in the morning and winds me down at the end of a busy and varied working day with long hours.

This commute is in stark contrast to my previous journeys to work. When working in London, I travelled to work on the City Thames link from Brighton to the City, also known as the 'Most Overcrowded Train in Britain'. Having witnessed other commuters fainting in the carriage, I can safely say that

travelling to work is far more pleasurable in the Isle of Man.

When working in the North of England, I spent three hours a day driving along the M62 and M1 or, perhaps more accurately, sitting in traffic jams. As a result of experiencing such contrasting commutes, I wholly appreciate the Isle of Man lifestyle.

I am fortunate to be able to utilise one of the Island's cycle paths and it would be fantastic to see more built around the Island as I am certain it would encourage more Islanders to get out on their bikes safely.

The Isle of Man offers so much more though. I am a great fan of small islands and regularly holiday in the Hebrides, but I appreciate that the Isle of Man is dynamic enough to provide the mental and professional challenge of an international finance centre.

The challenge and excitement of leading a major banking group, which offers a whole range of banking services, in a busy and successful jurisdiction, is what sets the Isle of Man apart from many other islands. To be able to pursue a sophisticated and rewarding career in such a beautiful Island is what makes the Isle of Man so special to me.

As well as being active, I am a great believer in the positive effects of a 'can do' attitude. I have strongly advocated such an approach in all the banks where I have worked. There is a lot of doom and gloom about the banking industry and the global economy in general and I always stress to colleagues that it is the

individual attitude that makes the difference. Let's look forward, be positive, learn from mistakes and from there we will achieve the best results.

Bringing positivity and also an active beginning and end to each working day can really lift your mood and help you face the challenges that work, and life in general, throw our way.



Mike Dee



# My life as a boring accountant

by Mike Dee, Managing Director - Manx Telecom

Suddenly, you start to wonder 'why did I agree to write an article about myself? Have I anything interesting to write? Surely my life cannot have been that boring!'

I'm a Gloucester boy by birth and one of the few out of our estate to get to a grammar school and then on to study for a business studies degree at Lancaster Polytechnic in Coventry. Life in the part of Gloucester I grew up in was always interesting but, I guess, not relevant to this publication. Needless to say, I grew up fairly street-wise.

I undertook my degree course as a Dowty Group apprentice. Despite it being a four year business studies degree I was still a 'student commercial apprentice' and have my indentures framed and on my wall. This four year course involved work experience at a variety of Dowty group companies and in various departments - including a month learning to use lathes and other dangerous machinery on the shop floor.

At the end of the four years there was no guarantee of a job so you had to make a good impression in order to get a job offer after qualifying. Then, out of the blue one day, I had a call from the training department and was asked if I would help out on the Isle of Man for six weeks.

Having no idea where it was or that Dowty's had a factory there - I loman Engineering in Onchan - I readily agreed! The good news was that the 'Dowty jet' was flying out the next week and I could catch a lift (along with Lady Dowty's sister visiting from Canada). All of a sudden I was going up in the world.

I sat silently at the back of the plane as it battled against driving rain and gale force winds. I didn't look at anyone else or comment; I guess I thought it was always like that on private planes. On landing, I was taken to my hotel for the night - The Villiers Hotel (now the RBSI building). The wind was too strong to use the main door on the promenade so, instead, you had to use the side door in Victoria Street. I lay in bed that night watching the curtains lift in the wind, despite the widows being shut, and thought 'what the heck am I doing here!'

Work began the next day and I was despatched to a smaller hotel along Loch Promenade for the remainder of the six week period. The crew at Dowty's did their utmost to ensure I enjoyed my stay on the Island - we had a Bier Cellar and Yates's Wine Lodge in Douglas - how could we go wrong? In this short spell I gradually built a real affection for the Island and the people I met.

A year or so later, firmly enhanced as project accountant in the mining division of Dowty's, I had a call asking if I had seen the advert for a permanent finance role at I loman Engineering. I soon found it, applied, and was soon leaving Gloucester life behind and heading back to the Isle of Man. In June 1979 I became an Isle of Man resident (aka come-over).

