

The Circuit

AFFILIATE OF: APS & GOPO

The Official Journal of the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors

"Year of the Railways"

by Terence Lyons (# 820)

To celebrate the Centenary of the opening of the Manx Electric Railway (MER), 1993 has been declared to be, "The Year of the Railways." To commemorate the event, the Isle of Man Post Office issued a set of four stamps, comprising 20p, 24p, 28p and 39p values, together with a booklet.

On the same day that the stamps were issued, a Travelling Post Office (TPO) special train was run from Ramsey, which is in the north of the island, to Port Erin in the south. A special cachet-type postmark, depicting an electric tram, steam locomotive and horse drawn tram, was applied to all mail, which was posted in letter boxes along the route. In earlier days, it was common practice to have letter boxes at specified stations and halts along the track, which were emptied by the train crew as they went past.

The mail on the TPO special was carried on the MER from Ramsey to the terminus which is located at the north end of Douglas promenade. From here it was taken by horse drawn tram to the Sea Terminal, some two miles away, where it was put on a vintage motor bus for the short journey to Douglas station. The mail then completed the final part of its journey by steam train to Port Erin.

The MER is built to a gauge of three feet and is seventeen and three-quarters miles long. It is the largest electric tramway operating in the British Isles and hugs the coastline for much of its route. It offers some spectacular views, as it twists around the tight curves and climbs the steep gradients.

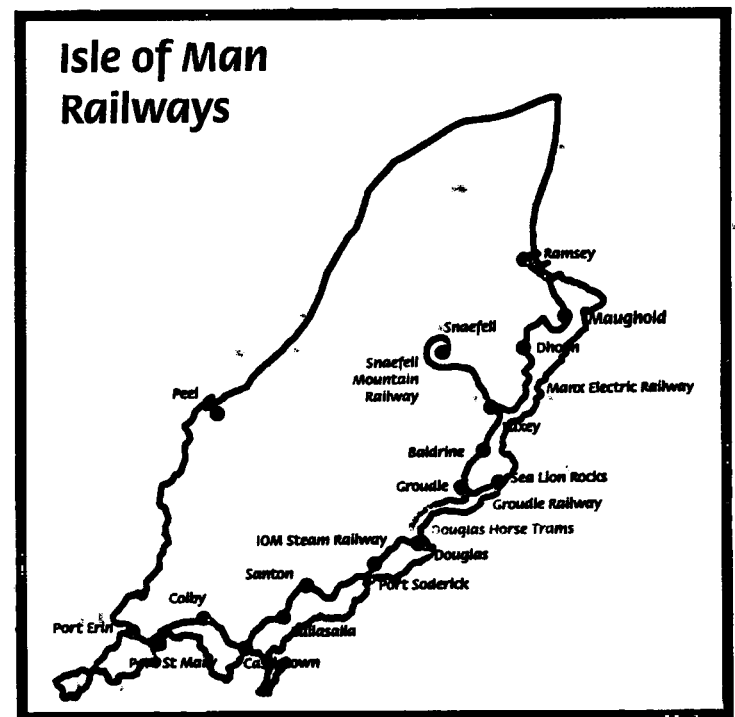
This pioneer inter-urban railway operates much as it did a century ago, using Victorian and Edwardian technology. The original No. 1 and No. 2 tramcars are still operating today. These have been recognized by the *Guinness World Book of Records* as being the oldest operating trams in the world. The newest of the rolling stock on the MER dates back to 1906.

