

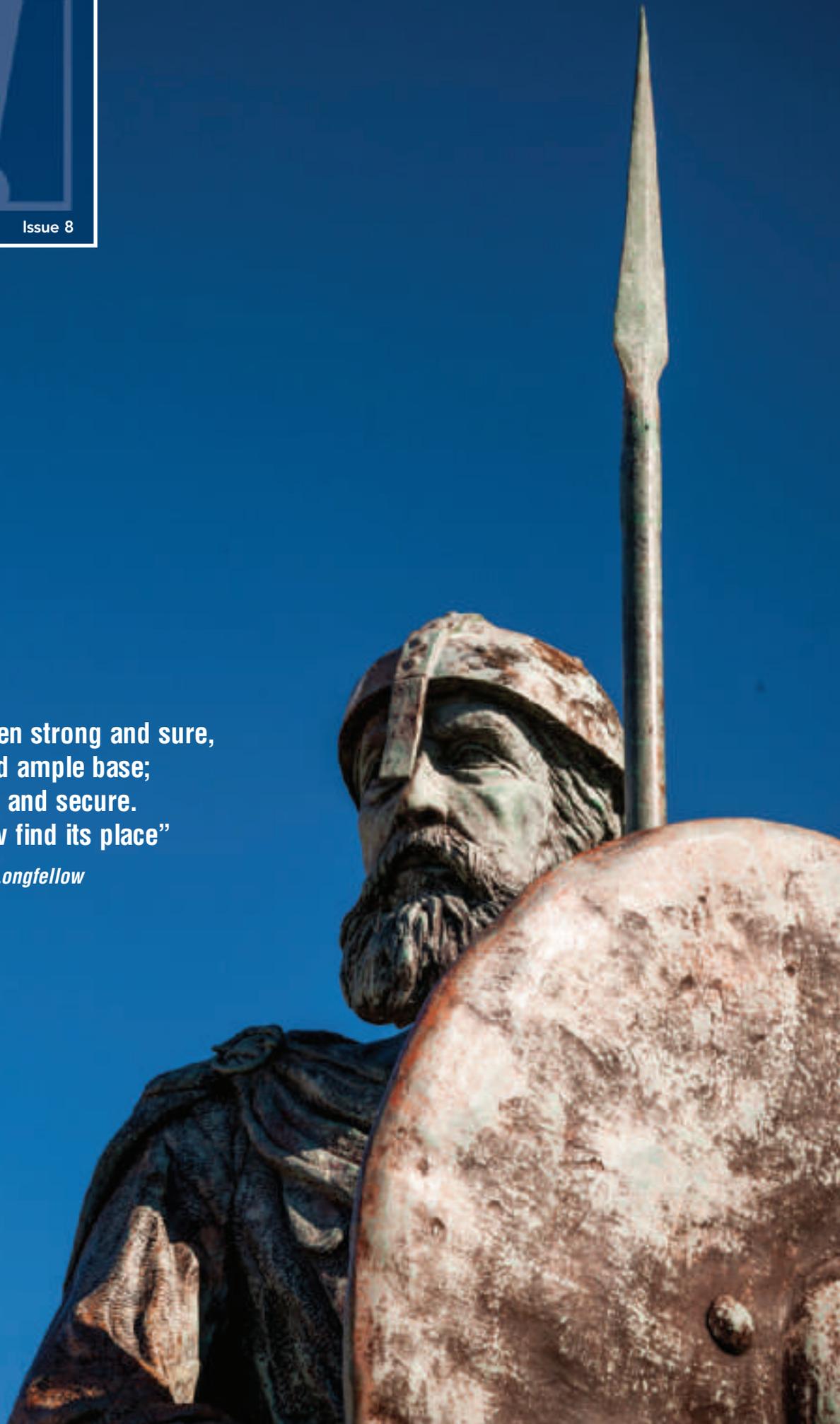


December 2013

Issue 8

**“Build today, then strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base;
And ascending and secure.
Shall tomorrow find its place”**

*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
1807-1882*



exclamation magazine

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Contents

- 4** Welcome
Darren Horrox - Bridson & Horrox
- 6** Pride in our Island
Maxine Cannon - General Manager, Isle of Man Stamps
- 10** Why the Isle of Man will always be home
Brian Kelly - CEO, The Online Regional Travel Group
(Mann Link Travel and Richmond Travel in the Isle of Man)
- 14** The changing face of banking
Simon Jones - Head of Client Relations,
Permanent Bank International
- 16** The ultimate lifestyle choice?
Ray Cox - Milan Veterinary Group and Race Director,
Isle of Man Parish Walk
- 20** The importance of work-life balance
His Excellency, The Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man,
Adam Wood
- 24** Invigorating the Isle of Man
Peter Greenhill - CEO, e-Gaming Development,
Department of Economic Development, Isle of Man Government
- 28** A role model for future generations
Dominic Winrow - Master in charge of Rugby,
King William's College
- 32** The Manx Advertiser:
innovation in local advertising
- 36** Touching lives on a global scale
Marlene Akitt - Office Manager, Riva Financial Systems and
Isle of Man Area Co-ordinator, Operation Christmas Child



Manx Advertiser



BUSINESS GIFTS



Merita Taylor

Exclamation Editor and Director Looking Glass Communications

By nature, humans are inquisitive creatures. Yes, many of us may value our privacy and some are fiercely guarded over it, but within everyone there is a hunger, a desire, to learn and broaden our horizons.

Writing 'Exclamation' is a fascinating job. I get to (legitimately) delve into the very different worlds of our subjects, share their incredible experiences and then write about them. It's a pretty privileged position to be in, if I'm honest. Even the most guarded of our subjects are willing to open up and talk 'life' and 'work' with me; I can only thank them enough.

It's not often you get to produce a collection of work where all of the subjects have such a passion for learning and passing that on to those around them – or to the younger generation – so they too can shine in the future, no matter what subject interest they may have. They take immense pride in their careers and what they've worked to achieve, in many cases now doing their dream jobs and fulfilling their vocations in life.

It also fascinates me how each and every one of them strives to make the best of their surroundings, be they abroad or here on the stunning Island in which we live, taking the most out of our landscape, our people and our very privileged position in the world.

Read Marlene Akitt's account of delivering Christmas gifts to poverty-stricken children in Kosovo and you'll understand exactly what I mean.

Something I know a lot of people struggle with is finding the perfect work-life balance. All too often the line between work and life becomes increasingly blurry until you can't tell the two apart. 'Work hard, play hard' becomes your way of life, with no time for 'time out' in between.

Does such a thing as work-life balance even exist? It's something I know I'm guilty of not having sometimes, and I speak for a lot of my friends there too. How do you perfect the art of balancing career with personal life? And how do you make sure you live your life without letting it pass you by? Answers on a postcard, please!

Recently I've started practising Yoga again, and at the end of every class the Instructor always says the following: 'Be mindful of the time you've invested in yourself today by detaching from the working day'. Basically, give yourself a big pat on the back for making the time to switch off and do something for you, even if it is only for half an hour.

The concept of separating 'work' from 'home' is something that all of the subjects of this edition of Exclamation have begun to value more and more as they've climbed the career ladder. Each and every one of them makes sure they invest time in themselves and their families after giving 100% at work. Whether it's going on holiday, going out and enjoying a hobby regularly, taking the children to the park or simply sitting down to a family meal each night, 'me' time has become a rule.

So, with that in mind please take half an hour out and enjoy the latest edition of Exclamation. Happy reading!





Darren Horrox



Welcome

2013 marked the 80th anniversary of Bridson & Horrox Group's launch, and I can honestly say it's been an exciting and challenging year for us. It's nice to be able to conclude our celebrations with this edition of 'Exclamation' and introduce you to a fantastic and inspiring group of people. I hope you enjoy reading this as much as we have enjoyed putting it together.