Eventually, once I had met the initial challenges at Dowty's, I needed a new challenge but wanted to stay on the Island. My next challenge came at Castle Industries where, under the guidance of David Thornton, I entered the world of printing and textiles, a very different world to my engineering background.

A similar situation arose whereby once the initial challenges were met it was clear I needed to move on, despite having a great relationship with David and the others at Castle. A strange advert in the local papers led me to the Palace Hotel for an interview for a finance role in a new company to be set up on the Island.

I got the role and after six months living in the Adelphi in Liverpool we set up British Telecom (Isle of Man), shortly thereafter to be re-named Manx Telecom. I could write a book about my time at Manx Telecom - perhaps I should. The moves from the various ownerships of BT, to O2, to Telefonica and now Hg capital all have some interesting stories.

In parallel to my day-to-day jobs, the real challenges came with my love of rugby. In Gloucester soccer doesn't exist - it is truly a rugby city. When I arrived from Gloucester all those years ago I was recovering from the affects of an unexpected collision with the elbow of a Stow-on-the-Wold farmer on the rugby field. The evidence is still there with the wire in my right cheekbone.

In no rush to start training again, I was enjoying the summer cabarets prominent on the Island at the time as well as great institutions such as The Dog's Home and Yates's Wine Lodge. After one such night I was hijacked by two unsavoury characters from Vagabonds Rugby Club - Mark Leneghan, who worked at Dowty's at the time, and Steve Wilson (sadly recently passed away).

At that time Douglas Rugby Club was the more prominent club and a likely destination. Somehow, I was persuaded to turn up at training for Vagabonds the next morning - Sunday!! I had a reputation in Gloucester for always turning up when asked, and as a result I played for many guest rugby sides around the county.

This particular Sunday, however, I was dubious. Leaning on the fence in Glencrutchery Road, I

was seriously doubting the wisdom of turning up. As I was about to give up and go back home a car pulled up and out stepped someone who had clearly played the game before - not Mike Henthorn, the driver, but Dave 'Piggy' Powell the Northampton, England and British Lions prop. It was Powell who was the key influence on my remaining at Vagabonds for over 30 years, a decision I have never regretted.

My Island rugby career had some real highs. Powell took Vagabonds to a different level, as well as establishing probably the strongest Island rugby team ever, playing above themselves on numerous occasions. I also worked with Dave 'boss hog' Oldfield to get an Island rugby team to the Dubai 7's. They didn't tell us we were in the international competition until we got there! I have numerous tales from various rugby games and tours. So many memories and stories - I can feel another book coming on!

The only real low was a stupid accident playing against Ronaldsway RFC which resulted in an emergency operation eight hours later to remove my spleen. The worst part was then having to cross the line and join the Specsavers top customers - the referees! I did, however, keep up my fitness and it was another bit of good medical logic that got me playing again. Asked by a medic playing for Vagabonds why I was not playing when clearly fit, he dismissed my spleen story with the response "well you can't lose it again can you!" So, away I went again, adding further chapters to that book of rugby fables.

Putting my mundane rugby career to one side, the biggest achievement I have had is marrying my wife Carol, still going strong after 17 years and becoming father to two great girls - Claudia and Reagan. Through the girls I have moved between gymnastics, swimming, athletics, ballet and musical theatre, taking up roles as vice chairman of IOM Gymnastics and chairman of Manx Harriers. The achievements of both girls have far outshone any of mine.

Recently, it was great to return to rugby as manager of the 7's team in the Commonwealth Youth Games, and having Reagan also involved, competing in the athletics.

Anyway enough of life as a boring accountant. Having recently moved to CEO I can forget about all that. I have an urgent appointment with the doctor to sort out a knee that will not bend - another rugby relic.

Still, maybe one more game - (tag rugby of course!).



Phil Kelly

# Closing the loop

by Phil Kelly,

Operations Manager -

Bridson & Horrox

WHEN Bridson & Horrox achieved ISO 9001 accreditation for quality standards in 2008 it was a logical decision to move forward and seek the ISO 14001 environmental standard, which was achieved in 2009. We achieved Investor in People in 2006.