There are five railway systems operating in the Isle of Man, these are:

- (1) The Manx Electric Railway - Douglas to Ramsey (17-3/4 miles)
- (2) Snaefel Mountain Railway - Laxey to summit of Snaefel (4-1/2 miles)
- (3) Isle of Man Steam Railway - Douglas to Port Erin (15-1/2 miles) - Opened 1873

- (4) Douglas Horse Trams - MER Terminus to Sea Terminal (2 miles) - Opened 1876
- (5) Groudle Glen Railway - Connects Glen to a cliff top zoo (3/4 mile) - Two foot gauge - Opened 1893

The first section of the MER line, between Douglas and Groudle, was opened on September 7, 1893, Laxey being reached on July 27, 1894. The extension from Laxey to the

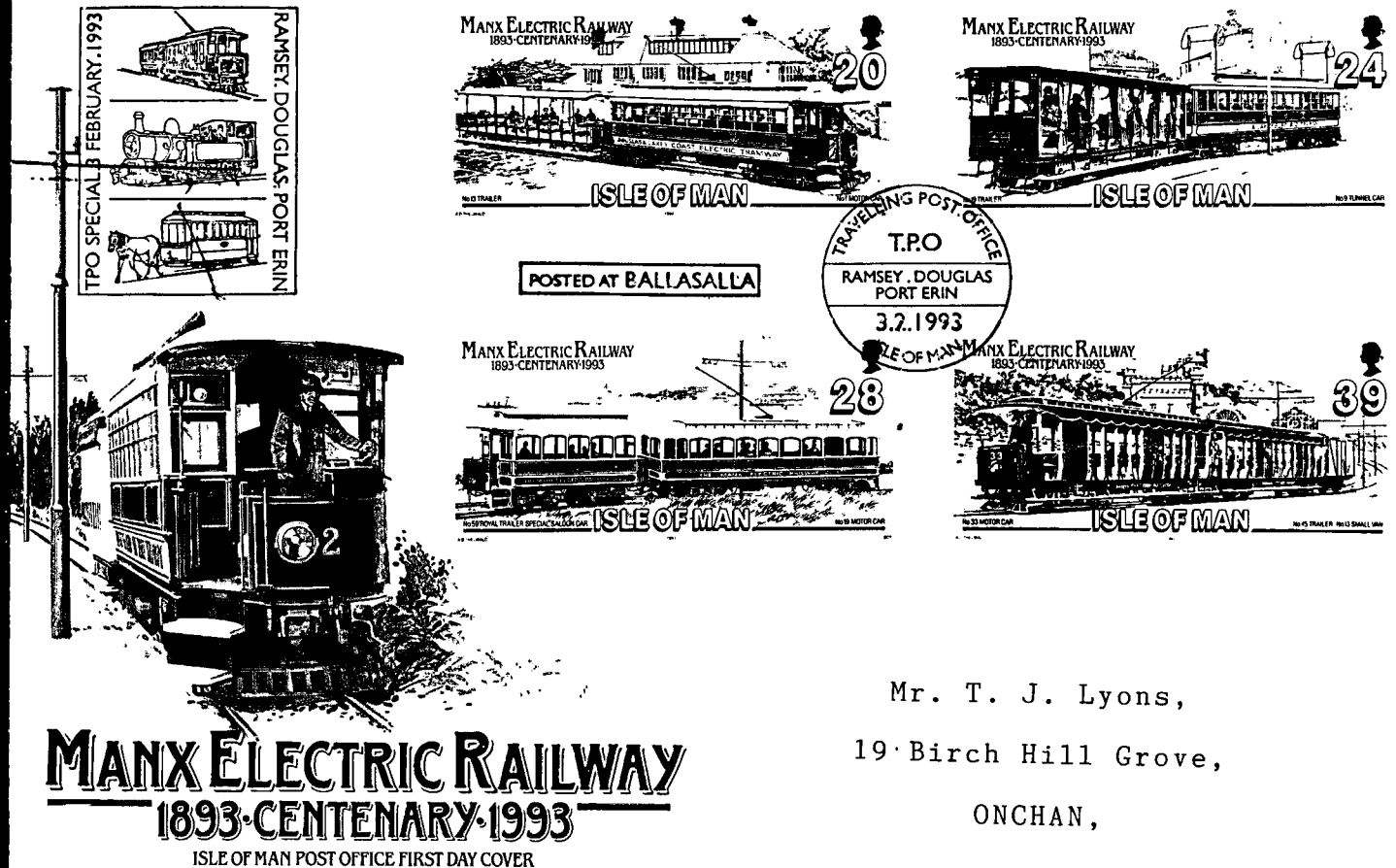


summit of Snaefel, which is built to a gauge of three feet six inches, was completed on August 21, 1985. This is the only electric mountain railway in the British Isles and climbs to a total height of 2,036 feet, the highest point on the Isle of Man.