This year we have also celebrated another anniversary; one year since the launch of the Manx Advertiser, our fortnightly magazine delivered to every home across the Island. This has given businesses a new advertising medium through which they can regularly promote their goods and services to Manx residents, at the same time growing their brand. Perhaps most importantly, it is affordable and effective; we know this thanks to positive feedback from our clients who have experienced an increase in sales following a campaign in the Manx Advertiser.

We are looking forward to working with our existing clients, and welcoming new ones, in 2014.

During the summer, Bridson & Horrox Group was delighted to be one of the sponsors of the King William's College rugby tour to Australia, which was enjoyed by 40 pupils aged between 14 and 18. As well as having an unforgettable experience Down Under, the benefits this tour has given to all of those involved on their return is probably the most pleasing thing for me. As well as having had an excellent rugby season to date, the added confidence the pupils have gained will stand them in good stead for the rest of their academic careers, and making the transition from College to further education or the workplace.

As part of our 80th anniversary celebrations we delivered special birthday cupcakes to all of our clients across the Island. This was a great opportunity to get out and meet our loyal clients, and thank you for your valued business.

The diversification of Bridson & Horrox Group from a small, family-run printing company to an all-encompassing business which now specialises in printing, digital print, mail merge, office stationery, office furniture, document storage, signage and design means we have been able to survive the recent economic climate and build for the future. This will not be without its challenges, but we are in an excellent position to meet those.

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Maxine Cannon

Pride in our Island

Maxine Cannon - General Manager, Isle of Man Stamps

It's not often I bring tears to someone's eyes during an interview, but being asked to recall the incredible number of achievements she's enjoyed in her career to date does exactly that to Maxine Cannon.

It's now six months since she took over from Dot Tilbury as General Manager of Isle of Man Stamps and Coins, stepping up from her previous role as Sales and Marketing Manager in the organisation's 40th anniversary year, and having been with the business since 1981.

"In part I've found it easy in that I already know the business and the people, but at the same time my role is very different to what I was doing, and having the same knowledge and relationships that Dot had will take time to develop. However, I've had tremendous support from both my team and from our partners in the industry who've treated me with the greatest of respect.

"The Isle of Man Post Office has always had a natural hierarchy of succession around it, which is one of the reasons why I think it's in such a strong position. Evolution is a wonderful thing and everything has to change at some point in order for it to survive. We've been doing that as a business since 1973 and for me, it's invigorating to have new people and new ideas to call upon. It's easy to get into a comfort zone, and evolution challenges that.

"I've recently returned from Beijing where we were thrilled to have a stand at a Philatelic Exhibition out there, which we manned alongside the China National Philatelic Corporation. This helped to further increase the Isle of Man's profile in such an important market for

international growth. What was perhaps one of the most positive things for me is that I was able to ask my staff if any of them would like to come and represent the Island with me.

"So many put their names forward and the willingness they all showed was encouraging. The colleague who travelled with me is just 25, and as well as helping on the stand, he also attended an international philatelic conference. In addition to this being valuable business experience and development for him, it's also fantastic to come back and have a younger and very different perspective for us to draw on. Depth of knowledge and regular idea generation are keys to our success, and I'm pleased to say we have those in abundance."

Chatting to Maxine is fascinating, and one thing that really strikes me is just how passionate she is for what she does. It's clear her work gives her an enormous sense of pride and satisfaction, and her ideas for the future are very exciting. We'll touch on those later.

So, her best or most privileged experiences during her career to date. Asking this question opens up many emotions for her, probably not least because of the experiences that these in turn have given to the subjects of her collections, as well as to her personally.

"I think in general, the best thing about my career as a whole is the opportunity and enjoyment it has also given to my family, immediate friends and colleagues. A while ago I did a talk at a Mother's Union meeting, and beforehand I was really panicking about what exactly to talk

about. I decided to look back at all of the people I'd had dealings with over the last 32 years, and got together all of the artefacts I'd bought along the way.

"It was then that I realised what an amazing career I've had to date. One of the collections we did was called 'Moon Landings' and was based on the fourth man to land on the moon, Alan Bean, who's now an artist and who I was introduced to through Chris Stott at ManSat. To have the opportunity to make a collection based on his life and work, and for that to turn into a friendship, has been lovely.

"I was sitting in the hospital waiting for my grandson's arrival and there was a programme on TV about him. I emailed him to say I'd been watching it whilst sitting in the waiting room, and got an email back with the first words being 'Congratulations Grand Ma'am!' – how wonderful is that?"

Perhaps Maxine's most privileged memory involves a collection produced to celebrate the experiences and memories of Manx people themselves. Called 'Time to Remember', this was based loosely on David Callister's programme and he recommended 20 Manx people to feature in it.

"We got all of the subjects together at the Braaid Hall one Sunday afternoon and asked them to bring their collectables such as paintings, letters and so on, with them so we could produce a digital recording of their memories. To meet such proud and yet humble Manx people, and be a part of that was such an honour. Sadly a lot of them have now passed away, including Cecil Mitchell who

was 101 at the time, Alfie Duggan, Vera Craine and Hilary Guard, Charles' father.

"Towards the end of his life, Hilary didn't really go out a lot. He had an awful lot of memorabilia from the tourist trade and the project gave him a real purpose in the last months of his life. We launched the issue at the Royal Agricultural Show that summer and invited all of the subjects along with their families. They were the stars of the day and everyone wanted to talk to them.

"I really did lose it when Hilary, totally unexpected to everyone, turned up. He hadn't been out socially for months, and for him to make that effort meant so much. Producing that collection was my ambition, yet without the support and co-operation of so many people it would never have happened. It never fails to amaze me what wonderful and exceptionally talented people the Island has produced, and where we are heading in the future."

So, facing another 40 years in business and having produced some fascinating and captivating collections already, what is next for Isle of Man Stamps and Coins? And perhaps more importantly, where do Maxine and her team look for inspiration?

"Historical events and things that are happening in our community are a big source of that. For example, to celebrate Island of Culture 2014 we're producing a collection using some of Juan Moore's specially commissioned artwork. Another is the centenary of the start of World War One.

"One of my big interests outside of work is genealogy. I'm very interested in family history and have researched my own in depth, and so last year took my mother in law and her sister in law to visit the War Graves in northern France. My grandfather's brother had been killed in 1916 and his grave is in Tynecot cemetery. We took a Manx tartan wreath to place on his grave, and are the first family members ever to have visited it – J. J. Craine, Northumberland Fuseliers'. It was very emotional.

"My mother in law's Uncle had also been killed in action and although the whereabouts of his grave is unknown, his name is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. To see that, besides the names of more than 72,000 other men who had lost their lives, was unbelievable.

"There's a Manx school party going out to the War Graves next year and we're hoping to be working with them. I want to help bring the story of the ordinary person, and human loss and sacrifice on such a catastrophic scale, to their minds as well as to the people of the Isle of Man.

I want it to have an impact on their understanding of wider issues, many of which still prevail today"

Maxine is a very driven individual, and admits that as she's progressed up the career ladder, she's found having a work-life balance even more important. Switching off and having a personal life is not always easy as ideas for potential stamp issues always present themselves; she enjoys spending time with her husband, Neale, daughters Kathryn

and Joanna, and grandson, Lewis. She also loves to travel, admitting she gets a lot of inspiration from relaxing and discovering new places. She's a firm believer in the adage that you'll become stale in your thoughts and words if you don't find time for yourself too.

So, remaining ambitions – there has to be one. In fact there are a few, but one that Maxine is determined to make a reality.

"I've always wanted to produce a Commonwealth Collection that celebrates the Queen as the Head of the Commonwealth. We had hoped to do this for the Diamond Jubilee earlier this year, but now our next target is in 2015 where I hope we can produce a 'Longest Serving Monarch' collection instead. Having all of the Commonwealth countries, led by the Isle of Man, working together to produce such a special momento, would just be a huge honour."