To complete the loop of accreditation standards, we are now working towards ISO 12647, which is the worldwide international recognised standard for offset printing of the highest quality. Bridson & Horrox is a long way down the road to meeting the stringent requirements, which will complete the loop of meeting all possible needs for clients in the Isle of Man.

We are totally committed to meeting this, the highest of quality standards even at direct cost to the company. Bridson & Horrox is currently fully absorbed in the process of attaining this highly coveted goal.

ISO 12647 is the specification upon which most printing specifications are based. Target gradation, ink colour, trapping, grey balance and dot gain numbers in the specification are based on hundreds of high quality print samples gathered and analysed from around the globe by the ISO TC 130 Committee.

Experience has shown that the improvements in efficiency and reductions in waste which follow naturally with the ISO 12647 accreditation will immediately give

significant benefits to customers and provide consistently high levels of print reproduction quality.

It also ensures that the printing quality is not just a "one-off" and that there is consistency in quality on a permanent basis, rather than the quality of just a single printed item. Certification gives the printer the opportunity to prove to clients that they can match the highest of standards on a daily basis.

### The ISO 12647 certification includes a number of important features . .

- Assured re-print colour matching
- Proof to print colour fidelity
- Shortened make-ready times and reduced waste
- Optimised colour performance from existing equipment

Many customers already demand standardised printing or even a certification by Fogra or one of the member associations of the Bundesverband Druck und Medien.

Printcom Control Pro is the tool which is being used by Bridson & Horrox to accomplish the certification, a stand-alone solution for calibrating printing presses. Detailed reports and well arranged graphical analysis offer a quick and easy overview about the printing process -

problems can be detected quickly and fixed in time. For existing customers the reports raise the confidence and help clients achieve higher standards of quality, leading to new work.

### Technical features . .

- PSO (ISO 12647-2) certification module
- Supports the official test sheet from vdm
- Supports all common measurement instruments
- FOGRA Reference data (ISO characterisation data) included
- Creates Individual reference files from ICC profiles
- Pass/Fail information with simple traffic light system
- Graphical overview of all parameters and tolerances
- Detailed Quality Control report
- Easy handling with predefined templates and jobs



## Quality without exception

by Paul Russell,

Digital Print Manager -

“Having the HP Indigo 5000 gives us a competitive edge over other digital printers as well as conventional printers.”

Paul Russell

Paul joined Bridson & Horrox in 2000 as a trainee Apple Mac operator, however since the introduction of digital print into Bridson & Horrox, Paul has increasingly raised the bar on standards of digital print quality, he fully embraces the need for quality and customer focus. His application to the digital side of the business is second to none and even some of his counterparts continuously call him the anorak, a testament indeed to his dedication and philosophy of “right first time” whether its a simple single colour business card or a 48 page colour brochure.

To ensure our clients stand out in the marketplace, we need to offer customers the latest industry capabilities and the most advanced technology products. HP offer the complete solution with HP Indigo technology – the world’s most advanced colour digital presses. HP also has the resources, the innovation, the tools, the partners, and the support system that can transform your marketing proposition.

To meet the tough challenges of today’s printing market, Bridson & Horrox provide high-quality start-to-finish

solutions and unequalled support, these solutions are complemented by most versatile, productive printing press on the market, the HP Indigo press.

Following considerable investment in printing machinery, Bridson & Horrox is in the position of being able to offer a HP Indigo press, capable of printing over two million colour pages or more than five million monochrome pages a month - it is a truly universal production device.

We have found this machine performs to the highest standards of quality.

The main attributes of the HP Indigo Press are ...