The line from Ramsey to Laxey was commenced in August, 1897 and officially opened on August 2, 1898. It did not, however, reach the center of Ramsey until July, 1899.

The MER operates all year, with several trains running each day in the summer. During the winter month, the service is reduced to two or three trains per day, with none

(Continued Page 2)



Mr. T. J. Lyons,
19 Birch Hill Grove,
ONCHAN,

Railways (Continued from Page 1)

at weekends.

The official opening of "The Year of the Railways," was made by H. E. the Lieutenant Governor, Air Marshall Sir Laurence Jones, during Easter.

There are many events planned throughout the year, which include open days at the MER and steam railway depots, steam locomotives operating on the MER, a Victorian Sports Day & Fair, a steam engine tug-of-war, plus many more too

numerous to mention.

A full programme of events can be obtained from the Isle of Man Railways, Strathallan Crescent, Douglas, Isle of Man.

The Isle of Man Post Office, Philatelic Bureau, still has available a limited number of First Day Covers, which were carried on the TPO special. The price of these is £2.50 or approximately \$3.50 US at the current exchange rate. ...

ISWSC Plans New Service for Kids Clubs

Plans are in the works on a new service to help young stamp collectors and leaders of youth stamp groups contact similar age penpals in other countries. Members Carol Cervenka and Tom Fortunato are working on putting it together and more details will be forth coming in the next newsletter. If you have any ideas and/or information on clubs or youth groups who would be interested in penpals and exchanging stamps in your country or area, please contact Carol Cervenka (# 498). Be sure to send name of leader, ages of children in the group and address of leader. ...

ISWSC LOGO CLOISONNE' LAPEL PINS

Be among the first to own these beautiful four color pins featuring our club logo.

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* Mint US Stamps with full gum or IRCs (at 50¢ each) also accepted.

THE PRESIDENTS COLUMN *by Dave Nelson (#25)*

Maybe one or two of you actually noticed that there was no President's Column in the last issue. Reason was partly that I was in Monte Carlo again but mostly the good-news reason; since we produced the combined issue at year end we have stayed right on publication schedule. Many thanks to our overworked and sometimes under-appreciated Editor.

The By-law ballots are in and the new By-Laws were approved. Now the Board and Executive Committee have a lot more work to do to get us a tax status appropriate to our current size and revenue levels. As has been obvious for some time, we will have to announce a hike in dues very soon; we must have just about the lowest annual dues of any club on earth that features a bi-monthly newsletter. We'll certainly keep the increase very modest, probably to \$8 per year, and hope that miscellaneous revenues from ads in *The Circuit*, our Mail Auctions and your kind donations will keep us financially sound.

Our new Auction Co-Managers, **Jim Watkins** and **George Land** got off to a good start with sale # 8 which was largely put together by our outgoing Manager, **Dr. Wallace Johnson**. Our everlasting thanks to **Dr. Johnson** for his generous contribution of time and talent to make this mail sale program into the success it has been. **Harold Humm #678** and others have pointed out the increasing levels of minimum bids appearing in the auction. I have been concerned about that myself and will be working with Jim and George to see if we can define a set of rules that are a nice compromise for all. The objective is to avoid extremes...if we don't allow any minimums at all then submitters will occasionally see the hammer fall on ridiculously small bids and they will stop participating. But if all the items have minimums that are at 50% of Scott or more then our sales will be no more attractive than the average ad in Linns and members will lose interest in submitting bids. We have some wonderful dealer members who have been helping to publicize ISWSC and advertising in *The Circuit*, etc. and I want them to be as free as any other member to send offerings to the Auction, but the primary purpose of this forum is to allow members to realize good cash for excess materials while other members get good bargains for desired acquisitions, so high minima are not called for.