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Brian Kelly



Why the Isle of Man will always be home

Brian Kelly - CEO, The Online Regional Travel Group

(Mann Link Travel and Richmond Travel in the Isle of Man)

One thing I've never seen before is Brian Kelly stuck for words. I've just asked the Founder and Chief Executive of the largest offshore travel Group in the British Isles what drives him? I've got my own ideas but, after a long pause, he answers.

"I think the fact that I feel like travel was made to measure just for me," he enthuses. "I couldn't imagine doing anything else – this industry suits my personality and my skill-set, and provides such a variety of challenges that often fascinate me. I'd be bored if I had to do the same thing every day; I get my drive from the fact I enjoy what I do and seeing what we achieve as a Group.

"Challenge drives me."

In 1982, Brian founded Mann Link Travel in the Isle of Man; a one-man band operating from a tiny office. Today he continues to own and lead Mann Link Travel and Richmond Travel on the Island, Bellingham Travel in Jersey, Wayfarers Travel in Guernsey, the award-winning global travel booking website JustTheFlight.co.uk, www.manxferrries.co.uk, www.manxflights.com and www.flybelfast.co.uk under the banner of the 'Online Regional Travel Group' (ORTG). Each Island travel brand has a dedicated business and leisure division, with the exception of Richmond Travel, and a number of pioneering global destination travel websites will be launched over the coming months.

A hands-off CEO he certainly isn't.

"I think if you own your own business you never switch off – work is seven days a week. After 31 years it becomes ingrained in who you are – you become that person and it's impossible to change. The fact you enjoy it means you want to do it, and do it well – I think it shows you're good at it. There's never a day where I think 'oh no, it's work again today' and it's a chore to go to the office – I'm always enthusiastic about what lies ahead.

"Work-life balance is hard, and sometimes virtually impossible to achieve but I'll change that one day!"

Brian's passion for what he does, and his continual hunger to embrace new technology and stay at the forefront of the global travel industry, is infectious; so too is his ambition to do the right thing for his businesses, and those who work for him across the tri-Islands. Whatever's going on in his company, he knows about it. Perhaps these impressive leadership skills are one of the reasons he is where he is today. Perhaps another is the fact he knows the industry so intimately; what he hasn't seen or experienced over the last 31 years isn't worth mentioning.

So, the travel industry. A lifelong ambition being fulfilled?

"At the age of 16 I spent nearly a year living away from the Island. When I returned I decided that I definitely wanted to live in the Isle of Man but travel and see the world at the same time. A career in travel seemed like the perfect choice, although as a child I would have

loved to have been a professional footballer or golfer – wouldn't any young lad!

"In the late 80s work took me to Hong Kong for six very successful months and I absolutely loved it! I'd like to go back. It's one of the best places to do business, it's dynamic, the people have a fantastic work ethic, the lifestyle is great and there's always something to do.

"However, I'm a proud Manxman and the Island is where I call home – my friends and family are here and I'm lucky enough to be able to have that balance of enjoying my home and Island life yet being able to travel the world. It is possible to stay here and develop an international business on the Isle of Man - you don't always have to leave to achieve success."

The mid 70s saw the birth of the package holiday to the Mediterranean and so the era of popular mass travel began. This turned the travel sector into a respected industry where the staff were highly trained. Nearly 40 years later the destinations and consumer requirements may broadly remain the same, but the way they research and book their travel has changed dramatically thanks to the birth of the internet. Those who have become highly skilled travel IT specialists and embraced technology are among the market leaders of today; those who choose to ignore this are now few and far between.

"ORTG is now known as an IT specialist within the travel sector thanks to the way we have embraced pioneering industry technology and empowered our customers with it,

particularly across our business travel divisions. One sixth of our workforce are travel IT specialists now. The sector evolves at such a fast pace that a project never feels like it's been completed before we're moving onto the next one! The future is a really exciting place and I'm delighted that we can introduce new innovation into the market.

"I think I was at the right age to adopt the internet when it became mainstream and that's one of the reasons why we are growing as we are. My next main goals for ORTG are to turn it into a global travel player through our vision and understanding of the internet, and to ensure regulation is properly enforced across the industry. The ability to accept risk is key to the success of any business."

One thing that strikes me about Brian is his devotion to his three teenage children, Hollie, Jordan and Anna. I've seen so many families where one parent is out at work so much that they effectively become a stranger, but from when they were born he admits he was fortunate enough to be able to adapt his lifestyle to fit around their needs, and be there to do dinner times and the school run most days. He enjoys introducing them to new cultures around the world to broaden their horizons, and most Saturdays during the season he can be found watching Jordan following in his footsteps and playing football for Ramsey, having broken into the first team at the age of 16.

Sport has always played a huge part in Brian's life, in particular football, golf and tennis in Ramsey. When work allows, these are how he chooses to relax.

"When I was growing up I played football, tennis and golf a lot. I taught myself to play golf on the old nine-hole course on the Mooragh Park – where the rugby pitches and BMX Park are now – and Ramsey Golf Club was right on my doorstep. Today I'm still a proud member of the club and enjoy playing there with my childhood friends.

"I started playing football at Andreas Primary School, and was very fortunate as a 13 year old that the likes of the late, legendary Kenny Burns, a well-known footballer and coach in the North of the Island, decided to develop a junior football structure and give us more opportunities to play, but also learn. I played for Ramsey until I was 40, and am delighted to still

be a Trustee and Director of the club today. It makes me really proud to watch Jordan enjoying the game so much, as I still do.

"I still try and play tennis on the Mooragh Park once a week during the season too; it's definitely important to be able to enjoy something regularly outside of the office. However, I do find that technology has evolved in such a way that where we once took sports or hobbies as being total relaxation, it now encroaches on your life and you can stay connected to the 'outside world' whilst you're enjoying something else. Totally switching off is very hard."

For someone who's accomplished an incredible amount during his 31 years in business and is steadily working towards his next career aspiration, what's left on the 'to do' list?

"More travel, for sure. I don't actually have a favourite place in the world and there's genuinely nowhere I've been that I wouldn't return to. It's really easy to find fault in things, but I try to be open-minded and see the best in places. I think it's important. I've been to Australia but I do plan to go back and experience more of it, as well as visit New Zealand, the Arctic and Antarctic, Patagonia, certain parts of Africa and China, and Japan.

"That's the beauty of the Island; you can always go away and see some amazing parts of the world, but when you come back, you always feel as though you're coming back home."



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Simon Jones



The changing face of banking

Simon Jones - Head of Client Relations, Permanent Bank International

I joined HSBC in the Isle of Man in January 1998, not long after moving here; since then, the banking industry has changed fundamentally. Regulation has tightened dramatically with much stricter reporting and anti money laundering controls than ever before, which I believe is a necessary part of the ongoing growth and development of the Island as an International Finance Centre.

One thing that's more noticeable than ever before is that our clients – and potential new clients – are much more savvy about where they are investing their wealth. It's no longer just about who gives the best interest rate, but understanding a bank's background, security, depositor protection and feeling comfortable.

At the same time we have to do everything we can to reassure our clients and replace some of that lost trust. Because banking has become more personal, it gives us a chance to really get to know our clients and have much more face to face interaction; for me, that's a good thing. Relationships are key, and being able to address our clients' concerns and gain their trust through building that relationship is very satisfying.

If you don't have that trust, you don't have a business.

I joined Permanent Bank International three months ago as Head of Client Relations, and it's been an easy transition back into the industry after some time spent in the IT sector. What cemented my move was the company's commitment to the Isle of Man and the important role we will play within the Permanent TSB Group. In the current climate, that's a big commitment.

We've recently moved into new premises on Prospect Hill in the heart of Douglas, and having a team of 11 means we all get chance to really work together as a team – we all get

stuck in, and so our roles are perhaps more dynamic than in comparable companies.

For me, I love working this way, and it's especially beneficial when managing the development of new business; I prefer to take ownership of projects, get an in-depth understanding of them and see them through from start to finish, whether it's setting up an account for a new client or launching a new marketing campaign.