- Superior HP ElectroInk liquid ink technology
- Wide colour gamut, with up to 7-colour printing
- Robust colour management with HP Professional PANTONE® emulation and ICC profiles
- Special and spot colour capabilities, including photo inks-light cyan and light magenta, HP Indigo Digital Matte, and brand colours

- High definition dot placement technology enables 1219 dpi and zero dot gain for superior line work and micro text printing
- Photo colour tables
- Best-in-class colour accuracy and consistency
- Extensive automation, to reduce operator involvement
- Support of a wide range of coated and uncoated materials, including speciality media

All enquiries should be directed to [sales@bridson-horrox.com](mailto:sales@bridson-horrox.com)



Cat Turner



# Hellbent on approaching life

by Cat Turner, Operations Manager - Arzak Global Securities Ltd

They say there are no ordinary moments in life: every one's a gift and should be savoured. That's certainly the view of Cat Turner, mother, author and finance sector professional. In her own words, she's "hellbent on appreciating everything that life, and this Island, has to offer" - which makes it a full time job, as the opportunities are so rich and varied.

"It's hard to over-state the terrific resource we have here, but it's also easy to slip into complacency and ignore them. I'm determined not to do that." With nearly three decades in the finance sector behind her, having published more than two dozen books on finance and governance matters, and with a sporting career that includes ten years sidcar passenger (and 8 TTs), she's obviously not one to let the grass grow under her feet - so where did this appetite for life originally come from?

A resident of the Island for over 40 years, Cat was schooled at the Buchan and remembers it very fondly. "It was an inspiring environment for me, where we were encouraged by our teachers to excel and to believe that we could achieve most things if we applied ourselves. That belief has stayed with me right up to this day, and it's propelled me to try things that otherwise I might have thought beyond me. I really hope I'm able to instill that same sense of possibility in my daughters, Catherine and Lizzie." From school, Cat developed a varied career in the finance sector, acquiring a raft of letters after her name and experience in investments, life assurance and banking. She now works part-time as operations manager at Arzak Global Securities, the Isle of Man's first and only wholly-online derivatives brokerage. She's enjoying her time at Arzak immensely. "In many ways, although I had good knowledge in fields such as investment, funds, and regulatory compliance, Arzak has taken me 'back to school' - as a unique organization offering online execution services primarily to clients based in the Middle East and Northern Africa, it's enabled me to expand my knowledge of margined trading activities immensely. I've loved this sense of building new expertise, and the people I'm working with are also great fun - Arzak is by far the most multicultural environment I've been involved in to date, and it's been fun finding out about my colleagues' cultural backgrounds - and on occasion introducing them to Island life!"

In addition to her work with Arzak, Cat is actively involved in several local voluntary organisations. As secretary of Isle of Man Friends of the Earth, she is a keen supporter of its campaigning on environmental issues - in particular, she believes that the government needs to take prompt and decisive action to ensure it meets the 15:15 commitment it has made to the Manx public. "The 15:15 target is a promise made by Tynwald that by 2015, the Island will be generating 15% of its energy needs from renewable resources. The fact that Tynwald made this promise is fantastic - though of course it's only small step on the way to what has to be a much bigger change.

"But unfortunately, since making that commitment, not much else has happened. What this means is that Manx people risk being at the mercy of relentlessly rising fossil fuel prices, with all of the poor energy security and the inflationary pressures this involves - quite apart from the very real impacts that a reliance on coal, gas and oil have for our poor battered planet. So I'm really hopeful that the new intake of MHKs will put their thinking-caps on and come up as quickly as possible with a strategy that incorporates a variety of renewable energy sources - on and offshore wind, biomass, hydro and eventually tidal. We have a real opportunity for this Island to be a beacon of clean and sustainable activity, we have the businesses, we have the know-how and I'm hoping we have the will."

She's also recently joined the management committee of a busy locally-based charity, the OneWorld Centre. Established with the aim of encouraging understanding and respect for the lives and cultures of all people, One World works to help create a fairer society which celebrates peoples' global differences and interdependence. The more I learned about the One World Centre's activities, the more I wanted to be involved. The team, led by Rosemary Clarke, does fantastic work, highlighting the links between our lives here in the Island, and those of people in developing countries. They also work hard to raise awareness of global economic, social, political and environmental issues - challenging stereotypes, fostering a positive attitude that embraces human rights and responsibilities and creating opportunities for people to become active global citizens. That's the approach I want for myself and my own

children, so I see it as a real privilege to be involved".