From my mail bag: Member #330, **Edward Stockhammer** is interested in Scott Specialty Album pages from 1950 on so look him up in your roster and let him know if you have some available. He also asks if anyone knows where one could buy stamp border stencils, he bought some from a company called Beardcraft about 20 years ago but hasn't seen them since. Have you? Member **Clyde Howard** wrote to say some good things about ISWSC and ask if anyone has a recent copy of volume #2 for sale. **Pete Bialick, #476** along with some other members have passed on some ideas about *The Omni* exchange. One criticism we hear is that people don't want to be forced to buy new Scott catalogues every 2 or 3 years. Good grief, anyone can sympathize with that these days! With Scott moving to *FIVE* volumes this year one could buy an awful lot of stamps for their collection with the money it takes to get a full new set. Furthermore,

most of our members have a cut-off date and are not interested in stamps after 1940 or 1962 or whatever date it was they got tired of paying for those overpriced supplements, so the idea of buying new catalogues just for the new prices when they don't need the new issue descriptions is angrifying to say the least. The problem we have had recently is that the massive price reductions Scott took in 1990 mean that a member who prices contributions with an '89 or earlier volume simply won't sell any. Just about every exchange had to go thru considerable machinations to adjust for this anomaly which one hopes will never be repeated. It is more usual for prices to trend upward, or to drop only a tiny amount, in which case we may not have to be too rigid about the four year old catalogue rule in years to come.

I have my own theory about how Scott could make more money and at the same time provide a much better service to the hobby. What I would like to see them do is to publish the photos and descriptions on three hole punched, durable, glossy stock without any price data (o.k. so they can be TWO hole punched for any of you overseas that have an interest in Scott). These photo quality pages might even be in full color! Then on separate, regular paper pages they should publish only the catalogue numbers and current prices which pages are, of course, republished every year. Assuming they were loose leaf, with no countries overlapping on a given page, Scott could sell the photo pages for any single country, or logical country grouping; and they could sell 'say' "South America" for a premium which those who collect same would be happy to pay since they didn't now have to buy all 5 volumes to get that one continent. Collectors could buy the new price lists for worldwide but not buy the new release photo pages if we don't care about those. I, for example, have been buying full sets every other year and may go to every third year now, but under this plan I would spend what it takes to get the new loose leaf set and then buy just the price pages EVERY year; since I cut off my collecting interests as of 1980 I wouldn't buy the new issue pages. Scott would get as much or more money out of me, I would have more up to date prices, and we all would have better quality photo descriptions of the stamps. More collectors would buy from Scott if they could buy just Scandinavia or just "dead countries" or whatever their interests might be, which would be possible with the loose leaf format. If you think that would be good for collectors why not mail Scott a copy of this column and tell them it's time they started thinking more about what the collector wants.

I'll close with a Scott related trivia question. What is the cheapest stamp in the world? Answer, according to my 1992 edition of Scott: Victoria #165. It is catalogued at a used value of only 10 cents. This is pretty exceptional in the '92 edition which is the year Scott moved to the 15 cent minimum! (another of their moves that didn't make too many collectors happy). ...

"Consider the postage stamp: its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing till it gets there." — Josh Billings

Secretary- Treasurer's Report *by Carol Cervenka (# 498)*

Since its beginning, ISWSC has been devoted to helping young people discover the joys of our hobby. A recent letter from Robert C. Toole gives an accurate picture of the dilemma facing many members who are actively involved with several youth stamp programs:

"I collect for 5 grandchildren, 2 young pen pals and the Youth Booth of the Indiana Stamp Club. I may not have 250 large collectible duplicates now, but I'll do my best."