It's fair to say I don't have a typical week. I always start the day catching up on website enquiries, local, Irish, international and financial news, as well as social media. Linked In is useful for seeking new opportunities and keeping in touch with contacts' developments.

I'm the first port of call for new clients, or for clients with maturing deposits who are looking to keep their business with us. I look after marketing and development of our website. I also meet a lot of clients as the 'Personal face of Banking' at Permanent Bank International. Needless to say, my role is very varied and very interesting, and gives me a lot of satisfaction!

One of the most rewarding things is when we get good client feedback. Everyone is so different and has such varying needs. To be able to listen to what they want, deliver a solution that meet their needs and know that what we are doing is working for them, is great.

The future is a very challenging place, but it'll be an exciting challenge. One of the biggest things that will shape the future is technology, and it's important we embrace this. Because this develops so quickly, we must remain responsive to change and look to the future to make sure we're ahead of the game, changing the way we do things to benefit our clients.

Because work is so busy and varied, having a balance with family life is very important to me. It's a rule in our house that my wife, our two children and I will all sit down to dinner around the dining table every night and catch up on what we've been up to.

Family life really helps me to switch off – even helping with the homework!

Investing time in our children is a wonderful thing, and perhaps one of the reasons why I became involved with the Friends of Ballacottier School. I'm the current Chair, and we fundraise to provide additional educational resources for pupils where needed. Seeing the difference we make to them is fantastic, and very worthwhile.

Similarly, I sit on the Committee of the Manx Executive Challenge because I think it's really important to help people develop their talent within the corporate sector on the Island. Having done this myself I know what an incredibly valuable and rewarding experience it is.

The Isle of Man is an amazing place, and as a family we love to go walking. We have a book showing some of the best routes to go on, and it highlights what you can expect to see on each one which is great for the kids. Some of our favourite places are up around Maughold, or in the South around Port Erin, Port St Mary, The Sound and The Chasms. I also love rock climbing (when I get the chance), listening to music – and the odd video game or two!

I'm proud to class the Isle of Man as 'home'. The quality of life the Island affords you is fantastic with everything you need right here on your doorstep. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.





The ultimate lifestyle choice?

Ray Cox - Milan Veterinary Group and Race Director, Isle of Man Parish Walk

Mention the name 'Ray Cox' on the Isle of Man and chances are you'll know him for one of two things – being Race Director of the annual Manx Telecom Parish Walk, or for being one of its leading vets. Those who don't know the enigmatic Irishman are in the minority.

But what does he prefer to be known for?

"Oh without a doubt being a vet! It's my life and I'm equally surprised and amused at the recognition I get for helping to organise the Parish Walk. Life is so busy that I think sometimes my wife wishes our life didn't have the Parish in it!" he jokes.

After studying Veterinary Science, Ray graduated from University College Dublin in 1984 and moved to the Isle of Man in March 1987, having worked in a horse practice in England. His intention was, eventually, to return home to Ireland. It was here on Manx soil that he met his wife, Valerie, who was working as an IT Manager in an investment company on Athol Street.

Life on the Island ticked all of his boxes.

"I saw a job ad in the Veterinary Record for a mixed practice in the Isle of Man and called the guy who would go on to become my new boss. He was fantastic and so I came over for an interview. I have to confess I didn't even know where the Island was! Famous last words – I said I'd come here for six months and I'm still here!

"The mix of work was, and today still is, excellent. It's very rare these days to find a practice which specialises in small animals, horses and farm animals in equal measure. It's also

virtually unheard of that you can have open fields and working farms less than ten minutes from the heart of your finance sector.

"It's easy to live here – it's a wonderful place and it has everything to give you a fantastic quality of life. People don't know they're born sometimes when they talk about queues at Quarterbridge in the morning on the way to work, or about the roadworks on Peel Road. They obviously don't know what it's like across!"

And make the Island 'home' Ray has, with four children, the eldest of whom, Caitriona, at 19, is studying medicine at Cambridge. His father and siblings are all doctors, with Ray being the 'odd one out'. Home is Santon where he, Valerie and their children share life with five ponies, three cats, two chickens and Maisie, their Welsh Terrier.

To me, being a vet and coping with loss of much-loved family pets on an often daily basis takes someone with incredible people skills and compassion. The trust people place in that person is huge. It's certainly something I don't think I could do. But for Ray, who has a very warm and calming demeanour about him, he takes a great deal of satisfaction from his work.

"The best thing is the variety and challenge of my role – every day is different. It's a privileged role in a way too – people invite me into their homes to help them when their pets are ill, and they invite you into their lives more than they would any other profession, like they used to do with country doctors from times gone by, such as my father. He was very much a country doctor and, with that, a

confidante and paragon of discretion to all of his patients.

"It puts a lot of pressure on us to be good at our jobs and be compassionate for them. The satisfaction you get when someone really wants your help and you can make a difference to them is just immense.

"In the early hours of this morning a farmer rang me in a panic about one of his cows who was really sick. She was within minutes of dying when I got to her, but I was able to treat her and now, a few hours later, she's better and walking round like nothing has happened.

"That's the best thing about my job; the impact you make and the satisfaction that you know you've made a difference is key."

Being a vet and meeting so many members of the local community really helped Ray to settle in, make friends and integrate into the community very easily, as did his love for running. Many of his friendships were formed through his love of sport.

A keen track and field runner, he joined the Manx Athletics Club where he was a prominent figure in the late 80s and early 90s. His club merged with the Boundary Harriers, who organised the Parish Walk, in 1992 and at the time, the event was little-known or publicised.

Indeed, it seems incomparable to the Manx Telecom Parish Walk we know today, a firm fixture in the Island's sporting calendar where more than 1,800 people have lined-up to start before now, and more than 200 regularly cross the finish line, having walked the course distance of 85

miles and through 17 parishes; back then, just 200 people started and 11 finished!

Ray competed in the Parish Walk in 1994 for the first time to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust – his daughter, Caitriona, suffers from the disease.

“That day was a fantastic experience,” he recalls. “We started in the Villa Marina Gardens. There was a cart race in Peel and so there was a diversion through St John’s instead. From that point on you had to have a support car with you, but I’d only intended to go as far as there – luckily someone I knew kept his eye out for me. It was a beautiful evening and so I just kept on going.

“I finished in 19 hours. I got home at 7am and was meant to be on duty at 8am, but I literally couldn’t get out of the bath so had to call in and get someone to cover for me!

“What really stuck with me was that so many people came out to watch and cheer you along – the real Manx folk who made you a brew if you needed one and would sit waiting for you to pass until all hours. It was great. Afterwards people would come up to me in the street and say ‘I saw you cross the finish line’ and suddenly you became someone in their eyes.

“I thought the whole sense of community and camaraderie was just fantastic, and that’s when I decided we really needed to increase the profile of the event.”

In 1995 Ray became Race Director, and today, virtually the same nine committee members still organise the event. They meet once a month throughout the year, with everyone having a defined role. The team are passionate about ensuring every competitor has a great day out, and about preserving such a national Manx event for future generations to enjoy. They are incredibly conscious of building for the future. Today’s competitor numbers are testament to their success.

As for funny memories, I ask Ray to recall some for me. Breaking out into an infectious laugh, he chuckles to himself for a while before telling me that many of them are unrepeatable! One he still marvels at to this day dates back to the mid 1990s.

“Brian Ashwell was a competitor from the UK – he was 68 and totally unknown to us. When he checked in, a few of us wondered why he was taking part – he looked like a really ‘old’ man – he stooped and didn’t look well at all.

Well, he went on to win it! He was a massive surprise to us all and walked the competition into the ground! It just goes to show anyone can do it.”

He may have such a fast-paced lifestyle, but something Ray always makes time for is switching off and relaxing.

“I go out for a run if I have a big decision to make. I find it mentally refreshing and can always make the right decision when I come back – it clears my mind and allows me to think properly and focus. The ponies and the kids are a big avenue of relaxation for me too. I ride myself, and the kids are all avid riders so their hobby takes up a lot of time – most of the summer is spent away competing in the UK. Valerie takes them and I go over to support them when I can. I think my lifestyle is a full-time role!

