“The Ordnance Survey in the Isle of Man (1864-68)”

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The Ordnance Survey in the Isle of Man (1864-68)

Stephen Miller

William Harrison, a member of the House of Keys, the lower house of Tynwald, the Island's parliament, had raised the issue of a survey back in 1861, when he “mentioned that the Board of Ordnance surveyors had already taken the angles of the Island for a survey, and were now ready to go upon the land. He considered that a good map or plan of the Island was very much wanted.” The Clerk of the Rolls in response appeared to have little knowledge as he simply replied that “there was no doubt but the surveyors would visit this Island in regular rotation.” Harrison’s replied that “this would be a favourable time for urging it upon the attention of the Ordnance authorities.” He was speaking at a session of Tynwald when the Act for Disafforesting and Allotting the Commons (1860) had been laid down for discussion and it was clear to many that there was a lack of any accurate mapping of the Island to hand.

In 1863, whilst difficulties with the disafforesting of the Commons were still rumbling on in Tynwald, Harrison again raised the issue of the Ordnance Survey. Mentioning that “an authentic map of the Island being very much required,” and pointing out that the survey of England was completed, “he read a letter on this subject which he had received some time ago from the Board of Ordnance, and he solicited His Excellency to promote further information on the subject.” The Lieutenant-Governor answered simply that “he would communicate with the proper parties on the subject, and promote all possible information,” and then moved on to the Weights and Measures Bill and the Embezzlement Bill. Later that year, there was to be movement on the issue in Tynwald. “From private correspondence which he had since received, his Excellency said he had reason to believe that such a survey would be undertaken at the expense of the Consolidated Fund, and that next year would see the commencement of it.”

Harrison saw his moment, and “after thanking his Excellency for the information, begged to move ‘That this court requests that a survey be made, on the scale named by his Excellency the Lieut.-Governor.’—Seconded and agreed to.”

“On Wednesday last, Mr Manners, of the royal engineers, arrived in Douglas, for the purpose of making preliminary arrangements for the great survey of this island.” This was 21 September 1864, and later in November the rest of the party were in the Island: “Twenty-two Sappers and Miners have arrived here to take part in the survey of this Island now being made by order of the Board of Ordnance. Considerable progress have already been made with the survey, which is being carried out on the gigantic scale of twenty-five inches to the mile.” The Mona’s Herald also reported Manner’s arrival, and wrote that “[i]t is expected that the survey of the Island will be completed in about two years. The insular

1 Mona’s Herald 20 March 1861.
2 Mona’s Herald 15 July 1863.
3 Mona’s Herald 20 March 1863.
4 Isle of Man Weekly Advertising Circular 27 September 1864.
5 Isle of Man Weekly Advertising Circular 29 November 1864.
revenue will not be charged with the expense, as that will be defrayed by the Imperial Government.” They were correct as regards the time taken but mistaken concerning who would pick up the burden of the expenditure.

Early in 1866, it was reported “that the Southern half of the Isle of Man has been surveyed and that the remainder will be completed during the present year.” In November of that year, the draft maps of the Island were on display in the Court Houses in Douglas, Ramsey, Peel, and Castletown. In 1868, the Survey was reported as being now completed, and “[t]he cost of this survey will be defrayed out of the revenue of the Island,” a decision that would later lead to a dispute with London. December that year saw the first map appearing from the Survey, one for Santan in eight sheets, the smallest of the Island’s seventeen parishes.

Tynwald met on 2 March 1869 and the business was to discuss proposals for large scale capital projects, such as repairing and replacing the Island’s crumbling harbours, building a Lunatic Asylum, rural police stations, moving the House of Key and the Courts to Douglas, and amongst this list, “[t]he cost of the ordnance survey comes next, and if we have to pay for that it will be a heavy pull upon our Insular purse.” One consequence of this was soon reported: “We understand that the sale of the Ordnance maps is stopped, in consequence of the dispute as to whether the Insular or Imperial Government is to pay the cost of the survey is settled.” In October the cost was revealed—a figure between £6,000 and £7,000 had been demanded by London, which amount the Lieutenant-Governor had negotiated down to £3,500, payable in instalments over the next three to four years. That the Island had to pay in the first instance was a surprise to some, and whilst the sum had been reduced it appeared still to be an arbitrary figure and one over which Tynwald had had no say whatsoever. It was pointed out that the Attorney General had resisted the claim made but it was fruitless as it was in any case a request by Tynwald in 1863 that the Island be so surveyed and as a consequence the charge would come upon the Insular and not the Imperial budget. It was pointed out that since 1 April 1866, greater fiscal autonomy had been granted to the Island, and so any work carried out after that date fell on the Island and was no longer paid for by London. A suggestion that the Island should at least reap the profits from the sales of maps had been followed up, but “there was scarcely any profit whatever on the copies—it would scarcely cover the actual cost of making the plans.” As regards the work on the ground, rather than the making of the plans, the newspapers reveal little to nothing. However, there are a number of births, debts, marriages, and deaths, that would not have

6 Mona’s Herald 28 September 1864.
7 Manx Sun 28 April 1866.
8 Mona’s Herald 20 October 1866.
9 Mona’s Herald 3 June 1868.
10 Manx Sun 19 December 1868. For the advert, see Isle of Man Times 1868.
11 Manx Sun 6 March 1869: 4[d].
12 Mona’s Herald 10 March 1869.
13 Mona’s Herald 3 November 1869.
occurred without the presence of the Ordnance Survey in the Island in those years.