As part of her support for the charity, Cat runs a fortnightly film club, Independent Cinema, which runs screenings of films - most, but not all, documentaries which highlight the issues the One World Centre is concerned with. So for example, it's recently screened H2OIL - a film documenting the devastating impacts of tar sands oil extraction on the Canadian environment and planetary ecosystem. Future screenings include Just Do It, an entertaining look at environmental activism, and Bananas!®, which focuses on fair trade and agricultural practices.

It's free to see the films, but Cat makes sure there's always a donations bucket out and the evenings have raised useful donations for the One World Centre. She thinks the most important thing is the message. "If anyone wants to come but can't afford a donation, that'd fine - I'd always rather see them there than not! It's a testament to the generosity of this Island community that the lovely folks at the Java Lounge provide us with a venue for these film evenings, and I'm eternally grateful to Daniel and Keong for their support in this wise!" she says.

In her spare time - of which there's not a huge amount - Cat loves exploring the Manx countryside and reading to her twin girls. I honestly believe that reading with a child is one of the most important things you can do for them - as well as being valuable shared time, it gives you the chance to share important lessons and messages in a way that nothing else can.

Most children's stories have some sort of moral outcome, or give you the chance to discuss ideas of right and wrong - and they stick in children's minds in a way that a dry old lecture probably wouldn't. And after writing so many texts on subjects such as lending and investments, maybe a children's book is next on the agenda for Cat?

"Could be," she says, "could be....."

# Meet the team - stationery & furniture

Bridson & Horrox

## **Alex Taylor – Sales Manager**

Alex has been with the company since 1976 and has a wealth of experience in the office products industry. He specialises in finding solutions for companies who don't have the time to look after their own requirements by implementing a bespoke solution.

Outside of work Alex is a life long Tottenham Hotspur fan, enjoys swimming, walking and playing bowls for Onchan.



## **Russel Warrender – Operations Manager**

Russel joined the company in November 2009. He has 20 years of retail experience and an NVQ level 4 Management qualification. The link between sales and despatch to provide quick delivery and a high level customer service is one of his key roles.

Away from work most of Russel's time is taken up by his two sons but when he has time he is a big football fan, not sure why he is a big follower of Wolves though!!



## **Gemma Burnell – Account Manager**

Gemma joined the company in October 2005. Gemma has exceptional product knowledge and is fantastic at sourcing that unusual product you can never find in the catalogue. In her spare time Gemma enjoys reading, Jodi Picoult and Dan Brown being her favourite authors. At the weekend Gemma loves a trip to the pub and when staying in likes to watch a good gory horror movie!





**Paul Smyth – Account Manager**

Paul joined the team in October 2011. He has over 15 years of sales & customer service experience. He has a 13 year old daughter Caitlin. Being competitive he enjoys playing snooker, walking and is a very keen cook. He plays guitar and sings around the local pub circuit.

**Steve Robbins – Office Furniture Coordinator**

Steve joined the company in 2002 and is our specialist office furniture space planner. Completing many projections, most notably the DAFF headquarters in St.Johns and most recently the new offices for Baker Tilly Isle of Man.

Steve is a avid motor sports fan, enjoying the TT every year and provides the video replays for the stock cars at Onchan Park, so if you're not happy with a manoeuvre you will find him in the south stand.



Stephen Carter



# Loyalty matters

by Stephen Carter, Director - Stewart Clague Services

I was born in the Isle of Man at the end of the "baby boom" years - 1964 - to young parents but I suppose my first "proper" childhood memories were at the age of five of Singapore where my father was posted when he worked for the RAF.

When you look at someone so young it's difficult to imagine that they remember anything at that age, but I can clearly recall lots of detail about those two years in Singapore, starting school and the very hot weather are just two. I suppose that even for a 5 year old it was quite something to go so far across to the other side of the world and certainly not an everyday story like nowadays.

When we came back to the Isle of Man I was seven. It was quite some difference in climate, which I remember very clearly. I had no recollection of snow and that winter we had quite a bit.