“When I was younger I always had a real passion for horses and I think this is what made me become a vet rather than be a doctor. I thought it would be more fun. It’s a hell of a lot more fun, and I wouldn’t change my life for the world!”

The 2014 Manx Telecom Parish Walk takes place on Saturday 21 June. Entries have now opened, and close on 11 May. For more information and training tips or to enter online, log onto www.parishwalk.com.



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His Excellency, The Lieutenant Governor Of The Isle Of Man, Adam Wood



The importance of work-life balance

His Excellency, The Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man, Adam Wood

For someone who's lived and worked in such diverse places as Thailand, Kenya, Belgium, America and Uganda, settling into life in the Isle of Man must have been somewhat of an adjustment, surely?

Seemingly not, according to the Island's current Lieutenant Governor, His Excellency Adam Wood, who, in an exclusive interview with Exclamation, has described his tenure to date as an 'unusual and different challenge'.

"I'm really enjoying it so far, and I'm actually sorry I'm at the halfway point of my five years here because it means I have less time left to enjoy it. It's working very well and I'll be sad when my time here comes to an end, but I do believe five years is a good time for stability.

"The Island has been what I expected it to be. I'd retired before I applied for the role, having worked in international development or for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for my whole career. When I came for my interview I spent a couple of days here and explored the Island to find out what it was really like. I stayed in a B&B and one evening I shared dinner with the owners who taught me a lot.

"When I moved over, I felt well prepared to live here and so it wasn't a difficult adjustment at all."

His Excellency has immersed himself into Island life and is regularly seen supporting community events as well as hosting high-profile dignitaries from around the world, keen to forge links with the Isle of Man. His global

experience and thus broad perspective on life can only be described as an asset.

To many people such frequent life change would be unsettling, but making a new home and discovering new cultures, places and experiences are something he thrives on.

"When I move somewhere, I find its strengths and weaknesses out straight away and try to match those with my interests and strengths. I take something new out of every place I go, and I think this is why I find it hard to define a favourite; my interests differ according to where I am."

Talking to His Excellency, it's clear he's experienced some incredible things during his career, of which he enjoys very fond memories. However, if a favourite place is hard to name, the most fascinating culture he's lived in certainly isn't – and for stereotypical reasons it's perhaps not where you'd think.

"Thailand, specifically Bangkok, is terrific," he enthuses. "My daughter, Persephone, was born there 14 years ago. Within a five minute walk of where we lived there was an incredible juxtaposition of tradition and modernity; you could sit at a shrine watching people in Gucci clothing praying with the Sky Train running overhead, and then walk to get food from one of the street vendors.

"We would love to return on holiday as we moved to Brussels when our daughter was very little – there would be much to show her."

Born and educated in England, His Excellency graduated from Oriel

College, Oxford, and joined the UK Civil Service specialising in international development and diplomacy. Roles within the World Bank in Washington, the Overseas Development Administration in London and Nairobi, the European Commission in Brussels, the Department of International Development in Bangkok, the EU in Brussels, the British High Commission in Uganda and Kenya and then the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London followed before his move to the Island.

Kenya holds his strongest memories, and it's needless to say the recent Westgate mall terror attack has left its mark, particularly as one of his daughter's former schoolmates lost her life in the atrocity. Moving there in 2005 and working (successfully), amongst other things, towards bringing the post-election violence to an end, he believes the country will recover.

"I'm not a Facebook user but my wife and daughter are, and they have many friends there. They are still finding out some difficult and gruesome things. This has had a very devastating impact on the lives of Kenyans and in particular, the citizens of Nairobi. Kenya has had many episodes of short-term violence in its history that have affected tourism but it has always recovered and I hope that's the case now."

So many different experiences of politics, economies, cultures and religions must leave a profound impact on a person, and His Excellency tries to use this to the benefit to the Isle of Man and its

residents, especially when engaging with and building relationships with representatives from overseas territories. So too when building relationships with Manx residents.

It's also helped him to appreciate the safe environment the Island offers to young people, something also enjoyed by his wider family.

"My wife's family are frequent visitors, and I have three brothers who also enjoy coming to stay," he said. "One of them has a Norwegian biker friend who's a big fan of the TT and so they visit every year which is lovely. I've actually become a fan of the TT myself, and it's funny because I had absolutely no interest in bikes before I experienced that for the first time!"

"The adrenaline experienced on the start-line of any major sporting event is amazing, and standing on the start-line of the TT on Glencrutchery Road is no different. Even though they go so much faster, I recognise the adrenaline rush from when I used to row in 8s competitions."

So, is he ever tempted to ask John McGuinness for a pillion ride around the TT course before his time on the Island comes to an end?

"Never!"

The speed of his response speaks volumes about his respect for the racers, and a job best left to the professionals.

With such a demanding job and a diary fully booked weeks in advance, you'd imagine switching off from the pressures of a very public everyday life would be difficult, yet His Excellency admits to being 'ruthless' with his schedule to ensure some semblance of work-life balance. If his experience of global culture has taught him anything, it's the importance of having that.

"I definitely do relax, and where I have lots of jam-packed days where I may have lots of charity or community engagements including during the evening, I make sure I have days off to compensate. I enjoy reading, and tend to have a fiction and non-fiction book to hand. I love going for a long coastal walk although constitutionally I can't have a favourite!"

"I also enjoy a game of golf, although my handicap must remain a state secret too. It does amaze me that

some people I know here have such busy jobs yet play so well – I always wonder where they find the time to practice!"

So, what does the future hold for His Excellency in just over two years from now, when it's time to bid the Island farewell for pastures new and yet another exciting challenge?

"What's important is that my next role is an intellectually stimulating challenge and I retain a work-life balance. I enjoy working and am very open to opportunities that come along, even those which are perhaps deemed an unusual step, if they look good and interesting.

"I'm very open-minded as to where I will end up, but that's exciting."



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Peter Greenhill



Invigorating the Isle of Man

Peter Greenhill - CEO, e-Gaming Development,
Department of Economic Development, Isle of Man Government

In May, the dawn of a new e-Gaming era began following the arrival of Peter Greenhill in the Isle of Man. Already well-known to many of the Island's major players thanks to his high-profile e-Gaming background – indeed, he was encouraged by them to apply for the CEO position when it became vacant – it's a decision he's thriving on.

"We've settled in so well – in fact it was a quick and efficient move," he told Exclamation. "It has definitely been helped by so many brilliant people here on the Island who've welcomed us, as well as many friends from afar.

"I think the move here came at the right time – I always say that the job looked for me and vice versa. It's a great fit in terms of my skills and ambitions, and I've really been struck by peoples' friendly nature; the way they work hard to get things done, and work together. I'm a people person, and to meet such like-minded individuals has been amazing.

"In fact, I'd go so far as to say this is probably the friendliest place I've ever worked; the whole environment is so focused yet relaxed, and it's very noticeable how less stressed the people are compared to other places I've lived and worked."

Peter's career has taken him all over the world, with the exception of Africa and much of South America. A qualified banker, he held many positions in banking systems and IT across the globe for prestigious corporations including Credit Lyonnais, UNiSYS and Geisco. The move to e-Gaming happened nearly 20 years ago.

"I was looking for a change in direction when I saw a vacancy for a role which matched my skill-set perfectly, yet was in Gaming. A lot of major transaction processing engines and security systems are similar in both industries, and my grounding in systems meant it was relatively straightforward to then move into mobile and online. It came at a good time, and I think this is why I'm enjoying working in such an exciting environment. I also have a very broad perspective on things, which certainly helps."

The Isle of Man is globally renowned for being one of the world's premier gaming jurisdictions, and this is something Peter is passionate about enhancing during his tenure:

"Through cross-industry partnerships, we've established a magnificent technological infrastructure for the world to see," he commented. "This is vital for efficient and strong operations.