Other collectors, new to the hobby or resuming after an hiatus of many years, find they struggle to come up with 250 different collectible surplus stamps. Previously, I have suggested that these prospective members (new and renewing) simply purchase a packet of topical stamps and donate them as that portion of their dues. ISWSC now offers a better option.

The Board of Directors has recently voted to allow the donation of an equivalent amount of money in lieu of the 250 stamps. The money will be kept in a special Youth Program fund, and used when available, to purchase stamps, supplies, philatelic books and other resource materials for youth groups as well as to defray program mailing expenses.

If you choose this option, simply send your cash, check or money order to the Secretary-Treasurer as you usually do, specifying the amount to be used in the Youth Program. We leave the amount up to you, but ask that you send sufficient to purchase a packet of 250 all different large collectible stamps. You may, of course, send more.

Stamps should still be sent to the Youth Program Chairman, who forwards a list of stamp contributors to me on a regular basis.

With the expansion of the Youth Program into the various Regions (Australasian, Canadian, E. European and UK) dues, stamps and funds for Youth Program dues are all sent to the Appropriate Regional Secretary. If you have any

questions, please feel free to send them to me; I'll answer them promptly.

#555 J.P. Arnold moved, and has sent in his change of address and renewal dues. Please note this in your Roster. The new address will be found in the Roster up-date page. Also make note that #542 Sibirin has been re-instated.

Dues were not received from #425 Yeong, #552 Bourgoin, #553 Rattray and #665 Newsome. #690 Joseph Farrugia has resigned. They have been dropped from the membership rolls. Please amend your Roster to this effect.

At press-time, we have had no word from #685 James E. Miller regarding his membership renewal, and if his dues are not received by May 31, he will have to be dropped.

I am delighted to report that #746 - Gil Langley, has earned a free year of membership in ISWSC for recruiting 5 new members in (less than) a year. Several other members are within one of having enough for a free year, and we truly appreciate the fine recruiting! If you know of other collectors who may be interested in ISWSC, please contact Tom Fortunato, 42 Maynard Street, Rochester, NY 14615 for copies of the new brochure. Gift memberships also count.

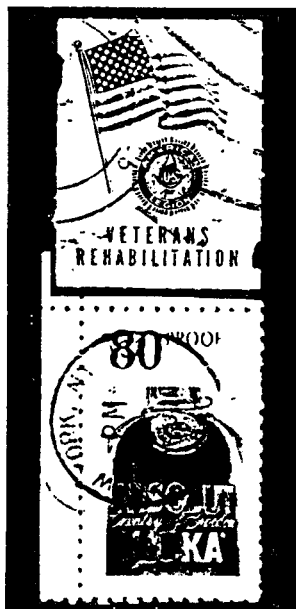
On the sad side, I received word from his daughter Pat, that #679 John Friedrich, passed away March 2, 1993, during hospitalization for a heart attack. John was a part-time dealer and a friend of many ISWSC members. He will be missed.

A reminder to Canadian members, when paying in Canadian funds for membership renewals, pins, books, etc. PLEASE SEND YOUR CHECKS TO Irving C. Whynot, P.O. Box 371, Don Mills, M3C 2S7, CANADA. Irv will convert to US funds and send payment to me. It adds to ISWSC postage costs when I have to send Canadian checks to Irv for conversion, and he returns them for deposit. Thanks in advance for your help! ...

USPS Has Problem Identifying Stamps!!

Beverly Chapman (#802) sent a letter written to a philatelic publication decrying the voiding of a coil pair of the 5¢ Washington stamp (issued about 20 years ago) by the postal service. He used a 19¢ deer stamp and the coil pair to make up 29¢ postage, but the 5¢ stamps were marked void and it was returned for postage.