The next ten years, growing up in Sulby, made me realise that the Isle of Man was where I always wanted to be. I've always loved the Island, and Sulby is a really Manx part of the Isle of Man. I worked in the village store at weekends and after school from a very young age. A decade spent in the Sulby countryside and at school in Ramsey was just fantastic and I guess that's where my work ethic started.

My first job, with chartered accountants Callow Matthewman and Co, not only urbanised me but also introduced me to my life-long passion for local football and my connection to Union Mills FC. Some of the staff played for the club and persuaded me to join and I was hooked immediately.

I always like to give 100% and look on myself as a "doer", so within a year at the club I was on the committee and a year later - in 1985 - I became treasurer and I still hold the position today. I became very good friends with Vince Watkins and Kevin Cartledge and together, with lots of support from the club, we set about expanding the club and improving the teams. I was only ever a "combi" player, but I love the game and I had a few good years and once in a while I got into the first team. Our matches against local neighbours Braddan were always the most memorable with both clubs either winning or being runners up in the Combination League. Problems with the former pitches in the grounds of what is now Noble's Hospital were resolved when we moved to Garey Moor and since then it has been a real success story. I'm pleased to have played a major part in the history of the club and in particular the relocation.

In 1989 I also took up the position of FA representative for Union Mills, which opened another avenue to get involved at administration level of the game in the Isle of Man. Times were very different back then. Administration of the local game amounted to very little more than competition and disciplinary management. There were no development initiatives and at Island Representative level opportunities to play against other countries were extremely limited. The advances in the last few years at the IOMFA, greatly assisted by the English FA, have been significant and we have a very strong team with a desire to transform Manx football. We can see this at the FA headquarters and The Bowl, but it's also happening all over the Island's clubs and the future prospects are looking very positive. There are now wonderful opportunities opening up for young players to develop into the potential professionals of the future. All the while the quality of football being played on the Island is improving. I'm particularly proud that members of all the other clubs on the island placed their confidence in me in electing me Vice President of the IOMFA three years ago.

I've also been fortunate to be able to get over to the UK a number of times over the years to see Man United and enjoy their fantastic success story over the last two decades. In terms of English football I've only ever supported United and I'm old enough to remember the dark days of the 1970s and the domination of Liverpool in the 1980s.

After working for Callow Matthewman for 19 years, I made a career move in the year 2000 and joined Stewart Clague Services as financial director. The company had plans to grow and some degree of succession planning was required too. I'm pleased to have been part of the team in the subsequent years of expansion, with SCS moving into all areas of building services and achieving notable success. We have just celebrated 40 years in business on the Island and have plans for further growth. Despite the current challenges I still feel that there are exciting times ahead and have great faith in our little Island.

Looking back, that's two jobs in my lifetime and one football club.

I'm a great believer in loyalty; it creates trust within an organisation on which you can build a solid future and friendships. I am also a firm believer in hard work and that any person who shows both qualities will always succeed in life.

I remain good friends with my colleagues at Union Mills FC and collectively we now all

want to see the club continue to grow. We have a very strong youth system which is designed to make Union Mills an established IOM Premier League team and hopefully future champions. Building loyalty, promoting identity and hard work are, I believe, the key factors in achieving this. We are developing youngsters who want to play for the team and be part of the club. All too often in the past our better juniors have left to play for other clubs.

Meanwhile, in my family life I have two daughters - Natalie, 17 and Lucy, 15 - who have both played, naturally, for Union Mills girls teams but have excelled at badminton with both representing the Isle of Man at junior national level. Natalie is studying for her A Levels and plans to go to University to study as a teacher and Lucy is on the way to GCSEs. With my partner Julie we try to take regular holidays and regularly visit my family in Spain. Most of that branch of the family live in or around Pamplona in the north and I have been there many times. My love for the place started when I first went there on my own as a single lad in 1984 and decided, in a moment of madness, to have a go at the 'Running with the Bulls' during the annual Fiesta of San Fermín.