"A big part of my job is to grow the sector and increase jobs in the Isle of Man, not only in gaming but also in the supporting professions such as software development, law, accounting and corporate service provision. We're very adaptable to change. When various countries change their laws, we are very fast to adapt to get ahead of the curve and stay that way. This obviously has a wider effect across industry.

"Another major reason for our global recognition stems from this, and is the quality of our regulation. This is a fantastic USP for us to have. Certain operators in other jurisdictions feel they don't need to be under such stringent control, but player protection is paramount to

the Manx gaming industry and our operators.

"We're renowned worldwide for being fair, firm, accessible and consistent, setting the gold-standard across the industry. I am determined to protect this."

Peter's passion for the future of e-Gaming in the Isle of Man is unmistakable, but so too is his love of football or, more specifically, his passion for refereeing, an interest which began some 40 years ago after a knee injury put paid to his playing career. Having qualified thanks to a former colleague who was also a Referee Instructor, he's enjoyed success to a high level, having been the fourth official in numerous Premier League matches and even making the official Hungarian national list of referees.

He has now turned his attention to giving something back to the game, and coaching the referees of tomorrow in the Isle of Man.

"It's a tremendous skill to develop, giving people a focus and instilling discipline. And let's face it, you can't have a game without a referee!

"I'm currently working with the Island's most experienced officials to increase the skill level across the board here, and hopefully to get more of them officiating in UK games. It's a challenge because they don't have the exposure to UK-level football week in, week out, but we can certainly do it. There's not much I haven't seen in 40 years and that certainly helps.

“It gives me huge satisfaction in coaching and mentoring young people, and seeing that making a difference. It’s very much like management really; not supervising people, but enhancing their skills and helping them to progress. It’s lovely that I’ve been welcomed with open arms.”

If there’s one downside to Peter’s love of referring, it’s the impact it has on his ability to watch his beloved Arsenal FC in action, which is now confined to Sky TV!

Peter describes his future in the Isle of Man as ‘long term’, having got on the property ladder here with his wife, Susanne, who’s fallen equally hard for its laid-back quality of life.

“We’ve recently bought a house just outside central Douglas and I think we set a record for how long it took us to secure – two and a half days from having the offer accepted to completing! We’ve got the builders in and Susanne is overseeing the renovation programme which she’s enjoying alongside studying for another degree, this time in Psychology. She lost her father to Alzheimer’s, and wants to work with people with dementia issues in the future.

“One thing we both find really important is enjoying life away from the office, and the fact we can be at home in the countryside, or be in the office or on the beach just ten minutes later is so unusual. Susanne is Swedish and so the outdoors is something she enjoys. Having done a three hour round trip to and from work in the UK, commuting is a major issue and can really make you jaded and have a negative impact on your outlook on life.”

When Peter isn’t in the office or the football field, he enjoys family time or holidays, with cruising being a particular family favourite. Catching up with his four grown-up sons is something he always finds time for. His eldest is an Engineering Officer in the RAF and will return to Afghanistan in January for another tour of duty; the second works in Gaming, for a subsidiary of Playtech in London; the third works for a Sharepoint company in Germany, and the youngest is in his second year of University at Exeter, and showing signs of following in his father’s footsteps with regular work placements at a London Gaming company.

I ask Peter what is the best thing about his career to date, and the opportunities it’s opened up for him?

“Experiencing other cultures, and meeting people from different backgrounds. I’ll never get bored of that – it’s invigorating! I think that’s why we love to travel so much and yet why I don’t have a favourite place in the world; the experience you get out of it almost makes the place irrelevant.”

For a man not short of words, my final question leaves him silent for a few moments; ‘how would he like to be remembered here on the Island’?

After a few more moments comes his determined reply: “As someone who helped to create an environment where e-Business companies see the Isle of Man as a natural place to be – a Centre of Excellence where they can grow their business in a secure infrastructure, helping to increase the profile of Isle of Man plc and its GDP.”

With the impression he’s already made on the industry and his wide-eyed approach to work and life, I have no doubt he’ll succeed.



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Dominic Winrow

A role model for future generations

Dominic Winrow – Master in charge of Rugby, King William's College

For someone who's achieved such an incredible amount in his life and career to date, Dominic Winrow is very modest, and almost uneasy about doing this interview. His sporting achievements outside of the classroom combined with his determination to succeed and qualify as a teacher are inspiring, not least of all to the pupils in his charge.

Dominic began his teaching career four years ago at King William's College, and has many titles; Teacher of PE and Games, Master in charge of Rugby, Head of Sport and Exercise Science, Assistant Head of Fifth Form and Head of Dickson House. He combines life on the sports field with life in the classroom, helping to guide his pupils through their education and prepare them for the challenges that lie before them in life when their time at KWC comes to an end. It's this journey that gives him a huge sense of satisfaction.

"I'm so proud to work at College; seeing the pupils grow up and develop is just amazing," he told Exclamation. "The children and the staff are just great. I grew up on the Island and King William's College is a fantastic institution which I'm incredibly proud to be a part of.

"There's an expectation of the pupils to work hard, but there is of the staff too. I think those who join for Sixth Form fit in well because working hard and routine is the norm, and they fall into it easily. Classes are roughly 12 pupils and so they do get a lot of attention. Our expectations are huge, but so is the expectation of us to work hard and perform well. We work very long hours and Saturdays, so it does

make you value your family time and holidays."

From chatting to Dominic, what really strikes me is the 'go getter' about him, and the way I believe he is instilling this in his pupils. Their achievements in senior rugby alone in recent years are testament to this.

After taking a Sports Science degree at Chester University followed by his MA in Sports Psychology at Liverpool, Dominic and his now wife, Sarah, went travelling. However, their time was cut short when she fell pregnant and they returned to the Island where he began working as an Education Support Officer at Castle Rushen High School.

Two years later and realising he definitely wanted to do his PGCE and begin teaching, the small family moved to Liverpool where he began studying again, as well as resuming his successful boxing career. Baby number two arrived when he was finishing his studies.

2010 can only be described as a mammoth year. After qualifying as a teacher, becoming a Dad for the second time and then moving back to the Island where he joined King William's College, Dominic also represented the Isle of Man at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, being one of only two Manx boxers to do so. His skill in the boxing ring is famed on the Island, being the first Manxman ever to reach the Amateur Boxing Association finals in the UK.

"I began boxing and had my first fight when I was 15, and boxed on and off for the next three years but gave it up when I went to Uni. However, when I was doing my

Masters I started again as there was a brilliant club round the corner from where I lived, and this time kept it up.

"My two real career highs are reaching the ABA final and Delhi, where I spent three incredible weeks. I was eventually knocked out of the competition by Anthony Joshua who went on to win Olympic Gold at London 2012. He's about 6'7 and 18 stone! Just to get to that level has given me an enormous sense of pride, although obviously I do have regrets that I didn't go any further in the competition but I think you always do feel like that.

"I've kept in touch with Anthony and it's really nice to see him doing so well. I think he'll go on to win a world title soon.

"I've been asked about continuing with boxing competitively but I want a new challenge now. However, I still coach it at the NSC and have introduced it to King William's College as well! It's non-contact, but my 12-14 year olds are loving it and are really enthusiastic. Female boxers at London 2012 have definitely helped to soften the image of the sport."

Sports science is Dominic's academic subject, and teaching this to his International Baccalaureate students is something he thrives on, especially as he gets to choose the direction of the course, interpret how it's taught and how internal assessments are carried out. Every day and every term are different, and present their own challenges.

The most enjoyable thing about his career to date involves rugby for which he is responsible for all

fixtures, as well as being part of a talented coaching team which also includes another current Douglas Rugby Club player, Mike Hebden.

“The biggest improvement I’ve seen is in rugby, and the development of the senior players since they were in Years Nine and Ten. There are around 80 senior boys in College, and more than 50 of them play regularly. The difference and enthusiasm is just amazing, and they should be very proud of themselves seeing their hard work paying off. We have three teams consistently playing now – for the first time in a long time. It surprises me how much they are still learning and taking in, even now.