Isle of Man XIII.7, surveyed 1866 published 1879 (NLS)

Births
“On Tuesday the 12th inst., at the Grosvenor Inn, Kirk Andreas, the wife of Mr D. Oswald, Ordnance Survey, of a son”.

Thomas Henry Oswald was christened in Andreas on 14 June 1868, the son of David Oswald (occupation given as “Ordinance surveyor”) and Jessie Blair. Oswald and Blair had married in Govan, Lanarkshire, on 31 March 1865. In the 1871 census he was living with his grandparents, Thomas and Janet Blair, at Fraser's Land, Lochgilphead in Argyllshire; in 1881, he was still living with his grandparents at the same address. As regards his parents and siblings, they cannot be located in the 1871 census, but in 1881, David Oswald was still employed by the Ordnance Survey, living now in Castle Street, Melbourne, Shardlow, Derbyshire.

Debts
“Notice is Hereby Given, that the Officer Commanding the Surveying Parties of the Isle of Man, in no way holds himself responsible for the DEBTS of any Soldier of the Royal Engineers, or Civilian belonging to any of such Parties; and attention

14 Manx Sun 16 May 1868.
is directed to Public Proclamation within the Island, with reference to Soldiers' debts.

T.P. WHITE, Lieut. Royal Engineers.
Ordnance Survey Office, Glasgow, 16th April, 1866.”

**Marriages**

“Harraghy—McMullen—Monday, October 16, at St Mary’s, Buck’s Road, by His Grace the Right Rev. Dr Herrington, Mr P. Harraghy, C.E., of the Ordnance Survey, to Miss Catherine McMullen, of Wellington Square, Douglas.”

In the 1861 census, Catherine McMullen *née* Morgan (49) was married to Patrick McMullen (60), a hawker, living at 1 Callow Place, Douglas, together with their two sons, James (26), a carver and gilder, and John (20), a messenger. All bar John were born in Ireland. Her husband died in 1864, being interred at Braddan on 6 October (as McMullin). They had married in Douglas on 13 May 1854. She later married Patrick Harraghy (given as Harragher) on 16 October 1865. The pair cannot be found later in either the 1871 or 1881 census.


In 1861, Harriette Haslam was 18, living at Ballaglass, Maughold, with her parents and six siblings, along with four servants. Her father, William, farmed 200 acres aided by a workforce of eight. He was also a member of the House of Keys, and a Justice of the Peace. She is not found enumerated in the 1871 census. In 1881, she is found listed as a farmer’s wife, married but Thomas Manners is not present—his name was filled in but his first name scored through and Harriette’s name inserted instead. She was farming 136 acres at Channels End, Colmworth, Bedford, Bedfordshire, along with her three sons, Thomas Alexander (15), William Henry (12), Henry James (1), and with Susanna Woodcock (24) as a servant. Her two eldest children were born in the Isle of Man, in 1866 and 1869 using the census declaration of ages, the youngest one in 1880 in Emberton, Buckinghamshire. Their births cannot be traced in the Island.

**Deaths**

“An inquest was held before His Worship the High Bailiff of Douglas on Thursday evening, at the house of Mr Charles Woodward, Port Soderic, on the body of John Seaton, a labourer employed in connexion with the Ordnance Survey of this Island. Deceased had been missing from his lodgings for about six weeks, and, although diligent search had been made, nothing could be learnt respecting him until his body was found floating off Fort Soderic on Thursday morning. […]

“Henry Dalton sworn, saith: I am a sapper in the Royal Engineers, and along with others engaged in the Government survey of the Isle of Man. We have been so engaged for the last four months, others have been engaged for a longer period. I came to the Island about four months since from Scotland, and I

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15 *Mona’s Herald* 21 April 1866.
16 *Mona’s Herald* 25 October 1865.
17 *Mona’s Herald* 15 February 1865.
brought with me a man named John Seaton, about forty-four years of age, who had been connected with the Ordnance Survey many years as a chainman or labourer. When the said John Seaton came to this Island he was forwarded to St John’s in this Island, in order to join the party of sappers there under the charge of Corporal Black. I have ...viewed and examined the body now lying on the shore at Port Soderic, and found this morning floating on the water as described by the former witnesses, and I identify the boots on the body, and the rest of the clothing as the boots and clothing worn by the said John Seaton when he was in the employ of the Ordnance Survey; and from the general appearance of the body I have no hesitation in saying that the body so lying on the shore is the body of the deceased John Seaton. He was, when on service on the survey, a man of sober habits; but previous, and at the time he was missed, he was taking his fortnight’s holiday, and was not as temperate as might have been.”

Shoreline near Port Soderic (Isle of Man XIII.14, surveyed 1867/8, published 1869) (NLS)

18 Mona’s Herald 23 May 1866.