She enclosed the cancelled "stamps" that made it through the mail as postage stamps. She mused that perhaps the user of the 80 proof label stamp for Absolut Vodka may have been too drunk to notice the difference. That does not however explain how it got through the postal system!! ...



Correction:

Many months ago, your Editor failed to list a new member (# 832) correctly under his name. Instead member # 833 had his name listed under both numbers. It was a typographical error which was not caught in proof-reading. Both members are listed correctly on the new roster, but I feel it is only fair to mention that member # 832 is Don Brake, 3 Parkhurst Pl., Fairfield, IL 62837. Check the roster for trading information. My apologies and a big welcome to Don. ...

¿Whatzit?

¿Whatzit? No. 93-2:

Costa Rica
Color: Gray Black



CLASSIFIED ADS

APPROVALS: Get a 25% Discount off my already low prices. ISWSC members only. Worldwide used singles, Mint complete sets, Topicals, Mixtures, Want Lists. Terry Collins, 127 Benkard, Newburgh, NY 12550 (5/6)

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WANTED: 1935 KGV Silver Jubilee Omnibus used, F-VF, Light Cancells, Full Perfs, no defects, paying 50% 1993 Scott for sets, better singles (CV more than \$1.00), except Basutoland, Br. Honduras, Cypress, NZ. WANTED: ISWSC members who subscribe to PRODIGY. Write to XMRW93A. WANTED: Collectors of Israeli current issues. I have a standing order with the Israel Philatelic Office. Must take at least two of each stamp, therefore, looking for at least one partner to absorb duplicates. No unworkable problems. Tom Ginsberg, (#70 ISWSC, APS), 1041 Bowen Street, Oshkosh, WI 54901 (1/1)

**DEADLINE NEXT ISSUE
JUNE 15, 1993**

ISWSC

SWAP CIRCUIT

TO BECOME PART
OF A SWAP CIRCUIT
Send 100 Large
Foreign Stamps to:

Swap Circuit -
Dalene Thomas
8612 W. Warren Lane
Lakewood, CO 80227

STAMP COLLECTORS DISNEY

'93 10 - page Catalog: Albums, Supplements, Stamps, Collections, Anguilla - Uganda. Easy Order Form. Send \$1.00 Postage to Angela, 517 North 7th Street, Leavenworth, KS 66048 (1/6)

FOR SALE: 250 Australian fine used for \$10 note (no cheques please). Post Free, All Different decimals with sets, singles and values to \$5.00. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Wanted B.W.I. definitives, give Papua in exchange, Scotts Catalog. L. Cook, 37 Church St., Boonah, Queensland, Australia 4310 (1/1)

TIRED OF GETTING the same old stamps from your trading partners? Longtime collector has thousands of worldwide stamps cataloging \$1.00 or more for trading. No cash involved. Write for sample list and details. Thomas, Box 252, Wilmette, IL 60091 (1/1)

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IN YOUR COLLECTION

WITH
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TRADE YOUR
DUPLICATES

FOR INFO WRITE:
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OMNI MANAGER

BOX 252
WILMETTE, IL 60091-0252

Advertising Policy: All ads dealing with philatelic concerns are acceptable. We reserve the right to edit out objectionable language. Advertisers are expected to respond to all inquiries, so be sure you can handle the responses before you offer to trade, buy or sell. If you have a bad result from answering an ad, contact the editor. We will try to resolve the conflict.

Display Rates (Camera Ready*) per insertion:

Full Page	\$40.00**
Half Page	20.00**
Quarter Page	10.00**
Per column inch	2.00

* Camera Ready means ready to paste-up and print. reductions and typesetting extra

** Discounts for 3 or more insertions of same ad. Yearly display ad rates available. Write to ISWSC Editor or Fax direct 24-hr. line 1-(318) 325-4539 for special rates.

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Additional words are 20 for \$1.00. State abbreviations are one word. "P.O. Box 12345" is two words. Zip Code is one word.

Make all checks payable to ISWSC in US funds. Send payment along with copy to the Editor.

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