“For some of them, we’re trying to develop their training further by getting them involved with Douglas where Mike and I both play. We’ve been doing this for some time now and encouraging them to come to training with us. Playing against adults will develop their game further in College, help them make the transition from school to club much easier, and give them more confidence and positive self-belief.

“We never struggle for fixtures, both on and off-Island, but I want us to be on a level playing field with private schools in the UK as well as state schools. One place we do find it hard is in the National Cup competitions – we do very well indeed and it’s great to see how much the boys develop from their experience of playing in these, but we struggle with squad selection sometimes. We have 30 boys per year group to choose from, but schools in the UK sometimes have nearly 200 in the same age group

and so they can cover injuries very easily. The cost of travelling away is also a factor because it’s not easy for every parent to be able to afford this.

“In July, we were able to take 40 pupils to Australia on a rugby tour for three weeks. It took 42 hours to get there so ‘respect’ to the 14 year olds on the trip because that was tough! We started in Townsville and then went to the Sunshine Coast, Surfer’s Paradise, Fraser Island, the Whitsundays and ended in Sydney, with two squads playing four matches along the way. It took two years to plan and was an amazing experience. We’ve started looking at destinations for the next tour and are thinking about South Africa.

“Wherever we choose, we need to set ourselves apart and do it well. I want our pupils to leave College with fantastic memories and having had an experience for life. We can help create that and that’s the great thing about teaching. It also really pleased me to see, by the end of the trip, how the 14 year olds were the best of friends with the 17 and 18 year olds, and how the friendships created out there have remained in school since. Trips like this help pupils to build their confidence and social skills, and bring them together.

“Sport gives young people a focus – they need something constructive to do to prevent them getting mixed up in things they shouldn’t. Even if they’re not amazing at it, it’s important to help them find something they enjoy so they’ll do it regularly. I’ve definitely found that the more children are busy with activities, the more rounded, focused and organised they become. This is

an important skill to develop and sport really helps with that.”

So, for someone who leads such a busy life in work, is it possible to achieve some semblance of work-life balance and relax outside of the classroom?

“It is really hard, and something I struggle with, he admits. “We have three children now and so by the time I’m home from work, it’s usually bath and then bedtime, and then we’re not long after! It does really make me value quality family time, and the school holidays where I get to chill with the girls. They really help me to switch off and make life so worthwhile.

“After I came back from Australia we had a lovely summer camping, going to the beach, taking our eldest, Lauren, swimming a lot or playing in Onchan Park which is right on our doorstep. I wish they’d go to Noble’s Park for a change! Their days are busy too and so it’s wonderful to catch up with them, recharge the batteries and watch them grow up. I’m making the most of it as there will come a time when they don’t want to hang out with Dad anymore!”

Dominic’s also found the time to run the London Marathon twice, in 2011 and 2012 for the Anthony Nolan Trust and Isle of Man Hospice respectively, and admits he’s got a ‘positive addiction’ to exercise. For someone who fits so much into life, what’s next?

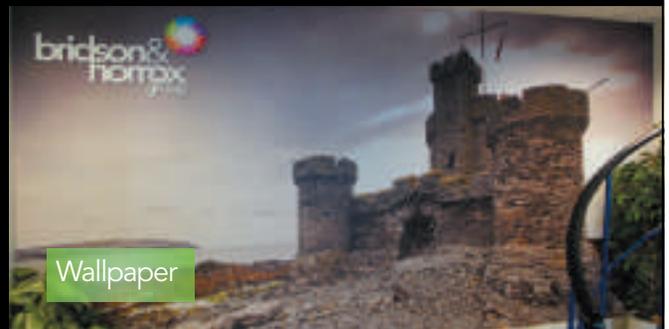
“I’m not sure yet. I just take life as it comes. I always look to the next challenge, but they seem to find me!”



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Tom Crowe

The Manx Advertiser: innovation in local advertising

Last month, the Manx Advertiser celebrated its first birthday, having firmly established itself in the Island's print advertising market.

If you're not familiar with our other magazine, here's a short recap for you...

Delivered to every home on the Island on a fortnightly basis and combining advertising and editorial content, the Manx Advertiser provides a cost-effective and consistent distribution channel for Manx businesses to promote their goods and services to residents, as well as providing readers with short, sharp, important and engaging 'information' in the form of current news stories and editorial features.

Due to its nature and frequency, the Manx Advertiser is the perfect vehicle for advertising fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) as regular offers can be refreshed quickly and cost-effectively by any company, be it a large corporate entity such as Isle of Man Bank or a one-man band roofing company.

Without the price tag of some more established print publications, it also allows for the creation of bespoke, targeted advertising packages to support a wider marketing campaign if necessary because our Sales Managers, Sam Lewis and Sam Noon, have the flexibility to create advert sizes to suit a client's requirements; other publications are constricted by column widths and fixed pricing structures.

They are also a valuable point of contact for our clients, especially in the SME sector, who more often than not have no internal or external marketing resource.

Why does the Island need another advertising outlet?

This was a question asked to us many times a year ago, but the answer lies with our clients!

We identified a gap in the market for a vehicle by which companies of any size could promote themselves to Manx residents on a mass level, and regularly. Whereas such magazines exist in the UK, it is very unique in the Isle of Man; no other printed medium can compare to the choice and value the Manx Advertiser offers.

Its launch followed months of in-depth market research to determine the demand for such a publication, as well as calls by our print, office furniture, stationery and design clients to introduce such a medium as they felt it would provide them with immense business benefits.

In the current economic climate where it's a universally acknowledged fact that the majority of companies on the Island have reduced their advertising budgets, the Manx Advertiser has successfully positioned itself in the print media arena. In fact, we are in the very fortunate position of having:

- A waiting list for prime advertising positions, including front and back covers
- A waiting list of clients wishing to be profiled in the editorial section thanks to the effectiveness this has, and 'talking point' it raises
- Secured many of the Island's flagship brands on long-term advertising contracts – for example, Shoprite has advertised in every edition of the Manx Advertiser since it was launched, and utilises this as a key marketing tool
- Noticed a sharp increase in flagship Manx brands becoming first-time clients, and on long-term advertising contracts, since the magazine was reformatted
- Achieved an increase in our client base, with larger corporate brands but particularly with SMEs who find it an affordable and effective medium for them
- Helped many of our clients to achieve an increase in turnover, which they themselves attribute to the Manx Advertiser

It is now a firm fixture in the marketing plans of companies from across the corporate world including Shoprite, Sure, Manx Telecom, Barry Curran Motors, Bedco, Isle of Man Bank and Conister Bank.

Embracing change

Some of the most successful businesses and brands in the world today have got where they are, in part, thanks to continually reinventing themselves and delivering what their clients want, staying ahead of the market and their competitors. The Manx Advertiser is no different, and we're certainly not afraid to make the changes when we need to in order to benefit our business, and our customers.

Originally launched as a weekly publication containing only adverts, a review exercise six months ago involving both market research and feedback from advertisers indicated it would be better to make the magazine into a

fortnightly publication and introduce some editorial content as well.

We changed the layout of the magazine to allow it to include more editorial features, which has been incredibly well-received by clients and readers alike. Sales figures also prove this was a positive change, with revenue and size of advertiser base significantly increasing after this point.

We continue to develop the magazine with every edition to ensure it remains fit for purpose, and maintains its reputation and standing in the market.

Sam Lewis and Sam Noon continue to work in partnership with their clients to help market their companies or products to best effect, by designing bespoke campaigns that will work for their needs as a business, and according to their budget. Every week the team takes part in a production meeting, looking not just at the current edition that is being worked on, but also future editions.

Long-term planning of themes, special editions or special offers takes place here, as well as brainstorming of client briefs, issues or ideas in order to provide them with a bespoke marketing campaign plan that meets their corporate objectives, but also fits with their budget.