What the TV doesn't show is that the bull running happens at 8am in the morning - at the end of a sleepless night celebrating out on the town - so everyone is full of drink - and bravado! So, of course, as a late teenager I gave it a go! I tried it again two years later and I have to admit it was fantastic fun. I didn't get hit by a bull, but I did get plenty of bruises as we were pushed into barriers by other runners. I'm not an 'Adrenaline Junkie' and I haven't done it since but I'm glad I had a go.

I was recently asked by a business associate what I do with my spare time. Over lunch I took him to the IOMFA headquarters and showed him the trophies and explained about my involvement with the Association and Union Mills FC. He said that many people would consider what I do in the evenings and at weekends to be a second job. The odd thing is that I've never seen it that way. The enjoyment of giving something back to the community is the driver for me and it doesn't seem to be relenting.

As for the future well we don't really do long-haul holidays, but I must admit I still have a fascination to go back to Singapore. It was a very long time ago when I was last there, but it's definitely in my mind to go back one day, sooner rather than later.



Ian Cooil



# Working on the blind side

by Ian Coolil, Manx Blind Welfare Society

Manx Blind Welfare Society (MBWS) was established as a local charity to support blind and visually impaired people (VIPs) in 1936. The Society developed that mission into an extensive and essential range of services which are currently utilised by in excess of 500 individuals on the Isle of Man who endure a form, or multiple forms, of sight loss.

The Society is able to finance its work purely on the basis of voluntary donations which enables our small staff group, and our 240 strong volunteer team, to reach out to VIPs right across the Island.

A number of our "members" are elderly and have little or no contact with the outside world or society at large. Sight loss is frequently associated with loneliness and a loss of dignity and self esteem. VIPs also sometimes experience significant mobility problems and, when combined with other factors, often lose the feeling of independence.

We have four social groups which meet weekly; three meet in our centre at Corrin Court, bringing people together from across the Island, and the fourth meets in various locations in the south of the Island.

The social groups provide many things to our members, not just the activities and events organised for them; but also they give people a social network, a weekly focus point, and fundamentally stop some people from becoming, or remaining, socially isolated.

We also support a number of young people and their families when they are faced with the devastating effects of sight loss or blindness. Our work is focused on providing real, tangible and long term support.

Each service we deliver is designed to improve the lives of the members we

serve. Some of our members call the society their "family", and it is extremely humbling and an exceptionally rewarding experience to be involved in making such profound and life-changing impacts in the lives of people who often feel so remote from their own Island community.

Other services include:

- Emotional support, at times of crisis, for the visually impaired person and their family.
- An extensive range of equipment freely supplied to help with reading and writing, accessing information, living safely and independently ... the list of equipment is endless but it even includes talking microwave ovens!
- Liaison with our RNIB colleagues, Social Services, health workers and local authorities on behalf of VIPs.
- 'Buddy' scheme for one to one contact with a volunteer offering general support, assistance with personal mail, personal shopping, outings etc. We hope to extend this scheme significantly next year and we are looking for volunteers to join the society to help us in this important area.
- Advocacy on behalf of VIPs in relation to issues of independence
- An audio book library with 3,500 titles which is regularly used by in excess of 150 people. A free postal service is kindly provided by the Isle of Man Post Office to support this service provision.
- Weekly news stick, serving in excess of 110 people, available on request to anyone unable to access normal print. This is a resume of news taken from three local newspapers. The cost of a new digital system for the weekly news service has been met entirely

from a fabulously generous donation from local Rotarians.

- Braille translation and printing facility is available to our members.
- A quarterly newsletter in large print and on USB stick.
- A transport service to and from the centre and various events and outings arranged in discussion with the members.
- Home visits from our Social and Welfare Officer
- Sporting activities including weekly carpet bowls at the NSC.
- And many more individual programmes including one to one IT training.

We are extremely grateful to the Manx public for their donations, which, when combined with the generosity of a number of individual and private benefactors, enable us to make daily differences in the lives of blind and visually impaired people..

The Society is extremely thankful to Bridson and Horrox for allowing MBWS to have an opportunity to bring our work to your attention and to offer you a chance to join us as a volunteer and welcome you to the side of the people we serve and who are so heavily reliant on the services we and our locally based colleagues from RNIB provide.

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