We pride ourselves on our flexibility and ability to provide bespoke solutions for our clients, particularly when no other advertising outlets on the Island can offer anywhere near the degree of flexibility that the Manx Advertiser can.

Another key benefit of the magazine is that it is produced and printed in-house by Bridson & Horrox Group using our revolutionary HP Indigo digital press, the most advanced digital print capability in use in the Isle of Man. This means that, if we need to, we can stretch deadlines to accommodate last minute changes where necessary and still deliver on time.

Don't just believe us!

B&B Furniture has used the Manx Advertiser as a core advertising medium frequently since it launched and the company's Director, Chris Brownlow, recognises the value it brings to his business. He commented: "We have been on the front cover and also take half page adverts inside the magazine. The Manx Advertiser has proven to be very successful for B&B – we always see a significant

upturn in business when our advert goes out. Sam Lewis is very professional and deals with our advertising very efficiently and, as a result, B&B will continue to use the Manx Advertiser for advertising campaigns in the future."

Brent Mealin is another long-standing supporter of the magazine, and told Exclamation: "The Manx Advertiser has driven significant results into my business over the last nine months. I feel this medium is definitely the strongest advertising platform on the Island for my business and represents excellent value for money as a motor dealer. My business re-branded a few months ago and we launched it into the Advertiser and, since then, we have recognised a continued growth with new leads being driven into the showroom every week.

"Along with the re-branding through B&H Group we re-launched a new website and our Google analytics can prove there is a significant increase in visitors each time the Manx Advertiser is published. We particularly chose this path because of its fresh new approach, quality and variation with creditable advertisers."

One of the Manx Advertiser's newest clients is Isle of Man Bank, as its Campaign and Communications Manager, Matt Cory, explains: "We started advertising in the Manx Advertiser in August this year. Our Account Manager provided me with an excellent overview of the publication, the options we had for advertising and associated prices.

"There was definite response to our adverts, which is always nice as it is difficult to track response to press adverts. The publication is of a good quality with a nice balance between articles and adverts plus the useful guide in the centre to what's on."

If you would like to find out more about how the Manx Advertiser can benefit your business, please contact Sam Noon on snoon@manxadvertiser.im, or Sam Lewis on slewis@bridson-horrox.com.

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Marlene Akitt



Touching lives on a global scale

Marlene Akitt – Office Manager, Riva Financial Systems and Isle of Man Area Co-ordinator, Operation Christmas Child

I'm in a very privileged position of having two careers, one as Office Manager of Riva Financial Systems and the other as Isle of Man Area Co-Ordinator of 'Operation Christmas Child'. Charity work is such a fundamental part of my life, and is something that will never change.

In 2002 my friend discovered the project in the UK, which is run by the 'Samaritan's Purse' charity, and introduced it to the Island. At first I was more involved with it through my work teaching in a Sunday school, which I still do, but gradually this increased and I began going to the warehouse to help pack and check the boxes before they were delivered, and then in 2010 I became Area Co-Ordinator.

I can honestly say my faith and my experiences with the charity have touched and humbled me in ways I never thought possible, and I believe this is my purpose – what I'm meant to do. Let me explain.

Shoebboxes are collected every year in the Isle of Man for boys and girls across a wide age range. They consist of toys, crayons, colouring books, sweets, gloves, other small items of clothing and so on. After being checked and packed into crates by our wonderful team of volunteers, from this region they're sent either to Eastern Europe or Africa.

The recipients are children who would never normally receive a gift, and I don't just mean at Christmas – I mean children who never in their lives have ever received anything before, either through extreme poverty or warfare.

Samaritan's Purse partners with a local church or Christian organisation; shoebboxes are delivered to children most in need, regardless of race or religion. This initiative won't solve the world's problems, but it gives them a little bit of hope in an otherwise bleak existence. To be able to make such an

incredible difference to someone by simply giving them a small gift is so incredibly satisfying.

In 2007, I was privileged to be invited to help deliver the Isle of Man boxes in Kosovo. The impact of the war in 1998 and 1999 is still felt there today; the widows still dress in black, grieving for their fathers, husbands and sons who were lost. They have so very little left, and their world is in stark contrast to the world we all take for granted.

After a small presentation with each school or group, we gave out their shoebboxes and, after a countdown, watched them open them in awe. It's incredible, even when they have so little, they are still generous enough to share their gifts. I remember seeing one little boy who had two pairs of gloves in his box, and another who didn't have any. The boy with the two pairs swapped one of them for something from his friend's box, much to both of their delight. Others sat on the floor happily playing games like marbles together.

The whole experience was awesome, and truly humbling, and I think something everyone should see because we have so much in comparison, and sometimes I don't think we realise how lucky we are.

The generosity of people in the Isle of Man astounds me. In 2012 we collected more than 2,600 shoebboxes, which is amazing seeing as this involves more effort than simply putting £1 into a charity box. I'm looking forward to seeing what Operation Christmas Child 2013 brings, and the joy it will provide to so many underprivileged children.

The Directors of Riva are so supportive that charity work is such a big part of my life. In fact, they're the reason I returned to work after taking a career break to have my two teenage daughters.

I'm originally from South Africa, and moved here in March 1991. I married in 1989 and my husband and I decided to leave our families behind to travel. I'm a trained teacher, and was teaching Maths in a High School when we left. My husband got a job as a skilled worker in the wonderful Isle of Man, and I joined GAM as HR and Training Co-Ordinator. It's a decision neither of us regret – we are very happy and have some wonderful friends here.

During my career break I filled my time with a lot of charity and church work, but during a GAM reunion at Bar George, two of Riva's Directors asked me if I would consider returning to work, and I haven't looked back! We've recently moved to new, state of the art premises at St George's Tower on Hope Street in the heart of Douglas. I now support a team of 15, which is growing rapidly as we expand internationally.

Riva has been in the press a lot recently and our profile is growing very quickly, thanks in part to the work being done locally by our Sales and Marketing Manager, Kelly Ashe. The company provides global transfer agency solutions for the asset management industry worldwide, and business is growing very quickly.

We are proud to be based in the Isle of Man and are a tight-knit team. The people really do help to make the business what it is! We work closely with the Government, and our CEO is a proud supporter of the Island's Fund Management Association.

We've got an exciting future ahead of us, and I cannot wait to see what it holds.

If you would like to find out more about Operation Christmas Child in the Isle of Man or would like to donate a box yourself, Marlene can be contacted by phone on 452670 or by email at marlene@akitt.com.

Bridson & Horrox Group acquires 'Skunkworks'



BUSINESS GIFTS

Bridson & Horrox Group has further diversified its range of services following its acquisition of 'Skunkworks'.

The Island's leading printing, stationery, office furniture, signage and design company has purchased the corporate and promotional gift business from John Wannenburg, and will operate it from its headquarters on the Hills Meadow Industrial Estate in Douglas.

The acquisition comes at the end of Bridson & Horrox Group's 80th anniversary year and will complement its existing service offering.

Skunkworks specialises in the production of items including pens, calendars, mugs, crystal and glassware, USBs, golfing merchandise, umbrellas, corporate clothing, confectionery, hampers, bags and folders. As well as having an established client base on the Isle of Man, it also has a large number of clients in the UK. Bridson & Horrox Group will continue to run the business using the 'Skunkworks' brand, although this will enjoy a new visual identity.

Darren Horrox, Managing Director of Bridson & Horrox Group, commented: "As a company we have been supporters of John Wannenburg, both through Skunkworks and his other venture, the Isle of Man Sporting and Dining Club, for some time. The promotional and corporate gift business is a growing market and has a lot of synergy with the services we already provide, so the opportunity to acquire Skunkworks was too good to turn down.

"This is a very exciting and dynamic business; it will not only complement Bridson & Horrox Group's range of services and expertise, but will also provide many benefits to our existing client base who can source all of their business support functions from one provider. Diversification is one of the keys to success for any company, particularly so given the current economic climate, and I am looking forward to developing our service offering in this area in 2014."



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